

Crafts Displayed at Herndon Community Center

NEWS, PAGE 4

November Herndon Elections Approved

NEWS, PAGE 3

Trish LaCharite,
owner of Empty
Nest Soap, attended
the Annual Arts and
Crafts Show at
Herndon Commu-
nity Center on
Sunday, Dec. 7.
LaCharite sold cold
process soaps at the
craft fair.

Community Behind Potential Garden Plots

NEWS, PAGE 4

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November Herndon Elections Approved

May elections nixed,
two year terms stay.

BY REENA SINGH
THE CONNECTION

Herndon elections will transition into a November election schedule.

Herndon Town Council voted to amend the town charter at the Dec. 9 meeting to allow for the elections to be held in November rather than May after four public hearings.

The vote was approved 4-2, with Councilmembers David Kirby and Steven Mitchell voting against it and Councilmember Jasbinder Singh voting "present."

Councilmember Grace Wolf changed the original motion, allowing for council to serve four year terms, because of the amount of opposition that particular item had during the public hearings. However, she said the May elections were "suppressive" for minority voters because it creates confusion and gives them less access to the polls.

"This has been a well discussed issue and a well thought out issue," she said.

The original proposal changes the number of years the town council and mayor serve - four - as well as staggers them so elections are still held every two years. The vice mayor will be decided by the town council every two years. That part of the proposal was not passed, however.

According to Town Attorney Richard Kaufman, the proposal will go into effect next July if both the town and General Assembly approve the proposal. Since there will be no election in May, the next town election will be held November 2016.



PHOTOS BY REENA SINGH/THE CONNECTION

The vote to move May elections to November passed 4-2.

ONE OF THE RESIDENTS opposed to adding additional years to the councilmember and mayoral terms was former Herndon mayor Steve DeBenedittis.

"I think we already have continuity," he said, referencing a reason some residents agreed with the change. "We have a great professional staff."

DeBenedittis said the changes would make the town council less accountable for their actions because they would not have to face a vote every two years.

"I don't think anyone here is unethical, so I would urge you not to vote in favor of this," he said.

Like several others opposed to the measure, he wanted the residents to take the entire proposal to referendum and have voters decide at the polls.

Those who spoke in favor of the proposal

focused on the November elections allowing more people - including minorities - to the polls.

"The voices you need to think about, the voices that would love to speak, are probably working their second job, their second shift," said resident Cesar Del Aguila, stating that the percentage of voters is always higher during November elections than in May. "It's healthy to move this May election to November."

Both Mitchell and Kirby, who voted against the proposal, wanted to see the voters be the ones who decided on whether it should pass.

"Get it on the ballot, get it to the polls and see what the voters really think," said Kirby, who made a motion to deny the November election change. That motion failed.

SINCE THE BEGINNING of the public



Residents spent about an hour telling the town council on their thoughts about the proposed changes.

hearings, Kirby has mentioned several times that the current council is not the only one to have thought about the proposals the residents have had the opportunity to discuss over the last four meetings.

"It's always been something that's been out there, and no other council has dared to touch it," he said.

Mitchell made the last motion to change 2016 to 2018 in an effort to make sure the current council would not be affected, but made a last minute decision to vote against it. That motion also failed.

"I don't feel comfortable making this decision," he said about the original proposal. "I believe the decision should be made by the people."

Ellen Findley Honored with Good Neighbor Award

BY REENA SINGH
THE CONNECTION

Another winner of the Good Neighbor Award was named at the Dec. 9 Town Council meeting.

Barbara Glakas, from Cultivating Community Initiative, introduced Ellen Findley as the neighborhood welcome wagon.

The good neighborhood award is to recognize citizens who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to help out their neighbors and who do things to make their neighborhoods a better place to live," Glakas said, noting that the nominations for the award come from residents in the community rather than the CCI.

The person who nominated Findley

said she helps neighbors with their yards, looks after the local children, and looks after homes when they are out of town.

"She helps new neighbors get settled, learn their way around the neighborhood and around Herndon," said Glakas. "She never stops helping."

Findley also continues to be an advocate for education even though her own children have graduated.

She is the third of four community residents who have been honored with this year's annual award. The fourth resident will be honored at a future meeting they can attend.

Martha Durden, 3, hands the Good Neighbor award to Ellen Findley with the aid of Mayor Lisa Merkel.



PHOTO BY REENA SINGH/THE CONNECTION



PHOTOS BY RYAN DUNN/THE CONNECTION

Maryland resident Barbara Lingham brought in a selection of quilts and handmade dog collars to the Annual Arts and Crafts Show at Herndon Community Center.



Cub Scout Pack 157 leader Barry Dresdner with Cub Scout Michael Fullerton helped sell wreaths at the Annual Arts and Crafts Show on Sunday, Dec. 7.

Crafts Displayed at Herndon Community Center

Volunteers promote turnout at Herndon craft fair.

BY RYAN DUNN
THE CONNECTION

Herndon Community Center, located at 814 Ferndale Avenue hosted its Annual Arts and Crafts Show Sunday, Dec. 7. The event was well attended, and both staff and volunteers from the Herndon Woman's Club helped direct visitors to locations where crafts were on display. "We have had over a thousand visitors," said Patsy Rust, a volunteer with the Herndon Woman's Club.

"It has been going really well," said Herndon Recreation Supervisor Dave Zakrzewski. Zakrzewski helped manage this year's craft fair event. The previous year, snowfall caused the craft fair to close early. "We got more than 30 vendors than last year," said Zakrzewski. Returning to the Herndon Arts and Crafts Show were craft vendors including Anna Atkinson and Clifton artist Maggie Des Lauriers. Reston



The festive Christmas tree currently on display at Herndon Community Center in downtown Herndon. The Herndon Community Center has serviced the Herndon area for 35 years.

resident Anna Atkinson had a booth for her homemade candles, and this year brought some bath soaps. "There are more vendors

and more customers than last year," said Atkinson.

