

# Homelessness, A Year-Round Issue

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Mo, who arrived with his family the night before, meets Gov. Terry McAuliffe at Shelter House's Thanksgiving luncheon on Thursday, Nov. 27, in Fairfax.

## Tell Teens 'Things Will Get Better'

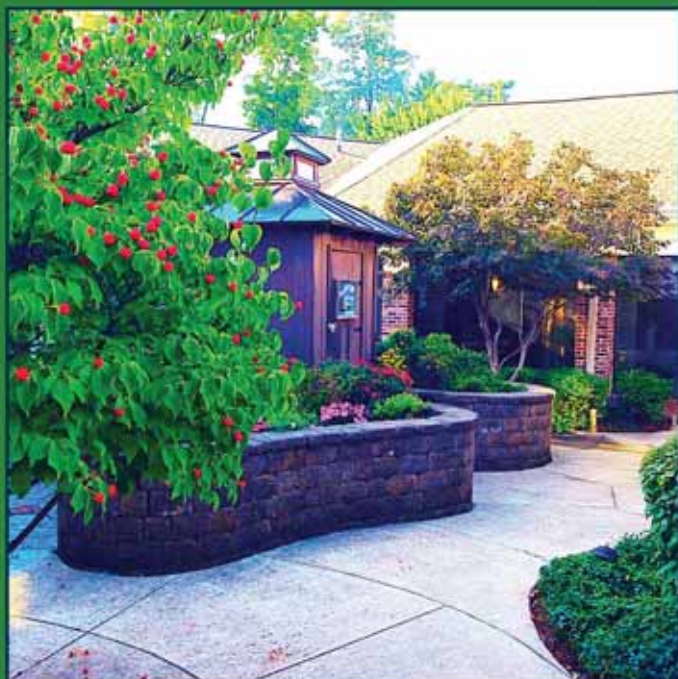
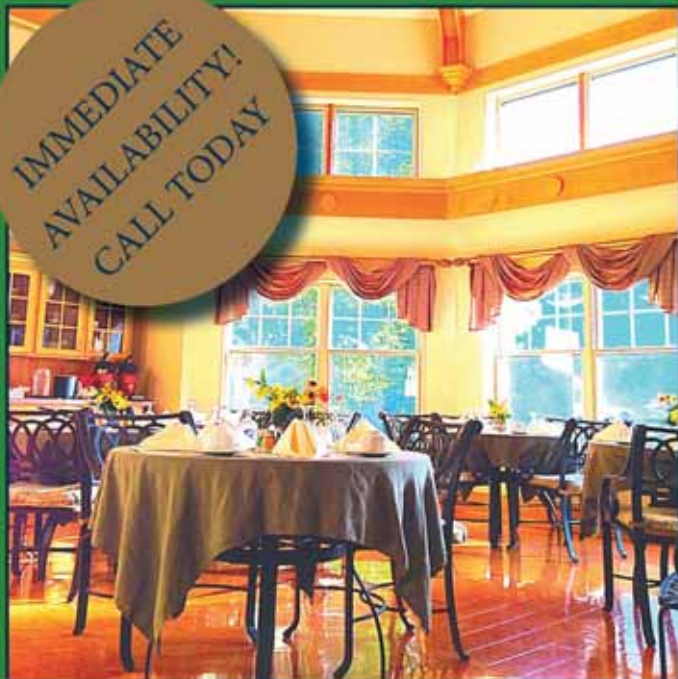
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## McLean to Host Holiday Crafts Show

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**Gov. Terry McAuliffe carves the turkey served to families at Shelter House on Thursday, Nov. 27, in Fairfax.**



PHOTOS BY ABIGAIL CONSTANTINO/THE CONNECTION

## Homelessness, A Year-Round Issue

**Gov. McAuliffe serves Thanksgiving lunch at Shelter House.**

BY ABIGAIL CONSTANTINO  
THE CONNECTION

“Do you like the stuffing? I made it,” said Gov. Terry McAuliffe on Thanksgiving, as he mingled with guests of Shelter House. Earlier, the governor donned a hairnet and served lunch to invited clients and residents at the Katherine K. Hanley Family Shelter in Fairfax.

“Fairfax County does an excellent job in providing for those who need shelter, who need food,” said McAuliffe. “I was so honored to come out here with my family to show our support and give back a little bit.” Though he said we all have something to be thankful for, there are those who are really in need.

Mo, his wife, and their two children arrived at the family shelter the night before. He was working two full time jobs when he got hurt at work. He lost one job and started falling behind on his bills. “It was just me providing for my family and I couldn’t do it anymore,” he said. He has been in the U.S. for 15 years, emigrating from West Africa. “I’ve never been in the shelter. Most of the time people talk about the shelter, and it’s, like, you know, you are somebody who doesn’t want to work. And, I’m not like that.”

**DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT** Jolie Smith said Mo’s situation is very common. “Really, all they need is a hand up not a handout.” With the help they receive, she has witnessed people bounce back. “A couple of month’s rent, a secu-

rity deposit and they’re off and running,” she said.

But there are those whose needs require more than financial help. “Thanksgiving, you’re supposed to be with your friends but right now, I cannot be with my family and friends,” said “Lee” (name changed for security). Lee fled from domestic violence and her husband does not know where she is staying. “He kind of knows I’m in a shelter. He knows I have no friends, no relatives. He pushed me out. Where am I supposed to go?”

Lee never called the police because her husband was the only one working in the family. “Since I got married, I kind of lost myself. I used to be very confident...go to work. But I have been a housewife for eight

years. I don’t know what I can do.” Lee left her children with her husband, while she regains her independence and learns to be self-sufficient. “I want to get custody of them. I want to fight for them,” she said.

McAuliffe visited the tables of the families he served and took photographs with them. Jennifer Erazo posed with him and nervously forgot to ask her question about housing for people with disabilities. “There’s a lot of housing for low funds, domestic violence. There should be more for people with mental disabilities,” she said. She is dealing with mental health issues and domestic violence.

**LAST SEPTEMBER**, McAuliffe announced his measure to expand healthcare services to over 200,000 Virginians. Through a series of executive actions, the plan includes care and coverage for people with mental illness. The plan was a reduction from a more ambitious one that was thwarted by the General Assembly when it shot down the expansion of Medicaid in the commonwealth. He said that about \$26 billion of Virginia taxpayer money has gone to Washington, D.C. and the commonwealth has a right to bring that money back. “It’s unconscionable that we’re not doing that,” he said.

About 26.2 percent of sheltered homeless persons have a severe mental illness, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. But although mental illness may contribute to homelessness, the lack of low-income housing is the predominant cause of homelessness, according to a 1994 study by Shinn and Gillespie published in American Behavioral Scientist.

November is homelessness awareness month. Shelter House executive director Joe Meyer said that homelessness is not just a holiday or a seasonal issue. “It’s a year-round issue that we need to address.”



**A father and son pray before eating their Thanksgiving meal, served at the Katherine K. Hanley Family Shelter by Gov. Terry McAuliffe on Thursday, Nov. 27, in Fairfax.**

### VIEWPOINTS

**What are the needs and priorities of the homeless in Fairfax County this winter?**

**Jolie Smith, director of development, Shelter House:**

“Housing. Affordable housing. We always need hygiene products. One thing people don’t realize is that with food stamps you can’t buy any hygiene products. So, we always ask people to give shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, toothbrush. Gift cards. A gift card from CVS can help people buy medications they may need. Gift cards are always in need. Think about what you need and those are the needs of our families.”



**Joe Meyer, executive director, Shelter House:**

“This is a community that really cares about the issue that we have—homelessness and domestic violence. For a community to come together is one of the biggest things that I want to see this winter.”



**Scott Covino, board member, Shelter House, and daughter Lauren, 10, of Leesburg:**

“It’s getting the folks who need the help, help. It’s usually trying to identify folks and make sure that they are in the system, that they’re being recognized and make sure that they are not just out there on their own. And communicating that there are places they can go and things that they can do to help themselves. And we can help them do that.”

**Gov. Terry McAuliffe (D-Va):**

“We need to make sure that this winter, which is expected to be a very tough winter, that we have the shelter for folks to make sure they can [have] shelter, they can have food, they can have healthcare. We need to do our part to provide for those individuals who need help today.”



**Brian Ricks, director, Katherine K. Hanley Family Shelter:**

“The biggest issue is affordable housing in Fairfax County. We are a rapid re-housing program. However, though, rents are really high in Fairfax and we have a lot of families that are low-income that may need additional support in housing. The biggest need is fair market housing in Fairfax.”



— ABIGAIL CONSTANTINO



# Tell Teens ‘Things Will Get Better’

Fairfax High hosts meeting about youth suicide.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

In light of recent suicides by students from Fairfax, Woodson and Langley high schools, Fairfax High hosted a meeting Nov. 19 to discuss the problem and search for solutions. The idea was to begin an ongoing exchange between parents, students, staff, community members and mental-health professionals.

“Now in my sixth year as principal, I’m focused on finding ways to foster a culture where people look out for one another,” said Fairfax High’s leader, Dave Goldfarb. “We want this school to be a place where people ask for help and build resiliency. For me, hosting a community dialogue on mental health and wellness is a big part of this work.”

He said that, over the years, he’s become aware of many students struggling with mental distress. And he’s realized that mental health is an issue that significantly impacts the students and school.

