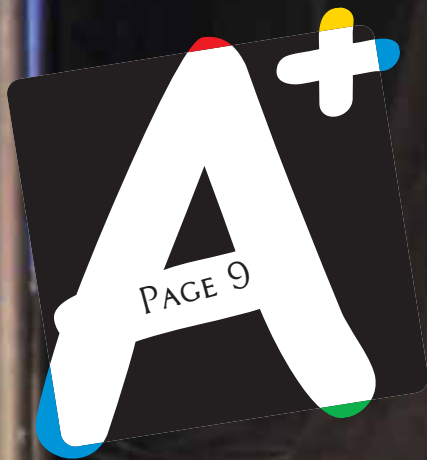


NextStop Theatre in Herndon hosted a TEDx event on Saturday, March 14. One of the speakers was Stephanie Butler who shared her experience of turning her multiple sclerosis diagnosis into a calling.

Promoting Innovation and Creativity

NEWS, PAGE 4



NextStop Produces 'The Secret Garden'

ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 8

Local Teens Compete in Science Bowl

NEWS, PAGE 3

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RESTON

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A Face-off in a Fast-Paced Competition

Students from Rachel Carson, Nysmith School compete in the National Science Bowl.

BY MARISSA BEALE
THE CONNECTION

Students from area local middle schools traveled to Newport News to compete in the regional competition for the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Science's National Science Bowl (NSB) at the Jefferson Nuclear Lab. The competition took place Saturday, March 7. Students from Longfellow Middle School will compete in the National Finals, held in Washington, D.C. from April 30 to May 4, for their first place win in Saturday's competition.

Other local schools at the competition included Rachel Carson Middle School and the Nysmith School for the Gifted in Herndon, and Joyce Kilmer Middle School in Vienna. These five schools were part of a total of 14 schools competing in Newport News on March 7. The students were tested in a range of scientific disciplines, including biology, chemistry, earth science, physics, energy, and math.

In 1991, the Department of Energy (DOE) created the National Science Bowl "to encourage students to excel in mathematics and science and to pursue careers in these fields. Furthermore, "Approximately 240,000 students have participated in the National Science Bowl throughout its 24 year history, and it is one of the nation's largest science competitions."

THE TEAM FROM RACHEL CARSON Middle School (RCMS) came in second place to Longfellow Middle School at the regional competition on Saturday. This year marked the school's fourth year competing in NSB, and every year they hope to improve.

"It was a very tough competition," said



PHOTO COURTESY OF RAJANI KOPPARAPU

Students that represented Rachel Caron Middle School at the regional competition of the National Science Bowl. Back row from left: Kevin Wang (Peiqi Wang), Nishanth Anand; front row from left: Neeyanth Kopparapu (captain), Jacob Fajer and Richard Wang.

Rajani Kopparapu, parent coach of the team. "They have to answer tossup questions in five seconds. The team was answering questions even before the question was completed." They were head-to-head with Longfellow, and both teams were buzzing before the questions were even completed by the judges. As the students progressed in the competition, specificity in answering the question mattered just as much as how quickly they answered.

"The question missed was 'What is the function of the occipital region of the brain,'" said Kopparapu. "Students at Rachel Carson Middle School said 'sight,' but what the judges were looking for was 'vision.'"

For winning second place, however, the

students received a \$500 check, awarded to the school, along with a trophy and individual certificates.

The competition was judged by scientists and engineers at the Jefferson Lab, who the students had a chance to meet. "RCMS kids have found it very inspiring to interact with scientists. They also get a tour of the lab and goodies to take home," said Kopparapu. Already, the students know how they would like to see the money used.

"They would all like to see the money used for the sciences," said Kopparapu.

At RCMS, the team to compete in the National Science Bowl was selected from a group of 120-150 students that showed up to take the test to qualify. From those stu-



PHOTO COURTESY OF VENKATA ALLAMSETTY

Team representing Nysmith School for the Gifted and Talented, back row from left: Anusha Allamsetty, Venkata Allamsetty (coach), Shaan Bhandarkar; front row from left: Vaibhav Sharma, Abhishek Allamsetty, and Ajit Kadaveru.

dents, five were chosen to create the team. The students receive tremendous support from teachers at the school.

STUDENTS FROM THE NYSMITH School for the Gifted and Talented were awarded third place in the regional competition of the NSB on Saturday.

The team members included Shaan Bhandarkar, team captain Abhishek Allamsetty, Anusha Allamsetty, Ajit Kadaveru and Vaibhav Sharma.

"I plan to join the high school science bowl as well. I think doing more complicated science will be really beneficial to me

SEE TEENS, PAGE 5

Dulles Chamber Casino Event Raises Thousands for Education

The Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce held its annual education fundraiser March 7 at the Salamander Resort in Middleburg, raising thousands of dollars to support students in Northern Virginia.

The James Bond-themed casino event attracted 150 guests eager to "Pay It Forward" in support of the region's future workforce.

