

Tyson's Corner Ice Rink Opens

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Paige Hall, of Vienna, and Tyler Lentine, of Great Falls, enjoy the newly opened Tyson's Corner Ice Rink last Saturday. The rink is located on The Plaza next to Lord & Taylor on the second floor of the mall, and opposite the Shake Shack restaurant.

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Students Rally to Lower Student Debt

Members of GMU Student Power Travel to Richmond to voice concerns over rising debt.

BY MARISSA BEALE
THE CONNECTION

Twelve students from George Mason University traveled to Richmond with the Virginia Student Power Network, rallying and calling for debt-free education, and for increased educational opportunities for undocumented students.

Rodrigo Velasquez, a junior at Mason from Springfield and GMU Student Power's organizer, was one of the 12 from Mason who also went to Richmond.

"These are students in the country through no fault of their own," said Velasquez. "They pay property, sales and income taxes in the Commonwealth and do all of these things that are required to qualify for in-state tuition, but they still have to pay out-of-state costs."

The students sat in on Education Committee meetings to inform members of the committee on just how many students are aware of the decisions being made that are affecting education. Afterwards, there was a time for students, recent grads and even high school students to share stories about limited access to education and how student debt was affecting them.

"I believe that the cost of tuition is turning education into a commodity that only the privileged can afford to obtain," said Samantha Parsons, a junior from Hurt, Va., at Mason, and co-founder of GMU Student Power. "I do not think our legislators are tak-

ing student debt seriously, but it needs to become a focal point of our state's agenda."

While it may seem simple and straightforward to either grant or deny rights to undocumented students, the situation is actually a lot more complex.

"Being undocumented is more of a spectrum than a binary," explained Velasquez. "Some students may be waiting to see if they can achieve citizenship status, before they can continue with their education."

Further complicating the problem for students is that a lot of them don't know that they are undocumented because their families may not have told them.

Turning a keen eye to legislation in place, Velasquez and other students want lawmakers to hear what these students have to say.

Describing what he says are "hateful" bills, Velasquez, as well as other students in GMU Student Power, are against the bill by Senator Richard Black of Loudoun County that would take away in-state tuition privileges for Deferred Action of Childhood Arrival (DACA) students and Temporary Protective Status (TPS) Students. The students also oppose a second bill by Delegate David Ramadan of Loudoun that would take away in-state tuition and fees for students that are eligible for in-state tuition through DACA. Instead, these students would have to pay out-of-state costs.

"A lot of people don't realize they are interacting with undocumented students, especially since some of these students are high achieving and some of the hardest



Rodrigo Velasquez at the rally in Richmond, which took place on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SAMANTHA PARSONS



Students shared stories about debt, and what they want Virginia legislators to do about it.

workers," said Velasquez.

"The growing costs of higher education are becoming too normalized on this cam-

pus and in this state, but starting life with \$25,000 or more in debt is not normal," said Parsons. "We have to stop acting like it is."

VOLUNTEER EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Fairfax County's free **Family Caregiver Telephone Support Group** meets by phone on **Tuesday, Feb. 10, 7-8 p.m.** to discuss Caregiving and Basic Tax Concerns. The guest speaker is an AARP Tax Aide Program Specialist who will share some basic tax information, as well as when to get an accountant or attorney involved. Register beforehand at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices and click on Telephone Caregiver Support Group. Call 703-324-5484, TTY 711.

The **Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program** needs volunteer advocates for residents in assisted living and nursing facilities. Training is provided in

March. Call **703-324-5861**, TTY 711 or email Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov. Find more information on the program at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ltc.

The **Lewinsville Senior Center** in **McLean** needs an **office assistant** and instructors for the following classes: Current Events, Knitting/Crocheting, Certified Arthritis Exercise, Ballroom Dance, Square Dance, and Tai Chi. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call **703-324-5406**, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

The **Gum Springs Senior Center** in **Alexandria** needs a **Spanish teacher** on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call **703-324-5406**, TTY 711 or

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

The **Wakefield Senior Center** in **Annandale** needs **Bilingual English/Spanish Activity Leaders**, a **Chair Exercise Instructor**, and certified instructors for classes in **Ballroom Dance** and **Pilates**. Volunteer instructor positions **could** lead to part-time employment. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call **703-324-5406**, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

Korean Meals on Wheels needs **Korean-speaking volunteers** to deliver meals in **Centreville, Reston and Annandale**. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call **703-**

324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

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

The **Annandale Adult Day Health Care Center** in **Annandale** needs **Spanish-speaking social companions**. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call **703-324-5406**, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

The **Kingstowne Center for Active Adults** in **Alexandria** needs a **Van Driver** to take participants on outings and instructors for the following classes: **Mosaic Art or Jewelry Making** and **Belly Dancing**. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call **703-324-5406**, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

Fairfax County needs volunteers to **drive older adults to medical appointments** and wellness programs. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call **703-324-5406**, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.



PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION

Ice skaters enjoy the newly opened Tysons Corner Ice Rink last Saturday.



Grace Chambers, Kelly Chen, and Megan Wilkins, of Tysons Corner, enjoy the Tysons Corner Ice Rink last Saturday.

Tysons Corner Ice Rink Opens

Offers ice skating lessons, Cartoon Skate for kids, birthday parties, and fundraising opportunities.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE CONNECTION

The new 6,000 square foot Tysons Corner Ice Rink has officially opened for business. The opening took place on Black Friday, Nov. 28, and the season extends through March 11. The rink sponsored by CBRE Realty is situated on The Plaza next to Lord & Taylor on the second floor of the mall, and opposite the Shake Shack Restaurant. A new Hyatt Hotel is scheduled to open beside it in March.

“We’re very excited about our project at Tysons Corner,” said Marissa Marwell, general manager who’s been in the business for 10 years. “We think it’s a perfect addition to an already successful mall.”

In addition to general ice skating, the rink offers ice skating lessons, birthday parties and fundraising opportunities. A weekly Cartoon Skate takes place Saturday mornings from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., for children to skate with mascots dressed as a lion, penguin, dalmatian and polar bear. For the older crowd, there’s a Rock and Skate with a deejay on Saturdays from 7 to 10 p.m. The deejay plays Top 40, special requests and does “shout-outs” to skaters.

For Valentine’s Day on Saturday, Feb. 14, they’ll be issuing Swag Bags to the first 100 skaters that contain coupons and swag gifts. On Friday, Feb. 27, there will be a Speed Dating on Ice event for singles to mix and

mingle with various skating partners. Sponsored by the Capital Grille Restaurant in Tysons Corner, the event for ages 18 and up will offer a different spin on speed dating.

“Our goal as a business is to provide a safe, enjoyable and memorable experience for all of our guests,” said Marwell, who grew up ice skating on ponds in Rhode Island. “We hope to have them return several times throughout the season and create a family tradition.”

She adds: “Skating in an outdoor rink is so different than skating in an indoor rink. There’s just something magical about it.”

Ice rink hours are Mondays to Thursdays, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.; and Sundays 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

As far as pricing goes, general admission is \$10 for adults; \$9 for child/senior/military. Skate rentals are \$6. Group rate (10 or more guests) is \$12/person (includes admission and skate rental). The skate rental shop is located inside the mall on Level 2 near Lord & Taylor. Birthday Party packages start at \$175.

Group and private lessons are available for kids ages 3 and up on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. or 10:15 a.m., based on skill level. The next classes, Session Two classes, are Feb. 1, 8, 15, and 22.

For more information, visit the web site: www.tysonscornerlearntoskate.com. The email isskatetysonscorner@gmail.com. Call 703-356-1240.



Camilla Ladygine, 11, and her friend Jillian Kendrick, 12, enjoy the Tysons Corner Ice Rink last Saturday.



Cameron Hobbs of North Carolina and his friend Abigail Barajas of Hawaii enjoy the Tysons Corner Ice Rink last Saturday.



The Tysons Corner Ice Rink is now opened.



