

With tools and wheelbarrow in hand, Charles Smith and Laura Grape are ready to work.

Chantilly CONNECTION

Fair Oaks ❖ Fair Lakes

Going Native with Planting

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BUSINESS

Email announcements to centreview@connectionnewspapers.com.

HomeAid Northern Virginia has been honored for the second consecutive year with the 2014 Top-Rated Award by GreatNonprofits, the leading provider of user reviews about nonprofit organizations.

The Top-Rated Nonprofit Award is based on the number of positive reviews that were posted online about HomeAid.

The **Fair Oaks office of Weichert, Realtors**, was recognized for outstanding performance in September. The office led the region, which is comprised of offices throughout Fairfax, Loudoun, Fauquier and Delaware counties, for new home dollar volume. Sales Associate **Courtney Clime Riley** of the Fair Oaks office was individually recognized for her exceptional industry success during the month of September. A top producer, Clime Riley led the region for new home dollar volume.

Jane Garrell, a case worker for Greenspring's hospice program, has been selected as the Virginia Association for Home Care and Hospice's Employee of the Year. Garrell joined Greenspring nearly seven years ago to launch the Greenspring Hospice program. During the early stages, she functioned as the program's Clinical Manager/Hospice RN; she realized that her calling was truly in patient care, so she returned to the role of a Hospice RN Case Manager. Garrell was also selected as a finalist for the 2014 Virginia March of Dimes Nurse of the Year Award, which recognizes nurses who demonstrate an extraordinary level of patient care, compassion and customer service.

Mica Stramel Jr. and Jesse Stramel, lifelong residents of the Chantilly area, have recently started a new business. Alpine Chem-Dry provides Chem-Dry services to Fairfax County residents.

The National Association of Counties has awarded a 2013 Outstanding Achievement Award to the **Chantilly Regional Library** for "Kaleidoscope Storytime: Adaptive Programming for Children on the Autism Spectrum," a monthly storytime and other activities adapted to children on the autism spectrum and with other developmental challenges.

The project was spearheaded by staff member **Gail Wellock** and has since been adopted by other library branches. It evolved as staff at the branch noticed a growing number of children on the autism spectrum in the building and in programs. They also became aware that traditional storytimes did not always meet the needs of some young attendees with developmental challenges and that some parents were reluctant to bring their special needs children to storytimes.

To prepare for the program, staff partnered with Fairfax County Public Schools, attending a full day of training given by Office of Special Education staff as well as meeting with the schools applied behavior coaches and observing special education classrooms. Wellock also met with the Parents of Autistic Children group to survey the members and ask for suggestions and comments.

Linda and Lou Mazawey have made a donation of \$125,000 towards Insight Memory Care Center's expansion and move to Pender Drive. The new facility will incorporate the latest technology and best design practices to ensure that participants are safe and secure. In recognition of the Mazawey's gift, Insight will name the Education and Support Center in their honor.

Gary Kramer, D.D.S.
Sara Bunin, D.D.S.
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www.greekorthodoxloudoun.org

Palm Sunday Service
 Sunday, April 5th 9:30 am

Good Friday Service
 April 10th 7:00 pm

Easter Resurrection Service
 Saturday, April 11th 11:15 pm

Easter Agape Service
 Sunday, April 12th 11:00 am

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NEWS



Hard at work planting are (from left) Matt Meyers, Joe Riley-Ryan and Suzy Foster, all with DPWES, Stormwater.



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Planting along the Big Rocky Run Stream are (from left) Jim Dewing, resource manager, E.C. Lawrence Park; Dwayne Bowman, DPWES, Stormwater; and Rachel Griesmer-Zakhar, urban forestry division of DPWES, Stormwater.

Getting Dirty for a Good Cause

Staff and volunteers plant native grasses along Big Rocky Run.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Wearing sturdy boots and wielding shovels and wheelbarrows, some two dozen people recently left their comfortable offices to dig in the soil at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park. When they were done, a variety of native grasses had been planted to beautify the Big Rocky Run stream valley and help stabilize the banks there.

Participating were staff members and volunteers from Fairfax County's Department

of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES), Stormwater; Park Authority; and the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District (NVSWCD).

"It's a community-building event between agencies," said Charles Smith, the DPWES, Stormwater, project manager. "And it's a lot of fun."

Centreville's Big Rocky Run Stream was restored last year to provide a stable channel. The work also improved the habitat for the animals in the stream — mainly insect larvae which provide food for fish — and the plants and animals outside it.

"As part of that project, we planted seeding grasses, wildflowers, trees and shrubs," said Smith. "But we compete with an invasive species — Japanese stilt grass — that E.C. Lawrence has been battling for 20 years; it's pervasive and widespread. The deer eat all the native plants and the stilt grass forms a mat preventing these plants



Holding a shovelful of earth is Asad Rouhi, with NVSWCD.

from growing back."

So on March 11, the staff members and volunteers put in 400 plants — all native grasses — that they believe can compete with the stilt grass. They planted wild rye and sweet wood reed — tough grasses deer don't like because they contain silica (found in sand and glass) which hurts their teeth.

Noting that the various counties often work together, Smith said Montgomery County propagates local, native grasses from seed. "They produced more last year than they needed, so they gave them to us," he said. "And it's a great benefit to Fairfax County to get these free plants; otherwise, they'd cost \$2,000."

Normally, they'd also cost another \$4,000 to plant. But, said Smith, "We're doing this as a team-building project. A lot of these people work at desks, and this gives them the fulfilling experience of getting dirty,

SEE PLANTING NATIVE, PAGE 8

'An Ambulance in the Air'

A close-up look at Fairfax County's police helicopter.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Members of the Sully District Police Station's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) recently toured Fairfax County's heliport, got to speak with a pilot and saw the Fairfax One helicopter up close.

It's a twin-engine, Bell 429 and does both police and medivac missions for the county. And one of its pilots, PFC Nick Taormina, is a paramedic as well as a police officer.

"We go on several thousand police missions a year," he said. "We try to find criminals, such as burglars, and search for missing children and adults. The aircraft has a camera, a spotlight and an advanced navigation system."