A VARIETY of products and merchandise were on display for the one day indoor event. Vendors arrived from all over the Northern Virginia and D.C. area. Bringing in quilts and handmade dog collars was Maryland resident Barbara Lingham. "I have been attending craft fairs since the late 1990s," said Lingham, who operates her business Doodlebug Quilts. In addition to her own webpage, Lingham also operates an Etsy webpage. Etsy is an e-commerce website focused on handmade or vintage items and supplies. "Etsy has been pretty good for me, but craft fairs are where you can get a personal approach," said Lingham.

"It was a hobby that became a business," said Trish LaCharite, owner of Empty Nest Soap, a line of handcrafted, cold process soaps. LaCharite operates an account on Etsy, but sees an advantage to craft fairs. "Craft fairs are the way to go because you have an audience." For many craft fair attendees, the experience is an opportunity to see the uniqueness and art of different individuals. It is different from the sameness of the retail environment.

"This is my third time attending this show," said Herndon resident Cindi

Brasington. Brasington had a booth displaying a selection of her quilts. "Because I am a quilter at heart and I like fabric, I thought why not make a little extra money?" Brasington does not currently operate an Etsy account or use a webpage, choosing instead to rely only on word of mouth advertising. "We had a good crowd come through," said Brasington.

Producing Director at Nextstop Theatre Company Evan Hoffman attended the craft fair to provide information on upcoming shows at NextStop Theatre, the professional theatre company in downtown Herndon. Also attending the event were Boy Scouts from Cub Scout Pack 157. Members of the cub scout sang several Christmas carols and sold Christmas wreaths. "We are working with Wreaths Across America to lay wreaths on cemeteries," said cub scout committee chair Kent Fullerton.

ON DEC. 13, National Wreaths Across America Day, remembrance wreaths will be placed at the headstones of fallen veterans at nearly 1,000 locations across the country and overseas. In Herndon, a remembrance ceremony will be held at Chestnut Grove Cemetery on Saturday, Dec. 13, at noon to ensure veteran graves are not forgotten.

Community Behind Potential Garden Plots

BY REENA SINGH
THE CONNECTION

Community gardens in Herndon are a step closer to becoming a reality.

County Park Authority representatives met with residents on Dec. 2 to find out whether there was a demand to create a revision in Bruin Park's Master Plan.

"It felt very positive," said Barbara Welsh, Herndon Environmental Network (HEN) vice president. "Nobody had anything negative to say about it."

She noted that Dranesville Supervisor John Foust attended to show his support, stating he would help the organization where he could.

The next step for HEN and the rest of the residents interested in a plot is to wait for the county's 30 day comment period to end, which ends Jan. 2, for the plan to be approved.

"We've also started a memorandum of understanding which outlines what the Town of Herndon is responsible for, what Fairfax County is responsible for and what HEN is responsible for," she said.

Welsh noted that HEN is responsible for taking care of the water and funding to build the garden.

"The next step is to hit the ground running on fundraising," she said.

HEN has reached out to several businesses, but none have agreed to donating money yet.

The best case scenario is that HEN might have the garden plots ready by spring. Welsh said the organization is planning to work with Julie Mendoza with A Gardener's Share to give surplus vegetables and fruit to food banks. HEN is also reaching out to



PHOTO BY REENA SINGH/THE CONNECTION

Herndon Environmental Network Vice President Barbara Walsh wants to see a community garden in Herndon.

Cornerstones to reserve a plot to educate children from local shelters on growing their own food.

To comment about the Master Plan revision, email Parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov.

WEEK IN HERNDON

Herndon MOMS Club to Hold Holiday Meeting

The MOMS Club of Herndon will host a holiday themed meeting on Thursday, Dec. 18, from 10 a.m. - noon at Trinity Presbyterian Church (651 Dranesville Rd.). All Herndon, VA (zip codes 20170 and 20171) stay at home mothers and their children are encouraged to attend.

Join the club for a holly jolly meeting with a holiday story and craft. There will also be an optional cookie exchange. Bring two dozen cookies to swap if you choose to participate.

For more information or to RSVP contact: Kelly McArter, Membership VP atHerndon_moms_info@yahoo.com.

The MOMS Club ("Moms Offering Moms Support") is an International nonprofit support group specifically for mothers who have chosen to stay home with their children! with over 2,000 chapters in seven countries. Herndon chapter offers events and support for moms and their children in the 20170 and 20171 zip codes.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Fairfax County is offering a free Telephone Support Group for Family Caregivers of Older Adults. Join us for this open discussion. This telephone support group may be just what you need! Share your experiences, gain support and get important information without having to travel. The one-hour free sessions are scheduled for the second Tuesday of each month beginning at 7 p.m. Find out more and register at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/ and click on Caregiver Telephone Support Group.

Fairfax County needs volunteers to drive older adults to medical appointments and wellness programs Reston area. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711

or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

Volunteers, fluent in American Sign Language, are needed in Reston, Herndon and Vienna. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

Meals on Wheels needs drivers in Chantilly, McLean, Mt. Vernon, and Clifton on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

The Lewinsville Senior Center in McLean needs instructors for the following classes: Certified Arthritis Exercise, Ballroom Dance, Square Dance, Knitting/Crocheting, Bridge and American Mah Jongg. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

The Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program needs volunteer advocates for residents in assisted living and nursing facilities. Training is provided in March. Call 703-324-5861, TTY 711 or email Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov. Find more information on the program at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ltc.



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OPINION

Holidays Are for Giving

In the scramble to finish Christmas shopping, remember tens of thousands of local children are short of food as well as presents.