PHOTOS BY TERESA CASTRACANE/COURTESY OF 1ST STAGE

Farrell Parker and Jimmy Mavrikes in "Bat Boy: The Musical."

1st Stage Receives Helen Hayes Nominations

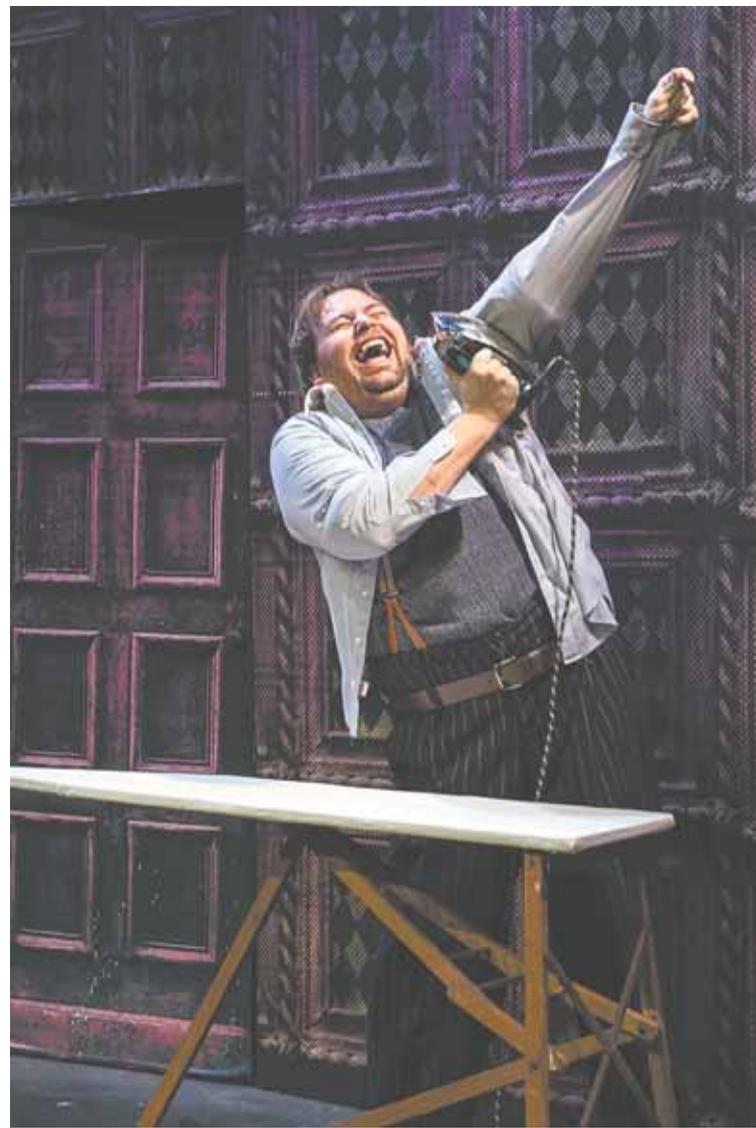
BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNERCTION

Tysons' 1st Stage was nominated for nine Helen Hayes Awards for outstanding achievement in professional theatre in the Washington metropolitan area. The awards are named after Helen Hayes, the legendary first lady of the American Theatre. Nominated artists and companies exemplify the excellence found on Washington area stages.

"We are very proud and grateful to be honored with these Helen Hayes Award nominations," said Alex Levy, 1st Stage, artistic/managing Director. "Everyone at 1st Stage is thrilled that these talented artists received this well-earned recognition."

The 1st Stage is a professional, nonprofit theater company making its home in Fairfax County. The company performs at 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons. More information at <http://www.1ststagetysons.org/>

For over 30 years, the Helen Hayes Awards have celebrated outstanding



Doug Wilder in "One Man, Two Guvnors."

achievement. There are over 80 professional theatres throughout the Washington metropolitan area. 1st Stage was one of only 31 theatres to receive Helen Hayes Awards nominations in various categories. The Helen Hayes Awards will be presented at a Gala event on April 6.

The 1st Stage nominations include:

Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Play: Katy Carkuff - "One Man, Two Guvnors"

Outstanding Support Actor in a Play: Daniel Corey - "One Man, Two Guvnors"

Outstanding Supporting Actress in

a Musical: Dani Stoller - "Bat Boy: The Musical"

Outstanding Lead Actor in a Musical: Jimmy Mavrikes - "Bat Boy: The Musical"

Outstanding Lead Actor in a Play: Doug Wilder - "One Man, Two Guvnors"
Outstanding Set Design: Adam Koch - "One Man, Two Guvnors"

Outstanding Director of a Musical: Steven Royal - "Bat Boy: The Musical"

Outstanding Ensemble in a Musical: "Bat Boy: The Musical"

Outstanding Musical: "Bat Boy: The Musical"

Puppy Erickson Comes to Vienna

Vienna resident raising puppy for Canine Companions for Independence.

Canine Companions for Independence – a national nonprofit organization that provides assistance dogs for children and adults with disabilities, has announced that Vienna resident Barbara Weigand recently began raising an assistance dog in-training for Canine Companions for Independence.

Puppy Erickson is a lab/golden retriever cross who will one-day know over 50 commands, and be matched with a person with disabilities.

Volunteer Puppy Raisers are critically important to the work of Canine Companions

for Independence. Puppy Raisers take the pups into their home at eight weeks of age, raising them, teaching them basic commands and socialization skills. The socialization is perhaps the most important, because the dogs need to be exposed to any and all types of surroundings. With the special yellow capes they wear, these dogs are permitted to go to many public areas that family pets aren't allowed. When the dogs reach about a year and a half old, they are returned to the Canine Companions for Independence regional headquarters in New York. They begin 6



COURTESY PHOTO

Barbara Weigand and puppy Erickson

months of advanced training with the organization's nationally renowned instructors, before they are matched with a child or adult with disabilities.

For more information about becoming a Puppy Raiser, visit cci.org or call 1-800-572-BARK.

WEEK IN VIENNA



Del. Mark Keam (D-35)



State Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34)

Petersen, Keam to Host a Meeting

State Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34) and Del. Mark Keam (D-35) will host a meeting to discuss the ongoing Virginia General Assembly legislative session on Saturday, Feb. 7, 2015 from 9 to 11 a.m. The meeting will be held at the American Legion Post 180, 330 Center Street, North.

This event is free and all citizens are invited to attend. The meeting will be hosted by the American Legion Auxiliary and there will be light refreshments served. For more information, please email Kathy@fairfaxsenator.com.

Langley Pyramid Helps Stop Hunger Now

For the fourth year in a row, Langley pyramid schools are raising money for the Stop Hunger Now. This year the goal is to raise \$25,000, which is enough money to purchase 100,000 meals for school age

children. To contribute to this fundraising effort, visit Stop Hunger Now at <http://events.stophungernow.org/LangleyPyramid2015>. Each 25¢ raised = 1 meal. All proceeds will be used to purchase meals which the community will then pack on Saturday, Feb. 7, 2015 from 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. at Colvin Run Elementary. Approximately 450 volunteers (150 people per session) are scheduled to pack meals that day.

The Langley pyramid students donated over \$10,000 which will purchase over 40,000 meals. Anyone interested to donate online towards the collective goal of 100,000 meals is encouraged to do so. Stop Hunger Now will use the money raised to purchase the meals for the event.

Supporting CIA Officers Memorial Foundation

This month's Military Appreciation Monday event is on Feb. 16 in support of the CIA Officers Memorial Foundation. Make your reservation early for either the 5:30 or 7:30 seating at The Old Brogue in Great Falls by calling 703-759-3309. Visit: CIA Officers Memorial Foundation to learn more about this organization and the help it provides to Agency families.

Last month the event for the Navy SEAL Foundation raised a little over \$7,000.

For those unfamiliar with the MAM events, you simply come enjoy a dinner at the Old Brogue in Great Falls, The Brogue, Bob Nelson of Keller Williams Realty and co-sponsors each make a contribution to the foundation based on 10 percent of whatever you spend. Door prize entries are also sold as a means of raising additional funds.