"Our chamber is deeply committed to the education of local students and we are delighted to once again provide local businesses with a way to directly impact this vital community," said Eileen Curtis, president and CEO of the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce. "It was a lovely evening, where entertainment and generosity paired to make exceptional memories."

Beneficiaries of the evening included the chamber's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) scholarship program, which awards a scholarship to one student at each of the six high

schools the chamber partners with annually.

Other beneficiaries of the evening included the Children's Science Center, the Fairfax County Public Schools' Homeless Liaison Office, and Mobile Hope Loudoun.

"Helping to make a difference in children's lives gives me great satisfaction," said Premier Realty Group Vice President Gina Poindexter, who once again served as chair of the event's planning committee and was instrumental in organizing the evening and bringing about its success. "It's what this night is all about."

Joining the evening's title sponsor Aeronautical Systems Inc., other businesses stepped up to support the event, including Salamander Resort, Cox Business, Fantasy World Entertainment, Reston Limousine, HRI Associates, Systems Furniture Gallery, Middleburg Bank, Thompson Greenspon CPAs, and Cornerstones.



COURTESY PHOTO

A bet on behalf of education is never empty ... guests at the Dulles Regional Chamber's annual casino fundraiser for education enjoyed a selection of blackjack, craps, roulette and more.



In addition to presentations, artistic talent was shared at the March 14 TEDx event in Herndon. This included choreography by members of Motion X Dance DC. Stephanie Lynn Dorrycott, artistic director of Motion X Dance DC shared the dance company's objectives and mission.



Executive director of the Council for the Arts of Herndon (CAH) Signe Friedrichs spoke about the objectives of her organization and the local arts scene available within Herndon, including the ArtSpace Herndon arts gallery located on Center Street. "The most surprising thing about the arts scene in your community could be you," said Friedrichs.

Promoting Innovation and Creativity

Town of Herndon hosts TEDx Herndon at NextStop Theatre.

BY RYAN DUNN
THE CONNECTION

NextStop Theatre in the Town of Herndon hosted a TEDx event on Saturday, March 14. In the spirit of ideas worth spreading, TEDx is a program of local, self-organized events that bring people together to share a TED-like experience. TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) is a global set of conferences run by the private non-profit Sapling Foundation, under the slogan "Ideas Worth Spreading."

TED was founded in 1984, and the annual conference series began in 1990. TED's early emphasis was technology and design, consistent with its Silicon Valley origins, but has since broadened its focus to include talks on scientific, cultural and academic topics. This was the first TEDx to be hosted in Herndon.

At a TEDx event, TED Talks video and live speakers combine to spark discussion and connection in a group. Local, self-organized events are branded TEDx, where x means independently organized TED event. The TED Conference provides general guidance for the TEDx program, but individual TEDx events are self-organized (subject to certain rules and regulations). Filming the event was a video crew from Herndon based Moon Bounce Media. As of March 2015, the TEDx talk library contained films and presentations from over 130 countries. "It is about spreading ideas and creating community... hopefully these ideas will take root after the event," said Joseph Plummer, organizer for the TEDx Herndon.

PLUMMER is founder, president and Chief



PHOTOS BY RYAN DUNN/THE CONNECTION

Connor Edsall accompanied by Christopher Hunt played music at the TEDx event held at NextStop Theatre on Saturday, March 14. Many in the audience agreed the presentations at the event were inspirational, bold and vulnerable. The event was organized by Joseph Plummer.

Executive Officer of The Three Birds Foundation, a Herndon-based nonprofit that aims to forward alternative energy resources, particularly in low income schools. In addition to work with low-income schools, Three Birds has reached out to other schools to assist them with various projects and initiatives. Plummer said he was encouraged by Mayor Merkel to investigate the TEDx event. "Finding the speakers is a very interesting process," said Plummer. Sponsors for the Herndon TEDx event included Katydid Kids and Cox Communications. Plummer said he sees the TEDx events as a way to continue promoting a culture of innovation and creativity. Many hope the success of this year's event may be repeated again.

"Tedx Herndon started as the result of a conversation about ideas to improve the community," said Town of Herndon Mayor Lisa Merkel. "Herndon has always been a

place where people take ideas and bring them into reality, we are innovators and risk-takers, neighbors who work together to make things like the Fortnightly Library and ArtSpace happen. Herndon is where high tech meets hometown, where the arts and technology intersect." Also attending the presentation was Herndon's Vice Mayor, Jennifer Baker.

Many of 15 persons participating in the presentations were residents of Northern Virginia. Within a set amount of time, each of the speakers shared a story. The presentations ranged from a variety of topics, including Louise Edsall's discussion on the value of honeybees, Tom "Tattoo Tom" Mitchell's journey to promote childhood cancer awareness, and Scott Sklar's presentation on the future of personal energy use. Many in the audience agreed the speakers were inspirational, bold and vulnerable, sometimes within the same 30 seconds. The

Tedx Herndon was a chance for the presenters to share their passions.

