

**Madison High School seniors Alejandro Tsocalis and Noelle Anderson, wrap small presents that will be included in the box of food for the students of Marshall Road Elementary School.**

# Sharing With Children in Need

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Cats Find Forever Homes**

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The Christmas market at Tysons Plaza.

## Christmas Market in Tysons

The Tysons Christmas Market is in its second year, this year taking advantage of the new plaza area connecting the mall to adjoining buildings. Lured by the scent of roasting nuts, bratwurst, mulled cider, and baked goods, shoppers will also find an excellent selection of gifts, warm hats, leather, wood and other crafts. The market is open from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. from now until Dec. 24, when it closes at 4 p.m.

— EDEN BROWN



Arnim von Friedenburg and Kathryn Goetz bring the taste of Germany to the market, and also take orders online at [www.germanfoods.org](http://www.germanfoods.org)

PHOTOS BY EDEN BROWN/THE CONNECTION



No Christmas market is complete without a skating rink.



# Scaling the Mountain

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From left, seniors Meghan Chen, Bao Randrianarivelo, and junior Mariella Toro, wrap and reinforce boxes that will contain food and supplies for students at Marshall Road Elementary School in Vienna.



Students collect supplies, such as toilet paper and detergent, in addition to food during the Spanish and French honor societies' food drive for Marshall Road Elementary School in Vienna.

## Food, Supplies for Children in Need

**Madison High language honor societies help those who go hungry.**

BY ABIGAIL CONSTANTINO  
THE CONNECTION

**M**embers of the Spanish and French Honor Societies at James Madison High School collected non-perishable foods to distribute to 20 children at Marshall Road Elementary School.

After school let out on Tuesday, Dec. 9, members of both honor societies began to gather the food and household items stu-

dents and parents collected through their drive and reinforce and wrap the empty paper boxes in festive holiday paper where the items will be placed. Each box will be given to a needy student at Marshall Road Elementary School.

"Lots of people don't know that people in the county go hungry," said Spanish Honor Society officer junior Chris Weech, of Vienna. He said that the food drive helps in raising awareness of that issue.

The food drive has been a "labor of love,"

said Spanish teacher Carolyn Carroll. She said that the students' families also got involved and one of the parents brought a minivan filled with food.

The Spanish and French Honor societies committed to 20 boxes but Carroll believes that they will have enough for more. The elementary school will receive the extra supplies and food as Carroll said that the teachers at Marshall Road Elementary School have sent students home with food on Fridays so they will have something to

eat over the weekend.

Madison students know that there are families in need in their own community. Senior Alejandro Tsocalis, of Oakton, whose mother works in a shelter, knows that a lot of people need help and how important it is for everybody to pitch in. Through her church, senior Bao Randrianarivelo, of Vienna, knows that helping those less fortunate "builds you as a person."

"It's nice to know people are willing to help," said senior Meghan Chen, of Oakton, especially during the holiday season. "It's a good time to give back," said junior Mariella Toro, of Vienna.

## Proposed Connector Slated for 2018

BY REENA SINGH  
THE CONNECTION

**T**he proposed Jones Branch Connector may be the answer to some of the congestion issues on Route 7.

During the public hearing on Dec. 10 at Spring Hill Elementary for the pending transportation project, Project Manager John Dresser said it would be a pressure valve for the increasingly heavy traffic through Tysons Corner during rush hour.

"We need another connector to get through Tysons on Route 123," he said.

The connector will run over I-495 from Jones Branch Drive to Dolley Madison Boulevard by the McLean Metro Station. Current plans, which are not official yet, include sidewalks and bike lanes on both sides of the four lane roadway. The connector on the roadway will include a

grassy median and room for landscaping in between the bike lane and the sidewalks.

"The plans are now 40 percent complete," said Dresser.

The project is expected to last between 25 and 30 months. The public comment period will last until Dec. 20.

"We are here to take your questions and comments and use those to refine the project," said Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) Director Tom Biesiadny.

Dresser said he expects to begin the right-of-way acquisition phase next fall and begin construction by late 2016 or early 2017. Expected completion is 2018.

The east side, connecting to Route 123, will be built first. Once completed, it will be opened to traffic as the side connected



COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY

**Aerial view of proposed Jones Branch Connector.**

to Jones Branch Road is worked on.

Gates of McLean Unit Owners Association President Lisa Samuels spoke out at the meeting about resident concerns.

"Our biggest concern is access," she said. "We really have significant concerns with getting home at night."

## Jones Branch Connector hoped to relieve Tysons traffic.

She was worried also about the amount of noise the night construction would make, but Dresser said the contractor has to abide by local noise regulations.

When he mentioned a possible soundwall being erected by the Gates of McLean if residents were interested, Samuels became excited.

"I can tell you the answer to that is yes," she said.

Other locals were happy to see pedestrian and bicycle-friendly access in the project.

"Until now, there had been no other way for cyclists to get from McLean to Tysons Corner," said Dennis Frew, McLean, a county bicycle advocate. "This will be the only safe way in."

More information and photos can be found at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot/jonesbranch.htm>.



# Running with Purpose

Colleagues say delegate candidate Craig Parisot's 'got his priorities straight.'

BY REENA SINGH  
THE CONNECTION

**C**raig Parisot can juggle. Whether that means candy canes or work-life balance, he catches everything that comes his way.

With a growing new family, a growing list of leadership roles in the community and an active campaign as the Republican candidate for delegate for the 34th District, this is a job that requires both hands.

"If there is one thing I want people to know about me, it's that I'm not looking for purpose by running," he said, sitting in the tight quarters of his McLean "Parisot for Delegate" office. "I'm running with purpose."

Although his son Jackson is only 12 weeks old, Parisot has just weeks to knock on doors and pound pavement to win voters over. He loves having the opportunity, however, to talk to the diverse group of locals that make up McLean, Great Falls and parts of Loudoun County, an opportunity he said he would almost never have without running for office.

"It inspires me to do right by all people," he said.

He said his parents divorced when he was a young boy in South Carolina. His mother raised him, and at one point, the family had to go on food assistance while she put herself through school to become a nurse.

"I always paid attention," he said. "I asked why my mom was a Republican - what does it mean to be a Republican?"

Working in the House of Representatives, his eyes were opened to how the legislative process worked. His interest in politics found its spark.

"It's about being conservative," he said about what it means to be Republican. "The Republican Party I know and love welcomes everybody."