It's also equipped inside with a cot and medical equipment, including a defibrillator and a medical monitor that displays the patient's vital signs. Said Taormina, "It's like an ambulance in the air."

Each time the helicopter flies, it's staffed with a crew of three — the pilot and two flight officers — and all the flight officers are paramedics. "Paramedics take a year of classes to be certified," said Taormina. "Then they undergo training with the aircraft for three months before they can go up in the air."

SEE FAIRFAX ONE, PAGE 11



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

PFC Nick Taormina, a paramedic and police officer, talks about the Fairfax One helicopter.

Moving: From Institution to Community

Northern Virginia Training Center to close by March 2016.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

Joseph McHugh has lived at the Northern Virginia Training Center for 35 years, moving in when he was a teenager. McHugh has cerebral palsy and colostomy and severe spasticity issues.

At the training center, McHugh works with a speech pathologist, nurse, on-campus dietician and is close to an X-ray machine, dental facility and clinic on the grounds.



Dr. Dawn Adams

“My brother would’ve been dead without the training center,” said Chris McHugh, who lives in San Francisco. “He was almost pronounced dead a couple times, except for his proximity to a nurse, the clinic right there.”

Chris McHugh and his sisters Kim Arthurs McHugh of Arlington and Donna McHugh of Centreville are Joe’s legal guardians, and grew up together in Arlington. They’re skeptical about whether there are appropriate placement options so Joe can live successfully outside of the training center, which is slated to close next year.

“I want to be their biggest cheerleader,” said Chris McHugh. “I want to be wrong, to be excited about my brother’s choices and his peer’s choices, but I’ve seen people who

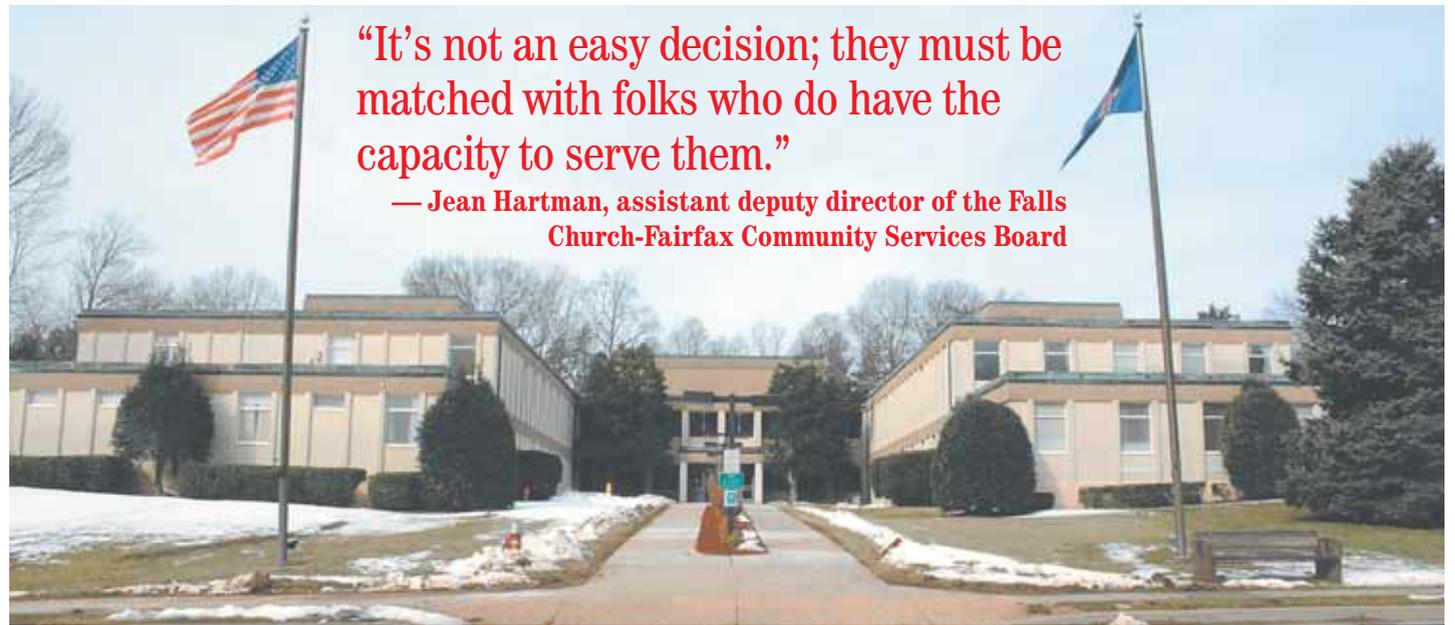


PHOTO BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

The Northern Virginia Training Center on Braddock Road is scheduled to close in March 2016.

“It’s not an easy decision; they must be matched with folks who do have the capacity to serve them.”

— Jean Hartman, assistant deputy director of the Falls Church-Fairfax Community Services Board

don’t have a family advocating for them slip through the cracks, wither on the vine.”

The training center, one of five large regional institutions in Virginia that are operated by the state’s Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, was built to house and provide services for people with intellectual and physical disabilities. The Northern Virginia facility, located on more than 80 acres off Braddock Road in Fairfax, has offered medical, dental and nursing services, physical and occupational therapy, social work and psychology services since opening in 1973.

Though the training centers provided an array of services, the institutional environment also moved people with disabilities out of their communities.

In June 1999, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Olmstead v. L.C.* that segregating people with disabilities from society is tantamount to discrimination and a violation

of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Governments or other public organizations, it said, must therefore offer more integrated, community-based services to people with disabilities.

Virginia Code § 37.2-319 calls for a Behavioral Health and Developmental Services Trust Fund that “shall be used for mental health, developmental, or substance abuse services and to facilitate transition of individuals with intellectual disability from state training centers to community-based services.”

Then in a 2011 letter, Assistant U.S. Attorney General Thomas E. Perez notified then-governor Bob McDonnell that the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division had conducted an investigation into the Central Virginia Training Center in Madison Heights, questioning the state’s compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The investigation concluded that Virginia “fails to provide services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs in violation of the [American with Disabilities Act],” Perez’s letter read.