Stephanie Butler shared how she turned a diagnosis for a chronic illness into a calling. In 2013 Butler was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS). Butler is now working towards a degree to become a family nurse practitioner at Rutgers, she has already become an MS certified nurse. Butler is an advocate for MS research, serves on a committee for the Accelerated Cure Project, and writes an MS blog, <http://justkeepsmyelin.com>. "I am not offering a cure, but I am empowering people," said Butler.

In addition to the presentations, artistic talent was also shared. This included music by Connor Edsall accompanied by Christopher Hunt, as well as choreography by members of Motion X Dance DC. Stephanie Lynn Dorrycott, artistic director of Motion X Dance DC, spoke about the dance company's objectives and mission to promote innovative and thought-provoking work from a diverse range of established and emerging choreographers. Musician Andrew Tufano shared some of his work, and spoke about the abilities available to artists in the today's expanding freelance marketplace. "What I am saying is the breadth of one person's potential has widened," said Tufano.

THE FOUR HOUR event's final speakers included chief strategic consultant of Stokefire Tate Linden, executive director of the Council for the Arts of Herndon Signe Friedrichs, CEO and founder of Organic Bronzing Station Jennifer Wignall, and Manager of School District Sustainability with U.S. Green Building Council Anisa B. Metzger. Some of the presenters had never spoken publicly before, and yet still came to Tedx Herndon to share their stories.

"It is my hope that today's event will lead to more ideas and more actions that make Herndon and the world a better place," said Mayor Merkel, who closed the event.

Herndon Election Changed for Good

Herndon's next town election will take place Nov. 8, 2016.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Arthur Nachman told Herndon's Town Council that their actions after Tuesday's council hearing would be just as important to the Town's future as their vote Tuesday night, March 10.

"After the vote is taken, you have to be united," he told Herndon's seven councilmembers. "You are now representing the ordinance."

"After the vote is taken, speaking disparagingly against the ordinance does not do any good. That causes derision," Nachman said.

Herndon's Council adopted an ordinance Tuesday, March 10 so Herndon's next town election will be held Nov. 8, 2016. Herndon's local elections have taken place in May since the Town was incorporated in 1879. Herndon's Town Council approved the change March 10 by a 4-3 vote.

"I get it. Change is really hard. It's hard in business, it's hard in personal life, it's hard in policy. It's really hard so I absolutely recognize that. But the cornerstone of democracy is participation," said Jennifer Baker, vice mayor on the Council.

At Herndon precincts, between 75-80 percent of registered voters turned out for the November 2012

presidential election year, and approximately 38-45 percent turned out during the midterm elections in November 2010, according to town records. In general, 20-25 percent of registered voters turn out for May elections.

"When you know better, you do better," Baker said. "May [elections] made a lot of sense for a long time. But we've done a lot of research and because of that I feel very convinced that we now know November will be better choice going forward."

ABOUT 35 people testified both for and against moving town elections to the fall. Hundreds voiced opinions during four public hearings in November and December and by email and written testimony to the Council.

Most talked Tuesday, from the heart, without notes.

Some residents remained convinced that town elections should be separate from federal and state elections to allow focus on town issues.

Council members Steve Mitchell, Dave Kirby and Jasbinder Singh asked for a referendum. Each voted against moving town elections from the spring to the Fall.

"If the town of Herndon wanted this, then I would support this 100 percent," said Mitchell. "And I would know this by a referendum."

But those who supported the move spoke with as much enthusiasm for the Town as those who spoke against the change.

"If we stop and ask for a referendum on everything we do in Town, we will never get anything done," said councilmember Sheila Olem.

Local Teens Compete in Science Bowl

FROM PAGE 3

in the future," said Abhishek Allamsetty, the team's captain. "My favorite part was the physical science because it has always intrigued me since I was a little kid. It's really cool to see the mathematics and science, and also energy."

Students are challenged in various ways as competitors in the competition. Some say the most challenging part is the questions, while others say it is the format of the game.

"I think it's the buzzer where it's a game of chance," said Vaibaz, a seventh grader on the team. "Everyone knows the answer but it's really about who is the fastest. I also liked the type of questions."

Used to doing well in NSB, students at Nysmith actually enjoyed a victory against Longfellow Middle School during a portion of the competition.

"We beat Longfellow in the double elimination stage," said Venkata Allamsetty, the team's coach. "When we eventually

had to play them again, we lost and that caused us to get third place."

The team prepared by competing against each other using the similar format in which they competed during the science bowl.

"We'd divide our five person team up into groups of two and three and practice every week-end. We started in the summer and worked until the weekend of competition," said Abishek. As it got closer to the competition's date, the team increased their amount of practice, working for as long as three hours to prepare.

"I think our team could have done a little bit better. Until the last few rounds we were doing better than I thought we would do, but at the last part, after beating the number one team, we were a little reckless, so let the team buzz in a few questions and that really cost us the competition." For their win they received a trophy and \$300 to go toward the school's science department.