FREE REMODELING & DESIGN SEMINARS!

**Saturday, February 7th, 2015
10:00am to 2:00pm**

Where: 5795B Burke Centre Pkwy
Burke, VA 22015

(located behind the Kohl's shopping center)

Thinking of remodeling? This event is the perfect opportunity to take advantage of free expert advice with no obligation. Learn about the hot topics you should consider when remodeling.

Seminars:

- Kitchen and Bath Trends
- Apples to Apples - Thinking your project through? How do you compare?
- Reinventing Your Home for Today's Lifestyle

Seminars run from 10-12pm.
Lunch to follow.
Please arrive at 9:45am for check-in.

Seating is limited!

RSVP: info@sundesigninc.com or call Erin at 703.425.5588



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OPINION

No Justification for Secrecy, Delay on Geer Shooting

Everything about this case erodes public trust and demonstrates police departments should not be allowed to apply “blanket” exemptions to release of information.

After waiting 17 months for any information about the investigation into the shooting death of John Geer, the information released last week is deeply troubling.

Fairfax County Police officer Adam D. Torres shot and killed John Geer of Springfield inside the doorway of his own home in Springfield on Aug. 29, 2013. Police were called to Geer's home following Geer's argument with his longtime partner. Police spoke with him for more than half an hour while he stood in his doorway, unarmed, with his hands raised and resting on the frame. As he began to lower his hands, by all accounts still at shoulder level, he was shot in the chest and died in his house without receiving medical attention.

It took more than 16 months, a \$12 million civil suit by Geer's family and a court order to get the first tiny bit of information on the shooting, which came earlier this month when police named the officer who fired the shot that killed Geer.

On Friday, Jan. 30, 2015, in response to a court order, Fairfax County released more than 10,000 pages of documents about the shooting and the investigation.

We now know that investigators learned on

the same day Geer died, Aug. 29, 2013, that at least five witnesses including the police officer actually talking to Geer at the instant he was shot, disputed Torres's version of events. Torres said Geer suddenly dropped his hands to his waist; none of the other witnesses saw Geer's hands move below his head.

EDITORIAL

On the day of the shooting, investigators and prosecutors had compelling information to take to a grand jury. Instead, after a long period of silence, obstruction and obfuscation, the investigation was turned over to the Justice Department, where there is no timetable for resolution (and no adequate explanation for punting the investigation to the feds).

Without the Geer family lawsuit and the court order to turn over documents as part of discovery, the public might never know what really happened that day.

The question of accountability for what happened remains.

As we have said many times, the problem goes beyond Fairfax County, and beyond police shootings.



520 days

It took a court order and 520 days after Fairfax County police officer Adam D. Torres shot and killed John Geer of Springfield for basic information about what happened that day to be released. The public now knows what investigators learned on the same day Geer died, Aug. 29, 2013, that at least five witnesses including the police officer actually talking to Geer at the instant he was shot, disputed Torres's version of events. Torres said Geer suddenly dropped his hands to his waist; none of the other witnesses saw Geer's hands move below his head.

Police officials in Fairfax, Arlington and Alexandria have adopted what they call a “blanket” approach to using their exemption. That means they have decided to withhold any document they can without any analysis of whether they should.

It's past time for change.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

An Open Letter to Virginia Delegates

Dear Delegate:

Many of you know our story well. We are the parents of Morgan Harrington. Morgan, a student at Virginia Tech, went to a rock concert in Charlottesville in 2009 and never came home. Her remains were found 100 days later.

We've made it our life's work in honor of Morgan to support victims of sexual assaults and to make sure that all students are safe on our college campuses – even if they're just visiting.

That's why we're asking for your support of HB 1343, a bipartisan bill by Delegate Eileen Filler-Corn and Chief Co-Patron Dave Albo.

Once a victim reports a sexual assault to campus and/or local law enforcement, HB 1343 calls for the local Commonwealth's Attorney to be notified within 48 hours of the reported incident.

We agree with Del. Filler-Corn who said: “By passing this bill, we can show victims that we will not

tolerate sexual assault on campus. We can show them they can have faith in our justice system.”

Chairman Albo has said that this “bill ensures that allegations of sexual assaults on college campuses will receive the same level of attention by police and prosecutors that off campus sexual assaults receive. This bill strengthens our justice system and encourages collaboration between victims, college staff, police and prosecutors.”

The reality is that too often sexual assaults aren't reported to the police.

A December report by the U.S. Justice Department found that 80% of students do not report rape and sexual assaults to the police.

That same report also found that fewer than one in five female student victims received assistance from a victim services agency.

This is where HB 1343 can make a difference.

HB 1343 works to restore victims' faith in the justice system and to show that they will be heard and supported. The bill expedites investigation of the case once reported to campus law enforcement, while ensuring the proper course of action, due process and any necessary legal filings are completed.

It also lets each Commonwealth's Attorney's Office Victim/Witness program get involved early on in the investigation, which helps provide counseling and can help educate a victim about her or his options going forward with a criminal prosecution.

Supporters of the bill include:

Michael R. Doucette, Commonwealth's Attorney for the City of Lynchburg
Mary Gavin, City of Falls Church Chief of Police
Stacey Kincaid, Fairfax County Sheriff
Denise Lunsford, Commonwealth's Attorney for

Albemarle County

Trina Murphy, Aunt of Alexis Murphy, Help Save the Next Girl supporters

Ray Morrogh, Commonwealth's Attorney for Fairfax County

Virginia Sheriffs Association, representing 95 sheriffs

Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance

We know this bill isn't a silver bullet when it comes to the complex problem of solving campus sexual assaults. But it is a good first step and that's what is needed.

Passing this bill can help us make sure that all students are safe on our college campuses.

We urge you to join us and support passage of HB 1343.

Gil and Dan Harrington

Parents of Morgan Harrington
Founders of Help Save the Next Girl

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SCHOOLS

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

On Saturday, Feb. 21, **crew team members from Langley High School** will participate in their "Boats and Oars" fundraising effort throughout neighborhoods in McLean and Great Falls. Each year, the Langley High School Crew Team asks the larger community for financial support. Donations to Langley Crew (LCBC) are tax deductible.

And the team invites you to come see a regatta or two in the spring. Regattas are held Saturdays, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. from March 21 until May 9 (no regatta on April 4) on the Occoquan at Sandy Run Regional Park, 10450 Van Thompson Rd, Fairfax Station.

Kristen Ashley Wolaver, daughter of John and Barbara Wolaver of Great Falls, and graduate of Langley High School Class of 2013, completed her freshman year at the University of Pittsburgh, Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences. Kristen has accepted membership in The National Society of Collegiate Scholars (NSCS).

Whitney Elizabeth Wolaver, daughter of John and Barbara Wolaver of Great Falls, and graduate of Langley High School Class of 2010, earned a Bachelor of Science Degree Cum Laude in Neuroscience with a minor in Chemistry and a Certificate of Conceptual Foundations of Medicine during the spring commencement exercises in April 2014 at the University of Pittsburgh, Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences. Whitney will begin the Graduate Program in Anatomical and Translational Sciences at George Washington University in August 2014.