Therefore, said Goldfarb, “We have to work together to make it visible. The inner pains our adolescents feel often limit them more than any physical injuries. We have to talk together to make it an open topic for discussion. Anxiety, depression, feeling out of control, suicide – we have to understand that these are all part of our teenagers’ world, and we have to talk openly about them if we want to connect with and support [our children].”

He also stressed that the meeting was just a first step. “Beyond tonight, we need to make brave choices as students, parents and educators to speak out and put our young people’s wellbeing first, over everything else,” said Goldfarb. “Success cannot come at the expense of happiness. We must summon the courage in our hearts to put balance, happiness and inner peace above GPAs, popularity and instant gratification.”

Then Fairfax High’s director of student services, Laura Rotella, and school counselor Tracy Hartley shared some results from the FCPS 2013 Youth Survey on mental health. On average, in the last three years, 29.6 percent of FCPS students in grades eight, 10 and 12 reported feeling sad during the year. In the Fairfax High Pyramid, it was 32.1 percent.

**THE PERCENT WHO CONSIDERED SUICIDE** during the past year was 17 percent countywide and 19.1 in the Fairfax Pyramid. “In 2013, 22.3 percent of females and 11.2 percent of males in FCPS considered suicide,” said Hartley. “But the social stigma attached to it makes it under-reported.”

Those same figures for students in the Fairfax Pyramid were 25 percent of females and 12.3 percent of males. “It peaks in 10<sup>th</sup> grade,” said Hartley. “And females report



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Applied psychologist Heather Tedesco points to a chart on the overhead screen.

“Success cannot come at the expense of happiness.”

— Dave Goldfarb, principal, Fairfax High

considering suicide twice as much as males, across all grade levels, but males tend to under-report.”

She and Rotella also discussed the “Three to Succeed” concept. Analysis of the Youth Survey revealed that having just three assets dramatically reduces teens’ risk behaviors and promotes thriving youth. Assets are strengths in young people, their families, friends, schools and communities that benefit them emotionally. The more assets a person has, the fewer risk behaviors they report – and every asset makes a difference.

Assets are: Possessing high personal integrity, performing community service, hav-

ing teachers recognize good work, having trusted adults to talk to, participating in extracurricular activities and having parents available for help.

“When a student said they had none of those, 50 percent of males have considered suicide and 80 percent of females,” said Rotella. “Having four or more assets reduces

suicidal attempts from upwards of 10 percent to nearly zero.”

“Female adolescents are twice as likely to commit suicide as boys are,” added Hartley. “But boys tend to use more lethal means, such as guns and gas.”

Another finding of the survey was that, by age 13, more than twice as many girls as boys are depressed – and this ratio continues into adulthood. And it also exists regardless of racial or ethnic background.

Applied psychologist Heather Tedesco also spoke. She’s in private practice in McLean and helps parents address their concerns about their teenagers. At the meeting, she discussed the burdens teens face today and how parents can help them deal with these things.

“Course loads in school are far more rigorous than in previous generations, and teens are involved in more extracurricular activities,” she said. “And because of social media, teens are always aware of what other teens are doing, and vice versa. So it puts more pressure on them and they have less face-to-face interaction.”

**AS A RESULT**, said Tedesco, “We need to de-stigmatize stress and talk about what we can do about it. We need to send healthy messages about failure and realize that teens need free time and psychological space to develop a strong sense of self.”

“We want our kids to have positive coping methods that they’ve practiced so, when they’re under stress, they can use them,” she explained. “And we must help them recognize and express their emotions.”

To thrive, said Tedesco, teens must be resilient and able to handle challenges. “Tell them that bouncing back is more important than not messing up,” she said. “Give them a message of hope that things will get better, and tell them failure can be an opportunity for growth.”

She said parents should examine their own attitudes about failure. “Parents must provide an unconditionally loving bond,” said Tedesco. “It’s a critical, protective factor in their mental health. And ask open-ended questions about their goals and values, and listen to their answers.”

Teenagers should be given increasing freedoms and responsibilities, she said, but they should also be responsible for their own successes and failures. “Avoid micro-managing and over-parenting, and encourage identity development,” said Tedesco. “Parents need to value psychological health as much as academic and extracurricular achievement. We really have to ask ourselves what really matters to us for our kids’ long-term happiness and success.”

She also told parents to “teach kids there are multiple paths to a successful adulthood. Character traits related to happiness and success include resilience, self-control, curiosity, enthusiasm, zest, self-efficacy and gratitude.” Bottom line, said Tedesco, “It’s not what your teen accomplishes that matters, but who they are.”



Goldfarb



## WEEK IN MCLEAN

### 'Crew for Coats' to Help Community

McLean High School Crew Club has announced their first annual "Crew for Coats" drive. This drive will provide coats to families in need, keeping them warm this cold winter. Support "Crew for Coats" by bringing your gently used coats, of all sizes, on Saturday, Dec. 6 to Books-A-Million, located on 1451 Chain Bridge Rd, during Crew's annual "ergathon" fundraiser (10 a.m. to 3 p.m.). Or you can drop off your coats, all day, on Saturday, Dec. 13 during McLean High School's annual Bazaar, held at the school. There will be drop-off points at the entryway and at the McLean Crew table. All "Crew for Coats" collected will be distributed to SHARE of McLean, Stanton Elementary School (Ward 8 in D.C.), and the Salvation Army. Dig through your closets and help McLean Crew give back to the McLean community.

### Vinson Hall to Host Packaging Event

Vinson Hall Retirement Community, a McLean nonprofit CCRC, is partnering with Troop Treats to host a 2014 Operation Santa's Little Helpers packaging event on Dec. 4.

Volunteers from Vinson Hall Retirement Community and Troop Treats organizers will come together in the Vinson Hall auditorium to pack 200 holiday stocking care packages containing thank-you notes as well as small items—such as sewing kits, coffee packs, playing cards, Slinkies, stress balls, jump ropes—to be shipped to the service men and women aboard the USS Carl Vinson.

The event will be held at Vinson Hall, 6251 Old Dominion Drive, McLean. Resident volunteers should check in at Vinson Hall auditorium by 12:30 p.m.

Vinson Hall Retirement Community and Troop Treats aims to raise \$400 in addition to stuffing 200 stockings, which would make this event a huge success for both organizations. Donations can be made through PayPal at [www.trooptreats.com](http://www.trooptreats.com), on Troop Treats' Facebook page using the "Fundrazr" feature, or by mail at Troop Treats, PO Box 3862, McLean, VA 22102.

### Clemyjontri Park to Celebrate Renovations

McLean's Clemyjontri Park, frequented by more than 200,000 visitors per year, required extensive renovations and

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### 'The Angels of Christmas' at Immanuel Presbyterian

The angels and the music will be soaring this Christmas season at Immanuel Presbyterian Church in McLean. "A lot of the stuff comes from old Christmas carols. Really, really old Christmas carols." That's what Immanuel's Director of Music for the past 16 years, Brian E. Wilhour says about some of the text for a six movement cantata titled "The Angels of Christmas," which will be presented on Sunday, Dec. 7.

"With most Christmas carols, there is a verse about the shepherds, a verse about the angels, and a verse about the kings." This year the angels reign supreme.

In addition to often obscure carols, from where does Wilhour find his inspiration? "Every time I walked past my harp, I plucked two or three strings. 'I like that. I'm going to incorporate it.'" Those kinds of spontaneous musical moments, coupled with countless hours of intense creativity are what lead the composer to create new works which showcase the talented members of Immanuel's music program.