**HE MOVED** to the area 13 years ago after serving as an officer in the U.S. Air Force.

Sang Yi, a Navy reserve officer who met Parisot through community activities, says that service in the military gives him an edge to run for office.

"I think when people serve in the military, they learn leadership skills that are not readily available at other jobs," he said.

Also, with a child under 3 months, Yi is impressed that Parisot decided to run in a drastically shortened race.

"He's probably not getting a lot of sleep right now," he said. "He's a remarkable guy."

His wife, Kristen, and he lived in Washington, D.C. while they worked for many years, then moved to McLean three years ago.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED BY SEAN MCCORT

**Kristen Parisot, Don Landefeld - Godfather - and Jill - Godmother - look towards the priest as Craig Parisot holds his son, Jackson, during his christening.**

They finally bought a house in McLean two years ago. They also have a family farm in Great Falls where Kristen can ride horses.

Two years ago, he also sold his company Aperio International, that once had nearly 300 employees. He said the benefits and fair wages the company provided made them competitive in the field.

"NOVABizPAC, the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce's political action committee, is pleased to endorse and support Craig Parisot for Delegate," said NOVABizPAC Chair Scott McGeary in a press release announcing their endorsement. "It is our hope

that Mr. Parisot will take his pro-business and pro-jobs policy positions to Richmond to ensure Virginia remains a top state for business."

Serving in the military gave him drive to serve in other ways once he retired. He has taken leadership roles in local nonprofit boards and goes to McLean Citizen Association and Great Falls Citizen Association meetings to listen to the issues that impact the area the most.

In pursuit of a way to serve during the short time he lived in Chevy Chase, Md., he decided to run for mayor - something he

## Q&A: Get to Know Craig Parisot

**What are your top three accomplishments?**

**Craig Parisot:** The number one is I am so fortunate to have a magnificent wife and things just keep getting better every day. I have such an adorable, healthy child.

My second is my service as an officer in the United States Air Force.

The third is really growing and operating a successful business where we had nearly 300 employees at one point. And we never missed a payroll. That was really special.

**What would be your top three priorities as delegate?**

**Parisot:** Growing and diversifying the Commonwealth's economy. Transportation. Education. They all go hand in hand. They're all key investments.

**Why should our readers vote for you?**

**Parisot:** I'm very deliberate about the decisions that I make. I'm deeply committed to this community, deeply committed to being the best delegate that I could possibly be. I've absolutely got the best background for this. I think it translates for the needs and priorities for the 34th district, and I am not a career politician.

**How would you show off Northern**

**Virginia to out of town friends?**

**Parisot:** First of all, we'd have to use a car, so hopefully the roads are clear and we don't come across much congestion. I would start by taking them out to our farm in Great Falls, just to show them the raw beauty. I'd then show them all my favorite spots here in McLean. If we get a little more daylight, we might go out to Great Falls National Park, take a little hike, because it's just so gorgeous.

**What would people find surprising about you?**

**Parisot:** I can juggle - apparently not odd sized objects - but cylindrical objects that in particular. I think the other thing is that my entrepreneurial roots run really deep. I was that typical kid that had the lemonade stand on the side of the road on a hot sunny day to make a little bit of money, because I do come from a single family home.

**How do you relax off the campaign trail?**

**Parisot:** Well, when you do get time, it's really about spending time with my family, making every opportunity to spend those moments with my wife and my son. Especially now, I'm watching him grow up and discover life.

## Bio:

**Current Position:** CEO of Aperio International

**Residence:** McLean

**Spouse:** Kristen

**Children:** Jackson, 12 weeks old

**Education:** University of South Carolina BA  
English, California State Polytechnic University  
Pomona MBA

**Current and previous organizations:**

President of Volunteer Fairfax, Board of World  
Police and Fire Games, Northern Virginia  
Technology Council, McLean Citizens  
Association, Great Falls Citizens Association.

says his opponents misread about his intentions.

"I knew I wasn't going to win," he said. "But I learned a lot of things. It really helped me to learn about my communities very quickly."

What he is learning from local communities this time around are the issues he plans to take to office if he wins: boosting the state's economy, promoting education and improving transportation. He believes that all three of those requests are connected.

"Listen, listen, listen," said Parisot. "You will learn so much, and your actions will be so much better by listening."

Fran Fisher, of Vienna, met Parisot when they were campaigning over the summer for Barbara Comstock's run for U.S. Congress. Fisher said she briefly contemplated running for her open delegate seat, but is excited that Parisot decided to.

"He's got his priorities straight," she said. "He's level-headed. He's got a good grasp of the issues of the district."

She also noted that his business background gives him an edge.

"As a business person, he understands a budget and how to live within a budget," she said.

**THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE** he is facing is just letting voters know there is an election in January even though there was just an election in November. Between those two elections are some of the biggest holidays to nearly every denomination - but he does not want to compete with them. Rather, he is collecting canned goods while on the campaign trail to donate to a food pantry.

Ryan Rauner, who met Parisot through the Finance Committee on the Fairfax County Republican Committee, said Parisot's success in business will make him a successful delegate. He described his colleague as passionate, dedicated and business-minded - a smart person who understands the issues.

"He doesn't need to become delegate," he said. "I know he's doing it because public service is a service. It's not a career for him, it's a passion."

Jim Tragakis serves on the Volunteer Fairfax board that Parisot leads. He said he was excited when he found out Parisot was running for delegate.

"He's very strategic in his thinking and focuses on getting things done," said Tragakis. "I can see him working his way into leadership positions like committee chairman and other positions like that."

Parisot continues to knock on doors and go to community meetings where he can listen in and hopefully take those concerns to the General Assembly one day.

"When people talk to me, they know what they're getting," Parisot said.



# News

## Wolf Honored as Defender of Human Rights, Dignity

**U**.S. Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ) delivered the following speech on the House floor on Dec. 10, 2014, honoring retiring U.S. Rep. Frank Wolf (R-10):

Congressman Frank Wolf of Virginia will cast his last vote this week, capping off a remarkable 34-year career of altruistic deeds, selfless service, bold humanitarian initiatives, and durable achievement.

Both of us got elected in 1980, the Ronald Reagan class. Many of us wanted to have a Special Order tomorrow night, including the gentleman from Virginia, Bob Goodlatte, to honor him. But he said, "Absolutely not." That is the kind of guy he is. He never seeks any attention. But I am here today. Tough. I am going to speak about him.