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OPINION

On Police Information and Secrecy

Time for change in public access to police information.

The first meeting of the Fairfax County Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission will take place next Monday, March 23, and it comes with hope for real change.

Police could take one step that would signal that they are serious about regaining public trust.

Police departments in Northern Virginia should let go of their relentless pursuit of secrecy. Police departments all over the country routinely allow access to police reports, incident reports, dashboard video and many other sources of information without harm, all things that police here refuse to allow the public to see.

The first paragraph of Virginia Freedom of Information Act, passed by the General Assembly in 1968, states that all public records “shall be presumed open.” But the legislation includes an exception that allows police to withhold

“complaints, memoranda, correspondence, case files or reports, witness statements and evidence.”

Police officials in Fairfax (and also in 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, whether the case is open or closed, whether they are about a “police-involved shooting” or information requested by a family about a homicide victim.

EDITORIAL

It is only because of legal action by the family of John Geer, shot dead by a Fairfax County police officer in the doorway to his own home in August 2013, and the resulting court order that we know details of what happened that day. And what we now know confirms that the information released by police was incomplete and misleading at best.

We’ve learned that we cannot trust the leadership at the Fairfax County Police Department to tell the truth voluntarily on these matters. (See Editorial: “Not the First or Only Time,” Connection, Feb. 11, 2015.)

Repeating what we have said in this space many times: Police wield power unlike any

other entity — the power to detain and question, the power to arrest, the power to respond with force when necessary, sometimes deadly force.

With that power, comes responsibility — the responsibility to operate openly and with transparency, the responsibility to make available the greatest possible amount of information, especially the responsibility to provide the public with a full picture of what happened when something goes wrong.

Most Northern Virginia residents think very highly of their police. We are very safe here. People understand that sometimes mistakes happen, that sometimes force is needed, and that sometimes police will exercise deadly force. What they are unlikely to accept is secrecy that shrouds mistakes, and failure to take responsibility for explaining events of deadly force.

It’s clear that discretion about when to withhold information cannot be left up to the police department.

—MARY KIMM, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Mary Kimm is a member of the Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission; news coverage of police issues will continue to be the responsibility of reporters at the Connection.

COMMENTARY

What Else Was Done?

BY KENNETH R. “KEN” PLUM
STATE DELEGATE (D-36)

Previous columns have focused on major legislation passed in the 2015 General Assembly session, but this column will describe other legislation that passed. Implications for these bills may be more limited in the number of persons affected, but you can be sure that for those persons these bills may be the most important. For example, Governor McAuliffe has already signed legislation to decriminalize the use of oils derived from the marijuana plant to treat persons with severe epilepsy. I had introduced one of the bills to accomplish this purpose. A bill was also passed that allows terminally ill patients under physician’s supervision to take investigational drugs that have been cleared for the first phase of clinical trials before getting final FDA approval.

Legislation already signed by the Governor allows transportation network companies like Uber and Lyft to operate in Virginia when they have met licensing requirements including appropriate insurance and background checks for drivers. The threshold for expanded state licensing and regulation of day care providers was reduced from the current six to five or more children unrelated to

the owner in a home. A national background check with fingerprinting will be required, and unlicensed providers must advise parents in writing. This crack-down comes amidst problems in some homes that resulted in the death of a child.

Another measure requires health insurance providers to include coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders in children aged two through ten. Current law only requires coverage through age six. In response to concerns about heroin and prescription drug abuse, legislation was passed to encourage persons to report another person’s overdose and remain on the scene without fear of prosecution for minor possession or intoxication. Under a pilot program, use of the prescription drug naloxone to counteract the effects of heroin or opioid overdose was expanded.

All common sense gun safety measures were defeated in a subcommittee of five in the House of Delegates, but a bill that would require Virginia to recognize the right to possess firearms of out-of-state felons whose gun rights have been restored in their home state



passed without my vote. Hopefully the Governor will veto the bill. A bill that would have allowed state government the ability to keep secret information about drugs used in executions and the drugs’ manufacturers was defeated in the House of Delegates.

Legislation to limit the warrantless collection of personal information by law enforcement when there is no reasonable suspicion of criminal activity passed as did legislation to restrict

to seven days the retention of information gathered by license plate readers that is unrelated to an ongoing criminal investigation. A bill passed that requires law enforcement and regulatory agencies to get search warrants before flying drones except in emergencies or training activities.

A bill to repeal the King’s Dominion law that requires school systems to start school after Labor Day failed with my voting again to repeal it. School calendars should be set by school boards, not the legislature. An ethics bill passed but with I believe glaring deficiencies that I will address in a future column.

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. Send to:

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SPORTS



PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Oakton junior Alex Marquis dribbles around a pick set by teammate Delaney Connolly (44) during the Cougars' state semifinal loss to Bethel.



Oakton fans cheer for the Cougars during the 6A girls' basketball state semifinals on March 13 at VCU's Siegel Center.