“The inadequacies we identified have resulted in the needless and prolonged institutionalization of, and other harms to, individuals with disabilities in [Central Virginia Training Center] and in other segregated training centers throughout the Commonwealth who could be served in the community.”

The other segregated training centers included the one on Braddock Road.

In January 2012, the U.S. Department of Justice and Commonwealth of Virginia filed settlement in U.S. District Court, calling on the state to “create or expand a range of supports and services to individuals with [intellectual disabilities or developmental disabilities] and their families.”

The settlement summary referred to the continued operation of all five regional training centers as “fiscally impractical” and that the state should submit a plan for considering closing all but one institution. In his 2012 letter, Perez wrote the average cost of serving one person in a training center was \$194,000 per person annually, while offering them services outside the center averaged \$76,400.

According to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, the average cost of care per individual for FY2014 was \$342,504. For FY2015 (through October 2014), the cost rose to \$359,496 per individual.

Dr. Dawn Adams, director of health ser-

SEE FINDING HOMES, PAGE 5

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



From left: Joseph McHugh Jr. and Yvette Roberts, students at the Co-op School for Handicapped Children in Arlington, meet with First Lady Pat Nixon and Secretary of the Interior Rogers C.B. Morton at The White House in 1972 as poster children for a United Way campaign.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHRIS MCHUGH

(Rear, from left) Donna A. McHugh, Kim McHugh Arthurs, Joseph F. McHugh Sr. and Chris McHugh celebrate with their brother and son Joseph F. McHugh Jr., who has been a resident at the Northern Virginia Training Center for 35 years.

Getting into Marian Homes

Remodeling project to provide for residents with intellectual and or physical disabilities.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

When the new residents of Marian Homes' latest remodeling project move in to the Gresham Street house in north Springfield, Fairfax resident and Marian volunteer John Germain hopes they feel at home.



Bill Crowder

The retired Marine engineer has been helping supervise the remodel of the more than 60-year old structure, retrofitting it for the specific needs of five people with intellectual and or physical disabilities. Some of the most noticeable changes are doorways that have been widened to 42 inches to accommodate wheelchairs and a wide-open entryway leading to a main dining room bathed in sunlight from numerous windows.

"When they come in, this will help them feel welcome," said Germain, "that this is a home, not an institution." The remodel began Feb. 25 and the team expects residents will be able to move in by July.

More than re-painting, Marian Homes is converting it from three bedrooms to five, adding a walkout entry, putting in all new flooring, super-sizing the bathroom with a hoist mechanism and redoing the kitchen.

This is the third private residence Marian Homes has bought and redesigned. Its first is a home for five women in the Brecon Ridge subdivision of Fairfax, dedicated in 1998. The second, a home for five men, is a house in the Fairfax subdivision of Greenbriar, purchased in 2010. All 10 resi-



PHOTO BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

Marian Homes volunteers from Fairfax (from left) — Walter Purdy, Michael Perri and John Germain — work on converting a north Springfield home to make it accessible for people with intellectual disabilities.

dents were formerly living at the Northern Virginia Training Center on Braddock Road.

The all-volunteer, non-profit organization was started by Knights of Columbus St. Mary of Sorrows Council 8600. They purchase and maintain homes for people with disabilities; Chimes of Virginia takes referrals from Fairfax County to select individuals for the homes and independently manages the round-the-clock care for the residents.

Chimes of Virginia is part of the larger, Baltimore-based nonprofit corporation Chimes Foundation. Before Marian House purchased its first group home, the Fairfax Community Services Board assigned Chimes of Virginia to provide services once the house was completed.

People with intellectual or physical disabilities were once centralized in large institutions around the country, where it was believed more robust infrastructure and staffing could better meet the diverse health needs. The Northern Virginia Training Center, opened in 1973, is one example.

But over the last several decades, states have been closing their larger institutions

in favor of finding smaller housing and service alternatives that are more integrated into communities. The Northern Virginia center, scheduled to close in March 2016, has been discharging residents and currently has 74 remaining.

"This isn't anything new, in terms of federal standards," said Chimes Chief Operating Officer Nancy Eisele. "We just want to make sure we do it right in Fairfax County. We look at it as permanent housing for people, we want this to be their home."

TO FUND the first two residences it remodeled, Marian Homes has depended on rental payments from Chimes of Virginia, voluntary donations and grants from the Knights of Columbus Council and St. Mary of Sorrows Parish. The state-level Knights of Columbus organization KOVAR, dedicated to helping people with intellectual disabilities, has also offered Marian Homes loans and grants.

For the Springfield house, Marian Homes received financial assistance from Fairfax County's Department of Housing and Community Development.

In September 2014, the county issued a Request for Proposals to take advantage of \$1.8 million in federal funding for acquiring and rehabilitating affordable housing. The Fairfax County Housing Blueprint prioritized expanding housing options for the people with disabilities as well as homeless people.

In December, Marian Homes, along with the non profit organizations Community Havens in Chantilly, Cornerstones Housing Corporation in Reston and Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services in the Mount Vernon area of Alexandria, was awarded funding in the form of deferred loans from the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority.

"This funding not only ensures persons with disabilities, the homeless and other people with special needs have a place to call home in Fairfax County," Kurt Creager, director of Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development, said in a statement. "It also supports efforts to provide a wide variety of affordable housing types and sizes to meet the diversity of needs in our community."

The \$510,000 mortgage Marian Homes received from the Redevelopment and Housing Authority helped cover the cost of the Springfield house, while the organization says it is costing \$103,000 to remodel it. Marian Homes president Bill Crowder called it "a very workable model, from the county standpoint and our standpoint."

Crowder said Marian Homes is beginning to reach out to local corporations for assistance as well. "This is a community effort," he said, "not just one organization. This is something we got underway but there's more than enough space for you to get in and help."

To find out more about Marian Homes, visit www.marianhomes.org.