The holidays are for giving. Christmas and Hanukkah are about children and family, about sharing, about joy, about being thankful and about faith and appreciation.

Here in Northern Virginia, many of us see few signs of families in need as we go about our daily lives and holiday shopping. Our neighborhoods are largely segregated economically; we mostly see the people who are most like ourselves economically.

But in Fairfax County, about 65,000 people live below the poverty line, about 6 percent. In Arlington and Alexandria, more than 8 percent of the population lives in poverty, about 18,000 people in Arlington and more than 12,000 people in Alexandria.

Where to Give Locally

In no particular order:

- ❖ **Our Daily Bread's Holiday Program** helps those in need with food for the holidays and gifts for their children. Donations are still needed, go to www.odbfairfax.com/holiday
- ❖ **Cornerstones**, 11150 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 210, Reston, serving Reston and Herndon. 571-323-9555, www.cornerstonesva.org. Programs and services include the Embury Rucker Community Shelter, Emergency Food Pantry, Hypothermia Prevention Program and the Thanksgiving Food Drive.
- ❖ **FACETS** helps parents, their children and individuals who suffer the effects of poverty in the Fairfax area. FACETS is always in need of volunteers, and offers a variety of one-time and ongoing opportunities. 703-865-4251 or volunteer@facetscares.org. www.facetscares.org. 10640 Page Avenue, Suite 300, Fairfax VA 22030
- ❖ **HealthWorks for Northern Virginia**, formerly the Jeanie Schmidt Free Clinic, provides medical, dental and behavioral health care to anyone in need, regardless of age or ability to pay. Herndon location, 1141 Elden St. Third Floor, Herndon, VA 20170, 703-481-8160 <http://hwnova.org/>
- ❖ **Alternative House** — Abused and Homeless Children's Refuge, 2100 Gallows Road, Vienna, VA 22182, 703-506-9191. www.thealternativehouse.org

EDITORIAL

To be clear, the poverty line is \$19,780 for a family of three; it's \$11,670 for a single person household. Imagine for a minute how far \$20,000 a year would go in your family. To live in Northern Virginia, a family needs to earn about twice the rate of poverty to get by. The median household income in Fairfax County and Arlington is well over \$100,000.

In Fairfax County Public Schools, more than 52,000 students, or more than 28 percent, are poor enough to receive free or subsidized meals, a significant measure of poverty.

In Arlington more than 32 percent of the students are poor enough to receive free or subsidized meals; that's 7,452 students at last count.

In Alexandria, more than 8,500 students are

poor enough to receive free or subsidized meals. That's 60 percent of the 14,222 students enrolled.

These are children who may not be sure that they will have a meal between the meals they get in school. School holidays can bring uncertainty and hunger, a far cry from the celebrations, gifts and plenty that we associate with Christmas, Hanukkah and winter holiday vacations.

Many of these are children are living in families who must choose between medical bills, car repair, heat and food. Almost all are families where at least one adult is employed full time, but still many are one unexpected expense away from disaster. Many of these families live on the brink of homelessness.

There are literally hundreds, probably thousands, of ways to give locally this season. Also mark your calendar to help again in a month or two. The needs don't go away after the holidays. Here are a few ideas.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

nonprofits, faith communities and businesses. <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless/>

- ❖ **12 Ways of Giving:** Fairfax County Office of Public Private Partnerships' "12 Ways of Giving" campaign is an annual event that showcases many ways for meaningful, local giving during the holiday season, highlighting nonprofits in Fairfax County. www.fairfaxcountypartnerships.org
- ❖ **Assistance League of Northern Virginia** is an all-volunteer organization that clothes, feeds, educates and nurtures those in need focusing five of the neediest elementary schools. Volunteers and donors are always needed. Contact ALNorthernVA@yahoo.com or see www.northernvirginia.assistanceleague.org
- ❖ **Western Fairfax Christian Ministries** — food pantry at 13981 Metrotech Drive in Chantilly (near Backyard Grill and Bar). For more information or to sponsor a family, call 703-988-9656, ext. 105. To mail gift cards or send donations by check, add a note saying "food basket program" and send them to: WFCM, P.O. Box 220802, Chantilly, VA 20153. 703-988-9656. <http://www.wfcmva.org/>
- ❖ **Touching Heart** in Herndon is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to educate children to have giving hearts. <http://www.touchingheart.com>, 703-901-7355

Helping People without Homes

BY PAMELA L. MICHELL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
NEW HOPE HOUSING

The weather has turned colder and the holidays are in full swing, which means it's the time of year when people ask "what can we do for the homeless now that it's so cold?" Or "how can we help the homeless have a good Christmas?" For those of us working with men, women, and children who are experiencing homelessness, the great community interest in December in those we serve can be heartwarming — and overwhelming. Overwhelming because we are inundated by your extraordinary generosity during this time. But

heartwarming, because you are thinking about the persons in our program as individuals; as people with their own holiday dreams.

In my 30-plus years in homeless services, one of my pet peeves is the phrase "the homeless." When we use that phrase we unknowingly dehumanize the people we describe. We are also inaccurately lumping together a diverse group of people under one label as though they are all the same with the same needs. Nothing could be further from the truth. They are individuals, each with a unique story. They are children. They are mothers and fathers. They are veterans. They are people from all walks of life. The one thing they

have in common is not having a permanent address.

At New Hope Housing, we don't help the Homeless, we don't house the Homeless, we don't serve the Homeless, we don't work for the Homeless, because here, we don't believe the Homeless exist. We serve people. And sometimes people experience homelessness. We believe homelessness is something that happens to you. Our job at New Hope Housing — and the job of our nonprofit partners — is to prevent that experience from happening, or if it does happen, making it as short as possible by helping get people back into appropriate permanent housing.