Hot-Handed Bethel too Much for Oakton Cougars fall in state semifinals.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

The Oakton girls' basketball team arrived in Richmond riding a 26-game win streak, having captured Conference 5 and 6A North region championships along the way.

But nothing could have prepared the Cougars for the shooting performance they would encounter in Friday's state semifinal matchup with Bethel.

The Bruins knocked down a flurry of mid-range jumpers, shot better than 50 percent from the field and did not miss from 3-point range. Bethel started the game with an 11-0 run, led 17-4 in the opening quarter and held an 11-point advantage entering the fourth.

Oakton didn't play poorly. Five players scored at least eight points, one player recorded a double-double, and the team showed resiliency in battling back from multiple double-digit deficits.

But at the end of the night, with a berth in the state final on the line, the Cougars would walk out of VCU's Siegel Center with a parting gift in the form of a life lesson.

OAKTON'S STELLAR SEASON ended with a 73-63 loss to Bethel in the 6A state semifinals on March 13. The Cougars, who hadn't lost since Dec. 4, had no answer for a Bruins team that shot 23-of-40 (58 percent) from the field and made all six of its



Oakton senior Karlie Cronin shoots against Bethel during the 6A state semifinals on March 13 at VCU's Siegel Center.

3-point attempts. Oakton pulled to within two when Alex Marquis' three-point play cut the Bethel lead to 63-61 with 2:38 left in the fourth quarter, but the Bruins made 10 straight free throws in the final 90 seconds to clinch the win.

"What I did tell them [after the game] is that sometimes you give your very best and it's not enough, and that's a lesson not only for basketball but for life," Oakton head coach Fred Priester said. "All you can ever do is the very best that you could, and they did. We got off to a slow start and they just continued to hit shots. ... They were hard

to stop."

Bethel scored the game's first 11 points, including a trio of 3-pointers from guard Kayla James, and led 17-4 late in the first quarter.

"I think it was kind of just nerves in the beginning," Marquis said. "We all knew we could play better and we finally just came together and started playing like we know how to play together and it started working for us."

Oakton pulled to within six at halftime and trailed 32-28 when Karlie Cronin scored early in the third quarter, but Bethel extended the lead to 11 by the end of the period.

The Cougars were down 12 with 7:09 left when they made their final push. Oakton went on a 9-0 run and outscored Bethel 17-7 over the a 4-minute, 31-second stretch, cutting the Bruins' lead to 63-61 with Marquis' three-point play.

After Bethel missed a pair of free throws, Oakton had the chance to tie or take the lead with 2:28 remaining, but the Cougars turned it over. The Bruins then pulled away by making 10 consecutive free throws.

James finished with 21 points for Bethel. She shot 7-of-8 from the field and made all five of her 3-point attempts. Kyra Williams also scored 21 points and made 11 of 12 free-throw attempts.

"They played a great game," Cronin said. "We just tried to keep our composure throughout. They were shooting lights out

and it's hard to keep up with them."

Marquis, a junior, and sophomore Delaney Connolly each finished 16 points for Oakton. Connolly finished with a double-double, grabbing 11 rebounds.

Cronin, a senior, scored 13 points, and senior Lindsey Abed and sophomore Maddie Royle each added eight.

OAKTON FINISHED the season with a 27-2 record and only one loss to an in-state opponent.

"I'm certainly proud of what this team did all season," Cronin said. "I thought we grew as it went on. It wasn't our best game but we still played really well and I'm sad of how it came to an end. I love this team."

The Cougars will lose Cronin (SMU) and Abed (University of Hartford) to graduation, but will return a trio of standouts.

"I think we have a good group returning," Priester said. "We've got some big holes to fill — Karlie will be a big hole to fill, Lindsey will be a big hole to fill — but we have Alex and Delaney and Maddie. They'll learn from this. Are we going to be back again? I don't know. But they'll learn something from here that has nothing to do basketball."

"Like I told you, sometimes you give your very best, you do everything you can, you do all your preparation, you show up on time, you do all the things people say you're supposed to do and it's just not good enough. That's a lesson way beyond basketball."

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CALENDAR

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

THURSDAY/MARCH 19-SATURDAY/MARCH 21
Reston Friends Children's Book Sale. 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. We have all your favorite children's book authors, plus teaching materials. Come browse and buy. All ages. <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/rr/>.

SATURDAY/MARCH 21
Northern Virginia Housing Expo. 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Herndon High School, 700 Bennett Street, Herndon. The Northern Virginia Housing Expo, a free public event showcasing rental and first time ownership opportunities in the region. Expo planners also announced a new web site that will link visitors looking to rent or buy in Northern Virginia with valuable region wide resources. At <http://www.novahousingexpo.org>, visitors will find resources categorized by jurisdiction as well as information on the upcoming Northern Virginia Housing Expo.
Weekend Bluegrass Concert Series: Mountain Faith. 7:30 p.m. Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 1090 Sterling Road, Herndon. Mountain Faith is a relatively new group of young musicians who are carrying on the legacy of traditional bluegrass and bluegrass gospel music.

