

Winning Holiday Decorating Contest

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Great Falls Volunteer Fire Department won the
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Kathleen Murphy Wins 34th District

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Great Falls Residents Reflect on Big Issues for Special Election

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Legislators Meet Constituents

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

Justin Dolan addressed the state delegates and senators from his wheelchair rather than the podium. The 34-year-old Falls Church resident has cerebral palsy, and received an Individual & Family Developmental Disabilities Support waiver.

"I can use my waiver to fund a staff person to help me with my daily care needs, when I can find someone who wants to work for \$11.47 an hour with no benefits," Dolan said. "The thing I really need is enough support for me to move out of my mom's house and live in the community with friends, but the waiver doesn't provide that."

Dolan asked for a reduction of the waiver wait list, a redesign of the waiver system itself to offer increased services. He was one of over 70 speakers given an opportunity to address a panel of delegates and senators about to travel to Richmond to begin the 2015 General Assembly session.

The forum took place Jan. 10 at the Fairfax County Government Center.

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Sharon Bulova was first to speak, speaking primarily on the importance of funding K-12 education in Fairfax County.



PHOTO BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

(From left) State Sen. Barbara Favola (D-31), Lenore Levin of Great Falls, Del. Ken Plum (D-36), State Sen. Dick Saslaw (D-35) and Del. Kathleen Murphy (D-34) meet following the Fairfax delegation public forum.

"We're pleased both the General Assembly and Governor McAuliffe were able to protect K-12 from recent funding cuts," she said. "In the longer term, we still need your help."

Bulova cited the more than 52,000 stu-

dents in FCPS that qualify for free and reduced lunch, a figure she said outnumbers the total population of all but four school divisions in the state.

FCPS School Board Chair Tammy Derenak Kaufax followed Bulova, claiming the cur-

General Assembly Fairfax delegation holds public meeting prior to session start in Richmond.

rent K-12 funding isn't serving the community well and decrying teachers' salary ranking with respect to the cost of living.

"I urge you to work on the SOL, reducing the impact of that assessment on students," she said.

Over 70 members of the public were each given three minutes to address the delegation. Though the subject matter varied from social services for mental illness and substance abuse disorders to filling circuit court judge vacancies, one common theme was the lack of resources, people trying to do more with less.

Several individuals spoke out about the closure of the Northern Virginia Training Center (NVTR), a state residence serving people with intellectual disabilities. Opened in 1973 at 9901 Braddock Road, the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities plans to close the NVTR in March 2016 in favor of a more community-based system.

"The quality of life has been been compromised by degrading services," said Judith Korf of Reston. Korf was at the forum representing the Parents and Associates of the Northern Virginia Training Center. "We need to keep it open in a smaller and more effective footprint."

VIEWPOINTS

What brought you out today?

— TIM PETERSON

Lenore Levin of Great Falls:

"I'm on the board of the ENdependence Center of Northern Virginia, a disabilities resource center. We've taken cuts and lost staff positions. We're hoping to have funding restored."



Stuart Mendelsohn of Great Falls:

"I'm here with the Fairfax Bar Association. Our court system is really at a crisis point. Our population has exploded and the business community has grown tremendously. We need to fund the entire 15 seats in our Circuit Court."



Candice Guillaudeu of McLean:

"I'm here supporting transportation alternatives and renewable energy."

Scott Peterson of Vienna:

"I'm here as executive director of the Checks and Balances Project, a nonprofit watchdog. In the aftermath of Bob McDonnell, we're hoping things can change with ethics. Too much coziness is allowed with corporations."



Jack Bruggeman of Vienna:

"I'm representing the Parents and Associates of the Northern Virginia Training Center and advocating for delaying the closure of the center."



Joseph Dailey of McLean:

"I'm here representing the juvenile domestic relations district court. We need to keep judges to make sure everyone has their day in court."

Ken Garnes of Vienna:

"I'm here as the chair of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, advocating for full time peer support for people with substance abuse disorders."



Tracey Phillips-Edman of Falls Church:

"I'm here supporting early intervention services. My daughter has cerebral palsy and my son has autism, and therapy is a part of everyday life. Early intervention was in no small way instrumental in giving my children a leg up."



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PHOTO BY REENA SINGH/THE CONNECTION

Kathleen Murphy, delegate-elect for the 34th District, thanks her staff during her victory party at McLean Community Center.

Kathleen Murphy Wins 34th District

Voters turn up despite snowstorm.

BY REENA SINGH
THE CONNECTION

Kathleen Murphy was greeted with cheers by more than a 100 supporters as she entered her victory party at McLean Community Center late Tuesday, Jan. 6.