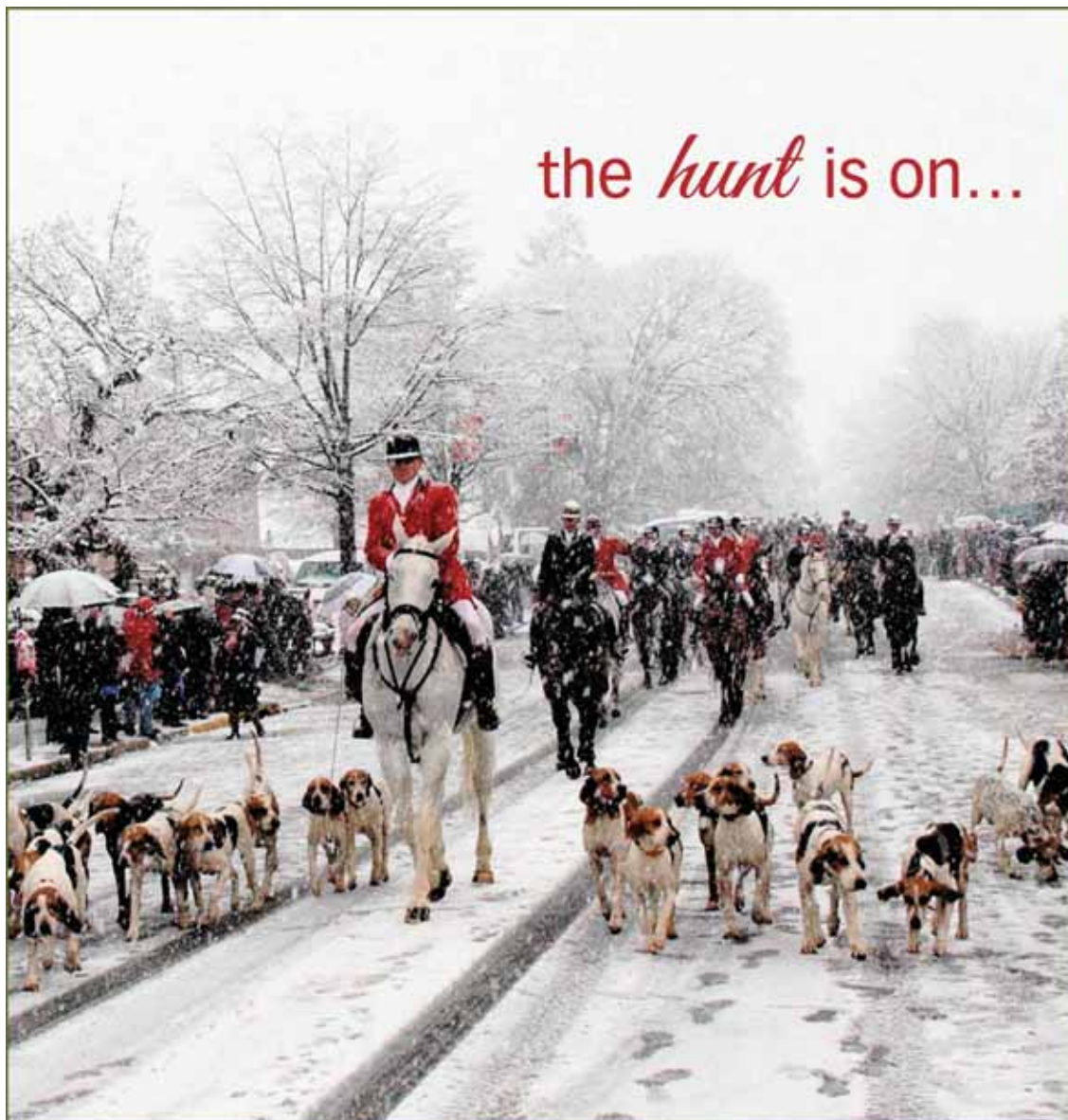
What about the role of computers in music composition? Wilhour bristles slightly at the question. "Some people are under the false impression that I click a button, and the computer does all of the work for me. No, it is more like a word processor." Wilhour explains that the computer program he uses merely for-

mats the notes, instruments, voices, and other elements he creates. It is much like an author. The computer doesn't generate the story, it simply helps to arrange the author's words into a printable format.

"The other nice thing the computer does, when I have the orchestra score finished, I can click, 'print flute' or another instrument, and it extracts each part individually so that I don't have to hand write everything. That's where the computer is a real time saver. It also allows me to save everything for later without having to worry that I'm going to lose, wrinkle, or spill coffee on the paper."

Wilhour's original composition will come to life with the vocal instruments of a double choir and soloist, accompanied by a chamber orchestra. In addition to strings, there will be flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, French horns, harp, timpani, and other percussion instruments to help us to rejoice, and to reflect on the spirit and story of Christmas.

"The Angels of Christmas" cantata will be part of Immanuel's Sunday morning worship services on Dec. 7 at 9 and 11 a.m. The public is invited. Come meet the composer at the coffee and refreshment hour immediately following each service. For more information about Immanuel's Advent activities, please visit [www.ipcmclean.org](http://www.ipcmclean.org).



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# Fairfax County Facing More Budget Strain

County Executive and FCPS Superintendent present adverse forecasts.

BY TIM PETERSON  
THE CONNECTION

**D**ays before the traditional loosening of belts for Thanksgiving, Fairfax County officials discussed the need for tightening theirs.

The Board of Supervisors and Fairfax County School Board met jointly Nov. 25 to talk about budget forecasts, prior to Governor Terry McAuliffe's (D) state budget proposal expected in mid-December.

County Executive Ed Long delivered the grim estimate of a just over \$100 million shortfall for fiscal year 2016. That's versus the estimate in the FY2015 adopted budget of around \$37 million.

Long cited lingering effects of the recession, including slow job growth, at 0.4 percent in Northern Virginia versus 2.4 percent before the downturn, as well as 10.8 percent drop year-to-date in



PHOTO BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

**Fairfax County Public Schools Superintendent Karen Garza speaks Nov. 25 at a joint meeting of the FCPS School Board and Board of Supervisors.**

home sales. Federal procurement spending has been trending down, and Long is expecting a 3-4 percent decline for FY 2014.

Residential and non-residential real estate values have also been decreasing, 3.3 percent since 2008 and 5.2 percent since 2009, re-

spectively, accounting for tens of millions of dollars of lost revenue for the county.

Even with a projected \$84 million in new funds from revenues, it doesn't cover the expected increases in disbursements of about \$185 million over the previous year. Those include county employee pay increases and benefits, public safety and human services, and for schools a 3 percent operating increase, capital support, debt service and Full-Day Mondays support.

"There are a lot of challenges going forward to the spring," Long said. "Uncertainty remains in the economy, we don't know what's going to happen with the Sequester."

Since FY2009, the county has cut around \$269 million by cutting positions and programs, but it just isn't keeping up.

"Looking back, there's nothing easy left to cut," said Long. "We're down to the meat of county programs. Cuts are going to be hard, there's no two ways about it."

Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova commented that additional county reserve funds

shouldn't be looked to as a resource to cover the shortfall.

"Our reserves are too low for comfort," Bulova said, "and compared to other jurisdictions, we're dangerously low."

FCPS Superintendent Karen Garza followed Long to further explain the challenges facing the vast school system regarded as one of the top in the country.

"Sometimes our challenges get masked by looking at the overall percentage of our size," said Garza. "Forty-nine schools have 50 percent free or reduced lunch or higher. There are some parts of our county where that population and the needs of our students are certainly growing."

Garza referenced growths of 2-3,000 students in the system over the last several years, as well as jumps in the percentage of students who take English for Speakers of Other Languages and or are eligible for free or reduced price meals. Total enrollment is now over 186,000 students.

"The real cost of growth exceeds \$190 million," Garza said. "And of

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## Area Students to be Featured in Sleepless in America

Students from Langley High School and Oakton High School, Superintendent Karen K. Garza, and Fairfax County School Board member Sandy Evans will be featured in *Sleepless in America*, a television show on sleep deprivation produced by the National Geographic Channel, premiering Sunday, Nov. 30, at 8 p.m.

The show focuses on the sleep-loss epidemic in the U.S. and explores the health consequences of sleeping too little. Citing the clear health benefits for adolescents, the Fairfax County School Board recently approved a recommendation to start high schools later, between 8 and 8:10 a.m. This change,

which will begin in the 2015-16 school year, will benefit more than 57,000 high school students representing more than 30 percent of Fairfax County Public Schools' (FCPS) student population.

In August, the American Academy of Pediatrics issued a policy statement that recommended later start times so that school schedules would be aligned with the biological sleep rhythms of adolescents. Other research indicates sleep-deprived students have shortened attention spans, slower reaction time, lower test scores, poorer grades, increased rates of depression, and higher risk of car crashes.

## Fairfax County Facing More Budget Strain

FROM PAGE 6

the cuts over the last six years, one-quarter were just the last year. There are 2,175 fewer people, but at the same time we grew by 20,000 students. That's significant for our system."

Echoing Long, Garza said the cuts are not allowing schools in the county to keep up with needs and in particular for schools, the needs of teachers.

"We're very concerned with competitive compensation," said Garza. "Our bread and butter is the quality of teachers in classrooms, employed throughout our school system. We're losing our competitive edge and I'm very con-

cerned with where we stack up compared to our surrounding jurisdictions."

She showed starting teachers' salaries hovering around the middle of surrounding jurisdictions, above only Loudoun and Manassas Park City for 10 years experience and a master's degree, and just above Prince George's Maryland for maximum salary.

Even with \$53.1 million in a transfer from the county, Garza is still projecting a \$63.9 million deficit for FY2016, something she and the supervisors agree should garner some attention from the state.

"We recognize and believe the state has to do something more to help us," said Garza.

Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay weighed in as well. "We're funding 70.6 percent of the FCPS budget, which is significantly higher than almost everywhere else in the state," he said. "If we received adequate funding from the state, we wouldn't be having this conversation. It's a huge emphasis moving forward. If we're not looking at the long-term, these issues will continue to compound."

Garza and Long will spend the next few months finalizing their budget plans. Garza's proposal for FY2016 should be released Jan. 8, 2015 and Long's plan for FY2016-2017 should come up at the Feb. 17, 2015 Board of Supervisors meeting.

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# OPINION

## Be Part of Children's Connection 2014

Annual edition showcases youth art and writing.

**D**uring the last week of each year, The Connection devotes its entire issue to the creativity of local students and children. The results are always remarkable. It is a keepsake edition for many families.

We publish artwork, poetry, essays, creative writing, opinion pieces, short stories, photography, photos of sculpture or gardens or other creative efforts.

We ask that all submissions be digital so they can be sent through email or delivered on CD or flash drive. Writing should be submitted in rich text format (.rtf). Artwork should be photographed or scanned and provided in jpeg format.