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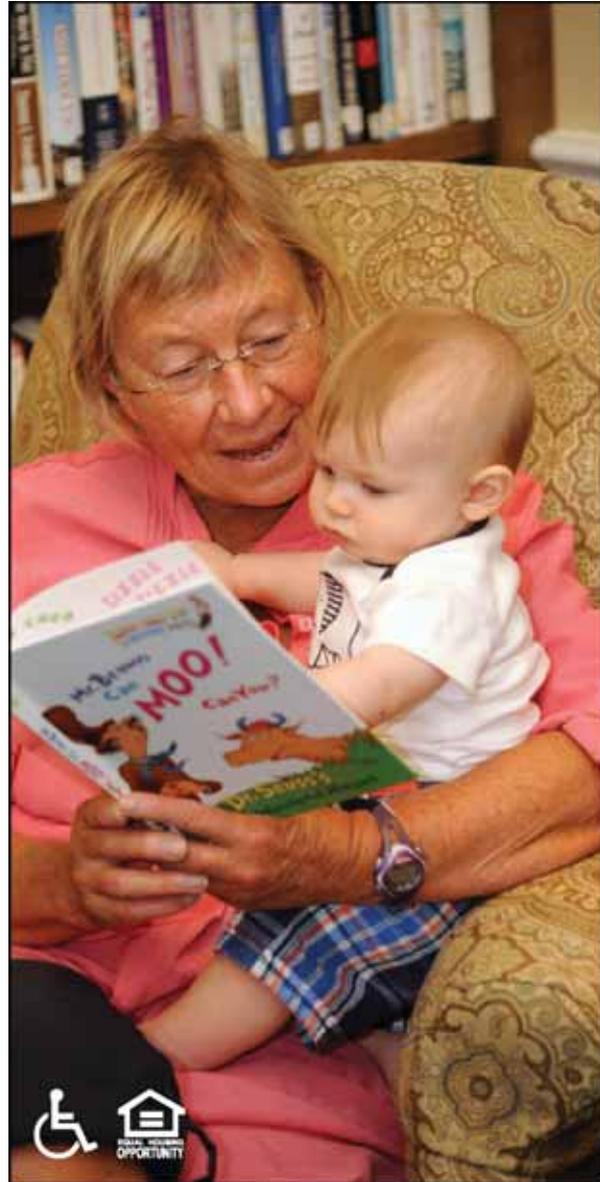
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Family Matters

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Assisted Living at Westminster at Lake Ridge offers a full complement of engaging activities encompassing fitness, wellness, social, spiritual and educational programming. We provide quality, professional on-site assisted living, as well as short-term and long-term nursing care. Your family will be assured of superlative, compassionate care *and* an exceptional quality of life at Westminster at Lake Ridge.

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2ND ANNUAL Boys & Girls Club Fairfax Casino Night
Friday, March 6, 2015
The Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF GREATER WASHINGTON FAIRFAX COUNTY REGION

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington/Fairfax Region help hundreds of at-risk youth every day right here in Fairfax County.

Casino Night is a fun-filled evening featuring:

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- Celebrity Emcee with music and dancing.

The Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner
 1700 Tysons Boulevard, McLean, Virginia 22102 • On the Silver Line
 Tickets: www.bcgw.org/fairfax/casino-night/

Friday, March 6, 2015 6:30-11:30pm
 Tickets: \$95.00 per person, \$175.00 per couple
 Special Overnight Guest Room Rate at the Ritz-Carlton for Friday March 6, 2015 -- \$119.00

We invite your organization to consider sponsorship opportunities for our 2nd Annual Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Washington, Fairfax Region Casino Night.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington/Fairfax Region help boys and girls of all backgrounds build confidence, develop character, and acquire skills fundamental to becoming productive, civic-minded, responsible adults. BCGW provides a safe and positive environment for our youth.

WELLBEING

Mental Health First Aid

County offers program to offer insight into mental illness and teach strategies for intervention.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Leslie Roberts recalls hearing a mother talk about getting her stepson admitted to a psychiatric hospital.

"Her stepson was angry and acting out," said Roberts. "She didn't understand what her stepson was doing."

The woman had completed a mental health first aid class that Roberts teaches. Mental Health First Aid is offered by the staff of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board Wellness and Health Promotion. The goal of the class is to offer insight into mental illness and teach strategies for intervention.

"She was grateful that the class had taught her what those signs and symptoms were," said Leslie. "Before the class she thought he was being a problem teenager. After the class she understood that he was suffering from depression, and his behavior had a lot more meaning."

That is the goal of the eight-hour



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Jamie MacDonald and Leslie Roberts of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board Wellness and Health Promotion teach a Mental Health First Aid class.

certification class, which is taught in both English and Spanish. Students learn the warning signs of such mental illnesses as depression, anxiety, trauma, psychosis, substance use disorders and self-injury. They also get a five-step action plan to help the individual in crisis connect with appropriate professional care.

"Students learn specific behaviors or comments that individuals will make," said Roberts, who is a Wellness and Health Promotions

Supervisor. "Such as, 'Things are never going to get better. I feel like I'll always be sad. What's the point?'"

"They get background and statistics on these illnesses, as well as a basic understanding of risk factors, signs and symptoms," added Jamie MacDonald, wellness health promotion and prevention manager.

There is a standard curriculum and class instructors must be certified to teach it. The class is typi-

cally taught on two separate days. "We offer an open enrollment class for adults once each month," said MacDonald. "It's a 'come one, come all.' Anyone from Fairfax County can sign up." Students learn to assess for suicide or harm, listen non-judgmentally, give information and assurance, encourage appropriate professional help and self-help, and other strategies.

"We use the acronym ALGEE, which is the first letter of each skill the students learn," said MacDonald. "Then they get skills around how to approach someone who might be showing early signs of a mental illness or how to recognize when someone is in a mental health crisis."

After the class, students take a test. If they pass, they are certified for three years.

"There is a lot of repetition and practice. There are live simulations and scenarios where small groups will practice what they learn," said MacDonald. "We try to gear their minds toward, 'What will I do when I'm experiencing a mental health crisis? How will I support

someone like a colleague, friend and even a stranger?'"

The re-enactment scenarios also help set limits. "We make their role clear," said MacDonald. "You're a mental health first aider when you get your certification, you're not a mental health crusader. You're not trained to provide treatment, counseling, or make a diagnosis. That is pounded into their heads."

Safety is another aspect of the training. "Students are taught to decide if a situation is safe for them to enter and whether or not they have time. If they start providing assistance, do they have time to finish it," asked MacDonald. "Being clear, careful and thinking through what steps they want to take is important. In a crisis, they have to decide: 'Do I want to step in or will I be in over my head? Do I need to grab my phone and call someone else? Your first and best action might be a call to 911.'"

For information on schedule of classes, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/events/mental-health-first-aid.htm.

Free and Low-Cost Dental Care for Children

Special programs available as part of National Children's Dental Health Month.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Dental hygiene should start even before a baby's first tooth emerges. That is one of the messages that dental professionals are hoping to convey this month.

February is designated National Children's Dental Health Month, organized by the American Dental Association, along with the ADA Foundation, to raise awareness about the benefits of good oral health for children. Dental professionals stress children should brush for two minutes twice per day, floss and rinse daily, eat healthy meals, limit snacks and visit the dentist regularly.

"To get babies comfortable with oral hygiene, begin cleaning the baby's mouth by wiping the gums and tongue with a moist washcloth or gauze shortly after birth until teeth erupt into the mouth," said Jeanne Yang, DDS, a public health dentist at the Joseph Willard Health Center's dental clinic in the City of Fairfax. "It is recommended that parents bring children to their first dentist appointment preferably within 6 months

of when the first tooth appears, but no later than their first birthday. And, always, always, always use a soft toothbrush, whether you are 1 or 100. A soft toothbrush should be used by all ages."

Local health departments want the public to know that a child's dental care need not depend on a family's ability to afford such services. Many Northern Virginia dental clinics offer free or low-cost dental examinations, cleanings, fluoride applications, restorative services including fillings and even limited oral surgeries.

"We have three children's dental clinics in Fairfax County," said Tina Dale of the Fairfax County Health Department. The county's clinics are in Mount Vernon, Fairfax and Reston. "Our dental program is just for children. Their family's income has to be at a level where they meet Medicaid criteria."