The democrat won the 34th District seat of the state House of Delegates, 6,406 to 6,082, after Republican Craig Parisot conceded the race.

"I could not possibly be more proud to be the delegate-elect for the 34th District," said Murphy at her victory party. "I'm overwhelmed. I know from the very beginning, I have said this to you every single time - this was not my win. This was our win."

Parisot did not comment after his concession following the election or the week after.

According to the unofficial results on the website elections.virginia.gov, Murphy won 51 percent of the vote when all precincts turned in their results.

The site recorded 12,503 votes, 15 of which were write-ins. Election officers expected low turnouts after snow blanketed Loudoun and Fairfax counties, but when the skies cleared by mid-day, residents swung by their local polling places to cast their vote.

"We were only expecting 5 to 10 percent (turnout), but we're at 12 percent right now" said Langley High School Chief Election Officer Amanda Bridges around 3 p.m. Tuesday. "Now that the snow has melted or been plowed, we've had more people come."

Although school was in session despite the treacherous weather, Bridges said there were no disruptions.

"It's out of the way," she said about the polling location inside the school. "In one door and out the other."

AT GREAT FALLS LIBRARY, doors were constantly being opened by eager voters around 4 p.m.

"We are trying to get more ballots at each site, so that indicates that turnout has been heavier than usual," said site Chief Election Officer Joe Gofus.

He said the location had the same issue as Langley High School's polling location in the morning - with most of the voters showing up after 11 a.m. to avoid the snow.

"We were at about 50 in the first three hours, and now we have around 350," he said.

Arthur Kingdom, at Murphy's table, and Grant Grieco, at Parisot's table, spent the entire 13 hours in the cold outside the library, dedicated to the candidates they represented. Kingdom said he had to go home several times to change his shoes - which became so soaked in the wet snow outside the library that his feet became painfully cold.

"I think the first voter showed up at 6:15 a.m.," he said.

At the victory party, Murphy said her first order of business is finding out her schedule for the looming Virginia Assembly session.

"I'm looking forward to it," she said.

She's not the only one excited about the upcoming session. State Sen. Barbara Favola (D-31) was very excited as well.

"I think this was a vote for common sense solutions-oriented government," she said. "It's a great win for the 34th District."

CAUCUS CHAIRMAN Del. Scott Surovell (D-44) introduced Murphy to her supporters as the next House of Delegates representative.

"You could not have asked for a candidate who worked harder, and I think it really showed in the results tonight," he said during his speech. "We kicked some butt, gave ourselves some momentum and are showing Richmond one brand spanking new member."

He said he believed that with Murphy, Virginia passed Mississippi with the percentage of women in the legislature, which garnered both laughs and cheers.

Dranesville Supervisor John Foust said it is a win for the community.

"Kathleen is a wonderful person," he said. "I think she'll do a wonderful job representing us in Richmond."

VIEWPOINTS

Great Falls Residents Reflect on Big Issues for Special Election

— REENA SINGH

Marti Badila, pilates and yoga instructor, Great Falls:

"It's very important that people exercise their right to vote no matter what the weather."



Stephanie Adrian, government worker, Great Falls:

"It's my civic duty to vote. I care about who is in that position."

Bob Mort Ranta, retired, Great Falls:

"I voted for Kathleen Murphy. I felt the issues she represented were close to my views."



Denis Yaro, semi-retired technology professions, Great Falls:

"I always vote. If you don't vote, you're not participating. Most people vote for presidential elections, but the election that is the most important to you is for the individual closest to you."

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OPINION

Steps To Prevent Gun Violence

BY MARTINA LEINZ
PRESIDENT, NORTHERN VIRGINIA CHAPTER OF
THE BRADY CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT GUN
VIOLENCE

Legislators convening for the 2015 Virginia General Assembly session this month have a great opportunity to make the Commonwealth a safer place for us all by voting in favor of the modest and responsible recommendations recently put forth by Governor Terry McAuliffe regarding gun violence prevention.

Governor McAuliffe has proposed six key pieces of legislation intended to keep firearms away from dangerous individuals. Three of the initiatives are regarding criminal background checks at gun shows. Currently, only Federally Licensed Firearms Dealers are required to run criminal background checks prior to selling or transferring firearms. Private sellers are exempt from this requirement leaving the door wide open for criminals to easily gain access to guns.

One of McAuliffe's proposals would make unlawful purchases more difficult by prevent-

COMMENTARY

ing gun shows from advertising that they are not required to conduct background checks. Another proposal would give the State Police statutory authority to process voluntary background check requests of private sellers. The most substantive of the three proposals would close the existing loophole and require background checks for all purchases at gun shows.