We welcome student's original ideas. Here are some suggestions:

❖ Drawings or paintings or photographs of your family, friends, pets or some favorite ac-

tivity. These should be photographed or scanned and submitted in jpeg format. Photos of sculpture or larger art projects are also welcome.

❖ Short answers (50 to 100 words) to some of the following questions: If you could give your parents any gift that didn't cost money what would that gift be? What are you most looking forward to in the upcoming year? What is one thing that you would change about school? What do you want to be when you grow up? What is your favorite animal? What is your favorite toy? What makes a good parent? What makes a good friend? What is the best or worst thing that ever happened to you? What is the best gift you've ever given? Ever received?

❖ Your opinion (50 to 100 words) about news, traffic, sports, restaurants, video games, toys, trends, politics, etc.

- ❖ Poetry or other creative writing.
- ❖ News stories from school newspapers.
- ❖ Photos and text about activities or events.

We welcome contributions from public and private schools, individuals and homeschoolers.

Identify each piece of writing or art, including the student's full name, age, grade and town of residence, plus the name of the school, name of teacher and town of school location.

Email submissions for the Children's Connection to [editors@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:editors@connectionnewspapers.com). To send CDs or flash drives containing artwork and typed, electronic submissions, mark them clearly by school and hometown and mail to Children's Connection, 1606 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.

Please send all submissions by Dec. 10. The Children's Connection will publish the week of Dec. 27, 2014.

— MARY KIMM,

[MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](mailto:MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

## Help! I've Lost Everything!

BY ANN EMMONS PETRI

**Y**ou may think McLean is a nice, quiet place to live, but you are wrong. In our living room at this very minute lurks an almost invisible menace. It is small and innocent looking but in reality it is the scourge of our lives. Very simply put, it is our laptop computer. It is not what it seems to be. With a mind of its own, it waits patiently for the ideal time to strike.

"Help! I've lost everything!" is Bill's usual panicked response when things go terribly wrong while he's in the process of creating an important document or trying to compose a crucial email. Of course, you know without asking,

that he is expecting me to perform miracles! The trouble is, however, I am not the authority he thinks I am. The sad truth is that I am usually teetering just one tiny branch higher on the Tree of Knowledge. The only sure way I know to fix anything is to turn everything off and start from scratch.

Sometimes this works. But sometimes it doesn't and then we are left with only two options: the first is our trusty son-in-law Dan who is a computer genius and good at explaining things via email or on the phone, and the second is a call to our grandson Brian and his wife Ashley who live nearby and can be counted on to come over and sort it all out.

The trouble with either of these

arrangements is that our temperamental computer acts up fairly regularly and we hate to keep interrupting their busy schedules. And sometimes all three are away on business trips or vacations at the same time. And the worst part is, when we have to appeal to them for help it makes us feel like the two bumbling old fogies we are. Usually it only takes them a minute to explain in a few steps what had seemed like the riddle of the Sphinx to us.

So now, we have developed a totally new strategy. It is incredibly simple. We kowtow to, and humor the all-powerful beast. Whatever it wishes: that is our command. We are no longer masters of our own universe, but who cares?



PHOTO BY BRIAN HENSK

**Bill at the computer: With a mind of its own, it waits patiently for the ideal time to strike.**

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## A New Kind of Candidate

To the Editor:

Craig Parisot is a new kind of candidate running to succeed Barbara Comstock in the upcoming special election for the 34th Virginia House of Delegates District.

Not only is the Parisot campaign's organization top rate, but his fresh approach to policy is making this election truly exciting. For example, Craig wants to focus on STEAM education, adding in the extra "A" dimension of arts. The arts have been left out for far too long in our schools, and it is refreshing to see a candidate want to put a focus on this in the Virginia state legislature.

Craig is also incredibly involved in our community as President of Volunteer Fairfax, an organization that partners nonprofits with individual volunteers in our county. One of the big projects Volunteer Fairfax is spearheading is organizing the World Police and Fire Games for the summer of 2015. The games are projected to bring \$60-80 million dollars to Fairfax County, and would have a tremendous economic benefit to our 34th District.

Mr. Parisot has a long history of service, having served as a Captain in the U.S. Air Force. He also has a professional background as a small business owner, which helps

him understand how to bring jobs and boost the economy in our area.

Craig's experiences are most relevant to Northern Virginia's future. He has innovative ideas, and a genuine, unassuming demeanor, which makes him a receptive listener and a well-qualified candidate for public office. Craig Parisot is the right choice for the 34th House of Delegates District. It behooves each of us to learn more about his unique campaign before the special election on January 6th at <http://www.craigparisot.com/>.

**Priseilla Griffith**  
McLean

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PHOTO BY LIZ HOLZAPFEL

**Troop 128 members and family members who created a gravel bed for Churchill Road's composters are (from left to right): Luke Carlisle, Waleed Khartami, George Carter, Reilly Jeddy, Walker Haynes, Simon Sutcliffe, Connor Yuzon, Jake Holzapfel, Jed Holzapfel, Garrison Edwards, Christian Markwart, Will Arrison, Luther Markwart and Betsy Stone.**

## Eagle Scout Projects at Churchill Road Elementary School

Four Eagle Scout candidates from Troop 128 have recently completed their service projects at Churchill Road Elementary School. During October and November, Langley High School junior Jake Holzapfel created a gravel bed for the school's four composters. Classmate Reilly Jeddy and Marcus Riddle laid a new foundation for a paver stone pathway and installed retaining

barriers around the front flower beds to prevent erosion, and built a 16 foot by 8 foot passive compost bin, respectively. McLean High School senior Simon Sutcliffe created a gravel bed around the school's two greenhouses. The Churchill Road community thanks Troop 128 for their partnership and hard work to improve the Churchill Road campus and facility.

## WEEK IN McLEAN

FROM PAGE 5

upgrades to restore play equipment and the unique surfacing to a high standard of safety. The Fairfax County Park Authority, urged and supported by the efforts of non-profit group Friends of Clemyjontri, has spent close to one million dollars on the project. As a result, the Park Foundation is hosting a celebration of the results of Clemyjontri's renovations this Saturday, Dec. 6 from 12-2 p.m. In addition to a public ceremony, there will be music, crafts and farm animals from Frying Pan Farm Park. Clemyjontri Park is located at 6317 Georgetown Pike in McLean. To continue supporting the park, the Friends of Clemyjontri will be hosting a formal black-tie fundraising event on April 25, 2015.

## Join Us For Our Annual Holiday Remodeled Home Tour!

Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014 10-4pm  
1795 Brookside Lane, Vienna, VA 22182



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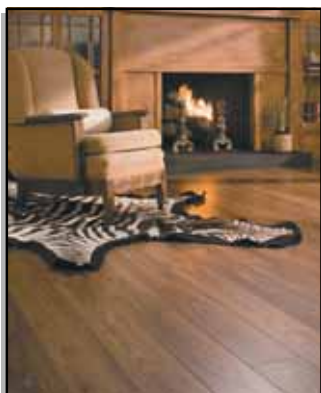
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## COMMUNITY



Gary Coetzee and the U9 Great Falls rugby team.



U17 Gonzaga Rugby

PHOTOS BY TERRANCE MORAN/THE CONNECTION



Gary Coetzee

# Rugby Fundraiser Held in Great Falls

**Gary Coetzee gives back by supporting spinal cord injury research and recovery.**

**T**welve months ago Gary Coetzee dove head first into a rugby pile and fractured his neck. Luckily a surgeon was on the pitch and was able to stabilize him. The fracture caused him to lose his ability to use his arms and legs.

After surgery Coetzee was accepted to the Shepherd Center in Atlanta, Ga., a nationally ranked rehabilitation hospital for spinal cord injuries. Coetzee suffered a major bruise to his spinal cord and had to relearn how to walk and use his body. His wife Theresa would visit every other week. His

two children were worried that their dad may never walk or play with them.

It took three months but Coetzee was able to regain the use of his legs and arms. His children saw him first stand, yet there was a lot of work to do to become independent.

Over the next nine months Coetzee worked daily to strengthen his body with rehabilitation and gym sessions. After 12 months of hard work and support from friends and family Coetzee decided to establish the annual fund raising rugby tournament in support of spinal cord injury research and recovery. The 2014 beneficiary is MedStar National Rehab Hospital.

Rugby teams from Gonzaga, Vienna, and Great Falls participated on Nov. 22 with age groups from U11 to U17. The entrance fee for each team was \$100 with 100 percent of the fees going to MedStar National Rehab Hospital.

On a brisk Saturday a field behind the Great Falls Library was set up to allow both small sided and large field matches in 7 V 7 format. Each match lasted seven minutes. Parents, coaches and players lined the field encouraging play and watching the nationally ranked Gonzaga rugby team display their skills in hard fought, fast action play.

— TERRANCE MORAN



U 13 Boys Tag Rugby



Gary Coetzee doing leg rehab exercises.



## COMMUNITY

# Great Falls Studios to Host Holiday Art Show and Sale

Show and Sale Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 13-14 at the Center for Education at Wolf Trap.