At home and overseas, Frank Wolf, the William Wilberforce of the United States House of Representatives, has been an indefatigable defender of human rights and human dignity. Last week, *WORLD* magazine named Frank Wolf the 2014 Daniel of the Year.

Whether it be helping a young mother in a refugee camp in Sudan or political prisoners in Russia or jailed pastors in China or any number of the marginalized and persecuted, Frank Wolf has always sought to rescue and to protect.

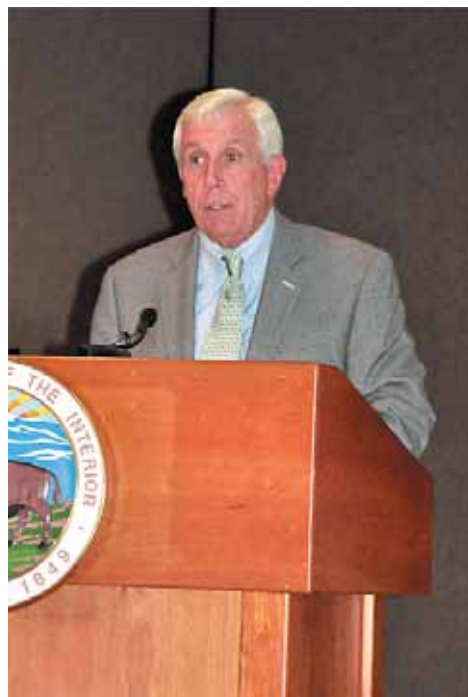
Frank Wolf is the author of the landmark International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, which established both an independent commission and a State Department office led by an ambassador at large wholly dedicated to safeguarding—via sanctions, if necessary—religious freedom.

I saw firsthand his devotion to human rights in a myriad of ways, including trips with Frank to a prison camp in the Soviet Union, the infamous Perm camp 35; a gulag in China, Beijing prison number 2, right after Tiananmen Square; Vukovar, a city under military siege during the war in Yugoslavia; and Romania on behalf of persecuted believers, just to name a few. He has chaired the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission with great distinction.

A man of deep Christian faith, Frank Wolf not only passionately believes in Jesus Christ but "walks" as St. Paul admonishes us, in a way worthy of his calling. Frank Wolf is a devoted family man. He, along with his wife, Carolyn, have five adult children and 16 grandchildren, all of whom are the apples of his eye.

In his district, Frank Wolf has delivered as well. His casework is superb and responsive; his staff reflects their boss' commitment to assist and to solve problems big and small.

As chairman of several Appropriations subcommittees over the years—including his latest assignment as chair of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science—he has authored nine major appropriations laws, including five transportation statutes that funded major projects in his district and throughout the Nation.



**U.S. Rep Frank Wolf (R-10) retires after 34 years in Congress.**

Frank Wolf's many other accomplishments include: His bipartisan Bring Jobs Back to America Act, designed to return manufacturing jobs to the U.S. from countries like China; raising awareness of the growing threat from cyber attacks; efforts to address America's unconscionable debt—it is \$18 trillion now—through bipartisan reforms; the formation of two anti-gang task forces operating in the region, as well as the creation of the National Gang Intelligence Center in the FBI; and the funding of the 103-mile Metrorail system.

He led the way in obtaining about \$1 billion to extend Metrorail through Tysons and out to Dulles Airport and to Loudon County. He pushed for lower carpool restrictions on I-66 and has helped many commuters get to the Capitol and to Washington. He led efforts to place Ronald Reagan Washington National and Washington Dulles International airports under a regional authority, providing the capital to build a new terminal at Reagan National and vastly expand Dulles.

He has been a leader in fighting with great tenacity Lyme disease. He has fought to address hunger by creating the Feds Feed Families food drive, which has generated more than 15 million pounds of donated food. And in 2014, he put language into an omnibus bill to create the National Commission on Hunger.

And one of the Nation's newest national parks is in his 10th District, the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historic Park, established in 2002 through yet another one of Frank's laws.

Finally, let me make it clear: Frank Wolf's departure from the House is only the end of his current place of service to humanity and marks a new beginning, a transition to the private sector, where he will continue and even expand upon his extraordinary life's work.



# MIDDLEBURG

## REAL ESTATE

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 <p><b>CL8447613</b> <b>\$10,900,000</b>  <b>BERRYVILLE</b> - Majestically positioned on the Blue Ridge Mtns, 472 acre (9 parcels) Cassique Farm backs up to Appalachian Trail. 4 bdrm, 4.5 bath home w/ spectacular views, entertainment barn w/ 8 stalls, 2 wash bays, 8 pastures, 8 run-in barns, 6 wells, 4 septic, and 2 ponds.            Peter Pejacevich 540.270.3835 Scott Buzzelli 540.454.1399</p>	 <p><b>FQ8470391</b> <b>\$4,300,000</b>  <b>UPPERVILLE</b> - Brick colonial on 50+ gorgeous acres in Greystone. 9000+ sq. ft. of spectacular living space, 3 finished levels. Heated pool, tennis court &amp; brilliant gardens overlook picturesque pond w/ fabulous mtn views. Private &amp; secluded.            Scott Buzzelli 540.454.1399 Peter Pejacevich 540.270.3835</p>
 <p><b>LO8269159</b> <b>\$2,800,000</b>  <b>MIDDLEBURG</b> - Beautiful stone home on 40+ acres just minutes from the town of Middleburg. Goose creek runs through the property. 4 bdrm 5 bath house is perfect for entertaining. Exquisite 8-stall stone horse barn with tack room. Additional guest house and lot available.            Scott Buzzelli 540.454.1399 Peter Pejacevich 540.270.3835</p>	 <p><b>LO8441685</b> <b>\$2,297,000</b>  <b>STONEBROOK FARM</b> - c.1750 house w/ Stone Addition c. 1793 &amp; recent total renovation w/ all of the charm of period home coupled w/ modern amenities. 3 additional guest houses, fantastic horse facilities, riding arena, 8+ stall barn/living space.            Peter Pejacevich 540.270.3835 Scott Buzzelli 540.454.1399</p>
 <p><b>LO8175796</b> <b>\$1,765,000</b>  <b>ROBIN CIRCLE, LEESBURG</b> - Stone, brick and cedar estate on 3.54 acres. Heated indoor pool, a sports pub, racquetball court w/ hoop, audio/video system, roof top pavilion. 2, 2-Car garages &amp; caretaker apartment.            Peter Pejacevich 540.270.3835 Scott Buzzelli 540.454.1399</p>	 <p><b>LO8412399</b> <b>\$1,495,000</b>  <b>PURCELLVILLE</b> - Antique brick &amp; stone home on 6.5 beautiful acres w/ mtn views. 7 fireplaces &amp; solid cherry floors. 5 bdrms, 3 1/2 baths. Carriage house wing has two bedrooms/ large living area/kitchen area.            Scott Buzzelli 540.454.1399 Peter Pejacevich 540.270.3835</p>
 <p><b>LO8105401</b> <b>\$1,190,000</b>  <b>MIDDLEBURG</b> - Spacious brick house w/ roof top OBSERVATORY in private setting. Master suite w/ lots of closets. Family room w/ fireplace connects to open kitchen. 4 car garage w/ work benches. Lower level w/ in-law suite, media room &amp; several work rooms. Pond. Mint condition.            Scott Buzzelli 540.454.1399 Peter Pejacevich 540.270.3835</p>	 <p><b>LO8092159</b> <b>\$995,000</b>  <b>BLUEMONT</b> - Custom all brick ranch with amazing views. Spacious open floor plan with over 6,000 sq. ft. of finished space. Large new barn/ man cave for all your toys. Daylight basement with rear brick terrace. Extensive landscaping and very private. Near Bluemont vineyards.            Scott Buzzelli 540.454.1399 Peter Pejacevich 540.270.3835</p>
 <p><b>LO8509475</b> <b>\$299,900</b>  <b>MIDDLEBURG</b> - Nice Bungalow rental. In the process of getting fresh paint &amp; cleaning. Should be ready to go in 2 weeks. Agent owned, motivated to sell before the end of the year. Granite countertop, SS Appliances, Very private off gravel road, one Acre lot, close to school, Ceramic baths and showers. In good condition.            Scott Buzzelli 540.454.1399 Peter Pejacevich 540.270.3835</p>	 <p><b>LO8504319</b> <b>\$278,900</b>  <b>36952 CHARLES TOWN PIKE, PURCELLVILLE</b> - Charming historic home in town of Hillsboro. Welcoming front porch, large stone FP in living room, beautiful HD floors, renovated country kitchen. Private deck, beautiful rear yard. Close to vineyard!            Leslie Woods-Hulse (c)703.728.7370 (o)540.338.7770</p>