None of these three proposals goes far enough. Ideally, criminal background checks would be universal; required on all firearms transactions including online sales. They are, however, a step in the right direction and would do much to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous individuals.

Another proposal is to return the limit of handgun purchases to one a month so the Commonwealth won't hold the dubious distinction of being one of the most prolific gun-running states in the nation. Other initiatives include a bill to keep guns from people subject to protective orders and one to revoke concealed handgun permits for parents delinquent on child support payments. This later proposal would affect the roughly 9,000 parents with

such permits who are delinquent collectively on child support payments of over \$15 million.

These six modest proposals would be very effective in reducing violent crime by keeping guns out of the hands of people who should not have them. None of the proposals would prevent law-abiding citizens from owning weapons and none would infringe upon Second Amendment rights of responsible adults.

With the Republicans controlling both the House of Delegates and the Senate, there are bound to be disagreements with any legislation proposed by Democratic Governor McAuliffe. However, everyone should agree to these modest proposals to keep Virginians safe. It is not a partisan issue; it is a simple matter of public health and safety.

With great opportunity comes great responsibility. I sincerely hope the General Assembly embraces that responsibility and votes accordingly. If you agree, please contact your elected officials and tell them you are counting on them to vote in support of all proposals to curb gun violence in the Commonwealth.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

County Shouldn't Spray Against Fall Cankerworm

To the Editor:

This letter is in response to a recent letter to the editor about Fairfax County's Fall Cankerworm Insecticide Spraying Program.

I am a professional entomologist and I have been in charge of the U. S. National Insect Collection at the Smithsonian Institution, a Fairfax County resident for 21 years, as well as a biologist experienced in conservation. I have been following the issues regarding the program in Fairfax County to spray *Bacillus thuringiensis var. kurstaki* (Btk), a kind of biological insecticide, to control a native moth, the Fall Cankerworm (scientifically, *Lepidoptera*: *Geometridae* or *Inchworms*).

Bt was first used to control *Lepidoptera* (moth) pests of agricultural crops; however, this naturally-occurring bacterium was found to be deadly to all moths and butterflies (*Lepidoptera*). Since this discovery there have been many types of Bt developed, but those used against moths are still deadly to non-target species, including native species. However, the areas in Fairfax County being sprayed are not crops or timberlands for harvest, but rather forests, parklands, neighborhood gardens. These are places to preserve wildlife and nature, and to protect them for the benefit of not only Fairfax County residents, but also for all Virginians and visitors. Without scientific monitoring or

surveys, we do not know how many or even which native species live in any particular area being sprayed. Therefore, to inadvertently spray this deadly microbe, even if the intention is to target certain areas, is not prudent.

The letter writer does acknowledge that spraying Btk can kill other kinds of caterpillars, "... but only if they are up and eating the first baby leaves." However, it is well known that plant chemicals that often prevent insects eating certain plants only are present in older leaves (for example, tannins in Oak leaves); therefore, many species of caterpillars are only able to eat, and even prefer, what he calls "baby leaves." He also claims that research shows that spraying increases the diversity of other species of butterflies and moths. However this research is apparently about the Gypsy Moth, a non-native (invasive) species from Asia. Reducing Gypsy Moth numbers could indirectly benefit other, native insect species. However, spraying to kill the native Fall Cankerworm is likely to severely harm many (as yet undetermined) native species of butterflies and moths and may even increase diversity of other non-native pest species potentially harming the fauna and flora of Fairfax County. Getting rid of the Fall Cankerworm will eliminate a potentially vital food source for many migratory and resident birds, as well as rep-

tiles, amphibians, predatory insects, and other wildlife that rely on caterpillars for their survival. His assertion that "birds can safely eat the dead caterpillars" is misleading because in spring (when the spraying actually takes place), many insectivorous birds need to find enough live caterpillars to feed their nestlings or fuel their northward migration and it is not clear if they would even eat dead caterpillars.

Episodic population outbreaks ("infestations") of native species such as the Fall Cankerworm are part of the natural ecological rhythm of our forests and woodlands, so why disrupt it? Based on previous research I have done (for example with Elms) and observations of the natural history in the forests of the northeastern USA, I do not believe that occasional and/or partial or even complete defoliation of most native eastern forest tree species will cause tree death. The severe defoliation from by Gypsy Moth in the 1970s demonstrated that only very severe and repeated defoliation over many years truly killed native trees; our local Fall Cankerworm outbreaks are natural and nowhere as severe and will not become so.

The far wiser approach to this problem would be for Fairfax County to sponsor some scientific surveys, to determine which species of butterflies and moths are

present in the intended treatment areas, i.e. the biological diversity. Also advice to homeowners about how to monitor and/or treat their gardens would be helpful.