We at New Hope Housing, and our partners, as well as the families and single adults in our pro-

grams, are truly grateful for your support in filling a holiday wish list, providing a meal, volunteering at one of the many hypothermia sites, or donating money to help our agencies end the homelessness of each person who walks through our doors. We will still need you on Dec. 26 and Feb. 5 and during the summer. Until each person is home, we've all got work to do.

Thank you for making this person-to-person connection this holiday season. Thank you for seeing that those who seek our assistance are not "the homeless," but men, women, and children with hopes and dreams, just like each of us who are blessed with a place to call home. Because there is no place like home — anytime of the year.

Oak Hill & Herndon
CONNECTION

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An Essay To Remember

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

While many are knee-deep in wrapping paper and egg nog, some students are holed up with computer keyboards and books of quotations. In addition to driving to the mall for holiday shopping, some parents are throwing rapid-fire questions at their children to make sure they are fast on their feet.

For students and parents who hope for slots at the area's top independent schools next year, 'tis admissions season.

"As a school we want to know what the relationship will be between what a student brings to the table and what we will need to bring to the table," said Tim Simpson, assistant head of school and director of admission and financial aid at Bullis School in Potomac, Md.

Interviews are opportunities for admissions teams to get to know applicants and their parents, and share information about their



PHOTO COURTESY OF AUDRA WRISLEY

Students at Episcopal High School in Alexandria collaborate on a school project. Essays and interviews help admissions teams determine how an applicant would fit into the school community.

schools.

"We try to encourage students to view the interview as a conversation," said Julie Jameson, director of admissions at St. Andrew's Episcopal School in Potomac. "They should feel comfortable ... be themselves ... and feel free to ask any questions they might have."

In fact, the interview is really a two-way street, says Ann

Richardson Miller, director of admission and financial aid at The Madeira School in McLean. "The girl and her parents should be asking as many questions of me as I am asking of her," she said. "After all, this will be her school for the next four years, and fit is critical, both for us, but also for the girl and her parents."

"Learn as much as you can about the school before your visit and be

prepared to ask questions," said Scott Conklin, director of admissions, Episcopal High School in Alexandria. "This is also an opportunity to brag about your interests, talents and accomplishments. ... Be humble, but make sure you let us know all about you."

That doesn't mean you should ignore your flaws, however. "We look for genuine conversations that convey the student's real interests and passions," said Simpson. "We also want students and parents to be open to talking about strengths and weaknesses."

THE ADMISSION ESSAY is another opportunity for students to reveal facets of their personalities that might not be obvious through test scores, transcripts and even letters of recommendation, said Patricia Harden, director of admissions and financial aid at Connelly School of the Holy Child in Potomac. "It should be a well-written snapshot of how an applicant thinks and how she understands some aspect of her world," Harden said.

Some schools even require the admission essay to be completed in person.

"We want to see a student's true, natural writing ability, and we are interested in assessing their ability to develop and present a cohesive, thoughtful essay on the spot," said Michael Cresson, director of admissions, Bishop O'Connell High School in Arlington. "A polished essay prepared at home with lots of edits really doesn't tell us what we want to know to best evaluate an applicant."

No matter where the essay is written however, the same basic writing advice applies.

"We are looking for students to express themselves and give us an insight into what kind of person he or she is," Cresson said. "My suggestions for students ... would be ... to proofread their essay, allow for enough time, do some research on the school and include that in the essay. "These are simple suggestions, but it is disappointing as a director to read through essays and find simple mistakes and see that it was rushed."

Be a part of our **Wellbeing** pages, the first week of every month.

Delight in our **HomeLifeStyle** sections, the second week of every month. Peek at the top real estate sales, glimpse over-the-top remodeling projects, get practical suggestions for your home.

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Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday.

DECEMBER

Publishing

Wellbeing.....12/3/14

HomeLifeStyle: Home for the Holidays... 12/10/14

Hanukkah begins December 16.

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to our friends and neighbors
and Best Wishes for a
Happy and Prosperous
New Year*



dullesregionalchamber.org

Herndon boys' basketball coach Gary Hall and his wife, Colleen Mulrenin, host a weekly study hall for Herndon student/athletes at their home in Reston.



Herndon student/athletes eat dinner during a weekly study hall gathering at the Reston home of head boys' basketball coach Gary Hall and his wife, Colleen Mulrenin.

Herndon Coach Hall, Wife Host Weekly Study Hall

Herndon High School athletes meet weekly for dinner, studying, fun.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

Gary Hall and his wife, Colleen Mulrenin, attended a Herndon boys' soccer game in the spring and wondered what could have been.

Hall, a PE teacher and head boys' basketball coach at Herndon High School, knew the Hornets weren't operating at full strength. He knew of several athletes at HHS who could help the soccer program, but for whatever reason were unable to play. Whether it was poor grades, family responsibilities or simply a lack of discipline, talented teenagers capable of making a difference weren't part of the team.

"It was the same story over and over again," Hall said. "All these kids weren't playing. It was like we need to try to figure out some way to help."

After discussing the matter, Hall and Mulrenin decided to open their doors — and offer their help — to Herndon athletes. In September, during the second week of the 2014-15 school year, Hall and Mulrenin began hosting a weekly study hall at their home in Reston. Three months later, a group of about 25 boys show up each week, ready to study, ready to spend time with their friends — and ready to eat.

"It's evolved," Hall said, "into this really cool thing."

THE STUDY HALL started on Tuesday nights in the fall. Kids arrive at the house around 7 p.m. At 7:15, it's time for dinner. Sometimes Hall and Mulrenin purchase food from a local restaurant. Sometimes Mulrenin prepares the meal (spaghetti and tacos are among the boys' favorites). Either way, Hall and Mulrenin consider it money well spent.

"There have been nights where we've gone through 150 tacos and 12 pounds of ground beef," said Hall, a 1979 Herndon High School graduate. "It's awesome."