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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.

### 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

## 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](http://www.odbfairfax.com/holiday)
- ❖ **Cornerstones**, 11150 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 210, Reston, serving Reston and Herndon. 571-323-9555, [www.cornerstonesva.org](http://www.cornerstonesva.org). Programs and services include the Embry 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](mailto:volunteer@facetscares.org). [www.facetscares.org](http://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](http://www.thealternativehouse.org)

- ❖ **SHARE** of McLean seeks donations of grocery gift cards and more. Checks and gift cards can be sent to: Holiday Celebration, Share, Inc. PO Box 210, McLean, VA 22101. 703-284-2179. [www.SHAREofMcLean.org](http://www.SHAREofMcLean.org)
- ❖ **Committee for Helping Others (CHO)**, Vienna, organized in 1969 by a group of concerned churches and individuals in the Dunn Loring, Merrifield, Oakton, Vienna community to provide simple, loving charity to those in need. 703-281-7614 <http://www.cho-va.com>
- ❖ **Herndon-Reston FISH** (For Immediate Sympathetic Help), 336 Victory Drive, Herndon, 703-391-0105 Also operates thrift store, The Bargain Loft, 336 Victory Drive, Herndon, 20170, 703-437-0600 <http://herndonrestonfish.org>
- ❖ **Northern Virginia Family Service**, providing gift cards and toys for 1,700 of Northern Virginia's neediest families this season. 10455 White Granite Drive Suite 100, Oakton, VA 22124 703-385-3267 <http://www.nvfs.org/>
- ❖ **Office to End and Prevent Homelessness** has a strategic road map to prevent and end homelessness, created by the Planning Committee to End Homelessness, in partnership with the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church, government agencies,

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](http://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](mailto:ALNorthernVA@yahoo.com) or see [www.northernvirginia.assistanceleague.org](http://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.

## Vienna & Oakton CONNECTION

[www.ConnectionNewspapers.com](http://www.ConnectionNewspapers.com)

An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by  
**Local Media Connection LLC**

**1606 King Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314**

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# An Essay To Remember

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

Local educators offer advice on acing independent school admission essays and interviews.

**W**hile many are knee-deep in wrapping paper and eggnog, 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."

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Rev. Joe Acanfora says that church is the people who worship, "It's a who, not a place."

PHOTO BY ABIGAIL CONSTANTINO/ THE CONNECTION

# Church Without Walls Finds Its Way

## Church of the Apostles continues despite losing "The Meeting Place."

BY ABIGAIL CONSTANTINO THE CONNECTION

Not all those who wander are lost. The Church of the Apostles has offices in Fairfax but it has held services in different locations since losing "The Meeting Place" in Pickett Road in 2012, where it had been since 1974. Its primary worship location is in Oakton at the Whole Word Fellowship but its members have attended services at several other churches and even in Van Dyck Park in Fairfax. Church of the Apostles leader Rev. Joe Acanfora said that the Whole Word

Fellowship has been a "friendly church" to his congregation. Services are planned well in advance, so the 350 members of the church know where to meet. "Church is the people of God. It's a who, not a place," said Acanfora. But despite the absence of a physical location, the church manages to reach out to the community throughout the year, through its collaboration with Bethany House and its hypothermia initiatives. Last Saturday, Church of the Apostles presented "Christmas in Bethlehem," a re-enactment of what it was like in the town where and when Jesus Christ was born. In 2006, the Church of the Apostles, along with 10 other churches, severed ties with the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia over schisms within the denomination, among them gay and same-sex issues. In 2012, the Virginia Supreme Court upheld the lower court's decision restoring properties, which the seceding churches held, to the Episcopal Church.