I have discussed this Fall Cankerworm issue with several experts on butterflies and moths at the Smithsonian and the USDA and they all agree with my statements above.

In conclusion I feel strongly that Fairfax County should cease spraying against Fall Cankerworm, because such spraying does more harm than good to the ecosystems and neighborhoods of Fairfax County.

David G. Furth, Ph.D.
Department of Entomology
Smithsonian Institution

Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors.

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HomeLifeStyle

Backyard Dreaming

Local tastemakers say winter is the best time to plan an idyllic backyard retreat.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Spring may seem light years away from the frigid January temperatures, and lounging in your backyard is probably the last thing you want to do at the moment, but landscape designers say now is the time to start planning a summer retreat.

"January is a good time to start thinking about your backyard," said Alex Ikenson, co-owner of Home Escapes, located in Herndon. Home Escapes, which had specialized in hot tubs and outdoor furniture, merged recently with Urban Retreat, an indoor furniture and accessory company.

"A lot of things we sell are special order and take a few weeks to come in, so you don't want to start too late," said Ikenson.

From swim spas to fire pit tables, options for outdoor landscapes are plentiful.

"People now are spending more time at home and less time going on vacation, and making their backyards more of a living space, creating a living space," said Rosanne Tsantes, sales manager of Home Escapes.

"Outdoor furniture companies have responded to the surge with beautiful pieces of furniture."

Touted by industry insiders as comfortable, durable and easy to maintain, the array of outdoor fabrics on the market rival their indoor counterparts.

"The whole industry has expanded to true designer furniture and fabrics. There are hundreds of beautiful fabrics available," said Tsantes. "If you were to pick out aluminum furniture, you could choose from at least 10 frame colors, where it used to be just black and green. We have brush tones with gold tint, antique tones, ... There are some really gorgeous finishes."

Accessories can be customized to fit virtually every budget and space as well. "Everything is made to order," said Jodie Labovitch, an interior designer with Urban Retreat. "They're not pulling it off the shelf."

Outdoor fire pit tables, powered by gas, are crowd-pleasing accessories that come in every size from compact coffee table to dining room table. Styles run the gamut from rustic to sleek.

"The tabletops can be porcelain or alu-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROSANNE TSANTES

Swim spas, upscale furniture and fire pit tables are among the options in outdoor furnishings for those who want to create a backyard living space.

minum, stone or granite," said Tsantes. "There is even an artisan top that looks like carved leather. Now you can go into your back yard and feel like you're on vacation somewhere in the islands."

Adding the resort-like feel are swim spas, the large cousin of the ubiquitous hot tub.

"A swim spa allows you to exercise, even during the winter, by swimming against the current," said Tsantes. "They are like hot tubs, only about 12-16 feet long and eight feet wide. You can run out in the winter and swim and then sit on the spa bench, just like you would in a hot tub."

Even those who don't have an expansive backyard can create cozy retreats.

"Outdoor furniture companies are making pieces for those with small spaces to those with huge Great Falls homes with a large backyard," said Tsantes.



Options for outdoor décor, including swim spas and fire pit tables, abound at a newly formed showroom in Herndon.

"Indoor and outdoor furniture are now blending," said David Cintorino, president of Home Escapes. "People are using their outdoor spaces like indoor spaces, that is a current trend. Outdoor furniture companies are creating furniture to keep up with that trend."

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FAMILY FUN BINGO

**Friday, Jan. 16
7-8:30 p.m.**

\$10/\$5 McLean district residents
Children 36 months and younger admitted free.
Registration is required for all participants.
Walk-ins will not be accepted.

Vertical, horizontal, diagonal or picture frame—
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The McLean Community Center
1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean VA 22101
703-790-0123/TTY: 711
www.mcleancenter.org



CALENDAR

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

THROUGH SATURDAY/JAN. 31
Exhibit of Colorful Nutcrackers. 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Closed on Tuesdays. Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. See an amazing array of nutcrackers, both old and new, in a colorful case exhibit. Did you ever wonder where the craze for collecting nutcracker dolls came from? Nutcrackers have a fascinating history. The first nutcrackers were produced to crack nuts more effectively and the oldest known metal example, on exhibit in Tarent, Italy, is from the third or fourth century B.C. The Leavenworth Nutcracker Museum in Leavenworth, Washington, shows a bronze Roman nutcracker dated between 200 B.C and 200 A.D. German nutcrackers, made as decorative pieces, were developed around 1500. Early nutcrackers were in the shapes of animals, birds and people. Later, they were made in the likeness of kings, soldiers, church leaders and ruling class figures. Fine wood carved nutcrackers were created across Europe, especially in France and England by the 15th and 16th centuries. Admission: \$7/adult, \$6/student, \$5/senior or child.