Finding Homes for Those Hard To Place

FROM PAGE 4

vices with Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services helps oversee the clinical organization of Northern Virginia Training Center, making sure the new community settings for transitioning residents meet their specific needs.

Adams says that of the 73 people still living at the center, down from 152 residents in 2012, more than half have already started a 12-week discharge process.

"It's a very thoughtful, specific process to ensure there is choice, that there's a good fit with the provider and they're able to offer specific supports for that unique individual," Adams said.

Since October 2011, the state agency has identified 106 community options for Northern Virginia Training Center residents. The options include using individualized Medicaid waivers to acquire services either at home, in a group home setting, or at another intermediate treatment facility.

The key is that residents, their parents and associates should have more choices about



PHOTO COURTESY OF JUDITH KORF

Judith Korf's son Adam Bertman celebrates his 43rd birthday in a Northern Virginia Training Center dining room, August 2014.

how and where they live, ones that are integrated rather than segregated.

"While the training center model developed over time, it didn't necessarily keep up with the idea that health services have changed quite a bit," said Adams. "These are individuals, they're people, their spe-

cial issues are around the potential vulnerability and a whole bunch of different diagnostic items they embody. The challenge is working towards bringing people into the community, so it's no longer so foreign, due to lack of exposure."

Another challenge is the number of waivers; there's a waiting list, said Jean Hartman, assistant deputy director for the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board. "The need far exceeds the number of waivers by the General Assembly every year," said Hartman.

The Community Services Board runs an intake for people with intellectual or physical disabilities, then determines whether they have an urgent or non-urgent need for a waiver based on the acuity of their conditions.

"The waiver has made it possible for individuals to live and work with their friends and families in their home communities, and made those communities stronger and healthier as a result," Hartman said.

SEE FINDING, PAGE 9

Training Center Timeline

April 1973: Northern Virginia Training Center opens.

1977: Average residents numbered 230.

1989: Average residents numbered 263.

1999: Average residents numbered 185.

June 1999: In *Olmstead v. L.C.* ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court calls for public entities to provide community-based services for persons with disabilities.

June 2011: 157 residents

2011: Assistant U.S. Attorney General Thomas E. Perez notified then-governor Bob McDonnell that the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division investigated Virginia's training centers and concluded that Virginia "fails to provide services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs in violation of the ADA. ... The inadequacies we identified have resulted in the needless and prolonged institutionalization of, and other harms to, individuals with disabilities in CVTC and in other segregated training centers throughout the Commonwealth who could be served in the community."

July 2012: 152 residents.

January 2012: Settlement reached between Virginia and the U.S. Department of Justice regarding violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

June 2014: Southside Virginia Training Center in Petersburg, Virginia, closes.

March 2015: Initial scheduled closing for NVTC. 73 current residents.

March 2016: Current scheduled closing for NVTC.

Mother's Day Photos

Mother's Day is May 10, 2015, and every year at this time, The Connection calls for submissions to our Mother's Day photo gallery. Send photos of mothers, grandmothers, great-grandmothers, with children or without children in the photos. Please name everyone in the photo, the approximate date, describe what is happening in the photo and include your name, address, email address and phone number. (We will not print your full address or contact information.)

You can upload photos and information directly to our website at www.connectionnewspapers.com/mothersday/ or email to editors@connectionnewspapers.com.



Mother's Day 2014

Little Rocky Run resident and AWANA Bible quiz coach, Kari Pewett, with her son, Sam, following a fun competition among local churches in early February.

ROUNDUPS

Free Carseat Inspections

Certified technicians from the Sully District Police Station will perform free, child safety carseat inspections Thursday, April 9, from 5-8:30 p.m., at the station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. No appointment is necessary. But residents should install the child safety seats themselves so technicians may properly inspect and adjust them, as needed.

Because of time constraints, only the first 35 vehicles arriving on each date will be inspected. That way, inspectors may have enough time to properly instruct the caregiver on the correct use of the child seat. Call 703-814-7000, ext. 5140, to confirm dates and times.

CAC Drug Meeting for Adults

The Sully District Police Station and the Citizens Advisory Committee will host an adults-only look into organized crime and narcotics. It's set for Wednesday, April 8, from 7:30-9 p.m., at the Sully District Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. Gain insight into how drugs are acquired, manufactured, concealed and sold. Learn about drugs in Fairfax County and what police are doing to prevent them. RSVP to Tara.Gerhard@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Meeting about Leland Road

A meeting about the future of Leland Road in Centreville will be held Monday, April 13, at 7 p.m., at the Sully District Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. Hosting it are Supervisor Michael R. Frey (R-Sully) and the Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT).

Currently, the county's Transportation Com-

prehensive Plan calls for the extension of Leland Road, known as the Leland Road connector. It would connect to Old Centreville Road at the present 90-degree turn with Braddock Road, traversing the edge of the Royal Oaks property.

However, Frey made a motion to consider removing the extension from the plan. FCDOT reviewed his request and has proposed an alternative for Leland Road. The purpose of the meeting is to present and discuss both plans and obtain community input on them.

Learn about Roundabout Plan

VDOT will hold a "Pardon Our Dust" informational meeting about the roundabout slated to be built at the Braddock/Pleasant Valley roads intersection. It's scheduled for Tuesday, April 14, from 6-8 p.m., at Stone Middle School, 5500 Sully Park Drive, in Centreville.

Learn about Police Department

Throughout the year, the Fairfax County Police Department will host a series of lectures as part of its 75th anniversary.

- ❖ April 20 – Public Safety Communications – Call taking, Dispatching, and Technology, 2 p.m. at MPSTOC community room

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/public-safety-communications-call-taking-dispatching-and-technology-tickets-15373766349>

- ❖ May 22 – The Police Canine (K-9) Team, 1 p.m. at OSB <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-fcpd-canine-k-9-team-tickets-15373824523>

- ❖ May 25 - The Development of the FCPD Badge, noon at the Massey Building A Level small conference room <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-development-of-the-fcpd-badge-tickets-15373875676>

- ❖ June 11 – 2002 Washington area Sniper

Task Force Investigation, 10 a.m. at the Massey Building A Level conference room <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2002-washington-area-sniper-task-force-investigation-tickets-15373977982>

Food Donations For WFCM

Western Fairfax Christian Ministries' food pantry needs donations of canned fruit (all types), fruit juices, cooking oil, sugar, canned meats (tuna, chicken), hot cereals, pasta sauce, flour, canned or dry beans, and small bottles dish soap. Also needed are toiletries, which WFCM clients cannot purchase with food stamps. Especially needed are shampoo and solid deodorant.