# News

## Oakton Resident Helps Older Cats Find Forever Homes

### County shelter volunteer Stefani Sacripante maintains Facebook page dedicated to shelter pets.

By Donna Manz The Connection

Stefani Sacripante of Oakton is a trained chef teaching at Culinary Cooking School, a mother of school-aged children, a college student in art history, and a volunteer with the Fairfax County Animal Shelter (FCAS). And, amid this multitude of activities, Sacripante makes time to promote the adoption of older (read: "senior") cats, via social media, with support from the County's animal shelter and its volunteer professional photographer, Marillyn Gaizband. "When you adopt a senior animal, they know you saved them," said Sacripante. "They're appreciative." Sacripante visited the Fairfax Shelter to adopt a cat six years ago. "I realized these cats need help." Working with them in

the shelter and publicizing their search for a permanent home became Sacripante's mission once her children went to school. Shelter staff and volunteers trained Sacripante to work in the cat-room, socializing the cats to ready them for adoption. Gaizband donates her expertise to photograph the animals for media promotion, and this is where Sacripante initiates her personal involvement in the media process. "I wrangle the cats to get them arranged, I hold them down," Sacripante said. "I always wear short sleeves because, in five minutes, I'm sweating." Kittens, she said, are an "easy sell." Their photos go up on Facebook and they're gone. "So, we focus on the older cats." To help get older cats adopted, their photos and bios are broadcast on Facebook by the shelter, Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, and Sacripante's own dedicated Facebook page, NoVa Cats. To be



PHOTO BY MARILYN GAIZBAND

Oakton resident Stefani Sacripante promotes the adoption of older cats through her dedicated Facebook page, NoVa Cats. Oscar is waiting at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter for his forever home.

shelter's internal collection. "It really does take a village," she said. "One thing I'm really careful about on my page is not to over-

## More Information

Visit [www.facebook.com/NOVACATS](http://www.facebook.com/NOVACATS) to view cats available for adoption at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter and other local rescue sites. To read about events hosted by the Fairfax County Animal Shelter and family pets available for adoption or fostering, go to [www.facebook.com/FairfaxCountyAnimalShelter](http://www.facebook.com/FairfaxCountyAnimalShelter). The Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter is a volunteer fundraising supporter of the County shelter. It promotes adoption and funds surgical procedures not funded by the County, as well as sponsor fundraising events. To learn more about Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, see [www.facebook.com/FFCAS](http://www.facebook.com/FFCAS).

load with drama, with unhappy stories." She said she posts "heartwarming" additions to maintain human interest. The Facebook photos and accompanying stories do inspire people to adopt from the Fairfax County Animal Shelter and for this gratifying reason, Sacripante recommends potential adopters first confirm with the shelter that a particular pet is still available for adoption. For each pet adopted, another one waits for a home. "All animals deserve a warm, loving home. You have to work a lot harder to promote cats than dogs. Helping to get them photographed, writing their bios ...It's my calling."

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lost (adj): 1. unable to find the way. 2. not appreciated or understood. 3. no longer owned or known



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## CALENDAR



**"A Kodachrome Christmas" with Jay Byrd as Earlene Hoople comes to the Alden Theatre in McLean, Dec. 19-21.**

PHOTO BY KENNETH GALL/  
COURTESY OF PAT HAZELL

Send announcements to [north@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:north@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is Friday for the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged.

### THROUGH SUNDAY/DEC. 28

**Holiday Model Train Display.** 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Every Saturday and Sunday. Fun for all ages. Watch G-gauge trains wend their way through a miniature western town in the Colvin Run Barn. 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.

### 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/MARCH 11, 2015

**Ice Skating at Tysons Corner Center.** Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.; Friday-Saturday, 11 a.m. - 11 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Tysons Corner Outdoor Center, 1961 Chain Bridge Road, Tysons. Adults, \$10; Child/Senior/Military, \$9; Skate Rental, \$6; Group of 10+, \$12 and includes skates

### WEDNESDAY/DEC. 17

**Pokémon League.** 4:30 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Come play Pokémon with your friends! Ages 5-15.

**Storytime With Furry Puppet Friends.** 10:30a.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Avenue, McLean. Ages 2-5 with caregiver.

Join puppets and games guides on a journey through the life of a mammal. Real mamal fur and skulls help you learn about how they adapted and survived. Call and make arrangements for sign language interpreters, listening systems or real-time captioning.

**Small Wonders.** 10:30 a.m. Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Short stories for you and your child. Ages 13-23 months with adult.

**Newborn Storytime - Rock-A-Bye Baby.** 11:30. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Avenue East, Vienna. Newborn to 12-months-olds with caregiver enjoy an early literacy storytime enhanced by songs and rhythms. Sign up for waiting list.

**Artist Opening Reception.** 7-9 p.m. Havana Vintage, 1137 Walker Road, Great Falls. Artist Cecilia Aquino will be exhibiting her artwork at Havana Vintage, a boutique in Great Falls. It is a consignment shop with very interesting finds.

### THURSDAY/DEC. 18

**Winter Concert.** 7 p.m. Oakton High School, 2900 Sutton Road, Vienna. The Oakton High School Orchestra will be performing a winter concert. Free.

**Oakton Book Discussion Group.** 7 p.m. Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Come and join Oakton's book discussion group. We will discuss Corelli's Mandolin by Louis De Bernieres. Adults.

### FRIDAY/DEC. 19

**Art & Acoustic Bluegrass.** 7-9 p.m. Vienna Art Center, 115 Pleasant St. NW, Vienna. Bring your acoustic stringed instrument, your voice, your love of original art and join with the jam. Plenty of parking, chairs and a wooden floor to carry the sound. Free.

**Playdate Café.** 10 a.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls Toys and play for children. Coffee and Conversation for grown-ups.

**Drop-in Chess & Backgammon.** 3:30 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. All

skill levels welcome.

### FRIDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 19-21

**"A Kodachrome Christmas."** 2 & 8 p.m. The Alden, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. From the creator of "The Wonder Bread Years" and a writer for "Seinfeld" comes a one-woman, cable-access holiday special. Enter the colorful world of Earlene Hoople as she entertains with participatory bell ringing, cookie baking, a family slide show, some outrageous advice for surviving the holidays with relatives... and a whole lot more.

### SUNDAY/DEC. 21

**Living Nativity.** 5 p.m. Great Falls United Methodist Church, 10100 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. A Live Nativity outside. There will also be a Blue Christmas Worship at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary. 703-759-3705 or [office@greatfallsunc.org](mailto:office@greatfallsunc.org).

**Glorious Sounds of Christmas.** 4 and 7 p.m. Vienna Presbyterian Church, 124 Park Street, NE, Vienna. Free concert with performances.

### MONDAY/DEC. 22

**Spanish Conversation Group.** 1 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls Practice Spanish as a foreign language in this casual conversation group.

**Evening ESL Conversation Group.** 7 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Practice speaking English in this informal conversation group.