MONDAY/MARCH 23
Terrific Twos. 11 a.m. Herndon Fortnightly Library, 768 Center Street, Herndon. Up Above the World So High - Engage in wonderment with your little one as we explore the world above with stories, songs and

rhymes. Age 2 with adult. To register visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/he/>.

TUESDAY/MAR. 24-SUNDAY/APR. 5
Herndon High School Art Exhibit. ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Art teachers at Herndon High School invite senior artist to show painting, photographs, drawings and digital art. <http://www.artspaceherndon.com/mind-heart-vision/>

TUESDAY/MARCH 24
Baby Lapsit. 10:30 a.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Enjoy nursery rhymes, songs and stories. Build an early literacy foundation for your child while enjoying time together. Birth-11 months with adult. To register visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/rr/>.
Director's Choice Book Club. 7 p.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Sam Clay, Director of Fairfax County Public Library, leads a monthly book discussion. The title this month is The Orchardist by Amanda Coplin. <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/rr/>.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 25
It's Pancake Story Time. 7 p.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Flapjacks on the griddle; maple tree sap on the run; Busia's coming out of hibernation. Please join us for family storytime fun! All ages. To register visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/rr/>.

I'm a Builder! Storytime with Wood Blocks. 11 a.m. Herndon Fortnightly Library, 768 Center Street, Herndon. Creativity, scientific thinking, problem solving, and language skills all come into play as we use wood blocks to build, explore, create, and learn (STEAM). Age 3-5 with adult. To register visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/he/>.
Mind, Heart, Vision Artist Reception. 6-8 p.m. ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Every spring art teachers at Herndon High School invite senior artists to participate in a juried art show at ArtSpace Herndon. The exhibit includes paintings, photographs, drawings, and digital art. The student artwork on exhibit will also be available for purchase. The exhibit and artists reception are free and open to the public. For more information visit our website: <http://www.artspaceherndon.com/mind-heart-vision/>. 703-956-6590.

THURSDAY/MARCH 26
World Class Irish Pianist. Reston Community Center, 2310 Colt Neck Road, Reston. 2:15-3:40 p.m. Hear world class Irish pianist John O'Connor perform. He is famous for his breathtaking performances with some of the most impressive orchestras around the world, including the London Symphony, the Royal Philharmonic, the Vienna Symphony, and l'Orchestra National de France. The concert is free to the public. Sign up at: <http://www.restoncommunitycenter.com/attend-shows-events-exhibits/centerstage-schedule>
Storytime for Threes to Fives. 10:30 a.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. An early literacy program with stories and activities. Age 3-5 with adult. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/rr/>.

SATURDAY/MARCH 28
Celtibillies. 8 p.m. ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. The Dominion Notes Concert Series continues with the Celtibillies joined by Emily Oleson. The Celtibillies, an award-winning quartet of outstanding musicians from Abington, Virginia, play stringed instruments in the style of the Scottish and Irish immigrants who settled in the Virginia Frontier. Led by the fiddle, an instrument originating in the Isles, the band plays Celtic tunes with a mountain flavor.
 They will be joined by a professional flat-footed dancer, Emily Oleson, performing Celtic and Appalachian dance. Tickets are \$15. To purchase tickets got to: <http://www.artspaceherndon.com/dominion-notes-concert-series/>. For more information call 703-956-6590.
Sugarland Run Stream and Runnymede Park Clean-up. 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. Runnymede Park, 195 Herndon Parkway, Herndon. Choose between stream clean-up or native plant garden assignments, bring work gloves and suitable clothing. Meet at main entrance.
 To volunteer contact the Town Forester. 703-787-7380.
Aqua Egg Hunt. 1:30 p.m. - 4 p.m. Herndon Community Center Pool, 814 Ferndale Ave, Herndon. Join us for our Aqua Egg Hunt where children will collect as many floating and sinking eggs as possible in the time allowed.
 Everyone will receive a prize. Ages 16 and under. Register online http://www.herndon-va.gov/content/parks_rec/specialevents/ or call 703-787-7300.



Katie Keyser who plays Lily in the NextStop Theatre production of "The Secret Garden."



John Loughney who plays Archibald in the NextStop Theatre production of "The Secret Garden."

Redemptive Musical Journey

NextStop produces magical "The Secret Garden."

BY DAVID SIEGEL
 THE CONNECTION

The beloved novel, "The Secret Garden" by Frances Hodgson Burnett, has been transformed into a musical that will be gracing the stage at NextStop Theatre. It is "a joyful, entertaining story about the enduring power of love, through all obstacles and across all boundaries," said Evan Hoffmann, director of the NextStop production.

With "some of the most fantastic music that I have ever had the pleasure of working on," the production is a musical journey of an orphaned girl dealing with heartbreak to find redemption. "It is a very honest and thoughtful examination of the powerful (and sometimes painful) bonds that hold a family together," added Hoffmann.