Bring all items to WFCM'S food pantry, weekdays, 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m., at 13888 Metrotech Drive, near Papa John's Pizza and Kumon Learning Center, in Chantilly's Sully Place Shopping Center. A volunteer stocker/bagger is needed Wednesdays, 4-6 p.m. Contact Annette Bosley at 703-988-9656, ext. 110, or abosley@wfcma.org.

How to Hire at CLRC

The Centreville Labor Resource Center (CLRC) serves businesses and homeowners needing help with just about any home remodeling or maintenance project. And local residents who'd like to hire a worker from the CLRC may do so easily. Either call 703-543-6272 or go to www.centrevilleLRC.org and click on the "How to Hire" link. Tell what kind of work is required, how many workers are needed and when.

The CLRC will match the needs to its registered workers' skills and set up the job. The price for work will be negotiated. After the job is completed, employers are encouraged to provide the CLRC with feedback to ensure that the work was done well and to their satisfaction and to make sure workers are fairly paid.

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Newspaper of
Chantilly
Fair Oaks / Fair Lakes
A Connection Newspaper

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

Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Free digital edition delivered to your email box. Go to connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe

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ENTERTAINMENT

Email announcements to chantilly@connectionnewspapers.com. Include date, time, location, description and contact for event: phone, email and/or website. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

ONGOING

Sully Historic Site. 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Enjoy guided tours of the 1794 home of Northern Virginia's first Congressman, Richard Bland Lee. \$7/adult; \$6/student; \$5/senior and child. Hours are 11 a.m.-4 p.m. 703-437-1794.

Singing. 7:30 p.m. at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 13421 Twin Lakes Drive, Clifton. The Fairfax Jubil-Aires rehearse every Wednesday which includes training by an award-winning director. Visit www.fairfaxjubilaire.org for more.

"Creating Across the City." Through June at Dulles International Airport. Three organizations; Critical Exposure, The National Building Museum and ARTLAB+ have teamed up for "Creating Across the City: A Teen Art Showcase," which provides an outlet through art and design for creative local teens.

CAMPS, CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

2015 Summer Programs. Registration is now open for the following Fairfax County Public Schools summer camps. Students should register for programs based on the grade they are in during the current 2014-15 school year. Visit www.fcps.edu/is/summer/index.shtml for more.

❖ **Tech Adventure Camp** will be held July 20-31 at Robinson Secondary School from 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. for students currently in grades 5-7. This camp allows students to explore careers and technology by rotating through eight areas including graphic design, automotive technology, culinary arts, television production, robotics, and computer technology.

❖ **STEM Camp.** Held in two sessions at Robinson Secondary School: July 6-10 and July 13-17 both from 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m., daily. STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) Camp is a one-week camp for students currently in grades 3-5 to explore careers and technology as they rotate through activities focused on science.

❖ **Elementary Institute for the Arts.** Held July 13-24 at Robinson Secondary School from 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. daily, Monday through Friday. Designed for students currently in grades 3-5, E-IFTA offers participants a total immersion in the arts as they rotate through classes in dance, drama, music, and visual art.

❖ **Institute for the Arts.** Held July 6-30 at Robinson Secondary School from 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. daily, Monday through Friday. Designed for students currently in grades 6-11, IFTA allows students to create, perform, experiment, and explore—all in various music, dance, visual art, and theatre venues.

❖ **Robinson Extended Day Adult and Community Education Enrichment.** Programs will be held July 6-31 at Robinson Secondary School and will begin after Tech Adventure Camp, STEM Camp, IFTA and E-IFTA end. These programs are for students currently in grades 1-11 and will provide a continuum of activities for students who want additional programs and activities. Programs will include the Foreign Language Experience Program (FLEX), Culinary Adventure Camp, Language Immersion Camp, Creative Writing, Computer Graphics, and Chess.

❖ **Credit Recovery Academy.** This program will be held at Fairfax High School for students seeking credit for high school level courses. Students will be able to take one course during each of the two sessions from June 29-July 16 and July 20-Aug. 4.

❖ **Online Campus.** For credit recovery, acceleration, and enrichment for middle school and high school students. Health, Physical Education, and Geometry Honors run June 29-Aug. 4; all other courses run July 6-Aug. 4.

❖ **SOL Remediation.** For FCPS high school students who passed an SOL course but did not pass the SOL test. Held at Fairfax High School.

❖ **SOL Test Only.** This program is for FCPS seniors who plan to graduate by Aug. 28 and passed an SOL course but failed the SOL test.

❖ **ESOL Numeracy and Literacy.** The ESOL Numeracy and Literacy class provides currently enrolled FCPS high school ELP Level 1 students with the opportunity to develop their numeracy and literacy skills. Students will meet face-to-face with their teachers daily. This is a noncredit

class. Held at Fairfax High School July 6-24.

❖ **Online ESOL.** Through this three-week class, students will continue developing their academic and reading and writing skills in an online discussion with an ESOL teacher. This is a noncredit class. Held July 6-24.

❖ **Extended School Year Learning Communities.** Services for identified students with disabilities in accordance with their individualized education programs (IEPs).

SATURDAY/APRIL 4

Amazing Container Gardens. 10 a.m. at Merrifield Garden Center, 12101 Lee Highway, Fairfax. Learn how to combine plants for intense, striking displays of color and review soil mixtures, planting and care instructions to make sure plants stay beautiful throughout the season. Visit www.merrifieldgardencenter.com or call 703-968-9600.