The meal is significant for some of the



PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

After dinner, it's time for work during a weekly study hall for Herndon High School student/athletes at head basketball coach Gary Hall's home in Reston.

students in attendance. Three students at a recent study hall told Mulrenin it was the only meal they ate that day.

"For some of them, the meal is actually important," said Mulrenin, a lawyer whose children attended Herndon High School. "It's a good, nutritious meal that they might not be getting."

After dinner, it's time to get to work. Students study from 8 p.m. until 9:15 or 9:30. Members of the Herndon football, boys' basketball, baseball, and boys' soccer teams set up around the house and work on assignments. The dining room is the math room. Basketball players usually set up shop in the living room, while soccer players hang out in the kitchen. The library is used for computer work, which is helpful as some of the students don't have Internet access at home.

There is candy at every table.

"We do have it down to a science," said Mulrenin, or "Ms. Colleen," as some of the students call her.

After studying, students relax with 30-45 minutes of recreation time. Some play pool downstairs. Others play Xbox.

By 10 p.m., it's time to go home.

As basketball season approached, Hall was concerned whether he could coach and continue hosting the study hall. Would he miss opportunities to scout future opponents? Would he stretch himself too thin?

Hall and Mulrenin decided it was important to keep the study hall going.

THE WEEKLY MEETING was moved from Tuesdays to Thursdays. A scheduling conflict led to a Sunday meeting, as well.

"The one thing Colleen and I have made a commitment to is we cannot cancel," Hall said. "We're having study hall every week. We're not going to quit on [the kids]."

While Hall and Mulrenin didn't quit on the students, they do have to rush at times to make sure things are ready to go by 7 p.m. Mulrenin leaves her office in Tysons Corner at 5:15. Hall and the boys' basketball team are finished with practice at 5:30. From there, dinner is purchased and/or prepared. The work tables remain set up to save time.

"When people get here, it looks great," Hall said, "but they don't see what happens [to get it ready]."

Michael Griffin is a 6-foot-2 sophomore guard on the Herndon boys' basketball team. He hasn't missed a study hall.

"At first, I thought that it was just going to be hanging out with my teammates and friends and have a good time," Griffin said. "Then I found out that it's a good place to get my homework done because I have trouble getting homework done at home. It was good to have him open his house to us to get homework done."

Griffin said he hopes to one day play college basketball. As a freshman, he struggled with his grades. This year, his grades have improved and he was recognized as the study hall group's most improved student during the first quarter.

Griffin said his favorite study hall dinner is Colleen's spaghetti with meatballs. When work is done, he enjoys playing pool and said he is usually on the winning team.

"It's like a second home," Griffin said. "Everybody loves it and we anticipate it every week. Everyone is always texting our group chat ... 'we have study hall tonight.'"

Chris Recinos is a senior soccer player. Last year, he was unable to play for the Hornets due to failing four classes, he said. This year, Recinos said his grades have improved and he's eligible to play.

"[The study hall has] helped me a lot with just keeping things more organized and getting more time for my homework," Recinos said. "... Last year, I would just blow things off and I didn't really care as much. Coach Hall's study hall gives me a little more motivation to do my work because they're going out of their way to help me and my fellow students. ..."

"It's really nice for Ms. Colleen and Coach Hall to do this. Taking their time and money to help us out, I really appreciate them doing it. It motivates me to do my work and I look forward to [soccer] season."

Recently, parents and neighbors have donated desserts for the study hall. Local businesses have offered discounted food. One neighbor is paying for a math tutor to help the Herndon students. The tutor sometimes stays an extra 30 minutes and works for half-price, Mulrenin said.

"Nobody's getting a tax break ... people are just willing to help," Mulrenin said. "... All of these people, we didn't ask for their help, but they heard the story and people are just throwing [help in our direction]."

Along with continued weekly meetings, the study hall group planned to dress up and go out for a holiday dinner this week.

"I grew up in Herndon," Hall said. "Herndon is my school. Herndon is my community. The reality is, if I'm only helping or working or having any influence over the young people in the basketball program, I'm being rather shortsighted. This was an opportunity for us to help."

CALENDAR

Send announcements to reston@connectionnewspapers.com. The deadline is the Friday prior to the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 17- SUNDAY/DEC. 21

"A Charlie Brown Christmas."

NextStop Theatre, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Reston. For the first time, NextStop Theatre Company will be producing a full-scale holiday production featuring a cast comprised entirely of young performers. All roles are unpaid, but will be supported by a team of high caliber directors, designers and technical personnel from the professional company. Directed by Jennifer Lambert. (Based on the classic holiday TV special). <http://www.nextstoptheatre.org/>

THROUGH WEDNESDAY/DEC. 31

La Lumiere DuBois. 9 a.m.-9 p.m.

Hunters Woods Exhibit, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. An exhibit of the colorful nature photographs of award-winning artist, Michael DuBois. 703-476-4500.

THROUGH SATURDAY/JAN. 3, 2015

LineWorks: Drawing Redefined Exhibit at GRACE. 6 - 8 p.m.

Reston Town Center, 11900 Market Street, Reston. Thematic multi-media works by five artists, Lee Gainer, Sarah Irvin, Nikki Painter, Foon Sham, and Sarah Weinstock. 703-471-9242. www.restonarts.org.

THROUGH MONDAY/JAN. 5, 2015

Annual "Gifts from the HeART" to Benefit Reston Interfaith. 9 a.m.-9 p.m.

Jo Ann Rose Gallery, 1609 Washington Plaza N, Reston. Sales of original works of art in many mediums will benefit Cornerstones. 703-476-4500.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 17

The Mitten. Herndon Community Center, 814 Ferndale Ave., Herndon. Where do animals stay on a cold and snowy day? Snuggle in for story time and listen to Jan Brett's classic book. Make a mitten craft. Weather permitting, bundle up and take a walk to search for animal homes. Reservations required by December 12. Fee: \$7/child RA members, \$9/child Non-members.