THROUGH WEDNESDAY/MARCH 11
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

THURSDAY/JAN. 15
Kevin Griffin. 8 p.m. The Barns Wolf Trap, 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>.
Reading Buddies. 4:30 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Beginning readers practice reading to teens.

FRIDAY/JAN. 16
Vienna Arts Society Reception. 7-9 p.m. Vienna Art Center, 115 Pleasant Street, NW, Vienna. Meet the artists as the Vienna Arts Society celebrates winners from the 45th annual Treasury of Art juried show and sale. The exhibition continues Tuesdays - Saturdays 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., through Jan. 31. Free and open to the public.
The Iguanas. 8 p.m. The Barns Wolf Trap, 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>.
Playdate Cafe. 10 a.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Toys and playspace for children, coffee and conversation for grownups.
Drop-in Chess. 3:30 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Drop-in and play chess. All skill levels and ages welcome.
Family Fun Bingo. 7-8:30 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. \$10/\$5 MCC district residents; children up to 36 months are free. Registration is required. Activity No. 4504.315



“Boy,” oil on paper by Anna Watson, Peoples’ Choice winner at Treasury of Art. Meet the artists as the Vienna Arts Society celebrates winners from the 45th annual Treasury of Art juried show and sale on Jan. 16 at the Vienna Art Center, 115 Pleasant Street, NW, Vienna.

SUNDAY/JAN. 18
Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration Theatre IV’s “I Have a Dream.” 2 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. \$15/\$10 MCC tax district residents

MONDAY/JAN. 19
Give Together, A Family Volunteer Event. 1:30-3:30 p.m. Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, 1545 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Volunteer Fairfax invites families with school-age children to participate in a special family event held in conjunction with Martin Luther King, Jr. National Day of Service. Give Together service projects are fun, hands-on activities and specially designed for young people in mind. Projects will directly benefit local nonprofits and project locations will include the Jewish Community Center of NoVa in Fairfax and the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in McLean. All volunteer activities are free. Please register at www.volunteerfairfax.org.

TUESDAY/JAN. 20
Lego Club. 2 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Drop-in and build with LEGOs. Ages 3 & up.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 21
Treasured 2-5s. 10:30 a.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Avenue, McLean. Join us for an early literacy enhanced storytime featuring stories, rhymes and songs. Ages 2-5 with adult.
Pokemon League. 4:30 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Drop-in and play Pokemon with your friends!

THURSDAY/JAN. 22
Reading Buddies. 4:30 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Beginning readers

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

FRIDAY/JAN. 23
“Be My Baby.” 8 p.m. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. “Be My Baby” is a romantic comedy that tells the story of John, an irascible Scotsman and an uptight English woman, Maud, and how they’re brought together when his ward marries her niece and the young couple decides to adopt a newborn baby. The older couple has to travel to California to pick up the child and bring her home to Scotland but John and Maud despise each other. While in California, they learn some startling lessons about life and love. Tickets: \$14. To reserve tickets email vtcshows@yahoo.com.
Additional performances: Jan. 24, 30, 31, Feb. 6, 7: 2 p.m.: Feb 1, 8: 8 p.m.
Playdate Café. 10 a.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Toys and playspace for children, coffee and conversation for grownups!
Drop-in Chess. 3:30 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Drop-in and play chess. All skill levels and ages welcome.

SATURDAY/JAN. 24
Polyhymnia. 8 p.m. Immanuel Presbyterian Church, 1125 Savile Lane, McLean. Polyhymnia is an a capella chamber chorus that since 1991 has offered free concerts of works from Renaissance to contemporary and from many countries. Polyhymnia’s Winter Concert series, under its conductor Steven Beck, features songs by Poulenc, Janacek, Tallis, Victoria, Desprez, Palestrina, and contemporary works by Steven Beck, Rich Campbell, and Ernst Toch. There is no charge for performances, but if you are willing to make a donation to support our costs it will be tax deductible.

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NEWS

Great Falls Volunteer Fire Department Wins Holiday Decorating Contest

Great Falls Volunteer Fire Department won \$200 as the Celebrate Great Falls Holiday Decorating Contest winner. In photo: Fire Chief Doug Wessel, Career Medic Jason Buttenshaw, Past Chief Homer Johns, Erin Lobato, Malou Rennert, Glynis Canto and Fire Department President Joan Bliss. Not in picture: Karl Sallberg.