Easter Egg Hunt. 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. at Ticonderoga's Amazing Farm Fun, 26496 Ticonderoga Road, Chantilly. \$12.95 per person. Visit www.ticonderoga.com.

SUNDAY/APRIL 5

Easter Egg Hunt. 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. at Ticonderoga's Amazing Farm Fun, 26496 Ticonderoga Road, Chantilly. \$12.95 per person. Visit www.ticonderoga.com.

THURSDAY/APRIL 9

Kid's Korner. 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Preschool-aged kids will learn about Bluebells. Admission is \$5 per child. Call 703-631-0013.

FRIDAY/APRIL 10

Wagon Ride and Campfire. 6:30 p.m. at Cabell's Mill, 5235 Walney Road, Centreville. Take a wagon ride, enjoy a campfire and make s'mores. There is a \$6 fee. Call 703-631-0013.

SATURDAY/APRIL 11

Animal Search. 8-9 a.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Naturalist Jim Dewing will lead a trek to discover the animals that inhabit the park. The fee is \$5. Call 703-631-0013.

Historic Tour of Southern Maryland. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at Walney Visitor Center, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Visit the homes of President Lincoln's assassin John Wilkes Booth and his co-conspirators Mary Surrat and Dr. Samuel Mudd and more. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence.

Build Your Own Birdhouse. 2-3 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Learn to build a nest box for your backyard. Kits are \$15 each. Bring your own hammer. Call 703-631-0013.

Pink Floyd Tribute. 9 p.m. at The Bungalow, 13891 Metrotech Drive, Chantilly. Hear local musicians Nikhel Susm, Jon Brady, Brian Zupruk, Jeff Hunter and Brian Paubacher give a tribute to Pink Floyd. Free. Visit www.headyentertainment.com.

SUNDAY/APRIL 12

A Touch of Japan. 3-5 p.m. at 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Experience traditional Japanese teas, treats and trinkets. Tickets are \$27. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 15

Nature Tots. 10:15-11 a.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Toddlers may explore the park through sight, sound, smell and touch. Cost is \$4 per child. Call 703-631-0013.

SATURDAY/APRIL 18

Tree Trek. 9:30-11 a.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Jim Dewing will lead a tour of the biggest, oldest and rarest trees in the park. Tickets are \$6. Call 703-631-0013.

Earth Day. 11 a.m.-12 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Learn about the changing environment and how to recycle household items. Tickets are \$5. Call 703-631-0013.

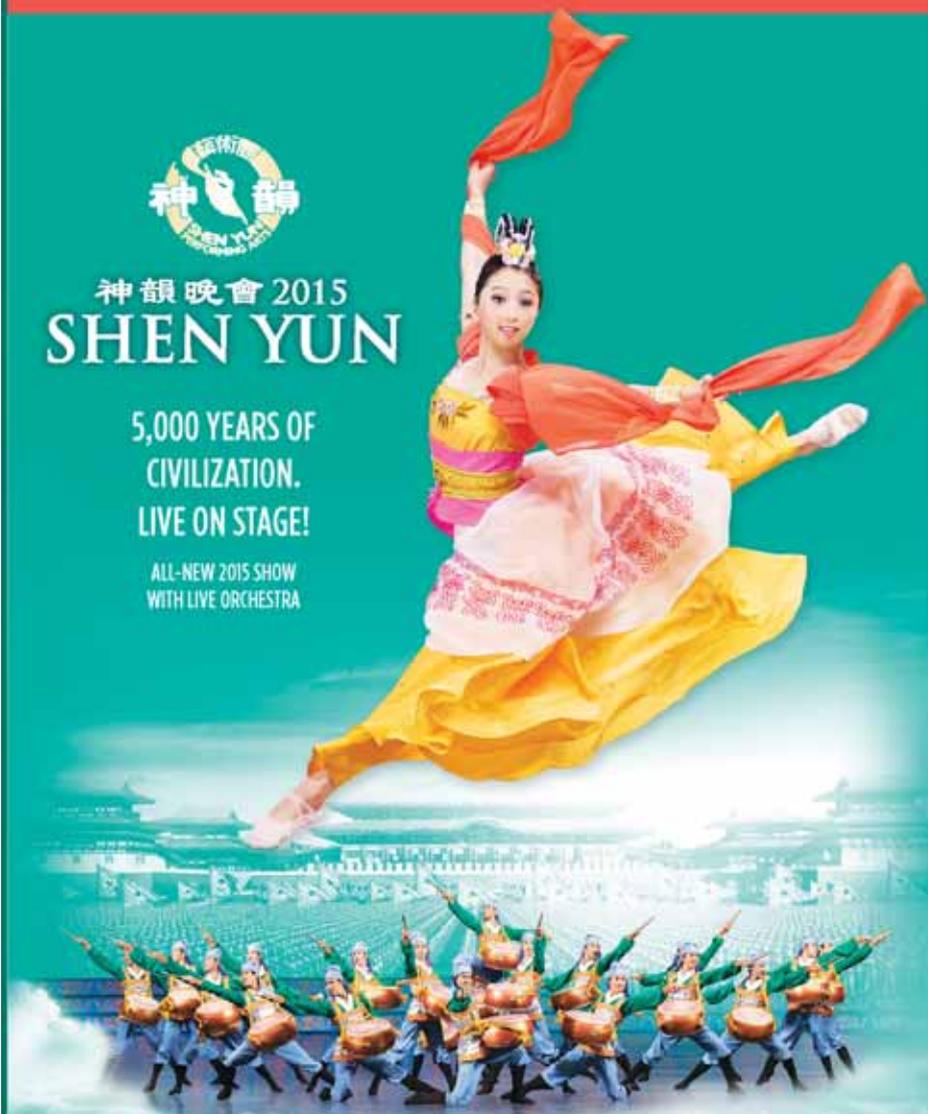
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SPORTS BRIEFS



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL

Brad Sechler and the Chantilly boys' lacrosse team are off to a 4-1 start.

Chantilly Boys' Lax Bounces Back from First Loss

The Chantilly boys' lacrosse team suffered its first loss of the season on March 26, falling to Robinson, 7-4, in a matchup of state powerhouses.