For more information, email naturecenter@reston.org, or call 703-476-9689 and press 5. Ages 3 to 5.

Preschool Storytime. 11 a.m. Herndon Fortnightly Library, 768 Center Street, Herndon. Ages 3-5 with adult caregiver enjoy gingerbread and Jingle Bells stories, songs and rhymes. Openings.

All Ages Sing-A-Long With Santa. 7 p.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Join the Jingle Bell Orchestra to welcome Santa. Openings.



PHOTO BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

Scooby Doo and Tweety Bird glide along at the Reston Town Center Ice Skating Pavilion. A big hit with the younger skaters – and a few of the young at heart, as well –the two are part of the rink's Saturday Cartoon Character Skate. Scooby assured us that he would be there for many more Saturdays to come.

THURSDAY/DEC. 18

Toddler Storytime. 10:30 a.m.

Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Age 2 and adult caregiver enjoy stories, songs, and fingerplay. Openings.

School Age Kid's Graphic Novel

Book Club. 4 p.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. This month's discussion: "Garfield & Co.: Home for the Holidays," by Jim Davis. Books are still available for check out at the Children's desk.

Book Discussion For Adults:

Poetry. 7 p.m. Reston Regional

Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Informal gathering of poetry lovers to share own work or favorite poet.

FRIDAY/DEC. 19

Storytime. 10:30 a.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Ages 3-5 with adult caregiver enjoy the early literacy program. Openings.

SATURDAY/DEC. 20

Horse-drawn Carriage Ride. 4-9 p.m. Reston Town Center, 11900

Market Street, Reston. \$5 per person. Children under 5 ride free. All proceeds benefit local charities. restontowncenter.com/holidays.

SUNDAY/DEC. 21

Mini-train Rides. 12-4 p.m. Reston Town Center, 11900 Market Street, Reston. All donated proceeds benefit local charities. restontowncenter.com/holidays

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 31

New Year's Eve Bonfire and Celebration. ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. African Drum & band workshop (youth event; \$5/child or \$10/family) 7 – 8:30 p.m. Bonfire with Drum Circle (all ages; free), 8:30 – 10 p.m. A Night of Blues: Herbie D. & the Dangermen (\$25/single, \$50/couple) 10 p.m. – 12:30 a.m. Purchase tickets at www.artspaceherndon.org.

Jimmy's Annual New Year's Eve Gala. Jimmy's Old Town Tavern, 697 Spring Street, Herndon. Ring in the new year at Jimmy's. <http://www.jimmystavern.com/>

THURSDAY/JAN. 1, 2015

New Year's Day 5K. 10 a.m. Reston Town Center, 11900 Market Street, Reston, Fountain Square. Kick off the New Year with a run from Reston Town Center with music, food, and fun celebration following the race. Presented by Potomac River Running. 703-689-0999 at praces.com/newyearsday

ONGOING

LRA Displays "Changing Colors."

Through Friday, Jan. 9. Parkridge 5 Building, 10780 Parkridge Blvd., Reston. This League of Reston Artists' show includes original painting, mixed media, two-dimensional hangable art, and photography. Free. www.leagueofrestonartists.org.

Free Comedy Showcase. Thursdays 8:30 p.m., at Kalypso's Sports Tavern, 1617 Washington Plaza N., Lake Anne Village Center, Reston. Kalypso's hosts weekly comedy shows that feature some of the best national touring and local comedians in the area. Free of charge.

Family Fun Entertainment Series. Saturdays 10-10:45 a.m., at Reston Town Square Park, 11990 Market St., Reston. Every Saturday enjoy live shows, children's music and other child-friendly entertainment. 703-476-4500.

Movies and Mimosas. Saturday and Sunday 11 a.m., at Reston Town Center, 11940 Market St., Reston. Showings in the morning; look up showings online. www.bowtiecinemas.com.

FAITH NOTES

Faith Notes are for announcements and events in the faith community, including special holiday services. Send to herndon@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Thursday.

Trinity Presbyterian Church, 651 Dranesville Road, Herndon, has Sunday worship services at 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Nursery and childcare are provided and youth and adult Sunday school classes are held prior, from 9:40-10:45 a.m. 703-437-5500 or www.trinityherndon.org.

Vajrayogini Buddhist Center, Unitarian Universalist Church, 1625 Wiehle Ave., Reston, holds weekly classes starting Sept. 12, Thursdays 7-8:30 p.m., for the general public which use Buddhist teachings to practice meditation. \$12. 202-986-2257 or www.meditation-dc.org.

St. Anne's Episcopal Church, 1700 Wainwright Drive in Reston, holds Sunday services at 7:45 a.m., 9 a.m., 11:15 a.m. and contemporary service at 5 p.m. Nursery, Sunday school and adult education available. Morning prayer on Monday at 9:30, Holy Eucharist Wednesday at 8:15 a.m. 703-437-6530 or www.stannes-reston.org.

Adult Sunday school will be held 9:30 a.m. Sundays at the Washington Plaza Baptist Church at Lake Anne Village Center. The group is studying the Gospel of Mark. Services follow at 11 a.m.

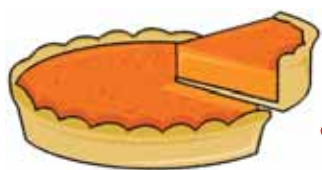
HAVEN of Northern Virginia offers a variety of free bereavement support groups, meeting on a weekly basis. Contact 703-941-7000 or www.havenofnova.org for schedules and registration information.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington and the Jewish Outreach Institute offer the Mothers/Parents Circle, an umbrella of free educational events and resources. Jewish rituals, ethics and the creation of a Jewish home, regular meetings and group Shabbats and holidays. Participants include Sha'are Shalom, Congregation Beth Emeth, Temple Rodef Shalom and the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia. ShalomDC.org.