### TUESDAY/DEC. 30

**Winter Science Workshop for Kids.** 3:30 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Children will learn hands-on in this iSchool workshop. Registration required for this event. Ages 8-12.

### WEDNESDAY/DEC. 31

**New Year's Eve in Entyse Wine Bar & Lounge.** 9 p.m. to Midnight. The Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner,

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

[WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)



# CALENDAR



**Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, off Beulah Road, features more than 500,000 LED lights in its spectacular Winter Walk of Lights Festival. The walking tour of the light displays and scenes opened on Nov. 14 and runs through Jan. 4, 2015.**

FROM PAGE 10

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.  
**First Night Vienna.** 7 p.m. - midnight. Town of Vienna, Church Street. A family-friendly New Year's Eve Celebration. Featuring music, food, kids entertainment, and more. Four free music venues, a dance party, glitter tattoos, face painting, arts & crafts, balloon twisting, fire pits, corn hole, s'mores, popcorn popping, hot chocolate, hot apple cider, party hats, and much much more.  
**Jammin' Java's Good Vibes New Year's Party Featuring Melodime.** p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple East Avenue, Vienna. MELODIME, a rock band that blends haunting bittersweet melodies with emotionally rich vocals atop a bed of

Southern-flavored alt rock, is not like most bands. Tickets: \$25-\$35. <https://jamminjava.com>

## 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>.

## FRIDAY/JAN. 16, 2015

**The Iguanas.** 8 p.m. The Barns Wolftrap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. These Bourbon Street party-starters mix New Orleans jazz, R&B soul, and traditional Mexican melodies to cook up their eclectic musical gumbo. \$25. 703-255-1900. <http://www.wolftrap.org/Barns.aspx>.

## ONGOING

**Tai Chi Beginners' Practice.** Through March 21, 2015. Free Tai Chi beginners' practice. Open to all. Every Saturday, 8-9 a.m. St. Luke's Catholic School Gymnasium, 7005 Georgetown Pike, McLean.

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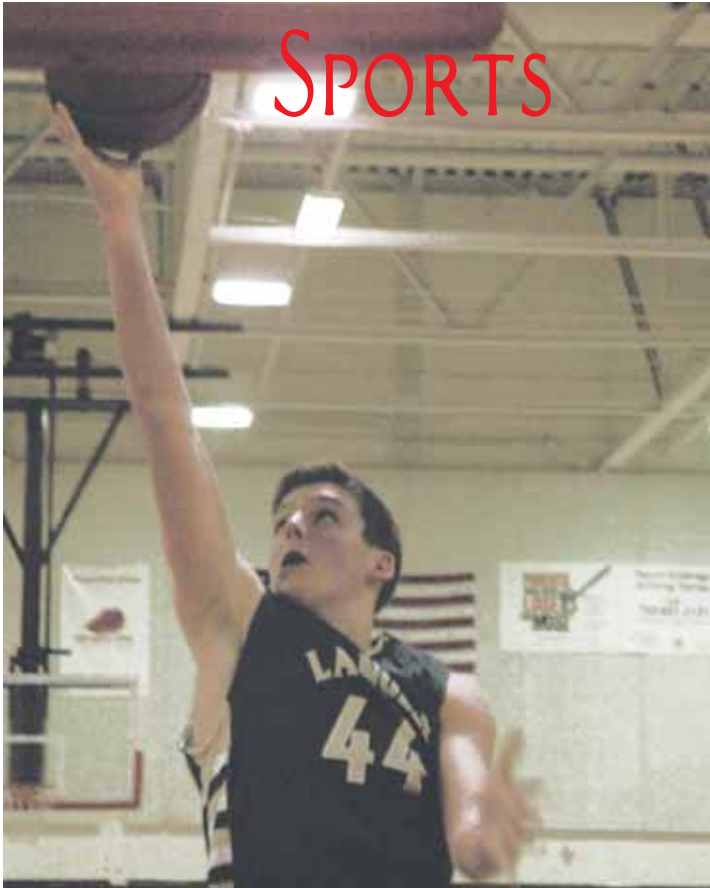
**The McLean Community Center**  
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[www.mcleancenter.org](http://www.mcleancenter.org)

## Season Brightens Reston Town Center

**This year's Christmas tree at Reston Town Center following a tree lighting ceremony on Nov. 28.**

PHOTOS BY JIM KIRBY/COURTESY OF RESTON TOWN CENTER





**Nate Shafer and the Langley boys' basketball team beat McLean on Friday.**



**Jackie Litschewski and the Langley girls' basketball team defeated McLean on Friday.**

# Langley Basketball Sweeps Rival McLean

**T**he Langley girls' and boys' basketball teams swept rival McLean in a doubleheader on Friday, Dec. 12 at McLean High School.

The Langley girls opened with a 46-33 victory, improving their record to 3-0. The Saxons opened the seasons with wins over Osbourn and Herndon.

McLean dropped to 1-3. The Highlanders lost to Wakefield and Robinson and defeated Woodson.

Langley faced Fairfax on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. The Saxons will host Chantilly at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 19. McLean faced Stone Bridge on Tuesday. The Highlanders will host Westfield at 5:45 p.m. on Friday.

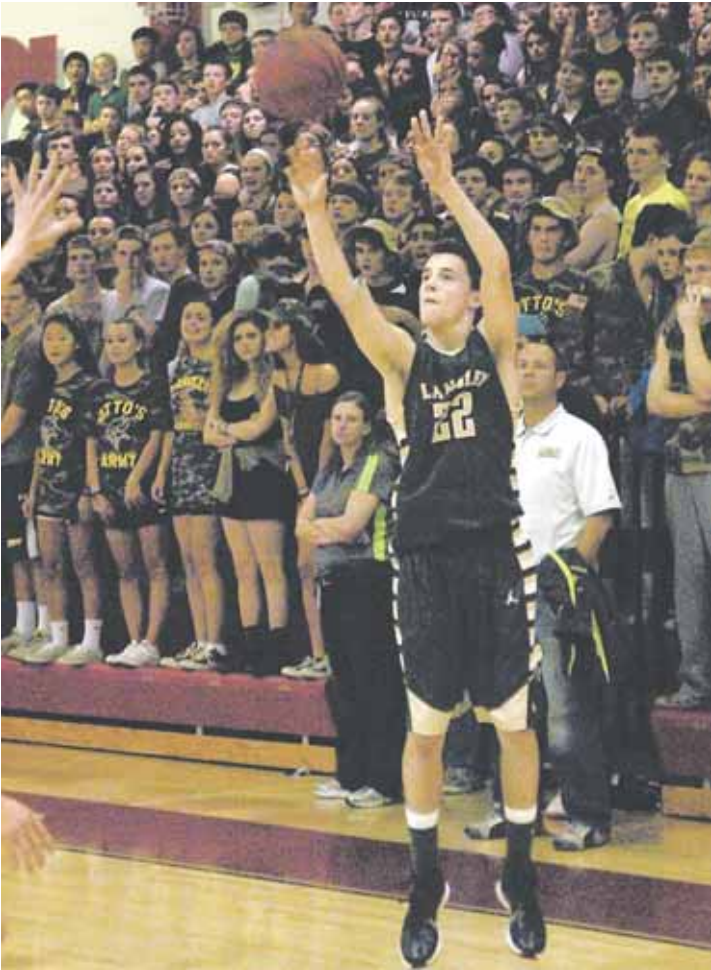
After the girls' victory, the Langley boys beat McLean 41-38 for their first win of the season. The Saxons faced Fairfax on Tuesday and will travel to face Chantilly at 7:30 p.m. on Friday.