The Chargers quickly righted the ship, however, beating Battlefield, 10-1, two days later. On March 30, Chantilly defeated rival Langley, 10-6.

While the Chargers secured a victory against the Saxons, a team Chantilly has faced in numerous big games over the years, head coach Kevin Broderick said the timing of the game carried more significance than the opponent.

"[W]e are in the midst of a four-game stretch in seven days, so playing Langley doesn't have the same significance," Broderick wrote in an email. "This will be a good test as the regional format this year is May 26, May 28, May 30 and June 2.

"We are proud of our players' effort, especially in the second half. We lacked focus early, failed to convert some opportunities and found ourselves behind at the half, 4-3, and 5-4 in the third quarter with 5:29 left. We then scored five straight goals, including the fifth as time was expired in the third quarter."

Colin Zimmerman scored three goals and had two assists for Chantilly. Ryan Rizzo finished with four goals and one assist. Davis Zaman had one goal and won 11 of 15 faceoffs.

Chantilly (4-1) will face Williamsburg LC at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, April 1 at Robinson Secondary School.

"We still have a lot of work to do," Broderick wrote, "to become the team we want to be in June."

Langley defeated Chantilly in the 2009, 2011 and 2012 state championship games, and in the 2014 region semifinals. The Chargers knocked off the Saxons in the 2013 regional semifinals on their way to winning the state title.

Chantilly Baseball Falls to Stone Bridge

After starting 4-0, the defending 6A North region champion Chantilly baseball team lost to Stone Bridge 5-3 on March 30.

The Chargers opened the season with wins over South County, Edison, Yorktown and Woodson.

Chantilly faced Lake Braddock on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. The Chargers will travel to face Osborn Park at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, April 6.

Centreville Boys' Soccer Ties Defending Champ

The Centreville boys' soccer team played to a 1-all tie against defending 6A state champion T.C. Williams on March 24.

The Wildcats are off to a 0-3-1 start, with losses against Washington-Lee, Woodson and Lake Braddock.

Centreville will host Hayfield at 7 p.m. on April 13.



Digging in the ground is Steve Hamrick with DPWES, Stormwater.



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

With tools and wheelbarrow in hand, Charles Smith and Laura Grape are ready to work.

Planting Native Grasses

FROM PAGE 3

putting their hands in the soil and planting something that'll produce benefits for many years."

And after all the snow and cold, he added, "It's great to be outdoors." The plants were dormant at the time; but when the soil temperature hit 50 degrees, the plants began to germinate and grow.

Laura Grape, NVSWCD executive director, was one of 15 people from her agency doing the planting. "We're planting grasses found in wetlands areas to emulate what's naturally found in Big Rocky Run," she said. "This restoration is really remarkable; and it's large scale — all the way [about a half mile] from Route 28 to Braddock Road."

That area's not always seen by the public, said Grape, "But it'll make a huge difference in the ecological restoration. I'm pleased that my staff and I are here to help lend a hand."

Matt Meyers with DPWES, Stormwater, said his division implements watershed-management plans. "A lot of what we do is in-house designs and project management," he explained. "So when we get to do field work, it's actually nice to do something first-

hand and get your hands dirty."

"In 2002-03, we originally walked all 805 miles of stream countywide to assess the streams' erosion and overall health," he said. "Ecologists sampled and identified the fish and bugs in the streams to help us identify their overall water-quality."

As stormwater runoff increases, said Meyers, streams get deeper and wider, eroding their banks. That also buries the habitat with sediment, and the sediment nutrients eventually move downstream and can affect the water quality of the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay.

"So the natural grasses we're planting filter the water and help clean it before it reaches the stream and continues downstream," he said. "And they help restore the floodplain here, too."

Rachel Griesmer-Zakhar, urban forestry division of DPWES, Stormwater, said it was great being outside and "interacting with people I don't usually see. I'm learning about the plant species we're planting and why. I like contributing firsthand to the restoration — it's more rewarding. And it's nice knowing what other parts of the county are doing."



Three government agencies united to plant along the stream valley.



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES.

The Northern Virginia Training Center spreads over 80 acres along Braddock Road, including facilities for administration, food service, programs, residences, a warehouse, transportation and therapy.

Finding Appropriate Placement

FROM PAGE 5

According to Hartman, in Fairfax County there are 450 people receiving services in the community through Medicaid waivers, from 30 providers in Fairfax County. However, 858 people are still on the “urgent” waiting list for waivers and 375 are on the non-urgent list.

Once you have a waiver, it’s a matter of matching up with the right provider and environment. For this, the Community Services Board, Northern Virginia Training Center staff and family or guardians collaborate to find the right fit.

“Those are hard times,” said Hartman. “It’s not an easy decision; they must be matched with folks who do have the capacity to serve them.”

SOME FAMILIES of residents of the Northern Virginia Training Center have viewed the closing as too hasty, that more time is needed to identify proper support providers. Several parents and guardians testified at the public hearing before the northern Virginia delegation headed to Richmond for the 2015 General Assembly session in January.

At the session state Sen. Stephen D. Newman (R-23) introduced SB1300, which sought to extend the Northern Virginia Training Center closing until Dec. 31, 2016, prevent the land from being declared surplus once it’s closed and keep three of the remaining regional centers open. The bill, which was co-patroned by numerous Northern Virginia senators and delegates, only made it as far as the Finance Committee.

Reston resident Judith Korf, co-president of the Parents and Associates of Northern Virginia Training Center group, spoke at the hearing on behalf of her son Adam. Adam is 43 and diagnosed with autism and mild learning disability; he has severe behavioral issues and requires a high level of skilled supervision.

“The hardest ones to place are the ones that are left,” said Korf.

Chris McHugh is hopeful the process will be successful, but has seen his brother passed up for discharge from the center for more than two decades.

“His friends and peers, some would find appropriate group home placements,” said Chris McHugh. “They would go through his checklist of needs and Joe would never make the cut. He requires a bit more

in terms of therapy and care. A day at the bathroom with my brother is an adventure.”