Epiphany United Methodist Preschool, 1014 Country Club Drive, N.E. in Vienna, is now enrolling 3- to 4-year-old students for the 2010/2011 school year. 703-938-2391 or www.epiphanypreschool.com.

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21 Announcements

21 Announcements

OBITUARY

Joel D. Tomlinson

Passed away on December 11, 2014, surrounded by family, at
George Washington University Hospital in Washington. He was
49.

Born July 21, 1965, in Waco, Texas, Joel is survived by his
mother, Mildred (Mitty) Hayek; Margaret (Maya) O'Connor, his
partner of 17 years; four children, Joshua (29), Jessica (27), Ja-
coba (26) and Ada Grace (4); along with former wife Lelia
Keen, brother Jonathan and sister and brother-in-law Jennifer
Tomlinson and Steve Toloken; he is also survived by daughter-
in-law Emily Cull Tomlinson, son-in-law David Rines and Agne
Menges. He was preceded in death by father Glen C. Tomlin-
son, brother James (Jamie) Glen Tomlinson and many loving
relatives.

Joel was a warm, kind person with a gift for talking to anyone.
He attracted an eclectic group of friends, and was an avid pho-
tographer, working for many years at Central Photo on Capitol
Hill, where his painstaking attention to detail would have been
felt in the portraits of countless Washington D.C. tour groups.
He was a frequent marcher at protests and supporter of social
justice, and he worked tirelessly to help with the longtime fam-
ily home on Beulah Road in Vienna, Va. He was raised in Fair-
fax County, Va., attending schools in Reston, Langley High
School and Texas State University. He lived most of his adult
life in the Washington D.C. area.

A memorial service will be held Friday Dec. 19, at 2 p.m., at
the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter
Mill Road, Oakton, Va. In lieu of flowers, the family is request-
ing donations to a charity of choice or Empower DC,
www.empowerdc.org.

21 Announcements

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ZONES

Zone 1: The Reston Connection
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Zone 3: The Alexandria Gazette Packet
The Mount Vernon Gazette
Zone 4: Centre View North
Centre View South
Zone 5: The Potomac Almanac
Zone 6: The Arlington Connection
The Vienna/Oakton Connection
The McLean Connection
The Great Falls Connection

A Level That's Anything But

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



This is not a home improvement reference, but this is most definitely a do-it-yourself column. And though friends, family and all the medical professionals at The Infusion Center, and of course the Oncology staff, have been wonderfully supportive and encouraging throughout my nearly-six-year ordeal, at the end of the day – heck, at the beginning of the day, every day – the patient has to figure a way to navigate through this characterized-as-terminal minefield. More often than not, this has been my greatest challenge: keeping my spirits up and my attitude positive when there are only three people present and accounted for: me, myself and I.

Dealing with unexpected results – both good and especially bad, from lab work, diagnostic scans and/or in-person appointments/physical examinations/assessments – and the effect all of it has on the patient's presumptive life expectancy, are emotional hurdles I regularly endure. Moreover, interpreting any of these results, better left for the professionals, rarely prevents us amateurs (patients) from wishfully-thinking, denying or freaking out entirely. After all, your life is at stake and since there are no guarantees or 100-percent predictable outcomes in the treatment of stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer – other than it's not curable, according to my oncologist – anticipating the worst while praying for the best becomes your 24/7 reality.

This reality is never more apparent to me, since I'm relatively asymptomatic, than when I complete my every-three-week, pre-chemotherapy lab work. That's when (other than my quarterly CT Scan), the tale of my tape, so to speak, is updated. If certain measurements are too high: creatinine, bilirubin, potassium – then no chemo for me. If certain other measurements are too low: white and red blood cells counts, oxygen, also potassium; then again, no chemo for me. The real anxiety, new anxiety – for me, is what levels show up on the inevitable retest (the first order of business is to confirm the abnormality with additional lab work). Typically, at least historically, my retests, taken a week later (sometimes even a day later), have always returned to normal, and accordingly, chemotherapy has proceeded as usual. This week, however, something different has occurred. This is the first time that my creatinine levels were too high on consecutive three-week intervals. If my next retest does not return to level (as the previous one did), and chemotherapy is put off an additional week again, that too will be a first and cause – in my head anyway, for new concern. This would be a complication/result that in the previous six years has never happened.

Should I be worried? And whether or not I should be, can I even control my feelings and somehow patiently (no pun intended) wait for new results from the retest without coming apart at the seams? If I could, I would; but given this column's subject, apparently I can't. Wish me luck; hopefully, I won't need it.

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

OBITUARY

Beverly Anne Schupfer Morris Dies

Beverly Anne Schupfer Morris, 84, passed away Nov. 23, 2014 in Idaho Falls, Idaho from complications of Parkinson's Disease. She was born June 13, 1930 in Lewiston, Idaho to Herman and Alberta Schupfer.

Beverly married Robert Morris July 3. Three sons were born: Robert, John and Richard.

She also loved classical music and was an accomplished pianist, organist, and recorder player.

In 1968 the family moved to Reston, after Bob got a job with the Office of Naval Research. While in Reston, Beverly sang in the Reston Chorale and founded house music groups.

She also taught piano and recorder and was a Cub Scout Den Mother. In 1974 Bob

got a job with the State Department, and in 1978 the couple moved to Paris, France for four years, followed by overseas stints in Bonn, West Germany; Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Madrid, Spain.

In 1992, Bob retired and the couple eventually relocated to Ashland, Ore., where they enjoyed attending the Shakespeare Festival. In March 2014 they moved to Idaho Falls, Idaho to live near their oldest son and his family.