**H**oliday shoppers, fine art collectors, Secret Santas and even good Saint Nick, don't miss "Art meets Architecture", Great Falls Studios' Annual Holiday Art Show and Sale on Saturday, Dec. 13 and Sunday, Dec. 14, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. both days, at The Center for Education at Wolf Trap, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. Sponsored by Sun Design, the weekend will feature 36 GFS member artists - original paintings, photography, wall hangings and jewelry, high quality prints, pots and dinnerware, purses, pillows and scarves, walking sticks, sculpture, art cards and books. Something quite unique for individual collections or a perfect gift for the special friend, teacher or family. Great Falls Studios artists are your neighbors and friends creating in home and group studios tucked throughout our scenic and artful village. Each artist enjoys telling the story of their creativity. Visitors are encouraged to engage in the, often lively, conversations. Not everyone will make a purchase, but all will leave with a story. Learn more at [www.GreatFallsStudios.com](http://www.GreatFallsStudios.com) and [www.sundesigninc.com/](http://www.sundesigninc.com/) Family friendly, fun and free.



"Mulled Wine," watercolor by Linda Jones.

Established in 2003, Great Falls Studios is a consortium of more than 100 artists living or working in Great Falls - a unique and diverse group of painters, potters, jewelry makers, sculptors, fiber artists, photographers and others representing a variety of media, creating in unique studio spaces,

scattered throughout the back roads of scenic Great Falls. Three of these spaces are group studios. The purpose of GFS is to support the artistic endeavors and objectives of members and to make the Village of Great Falls a more artful place.

Great Falls Studios manages exhibit ven-



"The Wreath," oil painting by Begona Morton.

ues in the community. The public is invited to enjoy solo member shows at Katie's @ the Old Brogue Irish Pub/760 Walker Rd., Great Falls and the art of local elementary school students at Starbucks @ Great Falls Center/9862 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Member art is often on display in the Large Meeting Room or the Small Conference Room at the Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. The Virtual Gallery on the Great Falls Studios website hosts a monthly themed exhibit of member work is as close as the click of the mouse.

Visit [www.GreatFallsStudios.com](http://www.GreatFallsStudios.com) for more information including additional special events and exhibits.



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# CALENDAR

Send announcements to north@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Friday for the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged.

## THROUGH SUNDAY/JAN. 4, 2015

**Meadowlark's Winter Walk of Lights.** 5:30 p.m. Meadowlark Botanical Garden, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. A winter wonderland, including a flowing stream of softly glowing lights, a two story animated fountain and a Gingerbread Village. Admission: \$13 adults, \$8 children ages 3-12; children under 3 are free.

## THROUGH WEDNESDAY/DEC. 24

**Santa HQ at Tysons Corner Center,** 1961 Chain Bridge Road, Tysons Corner. Visit Santa's Magical Workshop & Observatory, presented by HGTV - for photos and family activities, located in Fashion Court on level one between Nordstrom and Bloomingdale's - beginning November 14th. Reserve your space online to see Santa. Ongoing event.

## THURSDAY/DEC. 4

**35th Annual Tiny Tots Holiday Concert 2014.** 10 a.m. & 7 p.m. James Madison High School, 2500 James Madison Drive, Vienna. The James Madison High School Wind Symphony and Color Guard present an exciting concert celebrating the spectrum of seasonal music. Purchase tickets at: <http://james-madison-band.ticketleap.com/tiny-tots>

**Civil Twilight** with Special Guest Baby Bee. 8 p.m. The Barns Wolftrap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Stirring alt-rock with impassioned vocals and atmospheric melodies. \$22. 703-255-



**Langley High School's choirs, including the Madrigals and the Women's Chamber Choir, will present Renaissance-style dining and musical event on Dec. 5-6 at Capital Church, 10233 Leesburg Pike, Vienna.**

1900. <http://www.wolftrap.org/Barns.aspx>.

**48th Annual McLean Holiday Homes Tour.** 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tour starts at 1173 Ballantrae Lane. Showcases four distinctive homes in central McLean. \$25 in advance, \$30 on tour day. Sponsored by Woman's Club of McLean. Tickets at Mesmeralda's, McLean; Karin's Florist, Vienna; Great Dogs of McLean; tour houses. Benefits local charities. No children. 703- 556-0197 or [www.mcleanwc.org](http://www.mcleanwc.org).

**MarketPlace Fair and Fundraiser.** 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. United Methodist Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean. Free admission and parking. Numerous vendors, handmade and gift items, lunch and Homes Tour tickets for sale, silent auction of high-value products and services, free

buses to Homes Tour. Trinity Sponsored by Woman's Club of McLean. Benefits local charities. 703- 556-0197 or [www.mcleanwc.org](http://www.mcleanwc.org).

## FRIDAY/DEC. 5

**Ugly Sweater Party.** 7-10 p.m. Old Firehouse Teen Center, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. For 7th-9th graders. \$10/\$5 OFTC member.

**35th Annual Tiny Tots Holiday Concert 2014.** 10 a.m. James Madison High School, 2500 James Madison Drive, Vienna. The James Madison High School Wind Symphony and Color Guard present an exciting concert celebrating the spectrum of seasonal music. Purchase tickets at: <http://james-madison-band.ticketleap.com/tiny-tots> for

## FRIDAY-SATURDAY/DEC. 5 - 6

**Renaissance Feaste.** 7 p.m. Capital Church, 10233 Leesburg Pike, Vienna. Langley High School's choirs, including the Madrigals and the Women's Chamber Choir, present Renaissance-style dining and musical event. The holiday celebration features costumed servers, jesters, minstrels, and musicians in a festive "Greate Hall" environment. Fashioned after a 16th-century gathering of landed gentry, the event offers entertainment and traditional Madrigal songs such as "Masters of This Hall," "Gloucestershire Wassail," and "Deck the Halls."

Tickets adults \$30; student \$20. For more information on the Langley choirs and tickets for the Renaissance Feaste, visit [www.langleychorus.com](http://www.langleychorus.com).

## FRIDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 5 - 7

**32nd Annual McLean Holiday Crafts Show.** Friday: 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Saturday: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Sunday: 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. Admission: Adults, \$3; \$1, ages 13 and under. Good all 3 days.

## FRIDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 5-14

**Christmas Market & Winterfest.** Friday, 11 a.m.-9 p.m., Saturday & Sunday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Tysons Corner Center Outdoor Plaza, 1961 Chain Bridge Road, Tysons Corner. Festival will include 30 vendors selling German holiday goods. Plus, mulled wine, German beer, German fare, hot chocolate and coffee. Enjoy the spectacular Christmas tree, entertainment, beer garden and other festive activities. Ongoing event.

## SATURDAY/DEC. 6

**Holiday Sing-A-Long.** 4 p.m. Wolf Trap's Filene Center, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. No tickets are required, but patrons are encouraged to bring an unwrapped toy donation for Toys for Tots. For more information, visit [wolftrap.org](http://wolftrap.org).

**Great Falls Celebration of Lights.** 5:30 - 8 p.m. Great Falls Village Centre. Watch Santa and Mrs. Claus arrive in an antique fire truck to light the Great Falls Tree. Afterwards, Santa will be in his house to meet all children who wish to share their holiday wishes. For the children, there will be a petting zoo and pony ride that will begin immediately after the tree lighting ceremony. <http://www.celebrategreatfalls.org/Christmas.html>

**The Nutcracker Tea.** 10 a.m. & 1 p.m. Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner, 1700 Tysons Boulevard, McLean. Delight in a contemporary twist on the beloved holiday classic while you enjoy afternoon tea, petite sandwiches and pastries. All children will go home with a nutcracker doll and pictures to remember their day. \$79 per person. Event also takes place on Dec. 13 and 20.

**Authentic Darjeeling Teas.** 1-3 p.m. Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. From India's Himalayan foothills, the "Champagne of Teas" has recently been granted Protected Origin Status. Taste and compare the unique qualities from the four seasonal flushes and learn why tea garden location can impact the final flavor of Darjeeling teas. Tea infused treats included. Advance reservations and payment (\$30 per

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 13



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THE CONNECTION  
 NEWSPAPERS



# CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 12

person) required through the Mill at 703-759-2771.

**Holidays with Santa Paws.** 12-2 p.m. Clemyjontri Park, 6317 Georgetown Pike, McLean. The Friends of Clemyjontri, Inc. will join with the Fairfax County Park Authority to ring in the holidays with Santa Paws. There will be holiday-inspired crafts and goodies along with plenty of photo opportunities on the magical grounds of the newly renovated Clemyjontri Park. Bring your Pennies for Clemy and receive a Holiday treat from the Friends. [www.friendsofclemy.com](http://www.friendsofclemy.com).

**Breakfast with Santa.** 8:30-10:30 a.m. St. Francis Episcopal Church, 9220 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. St. Francis Episcopal Church is hosting a Breakfast with Santa. Each family attending the event is encouraged to donate a new, unwrapped toy for a child up to 12 years old. The toys will be given to children served by the nonprofit organization Transitional Housing Corporation (THC), which provides housing and supportive services to homeless and at-risk families. The event is free and open to the public. The Breakfast with Santa will include a visit and photo with Santa, holiday craft activities, holiday music, breakfast treats, and hot chocolate. The St. Francis youth choir, the Joyful Noyz, will sing Christmas carols. [www.stfranciscgreatfalls.org](http://www.stfranciscgreatfalls.org)

**Holiday Ballroom Dance.** 8-9 p.m. Viennese Waltz lesson, 9-11:30 p.m. dance. \$20 for the evening. Colvin Run Dance Hall, 10201 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Live music from the Dance-tet playing favorite dance tunes from the 1930s to today. Attire is ballroom casual, everyone is welcome. 703-759-2685 or [www.colvinrun.org](http://www.colvinrun.org).

## SATURDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 6-7 Gingerbread House Decorating

**Class.** 10 a.m. & 1 p.m. Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner, 1700 Tysons Boulevard, McLean. Learn to make your own sugary home at a Gingerbread House Decorating Class, taught by The Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner's Pastry Team. The class includes all the ingredients to construct a beautiful gingerbread house as well as a special souvenir. \$75 per child, ages 3 to 12, inclusive of tax and gratuity. Event also takes place on Dec. 13, 14, 20 and 21.

## SUNDAY/DEC. 7

**McLean WinterFest Parade.** 3:30 p.m. Old Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Groups interested in participating in the parade should go to [www.mcleanwinterfest.org](http://www.mcleanwinterfest.org) to complete the registration information and submit it to parade officials. Each entrant will receive confirmation of their registration with this year's parade rules. Registrations will be accepted until Nov. 18.

## FRIDAY/DEC. 12

**Annual Holiday Reception.** 4-6 p.m. Vienna Town Hall, 127 Cedar Street S., Vienna. Mayor Laurie DiRocco and the Town Council invite the public to celebrate the holidays at the annual Holiday Reception. Enjoy the sounds of the holiday season with the James Madison High School Madrigals from 4:30 to 5 p.m. and the Vienna Choral Society from 5:30 to 6 p.m. Light refreshments will be provided by the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary. No cost and no RSVP required. For more information, contact the Mayor's office at 703-255-6311 or [mayor@viennava.gov](mailto:mayor@viennava.gov).

## Artists' Atelier Presents Holiday Squares

Holiday Squares, large and small, will fill The Artists' Atelier Gallery the month of December. Join the 14 member artists on Saturday, Dec. 6, 12 – 4 p.m. for a reception and sale to celebrate the holiday season. Members are Carol Howard, Jennifer Duncan, Cindy Grisdela, Elaine Elinsky, Terri Parent, Jill Banks, Walt Lawrence, Chris Rollins, Tracie Weir, Lisa Tureson, Tina Learned, Roberta Beasley, John McCabe and Judith St. Ledger Roty. The Artists' Atelier is located at 1144 Walker Road, Great Falls.



**"Male Cardinal in Dogwood," by Walt Lawrence.**

The Atelier is open Wednesdays and Saturdays, 12 – 4 p.m. or by appointment, 703-862-0771. The studio will be closed Dec. 21-31.

## SATURDAY/DEC. 13

**"Frozen" the Movie.** 2 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. Come watch this family-friendly movie that all will enjoy. Free.

**Santa at the Mill.** 3-6 p.m. Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Enjoy old-fashioned family holiday fun at Colvin Run Mill. Visit Santa in the mill and see the Christmas tree trimmed with Victorian decorations. Join the costumed 49th Virginia Volunteer Infantry caroling around a bonfire. Roast marshmallows and make a family craft. \$5/person.

## SATURDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 13-14

**Great Falls Studios Holiday Show and Sale.** Wolf Trap Center for Education, 1645 Trap Rd., Vienna. Great Falls Studios presents Great Falls Annual Holiday Art Show and Sale. This annual show includes paintings, pottery, traditional and digital photographs, jewelry, drawings, art quilts, and hand pulled lithographic prints, plus artful gifts and cards. All of the artwork is created by Great Falls artists. Free admission.

**Visit from Santa.** 1:30-3:30 p.m. Santa Claus will be visiting the Freeman Store. Seated in his special chair next to Historic Vienna's beautifully decorated Christmas tree – courtesy of the Optimist Club and the Ayr Hill Garden Club – he will meet his young visitors and hear their Christmas wishes. Parents (and grandparents) are encouraged to bring their cameras to capture the looks of joy and wonder as the little ones talk to the Man In Red. For information call 703-938-5187 or visit [www.historicviennainc.org](http://www.historicviennainc.org).

## SUNDAY/DEC. 14

**Claude Moore Colonial Farm Wassail.** 1 - 4p.m. Claude Moore Colonial Farm, 6310 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Gather in the Farm's orchard to Wassail! ("wish good health to") the apple trees with singing, dancing, and chants to ensure a "howling crop" next year. Enjoy spiced cider, ginger biscuits, a bonfire and 18th century games. Regular admission fee. 703-442-7557.

**Holiday Joy Concert.** 3 p.m. McLean Community Theater, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. The program

include Rosauro's "Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra," performed by Rebecca Kite; Rossini/Respighi, "La Boutique Fantasque", Favorite Holiday selections for Orchestra, and the annual carol sing-along, led by the Symphony Festival Singers, Felicia Kessel Crawley. A concert for all ages. Adults: \$25; Seniors: \$20, Youth with student ID: \$15, Children 12 and under: Free. <http://mclean-symphony.org/index.php>

## WEDNESDAY/DEC. 31

**New Year's Eve in Entyse Wine Bar & Lounge.** 9 p.m. to Midnight. The Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner, 1700 Tysons Boulevard, McLean. Celebrate the New Year with live musical entertainment provided by The Christopher Linman Jazz Ensemble and culinary delights. As the clock strikes midnight, welcome 2015 with a complimentary champagne toast. \$100 minimum food & beverage purchase per person.

## THURSDAY/JAN. 8, 2015

**Dobet Gnahoré.** 8 p.m. The Barns Wolftrap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Discover delicate ballads and sensuous African grooves from this Grammy-winning vocalist, percussionist, and dancer praised as one of contemporary African music's most charismatic talents. \$25-30. 703-255-1900. <http://www.wolftrap.org/Barns.aspx>.

## FRIDAY/JAN. 9, 2015

**The Ying Quartet.** 8 p.m. The Barns Wolftrap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Ying Quartet occupies a position of unique prominence in the classical music world, combining brilliantly communicative performances with a fearlessly imaginative view of chamber music in today's world. \$35. 703-255-1900. <http://www.wolftrap.org/Barns.aspx>.

## THURSDAY/JAN. 15, 2015

**Kevin Griffin.** 8 p.m. The Barns Wolftrap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. A rare solo show by the frontman and songwriting mastermind of alt-rock band Better Than Ezra, who has written for Train, Sugarland, James Blunt, Howie Day, Missy Higgins, Blondie, and more. \$25-27. 703-255-1900. <http://www.wolftrap.org/Barns.aspx>.

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## WELLBEING

# Handling Family Dynamics During the Holidays

Local experts offer suggestions on how to diffuse family tensions.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
 THE CONNECTION

Last month, Linda and Tom Bullen traveled from Boston to Arlington, to celebrate Thanksgiving with their son Matt, daughter Rachel and her partner Grace Knight. But Rachel Bullen, who spent weeks creating a menu and coordinating a table setting that would please even Martha Stewart, was deflated by one question from her mother.

"Do you think you might be eating too many carbs?" Linda Bullen asked as her daughter scooped up a second helping of potatoes.

"What I eat is none of your business," Rachel Bullen responded. She spent the rest of meal fuming in silence and feeling humiliated in front of her partner and brother.

Family dynamics — and the drama that often ensues — are often unwelcome, but frequent guests at family gatherings during the holiday season. While spending time with family can be a source of comfort, it can also be fraught with anxiety. And the more people and dynamics involved, the more effort it takes to create or maintain harmony.

"During the holidays, people who live far apart and are not part of one another's daily lives often come together," said Stacie B. Isenberg, Psy.D. "As a result ... people cover lot of territory, catching up in a short amount of time, instead of gradually as things naturally happen throughout the year. People give opinions without understanding all of the details."

Being aware of the feelings and emotions of others can help minimize family conflicts, however. "Sensitivity allows us to tune in to what others might be feeling at a particular moment or in a particular situation," said Katherine Knapp, Ph.D., a marriage and family therapist based in Burke. "It helps us make wise decisions about things that we might say or decide not to say."

For example, Linda Bullen was concerned about her daughter's weight.

"Rachel recently lost about 25 pounds," she said. "As a teenager she'd been overweight and had self-esteem issues." She thought she was being a supportive and helpful mother.

Knapp says this is where sensitivity can reduce interpersonal tension, particularly during the holidays.

"When family members are sensitive to each other's feelings, they think before they speak about how what they say might affect another person's feelings," she said. "Even innocent comments or questions can damage a relationship when we speak from our own perspective and don't consider what another person might be feeling."

The pressure to create a perfect holiday can exacerbate pre-existing difficulties as well.

"People are often stressed during the holidays, es-

pecially those preparing meals, having out of town guests staying in their homes," said Isenberg. "Guests can be stressed too, as they are staying in someone else's

home, don't have their own space, and are operating according to someone else's agenda. So tensions are already higher, and patience is shorter."

The ability to be flexible and recognize that even the most organized plans can fall apart, will reduce pressure as well, said Pamela Daniels, a licensed clinical social worker and psychotherapist based in Lorton. "Flexibility allows us to roll with the punches," she said. "Rigidity can be a recipe for disaster, especially during the holidays."

**FAMILY MEMBERS** can help ease tension by expressing their needs up front.

"Some people just have a need to feel appreciated," said Knapp. "Everyone has different needs, but others, including family members won't know those needs unless we tell them."