The Highlanders faced Stone Bridge on Tuesday and will host Westfield at 7:30 p.m. on Friday.

PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION



**Freshman point guard Jordyn Callaghan and the Langley girls' basketball team started the 2014-15 season with three consecutive victories.**



**Langley junior guard Blake Mintz shoots a jumper against McLean on Friday.**

## BASKETBALL ROUNDUPS Oakton Girls' Basketball Beats Yorktown

The Oakton girls' basketball team defeated Yorktown 64-39 on Dec. 9, improving its record to 4-1.

The Cougars faced Lake Braddock on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. Oakton will travel to face Stafford at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 18.

## Marshall Boys' Basketball to Host Madison

The Madison boys' basketball team will travel to face Marshall at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 19.

Madison won its season opener against Oakton before dropping three straight. The Warhawks faced John Champeon Monday.

Marshall also dropped three of its first four, beating Centreville and losing to Annandale, Woodgrove and South Lakes.

The Statesmen faced Falls Church on Tuesday.

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## News

From left - Dream Team members David Pan, Christopher Gardner, Gwen Setia, Shaurya Saran, Christina Luckett and Max Golub.

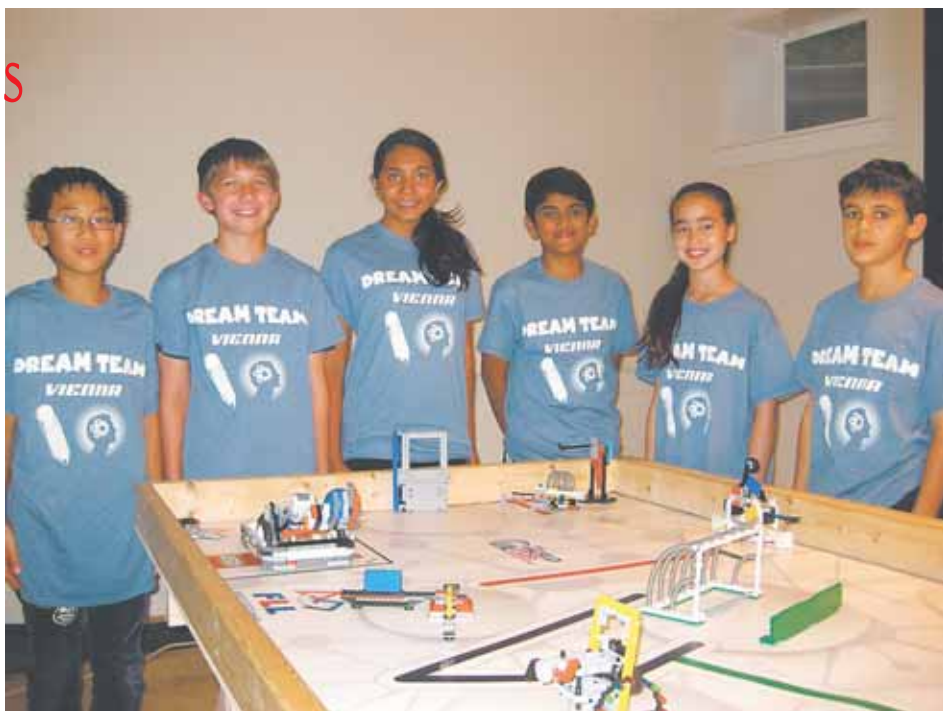


PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

## Dream Team Vienna Wins State Trophy

At the recent First Lego League VA/DC Robotics Championship Tournament, a team of sixth graders, named Dream Team Vienna, won the FLL Championship Research Project Award.

Dream Team Vienna teammates are: Shaurya Saran, Christina Luckett, Max Golub, David Pan, Christopher Gardner and Gwen Setia.

The state-level Robotics Research Project Award recognizes the outstanding robotics team that utilizes diverse resources to formulate an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the problem they have identified. This year's FLL theme was "Learning Unleashed."

Dream Team's research identified and addressed the need to narrow the achievement gap with respect to the subject of U.S. History. In particular, Dream Team's research solution included the formulation of an online game that aims to make U.S. History more engaging to all students, including English-as-a-Second-Language learners.

Dream Team had earned a berth at the VA/DC Championship Tournament because they had won the first-place Robot Performance Award and the first-place Grand Champions Trophy—for excellence in all of the judged categories of Robot Design, Robot Performance, Research Project, and Core Values/Teamwork—at the previous Regional Tournament at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, Alexandria.

### 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/](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults) and click on Volunteer Solutions.

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## SPECIAL CONNECTIONS CALENDAR

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday.

### DECEMBER

Publishing

Wellbeing.....12/3/14

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

Hanukkah begins December 16.

★Holiday Entertainment & Gift Guide II..12/16/14

A+ Camps & Schools.....12/16/14

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION.....12/24/14

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## 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.

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## CAPPIES REVIEWS

# Fictional Town, Real for Viewers

## Madison High's production of "Our Town."

BY LUCAS STRIGEL  
TUSCARORA HIGH SCHOOL

Plays can transport one to new places, perhaps a magical land, a pivotal point in history, or perhaps the small town of Grover's Corners. While it might sound stale, "Our Town," produced by James Madison High School, is a phenomenal play that always pulled me into the lives of these small town people.