The Northern Virginia Dental Society is also hosting a "Give a Kids a Smile Project" on Saturday, Feb. 6 at the Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) Medical Education Campus in Springfield. The project will join dentists and dental hygiene students from NOVA with other community vol-



PHOTO COURTESY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Dr. Howard Ngo works on a young patient at Northern Virginia Community College's Medical Education Campus in Springfield, as part of the Give Kids a Smile Program.

unteers to offer dental services to underserved children, including preschool students in Arlington County's Head Start

Dental Service Programs

Fairfax County Health Department
♦ Joseph Willard Health Center: 3750 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax; 703-246-7100.
♦ Herndon/Reston Office: 1850 Cameron Glen Drive, Suite 100, Reston; 703-481-4242.
♦ Mount Vernon Office: 8350 Richmond Highway, Suite 233, Alexandria; 703-704-6181.

program.

"A huge number of children have dental disease earlier and earlier," said Kathy A. Thompson of Northern Virginia Community College. "This is an opportunity to get them excited about dental care and give them information on how to take care of their teeth, and introduce them to what it's like to go the dentist."

The slogan for the 2015 campaign is "Defeat Monster Mouth." It's plastered on posters that depict dental superheroes fighting to defeat "Plaqster the Monster" for good oral health. Dental providers are hoping to teach children and parents about the timing of a first dental visit, how to brush and floss properly, the effect of thumb sucking on teeth and the importance of regular dental examinations. Although the observance is a month long, health department officials keep up the effort year-round.

"We work with Arlington families on the importance of dental care from day one," said Kurt Larrick of the Arlington County Health Department. "We're working with parents from the times the kids are born to talk about the importance of hygiene, nutrition, tooth brushing."

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CALENDAR

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

FRIDAY/JAN. 30 - SATURDAY/FEB. 15

"13: A Hilarious Coming-of-Age Musical." The Alden, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. The show chronicles the story of Evan Goldman, a New York City boy whose life is on the cusp of teen-hood. Evan finds himself dealing with a divorce, trying to fit in with the cool kids at a new school in an Indiana town, and one other major event ... his impending Bar Mitzvah. The MCP production of "13" includes a seasoned, yet all adolescent cast of 17 between the ages of 12-16. Selected through an open audition, the cast members include students from Northern Virginia schools such as Langley High School, McLean High School, Frost Middle School, Longfellow Middle School, Rachel Carson Middle School, Thoreau Middle School, Spring Hill Elementary School Our Savior Lutheran and the Metropolitan School of the Arts. Tickets: \$23-\$25.

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

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/FEB. 7-8

"Be My Baby." 8 p.m. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, 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.

WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY/FEB. 4-5

International Guitar Night. 8 p.m. Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. A night of international guitar virtuosos featuring poetic lyricist (Gore), Grammy-winning classical guitarist (York), jazz master (Figueiredo), and steel string prodigy (Jamal). Tickets: \$25-\$27.

FRIDAY/FEB. 6

Decades Party. 7-10 p.m. Old Firehouse Teen Center, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. \$5 member/\$10 all others.

Chamber Music At The Barns: The Montrose Trio.

8 p.m. Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Accomplished soloists and chamber musicians Jon Kimura Paker, Martin Beaver, and Clive Greensmith join forces to create a new piano trio. Tickets \$35.

SATURDAY/FEB. 7

8th Annual McLean Jewelry Showcase. 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. Jewelry lovers and others can meet more than 30 carefully selected designers and artisans for a special day of shopping. Admission: \$3.

Cars and Coffee. 7 a.m. Katie's Coffee

House, 760 Walker Road, Great Falls. Early on Saturday mornings you'll find an amazing gathering of cool cars - antique, custom, hotrods, exotic, sports cars, they're all here.

Great Falls Farmers Market. 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Old Schoolhouse, 9812 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. The history of the Old Schoolhouse on display on Saturdays at the Great Falls Historical Society table through mid-February.

General Admission Dance: BeauSoleil Avec Michael Doucet. 8 p.m. Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Let by fiddler Michael Coucet, this Grammy-winning ensemble combines zydeco, Caribbean calypso, and traditional Louisiana folk music for an irresistible Cajun mix. Tickets \$27.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 11

Mardi Gras Bunco Night. 7-9 p.m. Vienna Art Center, 115 Pleasant Street, NW, Vienna. No experience necessary, and everyone will take home a prize. Seating is limited, so please call to purchase a ticket for \$22. 703-319-3971.

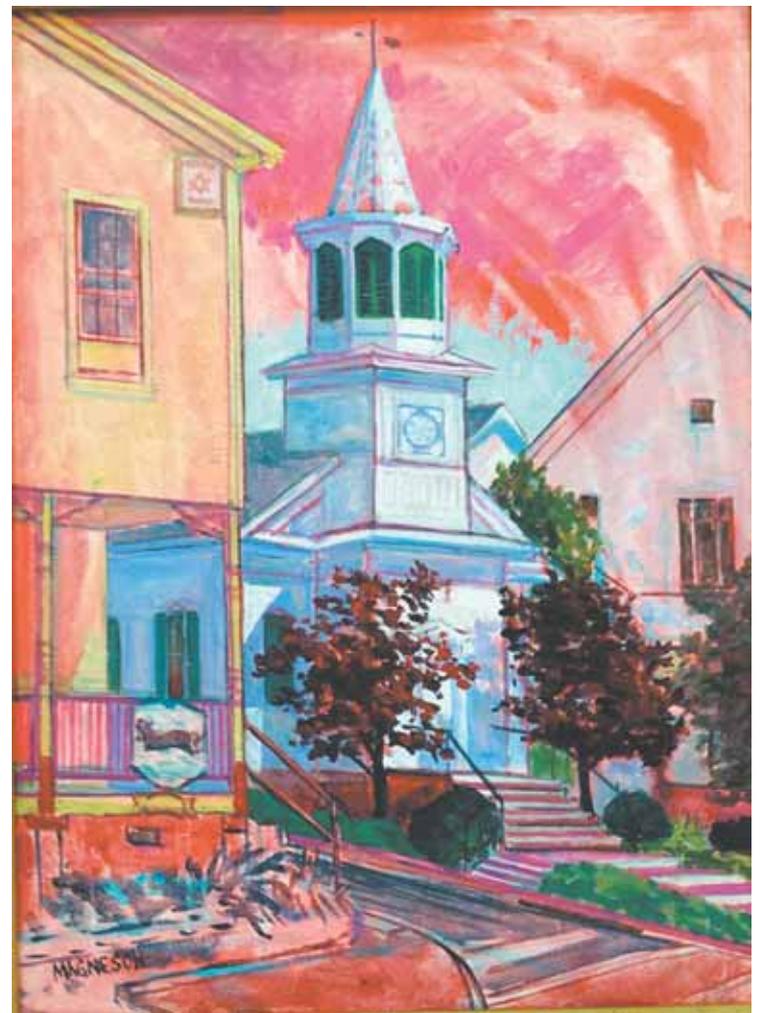
THURSDAY/FEB. 12

Acrylic Painting Demonstration. 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Watch an by award-winning Vienna artist Bob Magnesen, who captures vibrant scenes with the use of surprising colors. Free and open to the public.

FRIDAY/FEB. 13

Climate Action Movie Night. 7:30 p.m. Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Rd, Oakton. Join the Faith

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11



Members of the Vienna Arts Society celebrate Valentine's Day and the Carnival Season at the Vienna Art Center with colorful original art at 115 Pleasant Street, NW, Vienna; 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Tuesdays - Saturdays, Feb. 3 - 28. Pictured is "Vienna Presbyterian Church," acrylic, by Bob Magnesen.

8th Annual McLean Jewelry Showcase
Juried Handcrafted Jewelry

SATURDAY, FEB. 7
11 A.M. - 5 P.M.
ADMISSION: \$3 *Take \$1 off with this ad.*
Just in time for Valentine's Day!

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Be sure to include your name, address and phone number, and identify all people and pets in photos. Submission deadline is February 18.

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

Alliance for Climate Solutions' screening of "Thomas Berry: The Great Story". As a pioneer in the field of spiritual ecology, Thomas Berry created a quiet revolution. Discussion will follow the film. Free. <http://www.faihfclimate.org>; 571-882-9312.