Beverly was a devoted wife, a loving mother of three, grandmother of four, and great-grandmother of five. In observance of her wishes, her body was donated to science, with the wish that her remaining ashes be scattered in Northern Idaho.

Beverly is survived by her husband Robert and all other descendants.

BULLETIN BOARD

To have community events listed in the Connection, send to herndon@connectionnewspapers.com by the Friday prior to the following week's paper.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 17

ESL For Adults: Intermediate Level. 11 a.m.
Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Join conversational group: Wednesdays with Richard.

<call Thursday/Dec. 18

ESL For Adults: Advanced Level. 10 a.m.
Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Join conversational group: Thursdays with Richard.

ESL For Adults: Grammar and Vocabulary for Intermediate Level. 6:30 p.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. 12-week course to learn basic rules of English grammar and vocabulary building. Regular attendance is required for class: Thursdays with Paul.

<call Friday/Dec. 19

ESL For Adults: Beginners. 10 a.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Join conversational group: Fridays with Elayne.

ESL For Adults: Intermediate Level. 11 a.m.
Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Join conversational group: Fridays with Richard.

MONDAY/DEC. 22

ESL For Adults: Intermediate Level. 11 a.m.
Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne

SCHOOL NOTES

Send school notes to north@connectionnewspapers.com by Friday.

Each year, the Northwest Federal Credit Union (NWFCU Foundation) awards a total of \$100,000 in college scholarships – \$5,000 each – to 20 students who have demonstrated qualities of leadership, dedication and commitment in school, at home and in the community.

"These students have displayed the qualities that will make them future leaders in our community," said Chris McDonald, Chairman of the NWFCU Foundation and President/CEO of Northwest Federal Credit Union. "We are pleased to make an investment in their future – and our community's future – by helping them pay for college."

Winners of the 2014 Ben DeFelice Scholarships from our area include:

- ♦ Jared Hunsaker, graduate of Herndon High school. He will attend Brigham Young University.
- ♦ Troy Hunsaker, graduate of Herndon High school. He will attend Brigham Young University.
- ♦ Derek Phillips, graduate of South Lakes High School. He will attend Stanford University.

Emily Schaal, a student at Herndon High School, is the winner of the 2014 National Peace Essay contest for Virginia and has earned a \$1,000 academic scholarship – US Institute of Peace

Drive. Join conversational group: Mondays with Richard.

TUESDAY/DEC. 23

ESL For Adults: Beginners. 10 a.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Join conversational group: Tuesdays with Elayne.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 24

ESL For Adults: Intermediate Level. 11a.m.
Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Join conversational group: Wednesdays with Richard.

MONDAY/DEC. 29

ESL For Adults: Intermediate Level. 11a.m.
Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Join conversational group: Mondays with Richard.

TUESDAY/DEC. 30

ESL For Adults: Intermediate Level. 10 a.m.
Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Join conversational group: Tuesdays with Elayne.

WEDNESDAY/DEC.31

ESL For Adults: Intermediate Level. 11 a.m.
Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Join conversational group: Wednesdays with Richard.

announced. Emily's essay examined how security sector reform contributes to sustainable peace.

Douglas Graney, who teaches history and social studies at Herndon High, was named Virginia Teacher of the Year by the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Department of Virginia. Graney was one of three teachers (elementary, middle, and high school) recognized by the state VFW for their commitment to teach citizenship education topics to students, and to promote America's history, traditions, and institutions. Graney received his award in Williamsburg last month. He teaches U.S. and Virginia history, U.S. government, and philosophy, and recently completed the renewal process for board certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Herndon area students **Michael H. Chen, Emily Schaal, Jefferson Sheron and Tae-Jung Yang** of Herndon High School; and **Jocelyn Huang, Sreenath Are, Rohan Banerjee, Ashwin Basana, Arjun Iyer, Aseem Jain, Anne Li, Soumya Mishra, Christin Park, Rohan Punnoose, Sarah Quettawala, Simran Rohatgi, Snigdha Srivastava and Tony Xiao** of Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology are National Merit Scholarship semifinalists.



Merry Christmas

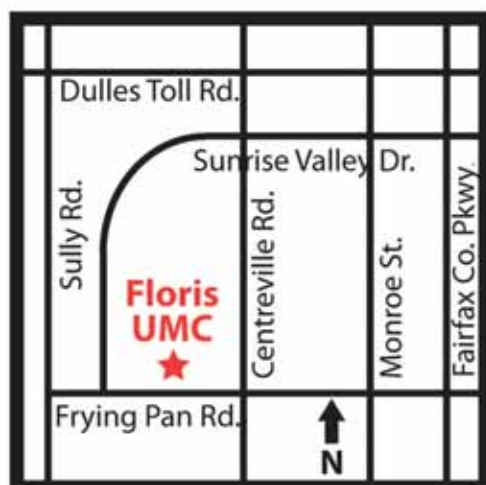
from Floris United Methodist Church!

Christmas reminds us of the warmth of family and the joy of friendship. We anticipate the giving and receiving of gifts. As we grow older, we often find that the anticipation of receiving the perfect gift fades.

Are you longing for that child-like anticipation again? Come to Floris United Methodist Church this Christmas Eve to hear about the greatest gift that you could receive this Christmas.

www.florismc.org/MerryChristmas

We hope you'll join us.



13600 Frying Pan Rd. Herndon, VA 20171
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Christmas Eve Service

Tuesday, December 23

Traditional 7 PM

Christmas Eve Services

Wednesday, December 24

Preschool..... 3 PM
Family..... 5 PM
Contemporary (Spanish Interpreter)..... 7 PM
Traditional (Sign Language Interpreter)..... 9 PM
Communion..... 11 PM

Christmas Day Service

Thursday, December 25

South Asian Traditional..... 10 AM