"Our Town" was written in 1938 by none other than Thornton Wilder. The play is set in the small American town of Grover's Corners, New Hampshire, during the early 20th century. The "Stage Manager" acts as a narrator throughout the production, showing the everyday lives of the people who reside in the small town. Wilder decided to try something new, he decided to use minimal set pieces and props, relying on the use of pantomime. His logic behind this was "I know it's a play, you know it's a play, the only thing that's real in a play is emotion," so that's all he focused on. A difficult task, but given in the right hands, "Our Town" grew into a huge success, winning the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1938.

Surprisingly enough, James Madison did a great job of painting the image of their town with minimal and simple tech. Chad Robertson did a superb job on sound cues, they were always on point but not overwhelming whatsoever. Josh Laney, who worked on the lights, used different lighting cues for the different times of day, a cloudy moon, and even the stained glass windows of a church! The tech never overpowered the actors, but always provided

ominous sounds and lights the fit the scene.

Actor chemistry is the binding force of dramatic interpretation, and "Our Town" would be nothing without it. All of the actors in James Madison's "Our Town" had effective emotional bindings and feelings for one another. I felt as if they knew each other for all of their life, which immersed the audience. Another thing that added into the immersion was the use of effective pantomime. The various actors performed their daily tasks as if it was second nature, a good amount of work went into the pantomiming. One of the best moments of the show was when the two main children (Matthew Landsdell and Caroline Campbell) were conversing from their windows. They were across the street from each other, but I could feel the bond between them. What sealed this bond was the faint church choirs singing in the background, one could actually feel a part of their town.

In order to create a town with no set pieces, you have to have someone describe it to you, and that's where the Stage Manager (Mitch Coomer) came in. Coomer had a voice of gold, every little thing that came out of his mouth was perfectly enunciated with appropriate diction. Given into the wrong hands, the Stage Manager wouldn't be the interesting narrator that he was in this show.

The audience was always looking forward to hearing what he had to say, Coomer was an excellent casting choice.

The emotional binds brought everyone together, and pulled the audience in. James Madison may have thought they put on a play, but it was much more than that. "Our Town" hit the audience on an emotional level that they won't forget soon. This show really made one think about life and the purpose behind it. Although Grover's Corners is a fictional town, it will be real to the viewers forever.

## BULLETIN BOARD

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

### WEDNESDAY/DEC. 17

**Morning Book Group.** 10:30 a.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Call branch for book title.

**ESL Conversation Group.** 2 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Practice English in this casual conversation group.

**English Conversation Group for Adults.** 1 p.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Avenue, McLean. Come practice conversational English in a group setting.

### THURSDAY/DEC. 18

**New Voting Equipment Demonstration.** 4 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Staff from the Fairfax County Office of Elections will provide an opportunity to see and try out the brand new voting machines as well as provide an opportunity for photo ID processing and voter registration.

**Reading Buddies.** 4:30 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Beginning readers and teens practice reading together.

**Evening Book Group.** 7:30 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Call branch for Title.

### English Conversation One-on One. 1:30 p.m.

Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. English practice for a non-native speaker with a library volunteer. Call for appointment. Adults.

**Patrick Henry Book Club For Adults.** 1 p.m. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Avenue East, Vienna. What's Next by Ann Patchett.

**Homework Help 1st-8th Grade.** 6 p.m. Lorton Library, 9520 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Drop in for homework help.

**"Not Just For Teens" Book Club For Adults.** 7 p.m. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Avenue East, Vienna. Join us for desserts and a delightful discussion of Let It Snow by John Green, Lauren Myracle and Maureen Johnson.

### FRIDAY/DEC. 19

#### New Voting Equipment Demonstration.

11a.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Avenue, McLean. Do not miss this opportunity and come see for yourself! Fairfax County Office of Elections staff will process your photo ID and voter registration through the brand-new voting machine.

**English Conversation for Adults.** 10 a.m. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Avenue East, Vienna. Practise your English skills in a group setting.

**Pokemon League.** 3 p.m. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Avenue East, Vienna. Age 5-18 learn and play Pokemon.





Santa and his elves pull out of the Vienna Fire Department station to kick off the 2014 "Santa Run."



PHOTOS BY DONNA MANZ/THE CONNECTION

Santa's antique fire truck is aglow for its evening runs through Vienna.

## 'Santa Run' Brings Joy to Vienna Neighborhoods

Vienna fire department volunteers cruise through community with Santa and candy canes.

When Santa Claus cruises through Vienna-area neighborhoods on an antique fire truck, siren and holiday music blaring through loudspeakers, when North Pole elves dress up as Vienna Volunteer Fire Department [VVFD] EMTs handing out candy canes and dog biscuits, it marks the season of VVFD's annual week-long Santa Run in the days running up to Christmas.

**AT SANTA RUN KICK-OFF ON DEC. 13**, families rushed to the curb when they heard the siren and music. They came with babies in their arms and with toddlers on their shoulders, and with jumping dogs with wagging tails. Little kids jumped and screamed for Santa.

Grandparents stood at their doors, waving. Even construction workers and laborers paused to wave and snap a cell phone photo. At Meadowlane Park, tennis players waved their rackets as Santa rode by.

Along Maple Avenue and busy side streets, drivers from the opposite direction honked their horns and waved to Santa, while passengers who pulled alongside the fire truck videotaped by cell phone. When driver and elf-in-chief, Matt Snow, spotted groups of children in a Maple Avenue tree lot, he pulled the vehicle in, exciting parents and kids.

**EACH OF THE SANTA RUN** participants volunteers four-hour blocks of time to produce VVFD's Santa Run.



Frequently, families ask Santa and his elves to pose with their children or their dogs when VVFD's antique fire truck stops in their neighborhood.

Just in case anyone is wondering ...VVFD buys 2,500 candy canes for community distribution

and a lesser number of dog biscuits. Look for Santa and the fire truck through approximately Dec.

21. Inclement weather may alter the schedule.

—DONNA MANZ



Children and their parents rushed to the street when they heard the holiday music and sirens blaring from VVFD's antique fire truck. Santa waved, elves handed out candy canes.



Reagan Clyne, Sneha Kuchipudi, and Caroline Meier took time off from their North Pole duties to help Santa on his Dec. 13 "Santa Run" through the streets of Vienna. Volunteers from the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department ensure no Vienna neighborhoods are missed during the week prior to Christmas.



North Pole elves, fittingly dressed as EMTs, were tasked with handing out candy canes to children and dog biscuits to dogs along the way.