SATURDAY/FEB. 14

Cars and Coffee. 7 a.m. Katie's Coffee House, 760 Walker Road, Great Falls. Early on Saturday mornings you'll find an amazing gathering of cool cars - antique, custom, hotrods, exotic, sports cars, they're all here.

Great Falls Farmers Market. 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Old Schoolhouse, 9812 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. The history of the Old Schoolhouse on display on Saturdays at the Great Falls Historical Society table through mid-February.

Concert: Solas. 8 p.m. Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Hailed by the Washington Post as "one of the world's finest Celtic-folk ensembles, this quintet's diverse repertoire includes innovative original songs as well as Irish classics. Tickets \$25-28.

THURSDAY-SATURDAY/FEB 19-21

"Big Fish." 7 p.m. McLean High School, 1633 Davidson Road, McLean. Follow the fearless Edward Bloom as he pursues the woman of his dreams, fights magical creatures, and learns that fatherhood may be the biggest challenge of all. Complete with juggling, silk dancing, and thrilling dance numbers, McLean's "Big Fish" is a show you will not want to miss! mcleandrama@gmail.com. Additional 2 p.m. show timing on Feb. 16, 21, 22.

FRIDAY/FEB. 20

Concert: HAPA. 8 p.m. Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. 8 p.m. With songs ranging from ancient chants to contemporary Hawaiian tunes, it's no wonder the L.A. Times calls HAPA's music "beautiful, fragile, spiritual, and powerful," all at once. Tickets \$25-30.

SATURDAY/FEB. 21

52nd Music Contest. 12:30-4 p.m. Assembly of God Church, 100 Ayrhill Ave., N.E., Vienna. The Vienna Host Lions Club will hold its 52nd annual James A. Bland Music Contest which is open to vocalists and instrumentalists from area middle and high schools. Each contestant will have up to eight minutes to perform, with awards announced at 4 p.m. Registration deadline is Feb. 16. Also, this is a free concert for the general public to attend. For information and/or application,



PHOTO BY DAVID SEGAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Actors Allison Shelby, Casey Bauer, Daddy Issa and John Barclay Burns rehearse a scene from Vienna Theatre Company's upcoming production of Ken Ludwig's romantic comedy, "Be My Baby," running through Feb. 8.

email sandcs89@yahoo.com or call 703-938-1142.

TUESDAY/FEB. 24

Concert: Bettye LaVette. 8 p.m. Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. 8p.m. Dubbed the "High Priestess of R&B," this sizzling soul singer turns up the heat with her soaring voice that made "My Man - He's a loving' Man," a Top 10 hit (The Huffington Post.) Tickets \$45-48.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 25

Concert: Kat Edmonson. 8 p.m. Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. With special guest Robert Ellis. Float away on the sweet, jazzy vocals of this singer/songwriter cherished for her vintage pop and "timeless-sounding voice." (NPR). Tickets \$25-30.

ONGOING

Tai Chi Beginners' Practice.

Through March 21. Free Tai Chi beginners' practice. Open to all. Every Saturday, 8-9 a.m.

St. Luke's Catholic School Gymnasium, 7005 Georgetown Pike, McLean.

Free Comedy Showcase.

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

Family Fun Entertainment Series.

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

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

Smart Markets. Wednesdays 3-7 p.m., Smart Markets at 12001 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston. Smart Markets is a producer-only farmers' market that offers food and live music from local jazz group, devoted to supporting local economy and a healthier environment. For more information visit, facebook.com/smartmarketsreston, twitter.com/smartmarkets and www.smartmarkets.org.

Open Mic Night. Wednesdays 9:30 p.m.-1:30 a.m. Jimmy's Old Town Tavern, 697 Spring St., Herndon. Register your band at BluesSlide@aol.com or 703-593-5206. www.jimmystavern.com.

TGIF Free Fridays. 5-7 p.m., at Greater Reston Arts Center, 12001 Market St., Suite 103, Reston. An evening of family art making and storytelling. 703-471-9242 or www.restonarts.com.

Insomnia Theater. Friday and Saturday 11:30 p.m., at Reston Town Center, 11940 Market St., Reston. Look up showings online. www.bowtiecinemas.com.



McLean
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Here's What's Happening at MCC



Just in time for Valentine's Day!

8th Annual McLean Jewelry Showcase

Saturday, Feb 7, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

Admission: \$3, (save \$1 with this ad)

Macdonald Fine Arts Scholarship Competition Application Deadline

Friday, Feb. 13, 5 p.m.

Vital Theatre's "Pinkalicious"

Saturday, Feb. 14, 2 p.m.

\$20/\$15 MCC district residents

Onstage @ The Alden Rani Arbo and daisy mayhem "American Spiritual"

Saturday, Feb. 21, 8 p.m.

\$30/\$20 MCC district residents

Theatreworks USA's "Fly Guy & Other Stories"

Saturday, Feb. 22, 2 p.m.

\$15/\$10 MCC district residents

Sunday Soirée Series "My Funny Valentine"

Sunday, Feb. 22, 3-5 p.m.

Admission: \$15 couples/\$8 singles

Onstage @ The Alden Chita Rivera: "A Legendary Celebration"

Tuesday, Feb. 24, 7:30 p.m.

\$75/\$45 MCC district residents

The McLean Community Center
www.mcleancenter.org
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www.aldentheatre.org



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McLean Gymnastics Wins 4th Straight District/Conference Title

Green places second in all-around, Brown-Kaiser third.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

McLean gymnast Lizzy Brown-Kaiser dismounted from the uneven bars, stuck the landing and celebrated with a smile toward head coach Courtney Lesson.

During Monday's ultra-competitive Conference 6 championship meet, which one of the region's top teams was guaranteed to leave empty handed, Brown-Kaiser kept her cool and came up clutch, placing in the top eight in three of four events.

AT THE CONCLUSION of the meet, Brown-Kaiser celebrated by hugging a teammate, reacting when Washington-Lee was announced as runner-up, meaning McLean captured its fourth consecutive Liberty District/Conference 6 championship. The Highlanders held off W-L and Yorktown in a tightly-contested three-team battle.

McLean earned the title with a score of 143. W-L finished runner-up and earned the conference's second and final regional berth with a score of 142.225. Yorktown, a talented team that performed well at times during the regular season, produced a score of 141, leaving the Patriots on the outside looking in at the 6A North region championship meet, scheduled for Feb. 11 at Lake Braddock Secondary School.

"It's a really great feeling because this is

"It's a really great feeling because this is our senior year and there was a lot of pressure to keep our conference championship title [streak], so it feels great to fulfill that."

— McLean senior Lizzy Brown-Kaiser

McLean posted a meet-best team vault score of 37.8 during the Conference 6 gymnastics championships on Monday at McLean High School.

our senior year and there was a lot of pressure to keep our conference championship title [streak]," Brown-Kaiser said, "so it feels great to fulfill that."

Fellow senior Jacqueline Green said: "It's great to do it for the fourth year in a row."

Green placed second in the all-around with a total score of 36.625. She tied for third on vault (9.6), placed fourth on bars (9), finished fifth on floor (9.125) and tied for sixth on beam (8.9).

Brown-Kaiser placed third in the all-around (36.425). She placed third on bars (9.225), tied for third on vault (9.6), tied for seventh on floor (8.8) and tied for ninth on beam (8.8).

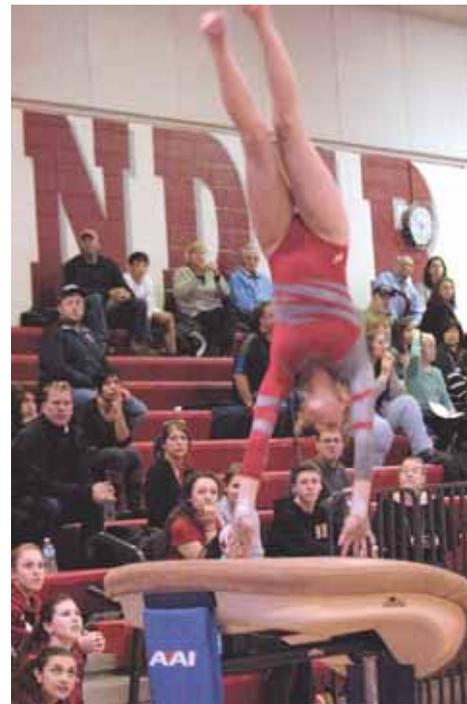


PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

meets, I didn't ever hit all four [events] — I always had some mistake — but today I hit all four and I'm really happy. This is the best meet I've ever had in all my four years of high school."