Rachel Bullen needed her mother to recognize and validate the effort that she'd put into preparing a healthy Thanksgiving dinner and an aesthetically appealing table, and to maintaining a lifestyle that had kept her fit.

"I've always seen my mother as thin, beautiful and the perfect hostess," said Rachel Bullen. "And she can always find something wrong with everything that I do, but she can find no wrong with my brother."

Recognizing that such old patterns and dynamics may be rekindled during big gatherings can help family members navigate difficult relationships.

"Even though there may be months or even years between visits, people's triggers and sensitivities are the same unless they've previously worked through them with their family members and reached an understanding about the best ways for them to interact," said Isenberg. "The judgmental parent or uncle will still be judgmental and the inquisitive grandmother who pushes boundaries will still do so."

Prior to spending time with family, she suggested, it's a good idea to think about the actions, words or situations that ignite tensions and decide how they can be avoided.

"Consider topics to discuss with certain family members and how you will politely steer away from topics you'd rather not discuss," Isenberg explained. "If you anticipate that there will be a topic or way of interacting that is too difficult to be avoided with subtlety, you may want to consider gently approaching it prior to the holidays. For example, tell your parents you don't feel comfortable discussing your relationship with your significant other in front of the extended family and ask them not to mention it during dinner, and provide them with an answer to give when relatives inquire."

Rachel decided to begin seeing a therapist to help strengthen her relationship with her family. "Hopefully Christmas will be less tense," she said. "If not this Christmas, then next."



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Stacie Isenberg



# GMU Chosen To Join Healthy Campus Initiative

George Mason was recognized for its commitment to health and wellness.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

George Mason University's well-being and wellness programs recently received national recognition when the Fairfax-based university was chosen as the first higher education institution in Virginia to join the Healthy Campus Initiative, an effort to encourage colleges and universities to make their campuses healthier by adopting guidelines around food and nutrition, physical activity and programming.

Last month, the Partnership for a Healthier America unveiled the pilot program at the American Public Health Association's annual conference in New Orleans. (Leaders from The Healthier Campus Initiative praised Mason for its commitment to a health and for agreeing to adopt more guidelines on food and nutrition, physical activity and programming in the next three years.



PHOTO BY ALEXIS GLENN

**George Mason University's wellness efforts recently earned national recognition for the school.**

"We are proud and challenged to continue this energy toward a Healthier Campus Initiative," said Bill Ehling, executive director of Mason recreation. "I am continually appreciative of the past efforts and results to provide a genuine sense of a healthier community at George Mason University."

Mason officials point to statistics from The

American Public Health Association, which show that during the first year in college, students' overweight and obesity rates increase by more than 15 percent. Additionally, most college students do not meet dietary and physical activity guidelines. PHA officials say, at the same time, the college years are a time when lifelong habits begin

to form because most students are making their own choices about healthy eating and fitness.

"As a Mason alumni," said Kerry Ross, director of benefits and faculty/staff well-being, "it gives me great pride to see our community coming together in the areas of wellness and well-being. Mason has demonstrated its commitment to these initiatives for years with opportunities like the annual Health and Fitness Expo, Wellness by Mason, the Well-Being Learning Community, and now our strategic goal of becoming a Well-Being University. We are honored ... to take that commitment to a new level as a partner in the Healthier Campus Initiative under the auspices of The Partnership for a Healthier America."

The Partnership for a Healthier America was created in 2010 in conjunction with first lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! Campaign with a goal of developing strategies to end childhood obesity.

"We know that going to college is a time of change for many students. We also know that means it's a time when new habits are formed. By creating healthier food and physical activity environments today, campuses and universities are encouraging healthier habits that will carry over into tomorrow," said the partnership's CEO Lawrence A. Soler in a statement.

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# Langley Boys' Basketball Enters 2014-15 with Increased Depth

Saxons have just one senior on the roster.

BY JON ROETMAN  
THE CONNECTION

Second-year Langley boys' basketball coach Scott Newman hopes to build on the success the team experienced near the end of last season, when it finished third in Conference 6 despite a slow start.

Increased size and depth should help the Saxons' cause.

While Langley's roster includes just one senior, Newman said this year's team has the talent to allow him to play 10 or 11 players on a given night rather than the rotation of seven or eight he played last season. Mix in five players listed at 6 feet 3 or taller and Newman is excited for his second year at the helm.

"Our greatest strength is our depth," said Newman, who was a Langley assistant before taking over head-coaching duties last season. "... It's unlike any team I've coached at Langley."

One big reason for Newman's optimism is 6-foot-4 forward Nate Shafer. The junior is a shot-blocking force at the defensive end and can score in the paint.



Aaron Kim, seen last season, is one of five members of the 2014-15 Langley boys' basketball team with varsity experience.

"Nate Shafer is just a tremendous shot-blocker and interior defender," Newman said. "... When we're forced to help [on defense], Nate can [make a difference]. ... Whenever we have a breakdown, having Nate at the back of the defense ... really [helps. He] cleans up a lot of mistakes that we make. ... I would be really surprised if

he was not one of the two or three guys in discussion for Defensive Player of the Year in our league."

Along with Shafer, senior guard Alex Callaghan, junior guard Daniel Salamone, junior forward Chris Miner and sophomore guard Aaron Kim return with varsity experience.

"Our greatest strength is our depth. ... It's unlike any team I've coached at Langley."

— Langley boys' basketball coach  
Scott Newman

Callaghan will start at point guard for the Saxons. Salamone and junior guard Tavon Tarpley are two of the Saxons' top perimeter players.

"[Salamone has] really matured and advanced his game," Newman said. "He'll be one of our key perimeter threats. ... [Tarpley is] long, he's athletic, he's quick and he's our best perimeter defender. He's also crafty on offense and gets to the rack."

Six-foot-4 sophomore Sami El-Rafey could see significant time at forward. Six-foot-6 junior John Rau provides Langley with additional size in the paint.

Langley opens the season with a home game against Osbourn at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 3. After hosting Herndon on Dec. 5, the Saxons will travel to face rival McLean on Dec. 12.

"The No. 1 thing that I've taken away from my first year going into my second year is I'm trying to be much more level as a coach and more consistent and even-keeled," Newman said. "I'm taking an approach to build their confidence and believe in their abilities."

## Oakton Girls' XC Places 4th at Nike SE Regional

Madison harriers compete at Foot Locker South.

The Oakton girls' cross country team, which captured its second straight VHSL 6A state championship on Nov. 15, finished fourth at the Nike Southeast regional meet on Nov. 29 in Cary, N.C.

The Cougars posted a score of 176. Blacksburg (Va.) won the event with a score of 86, followed by Western Cary (N.C., 106) and Lake Braddock (143), which placed runner-up in 6A at the VHSL state meet.

The top two teams and the top five unattached individuals qualified for the national meet on Dec. 6 in Portland, Ore.

Sophomore Casey Kendall led the way for Oakton, finishing 15th with a time of 18:07.7. Sophomore Leya Salis finished 24th for the Cougars with a time of 18:16.7. Senior Allie Klimkiewicz finished 35th (18:30.4), freshman

Kira Buttrey was 80th (19:01.7) and junior Jill Bracaglia finished 97th (19:19.3).

Patriot High School sophomore and VHSL state champion Rachel McArthur won the individual competition with a time of 17:16.

Klimkiewicz (third), Kendall (fourth), Salis (11th) and Buttrey (15th) earned all-state honors at the VHSL state meet.

Members of the Madison girls' cross country team competed at the Foot Locker South regional meet on Nov. 29 in Charlotte, N.C.

Madison sophomore Devon Williams finished 24th with a time of 17:57. Senior Amanda Swaak came in 28th (17:59), junior Morgan Wittrock finished 36th (18:08), senior Laura Sullivan took 93rd (18:48) and junior Catherine Stone finished 136th (19:31).

Ryen Frazier, a senior at Ravenscroft School in Raleigh, N.C., won the event with a time of 16:27.

The Madison Warhawks placed third at the state meet. Williams (eighth), Swaak (10th) and Wittrock (13th) earned all-state honors.



Oakton sophomore Casey Kendall, seen during the VHSL state meet Nov. 15, finished 15th at the Nike Southeast regional meet on Nov. 29 in Cary, N.C.

PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION



Pumpkins by  
Lisa Aronzon.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CRAFTERS/ARTISANS

# McLean to Host Holiday Crafts Show

The McLean Community Center's 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual McLean Holiday Crafts Show features an exciting mix of handmade items that express a fresh, new take on the traditional. Expect to see bonsai and bamboo trees, sculpted exotic eggshells, hand-dyed batik and all-natural salad dressings, along with the wreaths, ornaments and stained glass windows.

The juried show will be held Friday through Sunday, Dec. 5 through 7. Show hours are 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 5; 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 6; and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 7. Show admission is \$3 for adults and \$1 for children up to age 13, and is good for all three days of the show. The center is located at 1234 Ingleside Avenue.

The show draws skilled crafters from all around the region and from as far away as New Mexico. This year's show includes more than 70 fine artisans. At press time, participants included Shenandoah potter Cynthia Crane, family-owned specialty food purveyor Lakonia Greek Products, decorative glass-blower Lisa Aronzon Glass Studio, New York fashion designer Momo Soho and raw chocolatier Joy Bliss Raw Chocolate. Popular artisan Marie-Helene Grabman will hand cut silhouettes of family members or pets. Food service will be provided by Sweet Stuff of McLean.