PHOTO BY JOHN LUCK

4th Annual McLean Chocolate Festival

Sunday, January 25, 2015

11 am - 5 pm

McLean Community Center



\$2 admission

Admission for children under 6 is free

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The McLean Chocolate Festival is a fundraiser for McLean Rotary, with proceeds benefiting many local organizations.

Visit the website at: www.mcleanchocolatefestival.org

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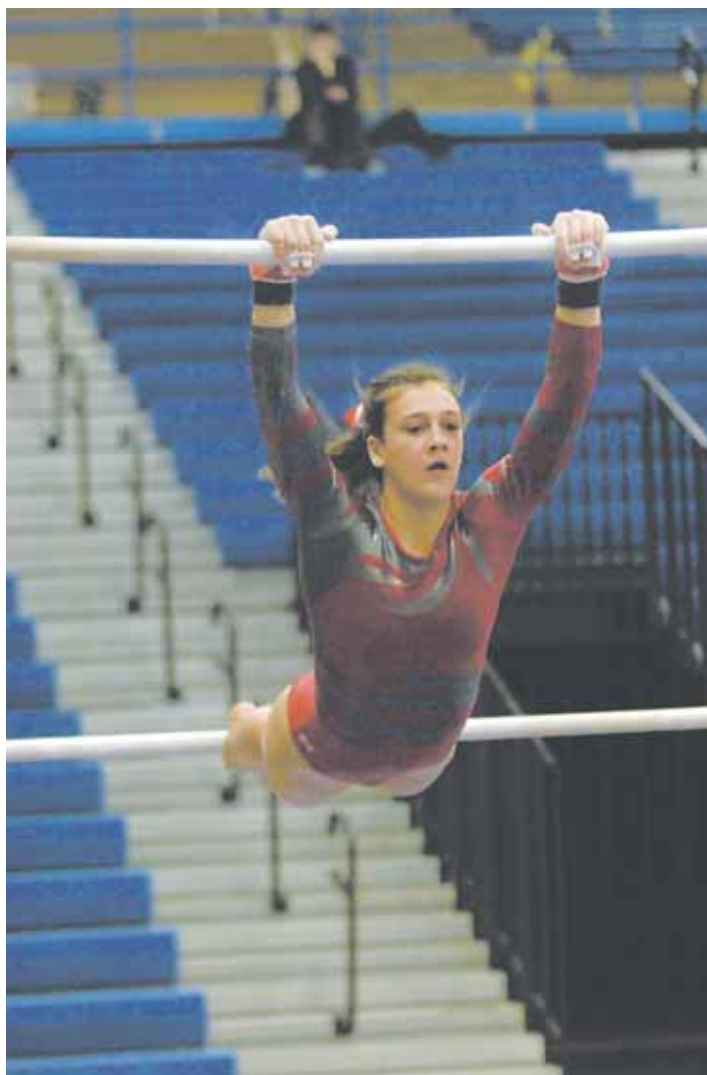
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Vienna, VA 22180
703-281-4868



Great Falls
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Great Falls, VA 22066
703-281-4868



McLean senior Lizzy Brown-Kaiser placed second on vault during a meet at Fairfax High School on Jan. 10.



McLean freshman Carolyn Brown-Kaiser finished second in the all-around during a meet on Jan. 10.

"I have always felt good about the team every year I have been on it, but I think this year we will be stronger than ever."

— McLean senior Lizzy Brown-Kaiser

McLean Gymnastics Looking for Return to States

PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Highlanders finished state runner-up in 2014.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

The McLean gymnastics team has produced a run of success in recent years, including a state runner-up finish in 2014.