MCLEAN SETS ITS SIGHTS on regionals, where the Highlanders have finished runner-up to Washington-Lee each of the last three seasons. Last year, McLean went on to finish second in the state.

"They've beaten us the past few years at regionals," Green said, "so we hope to come back this year and take it."

Fairfax senior Rachel Barborek, the defending 2014 conference all-around champion, placed fourth with a score of 36.250. Other gymnasts who earned regional berths in the all-around include: W-L's Annie Hatcher (36.2), Yorktown's Juliette Mitrovich (35.85), Yorktown's Bella Kane (35.725) and Hayfield's Molly Overstreet (35.675).

Overstreet, a two-time state champion, won the conference bars title (9.5). Barborek won the beam (9.425) championship. Hatcher won vault (9.75) and floor (9.575) championships.

Mitrovich said qualifying for regionals as an all-around will only slightly numb the disappointment of not qualifying as a team.

"It [helps] a little bit," Mitrovich said, "but it would have been nice to make it because we've beaten W-L almost all year and they just had a good meet this one time and we didn't get to make it, but it is what it is."

Fairfax finished fourth as a team with a score of 125.275, followed by Hayfield (121.1), South Lakes (115.125), Madison (108.7) and Langley (81.3).

South Lakes Wins Conference Championship

Both boys and girls win indoor track and field Liberty Conference championship.

Multiple event victories by sophomore Devyn Jones and domination of the relays, led the South Lakes High School indoor track teams to Liberty Conference championships in both the boys and girls divisions Thursday, Jan. 30 at the Prince George's County Sports and Learning Complex Landover, Md.

SLHS girls team scored 147 points for its fourth consecutive title. James Madison was second with 86 while Langley and McLean tied for third with 54.50 points each. The Seahawks boys team won its seventh consecutive title, massing 195 points with McLean second (68) and James Madison and Washington-Lee tied at third (48).

Jones teamed with fellow sophomore Jessica Lister, junior Golden Kumi-



PHOTO BY HARRY LISTER, JR.

South Lakes High School's 4x400 girls relay team, from left: Devyn Jones, Claire Nieuwsma, Jessica Lister and Golden Kumi-Darfour.

Darfour and senior Claire Nieuwsma in winning the girls 4x400 relay in 4:09.63. Jones finished fourth in the triple jump (33-07.00) and sixth in the 500 meters (1:23.64). On Day 1 of the championship (Jan. 22), she

led a SLHS sweep of the girls 55 meter hurdles, winning the event in 8.85. Seniors Maya Rodriguez (9.44) and Nieuwsma (9.88) finished second and third, respectively. Jones also won the long jump (16-08.50).

Senior Comfort Reed, who finished third in the long jump (16-03.50) won the triple jump with a leap of 34-11.25. Reed and seniors Ozioma Chinaka, Samantha Webb and sophomore Nikayla Hoyte finished third in the girls 4x200 meter relay (1:48.83). Chinaka also finished third in the pole vault (8-03.00).

Senior Delaney Wickman finished second in both the 300 meters (41.96) and 500 meters (1:18.52). Kumi-Darfour was third in the 1,000 meters (3:07.82).

SLHS juniors, led by Eric Kirlew, dominated the boys triple jump. Kirlew won the event with a jump of 44-06.50. Skander Ballard was second (41-08.75), Anas Fain finished third (41-06.00) and Alex Rudison took fourth (39-10.00). Kirlew also led the SLHS boys' long jumpers on Day 1 with a winning distance of 19-10.00. Ballard was second (19-06.00) and Fain finished third (19.-05.00). Fain also contributed to the boys' championship finishing tied for second in the high jump (5-11) and winning

the 55 meter hurdles in 7.94 on Day 1.

Kirlew, third in the 55 meters (6.84), sophomore Timiebi Ogobri, who was second (6.68) on the first day of competition, teamed with Ballard and Rudison on Day 2 to win the boys 4x200 relay in 1:35.66.

The 4x400 team of senior Sam Arpee, juniors John LeBerre, Nikolai Waithe and Ballard won the event in 3:35.59. Arpee also won the 500 meters in 1:08.81 and Waithe was second 1:09.58 in that event. In the 300 meters, Ballard finished second (36.73), Arpee was third (37.21) and Waithe finished fourth (38.21).

♣Sophomores John Swecker, Ashton Reinhold, juniors Connor Smith and LeBerre finished second in the 4x800 meter relay (8:33.16).

♣Freshman Olivia Beckner, Kumi-Darfour, junior Monica Lannen and senior Augusta Durham were third in that event with a 10:00.09.

The top six finishers in each event and the top three relays advance to the Northern 6A Regional Championship Feb. 19 at the Prince George's County Sports and Learning Complex in Landover, Md.

McLean Theatre Company Presents 'Big Fish'

The McLean High School Theatre Company (MTC) premieres the musical "Big Fish" to the Metro DC area this February. Led by Artistic Director, Amy Poe, and Music Director, Bobby McCoy (1st Stage, Keegan, McLean Community Players), the award-winning company brings this big-hearted musical of a father's story, a son's journey and life's epic adventure. "Big Fish" premieres with a special Feb. 16 President's Day preview show, 2 p.m. followed by a single weekend run Feb. 19-22, Thursday through Saturday, 7 p.m. with Saturday and Sunday matinees, 2 p.m. Performances are in McLean's Burks Auditorium with advance tickets available at www.mcleandrama.com. Based on the celebrated novel by Daniel Wallace and the acclaimed film directed by Tim Burton, "Big Fish" is a new Broadway musical featuring music and lyrics by Tony nominee Andrew Lippa (The Addams Family, The Wild Party) and a new book by esteemed screenwriter John August (Charlie and the Chocolate Factory). "Big Fish" centers on Edward Bloom, who sweeps the audience into a fantasy as he recounts his seemingly impossible life stories. Edward's far-fetched tales represent his unique outlook on the world; he sees life as an adven-



Alex Stone



Jack Posey



Rachel Lawhead

ture and himself as the hero. Complete with acrobatics, juggling, aerial silks and thrilling big-stage dance numbers, this musical reminds us why we love going to the theatre for an experience that's richer, funnier and bigger than life itself.

Director Amy Poe said, "We are very excited that the McLean Theatre Company will debut this magical and moving adventure to the Metro D.C. community. After premiering "Catch Me If You Can" last spring and thrilling audiences with the outrageous "The Addams Family" this fall, our company is ready for the challenge of the spectacular that is "Big Fish."

The show's technical elements and stunning performances will create an atmosphere where it appears the impossible is achieved. We want the audience to embrace Edward Bloom's incredible interpretation of the mundane. Through witnessing Edward's 'big fish' tales, the audience learns that reality is relative and perception is possibility."

Following his recent recognition as a National YoungArts Finalist and nomination as a Presidential Scholar in the Arts, Alex Stone appears as Edward Bloom while recent DCMetrotheaterarts.com award recipients, Jack Posey and Rachel Lawhead,

appear as Will and Sandra Bloom respectively. Principal characters round out with Matt Lucero as the giant, Karl, Will Stockton as Amos Calloway, Emma Gold as Josephine Bloom, Thomas Kelty and Jeffery Nolan as Don and Zacky Price, Helena Doms as The Witch and Nicole Sheehan as Jenny Hill.