Detailed information and discount admission coupons are available on the Center's Web site, [www.mcleancenter.org/special-events](http://www.mcleancenter.org/special-events). Call the Center at 703-790-0123, TTY: 711.



New York fashion designer Momo Soho participates in McLean Holiday Crafts Show.

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County of Fairfax, Virginia  
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of Transportation

## Roadway Improvement Project Jones Branch Connector from Jones Branch Drive (Route 5062) to Dolley Madison Boulevard (Route 123) Fairfax County • Location and Design Public Hearing

Wednesday, December 10, 2014, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm.  
(Formal presentation at 7:15 pm)

Inclement Weather date: Tuesday, December 16, 2014, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm  
Spring Hill Elementary School • 8201 Lewinsville Road, McLean, VA 22102

**Find out about plans** to extend Jones Branch Connector roadway to connect Jones Branch Drive (Route 5062) to Dolley Madison Boulevard (Route 123). The roadway will cross I-495 and continue along the current Scotts Crossing Road alignment. Current direct ramp access to the I-495 Express Lanes will remain. The project will provide alternate vehicular access to the Tysons area and will reduce congestion at the Route 123/I-495 interchange.

**Stop by** between 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm (formal presentation at 7:15 pm) to view displays and learn about the project. The Project team will be available to answer your questions.  
**Review** project information and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot/>, at the Public Hearing, or at FCDOT's office at 4050 Legato Road, 4th Floor, Fairfax, Virginia, 22033. Please call 703-877-5600, or TTY 711 in advance to schedule an appointment with FCDOT staff.

Consistent with the NEPA and 23 CFR 771, a Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was approved by the Federal Highway Administration in April 2006 for High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lanes on I-495. In accordance with 23 CFR 771.129, a reevaluation was prepared for proposed Jones Branch Connector improvements to determine the adequacy of the final EIS. In compliance with the National Historical Preservation Act, Section 106 and 36 CFR Part 800, information concerning the potential effects of the proposed improvements on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places are included in the environmental documentation.

**Provide your written or oral comments** at the hearing or submit them in writing within ten (10) days following the hearing, to Mr. John W. Dresser, Project Manager, Fairfax County Department of Transportation, 4050 Legato Road, Suite 400, Fairfax Virginia, 22033. You may also e-mail your comments to [DOTinfo@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:DOTinfo@fairfaxcounty.gov) (include "Jones Branch Connector" in the subject line).

Fairfax County ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.



For more information or to request reasonable ADA accommodations for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact the project manager at the above phone number.

If meeting is canceled due to a school closing, it will be held on December 16, 2014, at the same time and location.

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## Since It Ain't Broken...



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Apparently, at least in the near term, we're (meaning my oncologist) not going to fix it. And by fix it, I am referring to my chemotherapy infusion, which will continue to be every three weeks, as it has been for almost six years; save for a year or so when I was able to take pills at home, and on-site infusions were not necessary. Last week, at my most recent face-to-face appointment with my oncologist, given my higher-than-hoped-for creatinine levels, (which led to a one week's delay in my regularly scheduled infusion), I had inquired about extending my infusion interval to four weeks to give my kidneys a break. Considering the ongoing damage these vital organs have suffered after six years of non-stop chemotherapy, I thought – to quote my deceased father, "that the idea had merit." And it does have merit and my oncologist has always been concerned about the effect. In fact, per his orders, I had seen a nephrologist (a kidney specialist) a few years back. After examining me on multiple appointments, the doctor suggested there was no real need for a return appointment. Though my creatinine levels were abnormally high, her assessment was, considering my pre-cancer/pre-chemotherapy lab work history had been normal, it would likely go back down if we stopped chemotherapy; but since it's highly unlikely that we'll be stopping chemotherapy, given my diagnosis, there was nothing to be done other than watching and managing the levels as my oncologist has been doing. And that's what we've done and I've not been back to see her since.

Nevertheless, it is cause for concern. The kidney is a major organ. As it goes, so might yours truly go, and consequently its affect has been an ongoing theme/point of awareness during my six years of treatment. Fortunately, miraculously maybe (for all I know), a week later the second/rescheduled lab work showed that my creatinine levels had returned to its previous high normal and thus chemotherapy went on/in as semi usual. And thus begins, according to my oncologist, my new normal: I will continue to be scheduled for infusion every three weeks with my pre-chemotherapy lab work completed the Wednesday before the Friday. If my creatinine levels are high, we'll delay, and reschedule the infusion for a week later as happened during this past interval. Now, we didn't discuss what schedule we'd follow if abnormal creatinine levels persist. As has been established during previous conversations between Team Lourie and my oncologist, scenario questions are not helpful and we rarely venture into any what-ifs/what-abouts until absolutely necessary.

But what we did discuss at this last appointment was my future, a little bit. Considering the "shrinkage" written about in last week's column, my oncologist was very encouraged and characterized my treatment going forward as something we're going to be doing for awhile. But he said it so matter-of-fact, that we sort of took it for granted. He didn't really fuss about it and we didn't either. He said it. He didn't really emphasize it. But he meant it. It was all good, that's for sure.

On the way home, my wife, Dina and I reviewed what my oncologist had said and we became even more giddy at what had transpired/been said. It was certainly news with which we could live and that's what we intend to do. I'm not about to look a gift oncologist in the mouth. Since nothing seems broken, I'm not looking to fix anything.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

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## NEWS



PHOTOS COURTESY OF KATHRIN SWOBODA

**Nature Visions' Best in Show in Fine Art: "Delicate Nectar Gatherer" by Kathrin Swoboda.**

## Exploring the Beauty of Nature

Kathrin Swoboda, of Vienna, received the Nature Visions' "Best in Show in Fine Art" award at the recent 2014 Nature Visions Photo Expo. Her photograph is titled "Delicate Nectar Gatherer." The photograph was taken from her Vienna home. Nature Visions is one of the premier photography expos in Northern Virginia. The expo was held Nov. 14-16 at the Hylton Performing Arts Center in Manassas. "This year there were 1,335 entries from 155 local photographers for our nature and fine art competitions.



**Kathrin Swoboda.**

The talent and creativity is a joy to behold," said Bill Corbett, McLean Photo Club and President, Nature Visions Photo Expo. Camera clubs and their membership from throughout Northern Virginia and beyond were contributors to the Expo.

"I am a physician turned stay-at-home mom turned amateur nature photographer.

I like exploring the beauty of nature with a camera to capture what can't be seen with the naked eye," said Swoboda. "This award inspires me to seek art in nature," added Swoboda.

## BULLETIN BOARD

—DAVID SIEGEL

To have community events listed in the Connection, send to [north@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:north@connectionnewspapers.com). The deadline for submissions is the Friday prior to publication.

### WEDNESDAY/DEC. 3

**Human Rights Defenders: Relevant International Law and Strategies.** 7:15-9 p.m. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. A presentation by David Padilla, international human rights consultant. How lawyers and other activists try to defend victims of human rights violations around the world. [www.uucf.org](http://www.uucf.org).

### SATURDAY/DEC. 6

**Region 1 Listening Tour.** 9 a.m. Hunters Woods Elementary, 2401 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Superintendent Jane Garza invites students, parents, employees, and community members to join her at the Region 1 Listening Tour Meeting. Garza will discuss school issues and the priorities for Fairfax County schools and listen to ideas, comments, and questions from the audience. Those planning to attend the meeting are asked to please register at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/listeningtour2014-15>.

### TUESDAY/DEC. 9

**Great Falls Citizens Association Meeting.** Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Dranesville School Board Representative Jane Strauss will be the featured speaker. Strauss will speak to residents about current local schools issues, including school renovations and the annual budget process. She will take questions following her remarks. Also participating in the program will be the four PTSA presidents from Forestville, Great Falls

### WEDNESDAY/DEC. 10

**Expansion and Renovation Meeting.** 7:30 p.m. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. Learn more about the Town of Vienna's planned Community Center renovation and expansion. The Vienna Community Center, originally built in 1966, is one of the town's most vital sites. The renovation is slated to begin in 2015 with funds budgeted from two Capital Improvement Plan periods. Further community update meetings will be held as plans progress.

**Herndon Bus Operations Facility Meeting.** 7 p.m. Herndon Community Center, 814 Ferndale Avenue, Herndon. A meeting held to present the proposed renovations to the Herndon Bus Operations Facility.

**League of Women Voters Meeting on Fairfax Schools.** 7:30-9 p.m. Reston Art Gallery at Heron House, Lake Anne Plaza. Later high school start times and full-day Mondays: what do these mean for the rest of the Fairfax school calendar and schedules for students and parents? Free, open to the public (men and women), call 703-757-5893. Background papers at [www.lwv-fairfax.org](http://www.lwv-fairfax.org).

### FRIDAY-SATURDAY/DEC. 19-20

**Citrus Sale.** Friday: 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. Saturday: 8 a.m.-noon. American Legion, 1355 Balls Hill Road, McLean. Proceeds used to support veteran needs, local community, youth, and patriotic activities. Seedless Grapefruit, and Navel Oranges fresh from Florida. Pure Maple Syrup will be available at all sales. Call 703-356-8259 for additional details and reservations.

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