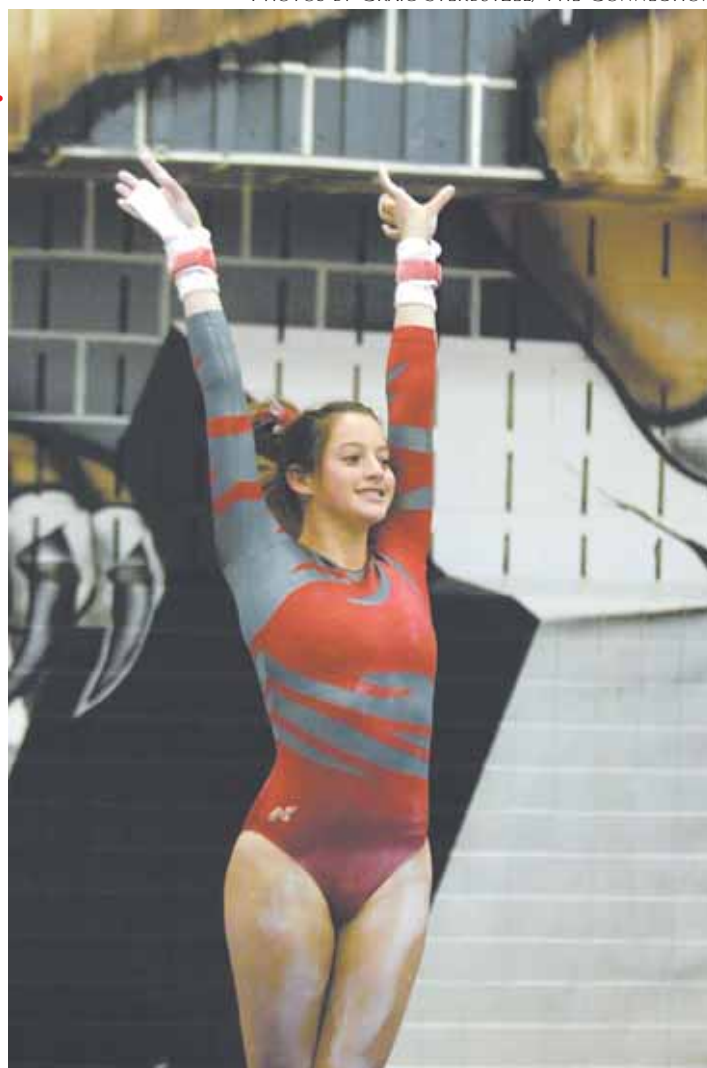
This year, the Highlanders might be even better.

McLean has been one of the region's top programs, finishing runner-up to Washington-Lee at three straight regional meets. Last year, the Highlanders outperformed the Generals at the Conference 6 meet, winning the title, and at the state meet, where McLean finished second to Frank Cox.

The Highlanders return multiple gymnasts with experience at states, including seniors Lizzy Brown-Kaiser and Jacqueline Green. McLean also has a standout freshman, Carolyn Brown-Kaiser.

McLean won a meet at Fairfax High School on Jan. 10. The Highlanders produced a score of 139.45, well ahead of the host Rebels, who finished second with a score of 125.825. The Highlanders had three of the top four finishers on vault, three of the top five on bars, three of the top four on beam and two of the top four on floor.

"Going forward, I feel pretty good," McLean head coach Courtney Lesson said.



Jacqueline Green, a senior, is one of the most experienced members of the McLean gymnastics team.

"I feel like we're getting our kinks and our falls out now. We're just working to improve for the next meet and moving one meet at a time to hopefully make it on to the state tournament."

Carolyn Brown-Kaiser was the lone McLean gymnast to compete in the all-around. The freshman finished runner-up with a score of 34.6.

"She is a top contributor and has been immensely helpful to our team," Lizzy Brown-Kaiser, Carolyn's sister, wrote in an email. "She's a powerhouse, so she really bumps up our vault and floor team scores."

Fairfax's Rachel Barborek won the all-around with a score of 38.325.

Lizzy Brown-Kaiser, who is in her fourth year on the McLean gymnastics team, placed second on vault (9.525) and beam (9.225). Green finished third on vault (9.475), third on beam (9.1), and fifth on bars (8.3). Calista Pardue placed first on floor (9.55) and fourth on bars (8.375). Jennie Korb was fourth on beam (8.775).

"Being a senior this year definitely has me feeling more excited and confident this year," Lizzy Brown-Kaiser wrote. "I know that my fellow senior Jackie Green and I really want to go out with a bang. I have always felt good about the team every year I have been on it, but I think this year we will be stronger than ever."

McLean is scheduled to compete in a meet at Washington-Lee High School in Arlington at 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 22. The Conference 6 meet is Feb. 2 at McLean High School.

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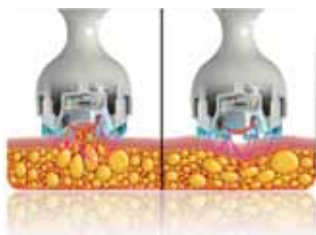
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By KENNETH B. LOURIE



For one box of 54 petite Belgian waffle cookies in three delicious flavors: milk chocolate, dark chocolate and vanilla; an extravagance to be sure, available during the holidays; this recipient (actually, my wife, Dina, was the recipient) very happy to oblige and indulge. However, as lucky as I was to receive/be offered some of these desserts: \$36 approximately, for 54 average-sized cookies is a bit out of my price range. The problem/complication is, my wife Dina is often a quality-not-quantity type of person, much different than I. And even though her sweet tooth pales in comparison to my sweet teeth, she is now, as a result of this very kind and generous gift, predisposed more than ever to scoff (I'm being polite) at my regular cookie purchases; typically bought by yours truly at the local supermarket and more often than not, involving some kind of Nabisco-brand product. As much as I'd like to think I'm semi open to change, it's the change back from a five-dollar bill with which I'm likely more inclined to consider.