"Big Fish" premieres Feb. 16 with a special President's Day preview show at 2 p.m. followed by a single weekend run Feb. 19-22, Thursday through Saturday, 7 p.m. with Saturday and Sunday matinees, 2 p.m. MTC welcomes the CAPPIES and National Thespian adjudicators to Saturday evening's performance. Performances are in McLean's Burks Auditorium with advance tickets available at www.mcleandrama.com. "Big Fish" is presented through special arrangement with Theatrical Rights Worldwide (TRW).

McLean Theatre Company comprises students, parents and teachers at McLean High School working together to produce challenging and award winning theatrical productions. The home of McLean Theatre Company is the 600 seat Burks Auditorium and the more intimate 75 seat Black Box Theater at 1633 Davidson Road, McLean.

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The Past Future is Now Present

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



Presumably, maybe even obviously, nearly six years into a "terminal" diagnosis, arrangements for a smooth transition of power should have been made already. But they haven't. Not being a parent, and with no real extenuating-type circumstances to consider, despite the rather precarious existence in which I find myself I've never felt strongly about taking the steps necessary to arrange for a future which didn't involve yours truly.

Selfish, stupid, stubborn or any number of other characterizations which don't begin with the letter "s," I've never put down anywhere on paper – literally or figuratively – what would, in the event of my death, need to happen, how any of it should happen, and/or why it would even happen. So far, as concerns my wife, Dina, should I in fact predecease her, I've pretty much left it to happenstance. Moreover, given her interests, it seems unfair of me to not assist her somehow in a post-Kenny world.

Still, I've always felt that doing so, however prudent and practical – and considerate – was bad luck, sort of; a version of negative reinforcement. By not thinking of death/planning for it, somehow I was preventing its occurrence, dare I say (given my original "13-month-to-two-year prognosis"), its inevitability. And though I don't specifically know why this uneasy feeling has manifested itself of late (I've not received any discouraging medical news of late), it has; and ignoring the consequences of my continuing neglect seems ill-advised.

In addition, throughout this cancer experience, it has been suggested that managing stress (among other anecdotal-type advisories: keeping a positive attitude, maintaining a sense of humor, being a compliant patient) would be beneficial in the short, medium and long term battle royal that all cancer patients endure. But diagnosis-to-date, I've not addressed this most stressful, what-to-do/what-needs-to-be-done problem. And though a properly executed will would certainly be a start, it would not be a finish. There are more mundane instructions and organizational details, tedious as they may be, which would likely drastically reduce a level of stress which unbeknownst to me and my conscious, has probably invaded my subconscious, with predictable effect. I don't imagine solving this problem would put a bounce in my step; however, it would definitely eliminate a potential drag on my coefficient. And if my life is going to be lived, the less drag on it, the better.

Whatever I can do to lighten the load should be priority number one. I don't want to be spinning my emotional wheels over here. Cancer imposes enough pressure externally; I don't need to add to it internally.

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

NEWS

Vital Theatre's 'Pinkalicious' at The Alden Feb. 14

Vital Theatre's "Pinkalicious," a musical adaptation of the book by Victoria and Elizabeth Kann, will come to The Alden in McLean for a single performance at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 14.

Tickets are \$20 for the general public and \$15 for McLean tax district residents.

The Alden is located inside the McLean Community Center, which is located at 1234 Ingleside Avenue.

The show's main character, young Pinkalicious, can't stop eating pink cupcakes despite warnings from her parents. Her pink indulgence lands her at the doctor's office with "Pinkitis," an affliction that turns her pink from head to toe—a dream come true for this pink-loving enthusiast. But when her hue goes too far, only Pinkalicious can figure out a way to get out of this predicament.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Vital Theatre's "Pinkalicious" comes to The Alden in McLean for a single performance at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 14.

The production is appropriate for children ages 4 and older.

Tickets are on sale now. For more information or to purchase tickets online, visit: www.aldentheatre.org or call 703-790-0123, TTY: 711.

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/FEB. 5

Computer Tutoring. 3:30-5:30 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Learn how to enhance your computer skills by working with a tutor. All are welcome.

SATURDAY/FEB. 7

Document Shredding Day. 9 a.m. - noon. Flint Hill Upper School, 3320 Jermantown Road, Oakton. Paper documents only. No electronic devices, thick metal, plastic, newspaper, magazines, etc. Sponsored by Safeguard Shredding.

TUESDAY/FEB. 10

NARFE Chapter 1116 Meeting. 1:30 p.m. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, Vienna. The speaker John Horejsi, lobbyist for Virginia State Government will speak. The meeting is open to all members and their guests.

THURSDAY/FEB. 26

Computer Tutoring. 3:30-5:30 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Learn how to enhance your computer skills by working with a tutor. All are welcome.

ONGOING

Food Addicts in Recovery. Wednesdays at 7 p.m. at The Vine Church, 2501 Gallows Road, Dunn Loring. Are you having trouble controlling the way you eat? Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous (FA) is a free twelve step recovery program for anyone suffering from food obsession, overeating, under-eating or bulimia. For more information or a list of additional meetings throughout the U.S. and the world, call 781-932-6300 or www.foodaddicts.org.

Vienna Toastmasters. 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m., at the Vienna Community Center on the 2nd floor room opposite the elevator, 120 Cherry St., S.E., Vienna. A friendly place to get comfortable with public speaking and impromptu speaking for new and experienced speakers. Open to the public.

Run With the Doctor. Every other Saturday at 7 a.m. 8230 Boone Blvd, Tysons Corner. The Center for Orthopedics and Sports Medicine offers its services in a convenient format to runners at this running event. Free. facebook.com/runwiththedoctor.

Senior Fall Prevention Classes. 1:30-2:30 p.m. and 2-3 p.m., The Woodlands Retirement

Community, 4320 Forest Hill Drive, Fairfax. Classes are held in a heated indoor pool and are designed to work on balance and core muscles. \$10. 703-667-9800.

Coffee/Tea Poetry Group. Poets and poetry lovers seek to form a group to meet once a month at a local coffee/tea shop to enjoy each other's creations. 703-819-1690.

Virginia Sheriff's Institute Scholarship Program. Those enrolled in a Virginia college or university who are pursuing a degree in the field of criminal justice are eligible for the Virginia Sheriff's Institute Scholarship Program; recommendation letter needed. 703-246-3251, shf-pio@fairfaxcounty.gov or <http://vasherriffsinstitute.org/scholarship/>.

Everest College Free GED Test Preparation. Tysons Corner, Vienna. Free GED test preparation and credential completion program, GED Advantage, open to the public. 1-888-201-6547.

Weekly TIPS Lunch. 12:15-1:30 p.m., at Shula's, 8028 Leesburg Pike, Vienna. Tyson's Regional Chamber of Commerce does lunch. 703-862-4895.

New Neighbors League Club of Northern Virginia. For women, the club includes Bridge, mah jong, gardening, quilting and many other activities. www.newneighborsvirginia.com.

Volunteers for Change. A program for adults which offers more than 50 weekend and evening volunteer opportunities per month. www.volunteerfairfax.org.

Haven of Northern Virginia Support Group. 703-941-7000, www.havenofnova.org or havenofnova@verizon.net.

The Advisory Board of the Northwest Center for Mental Health Services. 7-9 p.m. Looking for volunteers who are dedicated to improving mental health services. 703-435-0868.

Brinker Toastmasters. 9:30 a.m. at Vienna Presbyterian Church, 124 Park St. N.E., Vienna. Meets second and fourth Saturday of the month. brinker.wordpress.com.

Pauline Shirley Toastmasters Club Meeting. 6:45 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Develop better speaking and presentation skills, learn to think quickly and clearly on your feet. 703-893-5506 or paulineshirley.freetoasthost.info.

Multiple Sclerosis Support Group. 7 p.m. Vienna Presbyterian Church, 124 Park St., N.E., Vienna. A group for anyone with multiple sclerosis, their family and friends. 703-768-4841.

Virginia Chronic Pain Support Group Meeting. 1:30 p.m. at Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine, 6829 Elm St., Suite 300, McLean. Group leader, Jodi Brayton, LCSW; meetings are the second Wednesday of each month. 703-532-4892.

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