"The Secret Garden" is a multiple Tony Award winning show with a score of about 30 numbers by Marsha Norman and Lucy Simon. Music director Steve Przybyski and a seven-piece orchestra will give vibrancy to a wide-array of eclectic music, "from sweeping waltzes to heartbreaking ballads to high-energy folk-rock, and stopping everywhere in between." With a set design by Andrew Cohen, the audience will be transported from "a Yorkshire manor, the moors, India, and a magical garden."

Bobby Libby who portrays Dr. Neville Craven, called "The Secret Garden" "a gorgeously rich and intricate score...a moving story that is a meditation on loss and love" The themes are "universal; it's the epitome of a

Where and When

NextStop Theatre presents The Secret Garden at the Industrial Strength Theatre, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. Performances: March 26-April 19. Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 8 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m., Saturday, April 11 and April 18 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., Sunday, April 12 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets: \$35. Call 866-811-4111 or visit <http://www.nextstoptheatre.org>

show that can appeal to audiences of all ages and backgrounds."

Katie Keyser described her character of Lily as "the guiding light in this story" representing "the peace" that others seek. Without giving away too much for those less familiar with "The Secret Garden," Lily's character has a profound effect that is key to the show's redemption qualities. "She found simple pleasures in being surrounded by nature when tending to her garden...She yearns for her husband and her child to find happiness."

The musical has two child characters. NextStop will have four young actors rotating into the roles. As "Mary," Isabella Brody and Maggie Slivka. As "Colin," Eli Schulman and Ethan Van Slyke

Why will audiences of all ages enjoy "The Secret Garden?" Cast as Archibald, John Loughney said, "to put it simply, it's a gorgeous score coupled with a touching story." Kesyer added, "come for the story and the music! It is a retelling of a classic children's story, dealing with heartbreaking loss and change and how, through the eyes of a child, discovering a new life is always possible."

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The Right Fit: Choosing a Summer Camp

How parents can ensure positive summer experiences for their children.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Though the official start of spring is still days away and the fridity of winter is still recent on the minds of many, Janelle Wright, a Potomac, Md., mother of two, has already mapped out the summer for her children.

Wright did research before signing up her 13-year-old daughter, Corrine, in an academic camp geared toward boosting her English composition skills, and enrolling her 12-year-old son, Teddy, in a camp for children whose needs fall just outside the norm.

Indeed, experts say social interactions, a chance to have fun and an opportunity to fill the time between family trips are just some of the benefits of summer camps.

There are camps for every child, no matter their needs.

"I spoke to the camp and shared with them up front that my son might need help socializing with other kids," said Wright. "He might need directions repeated to him. I did that so I could drive away in peace knowing that he'd be fine. It's different for



PHOTO COURTESY OF SUMMER AT NORWOOD

When choosing a summer camp, parents should consider signing up their children with friends to decrease the chance of loneliness.

my daughter because she doesn't have any challenges. I don't have to call the camp and talk to them like I do with my son."

WHETHER A CHILD is typical or falls slightly outside the norm, doing a bit of research and exercising forethought are good ideas when selecting summer programs. In fact, advanced planning and registration for summer camp is essential in the Washington, D.C., region, say educators.

"It's important to find an activity that kids already like to do. It's summer so kids should have fun," said Linda Guly, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Marymount University in Arlington.

"Choose a camp where they won't feel lonely. It helps to sign them up with a buddy, especially in late elementary and middle school so they'll have one or two people at camp they already know. That really does matter."

If choosing a specialty camp, summer might not be the time for embarking on a new activity, however. "Summer camps may not be a time to have kids do something completely new," she said. "For example, if a child has never played golf, you might not want to invest money in a golf camp if you aren't sure your child will enjoy it. A child needs to feel like this is not school where they are struggling to learn a new activity."

The most important thing is for parents to do their research.

"Interview the camp director," said Lois McCabe, head of school for The Diener School in Potomac. "What does the day look like? How structured or unstructured is it? It is good to have a mix of both."

This is particularly true for children with special needs. "You want to make sure the camp understands the needs of special needs children," said McCabe. "You don't

want to throw them in this big unstructured environment with other kids and hope for the best. You want to make sure your child's peer groups understand your child."

SOME DAY CAMPS are structured to allow parents to choose the week their child will attend camp based on the camper's interests.

"We have a theme for every week that is packed with field trips and special events" said Fred Lowery, owner of Kiddie Country in Burke, which is running 11 weeks of camp this summer. "All of the camp activities are related to the theme. There are field trips to the Maryland Science Center, a Washington Mystics game, Reptiles Alive and Hershey Park. On site, we have everything from mad science to jugglers to swimming."

Traditional camp experiences, like opportunities for socializing with peers, are still found in specialty camps.