Not that I didn't/don't appreciate the upgrade in my snacking choices, it's more the arithmetic that boggles. For the same \$36 spent on these delightful alternatives, when on sale at \$3 per bag, take 12 bags of Oreo DoubleStuf cookies – each of three sleeves holding 10 cookies – 30 cookies filling each bag. If one multiplies 12 bags times 30 cookies, 360 cookies becomes the total; meaning for the same \$36, I can enjoy 54 cookies, or with my Oreos, I can enjoy 360 cookies (not at one sitting; I'm bad, but not that bad) instead. Not exactly the heels of a dilemma, but neither is it dollars to donuts. And like my mother before me, when the price is upside down on something, as I would characterize this comparison, digesting the more expensive item (cookies in this example) becomes challenging and not nearly as enjoyable as the upgrade might lend itself to be.

To be fair though, as delicious as these cookies were, they are NEVER going to be a regular item in our pantry, nor do I suspect, a regular gift. I mean, who can afford such an expense? And though I certainly enjoyed eating them (especially considering that I didn't pay for them), buying them myself offers much less satisfaction. Dina however, might (might?) think differently. She might (might?) prefer the upgrade. As she has said many times, she doesn't mind less if it is better than more. And on a related subject, a lot of something is just a lot, not necessarily better. She doesn't see the same value in quantity as I do. Speaking to her cookie interest, it might only be 54 cookies whereas mine would be substantially greater. Thus, my being cut off after only 54 cookies, (time frame not specified) would be a significant consideration; for Dina, not so much.

Quality rules her roost. More often than not, quantity rules mine. And though one might consider this difference as substance over style, I characterize it more as fact over fiction. Yes. The cookies were delicious, but money doesn't grow on trees (it's made out of linen, actually); still, I'd rather have a lot of a little than a little of a lot. Sometimes, too much of a good thing is simply too much. With respect to these Christmas cookies, even though their time here was short, their memory will be long. For now, that will have to suffice.

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

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- Zone 6:** The Arlington Connection
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Forestville Elementary Girls Perform on the Ellipse Stage

Kendall Ladd, Erin Kearns and Christina Barton — fifth graders at Forestville Elementary - submitted an audition tape and were chosen to perform on the Ellipse Stage at the National Christmas Tree in Washington, D.C., on Dec. 13. They chose to sing "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch." The girls heard about the opportunity to audition, picked out their own song and costumes and were ultimately chosen to perform on the Ellipse stage with the National Christmas Tree in the background.



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.

THURSDAY/JAN. 15

Shepherd's Center of Oakton Vienna

Registration. 10 a.m. - noon. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax (UUCF), 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Come to the open house/registration day and sign up for Adventures in Learning classes to be held every Thursday from Jan. 22 - March 19, 2015 (no class on Feb. 26). Enrichment in relevant classes is open to all adults age 50 or older. One tuition payment of \$40 entitles you to attend any or all classes during this eight week session. If you are unable to attend the open house, download the classes schedule and registration form from our website at www.scov.org or call SCOV at 703-281-0538. We welcome new participants for fun, fellowship and learning.

Chapter 227, Vietnam Veterans of America Inc. Meeting.

7:30 p.m. Neighbor's Restaurant, 262D Cedar Lane, Cedar Lane Shopping Center, Vienna. All veterans, friends, and the general public are invited to attend the chapter meeting. Mike Walsh, Vietnam War veteran, will discuss his quest to document every Vietnam War Memorial in the United States. Free. For more information, call Len Ignatowski at 703-255-0353 or visit www.vva227.org.

TUESDAY/ JAN. 20

Improve Your English Skills. 11 a.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Avenue,

McLean. Get focused help with reading, writing.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 21

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

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

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

FRIDAY/JAN. 23

McLean Art Society Meeting. 10 a.m. - noon. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. Alice Kale will be the featured artist. She will talk about artist travel diaries for sketching and recording memories, using convenient and easy-to-carry materials. There will also be a chance to sign up for a painting trip to Greece scheduled for the May 2-16, 2015. All are welcome.

SUNDAY/JAN. 25

Free Seller Seminar, "What Every Seller Needs To Know," 1-4 p.m. Presented by The Lyons & McGuire Team of Keller Williams Realty. Come learn invaluable tips on selling your home from a professional stager, a photographer, a home inspector and more. RSVP by Jan. 19 to LyonsMcGuire@TeamGreatFalls.com. Seating is limited



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