"As [campers] learn to identify, measure and combine ingredients, they are also learning important life skills, working together as a team and ultimately creating a delicious meal," said Jennifer Bashaw, curriculum development coordinator at Tiny Chefs, Inc. "Children leave our camps with a greater confidence in their kitchen skills and personal creativity."

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By KENNETH B. LOURIE

It always does, and there always are; especially if you have to work for a living and cancer is a part of that living. Granted, I'm extremely happy to be able to still make a living, cancer diagnosis notwithstanding, but a cancer diagnosis, particularly a "terminal" one, is hardly "notwithstanding." In fact, it is almost impossible to withstand. Oh sure, there are good days, and of course bad days, but mostly – for me, anyway, there is a daze in between. And that "between" is what's rocky about this hard place.

Since most things cost money, and money doesn't grow on trees (nor is it made from trees by the way); allocating it, when you have cancer, is complicated. Do I spend it now (whether I have it or not), as a means of reinforcing a positive but premature end? Or do I not spend it and plan for a longer-than-predicted life expectancy while depriving myself of the pleasure in the interim? Or do I rationalize the expenditure and reward myself for good behavior – so to speak, figuring that the high will be more beneficial than the low and create exactly the kind of energy my body needs to combat the cancer? Or do I minimize all of it and live my life as normally as possible? If only it were that simple.

"Normally as possible" left the building on February 27, 2009, the date I received my stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer diagnosis (my ground zero) with its "13-month to two-year prognosis." At that point, your brain stops functioning as it has for the entirety of your previous life (54½ years for me). Life, as you knew it, is sort of over; not done, but most assuredly, it will be different, and your perspective and emotional underpinnings will be changed forever – whether you expect them to be or not.

It doesn't mean, as an example, that you'll never laugh again or make self-effacing jokes, but neither can you look at, or live, life as naively as you have. Living forward becomes way more complicated, and viewing it all, planning for it all, can only be considered through the prism of cancer. And though certainly I can boast of some success surviving six-plus years post-diagnosis, it really has been mind over matter. Even though cancer is constantly on my mind, I've tried not to let it matter. (Much easier written about than actually managed.)

Juggling emotions has been difficult enough, but managing money, allocating resources and planning a financial future while living a precarious present, is all it's cracked up to be. Yet, if I don't find a way to maintain my status quo/balance emotionally, I may very well become a victim of my own circumstance. As much as I'd like to invoke Curly Howard (while looking in the mirror): "I'm too young to die, too handsome; well, too young, anyway" as an arbiter of reason, the reality is: cancer is the big dog and I'm just sitting here on the porch.

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



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But fitness might be the most important thing to living a healthy life. Being healthy makes you a happier person, a better parent, employee, partner or spouse. Fitness is the key to getting involved in life. You can choose to fully embrace your own fitness life, or you can watch other people living theirs. Only YOU can decide to change your life and body when you are ready.

At Koko, we understand all of this, which is why our company was founded over a decade ago. We are the small, alternative fitness choice that exists for people who feel they don't fit into that impersonal big box fitness center.

If you like lots of help and guidance, then we are for you. If you like a small, comfortable place to work out with people just like you, then Koko is your gym. If other gyms have failed you and you felt lost in the crowd, we are here to make sure that this time -- with personal guidance and the proven Koko training methodology -- you will succeed.

Don't take our word for it, come see us for yourself. We offer a full 30-day membership, including full access to our training and coaching programs, for only \$30. Come experience what makes Koko so special. Meet our clients and our staff, and give us a chance to prove that this time you will succeed.

Fitness has to be part of your life; it shapes the way you live today and how you'll look and feel tomorrow. If you have failed before in fitness, remember that there is a place here in our community that is truly different and willing to prove it to you. This time, it is all about you. This time, you will change your life.

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*Some restrictions may apply. See club for details.

Koko is all about family for us... it was my 17 year old who begged me to give it a try. I loved it at first because it was easy to fit into my schedule and was something fun for me to do with my teenager. Now I love KOKO because I see the results and I feel so much better. KOKO is just a part of my life. KOKO is like no other fitness experience. It's not a regular gym (thank God -- no mirrors!). And it is an easy way to fit exercise into your schedule without it being a drag. I actually like working out now which was certainly not the case before. KOKO is fun because it challenges you individually, is efficient and gets results! I recommended it to my neighbors and now they're KOKO Nuts too!



~ Leesa Donner, Great Falls

I previously belonged to three other gyms in Reston, and I had never made it a full year before my attendance dropped off. With Koko, however, I recently passed my two year anniversary and am still going strong. I love that I can get a full body workout every time in less than an hour. The cardio and strength workouts continue to push me to work harder than I ever did on my own at previous gyms. As a result, I'm in the best shape of my adult life. And the desire to keep feeling this healthy and strong keeps me coming back. Thanks Koko!

~ Watt H., Reston, VA

There is absolutely no way I would achieve what I do at this club ANYWHERE else. I've lost over 15 lbs, my blood pressure is lower, and I am looking and feeling better than I have in 10 years!



~ Scott Kreitz

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