However Adams remains confident all the residents will be able to find proper home and service combinations by the training center projected closing of March 2016.

ONCE THE LAST RESIDENT leaves, the Northern Virginia Training Center, the campus’ future is still uncertain. Dena Potter at the Virginia Department of General Services said the campus is currently in “the surplus property review process to make a decision on whether the property would be sold.” The state owns the land; several properties were purchased for the site from private owners while one was obtained under eminent domain.

Because the 1973 opening predates the county’s Zoning Ordinance of 1978, the underlying zoning for the property is R1, meaning new construction would be limited to one house per acre, without being subject to public hearings and a change to the comprehensive plan.

According to the Virginia Code, if the buildings or property are sold, the money must first be used to make sure the same level and variety of services offered at the training center are available for former residents.

Parents and associates of center residents were scheduled to meet with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services Commissioner Dr. Debra Ferguson at the end of March to learn more about the plan to close the training center.

“Theoretically, we’re all supposed to get at least three viable options to choose from and that just isn’t happening,” said Korf. Of around 40 parents and associates who attended the meeting, many, she said, were “very frustrated” with the provider options they’ve been sent to assess so far. “They’ve looked at everything there to look at and it just wasn’t panning out.”

In the mean time, Adams said the campus will continue to provide dental services, something more difficult to establish than a primary care provider.

Joe Rajnic, the NVTC acting facility director, was not available to comment for this story.

The Northern Virginia Training Center website is www.nvtc.dmhmsas.virginia.gov.

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Manifest Destiny

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



I wouldn't say I have symptoms (why would I say that? If I said that, I'd have to admit that cancer is having an effect on me. And I wouldn't want to admit that; admitting that would acknowledge my destiny and perhaps even hasten my decline); no, more like manifestations. Yeah, "manifestations," I think I can live (no pun intended) with that admission. At least I hope so.

The manifestations to which I refer – in the abstract, are not exactly new or out of my ordinary (again, if I said they were in fact new and out of my ordinary, I might have to believe that my underlying problem/diagnosis: stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer, is manifesting itself in a potentially life-altering way), but they are something. The question is: is my body telling me something I already know, or am I looking for trouble in all the familiar places?

I'd rather not be looking for trouble, given that trouble has already found me. I'd rather be minding my own business and not introspecting so much. But the day I received a cancer diagnosis is the day I lost the ability to turn the introspection switch off (if only it were that simple). I can dim it, though, except when I experience some of my manifestations. Then I'm reminded that I'm not in Kansas anymore, especially every third Friday (lab results allowing) when I'm at The Infusion Center receiving my 10 minutes of Alimta intravenously. On those days, I am indeed a victim of my circumstances, and regardless of what I tell myself – repeatedly, in an attempt to blur my reality – when my oncology nurse, Ron, inserts a needle into a vein in my arm and the i.v. starts dripping, the truth does not exactly set me free.

Still, I'm happy to be there (heck, I'm happy to be anywhere, symptoms-I'm-unwilling-to-admit-I-may-have notwithstanding). It's more the inevitability of my diagnosis that wears on me. I wasn't given a "terminal" diagnosis because I was treated at an airport. I was given it because I have malignant tumors that apparently have moved/metastasized from one lung to the other and are inoperable. (Nor was I/am I a candidate for radiation. The tumors are too spread out, I was told, and thus the treatment would prove ineffective.) This diagnosis and related prognosis is hardly for the weak of heart (fortunately I've never been treated for a weak heart; a weak back, maybe). But diseases are sort of like your family: you can't pick them. Hopefully you can live with them, because living without them would likely make an incredibly difficult situation worse. And if there's one thing a diagnosed-as-terminal patient doesn't need is external complications; we already have enough internal complications.

My internal complications are mostly "manifestations," as I've described them, symptoms that occasionally go bump in the night and often cause me to grind during the day ("grind" is an emotional reference). I want to think, I'm desperate to think, that the things I feel are not cancer-related but instead are being-sixty-years-old-related. But since I've never been 60 before with or without cancer, (and neither have I ever experienced six years of non-stop chemotherapy), I don't know whether my cancer is manifesting itself and my predicted future is finally present, or whether I'm destined for an unexpected long life with all the associated symptoms. Certainly I hope for the latter, but it's the former that seems to be driving this bus. And though the bus may need some paint and a bit of an overhaul, the wheels have yet to come off.

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

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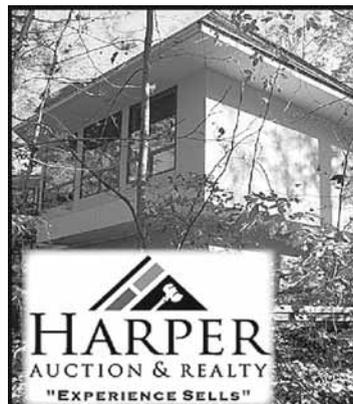
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NEWS

Fairfax One

FROM PAGE 3

Also inside the helicopter are various radios to communicate with fire and police personnel, air traffic control and hospitals. "We'll alert a hospital about the condition of a patient we're bringing in," said Taormina. "Working together as a crew is key."

Two mechanics are on duty to keep Fairfax One in tip-top shape. "And we have a second aircraft because we work 24/7," said Taormina. "So one gets maintained while the other flies. We can get into the air two minutes after getting a call. We use road maps to find houses and exact addresses."

"We're the only police medivac helicopter from the Potomac to Richmond."

— PFC Nick Taormina, paramedic and police officer

He said they fly pretty low, at an altitude of about 1,000 feet, so they can see well with their camera. Certain factors determine when the helicopter is used to whisk people to hospitals, rather than an ambulance.

"It depends on the time of day — for example, if there's an accident on I-66 in rush hour — and the severity of the injuries," explained Taormina. "If there's a burn injury, for instance, it'll take us just 10 minutes to get to the Washington Hospital Burn Center in D.C."

When having to land in a spot with heavy traffic, he said, "The Fire Department will close off the roads and establish a landing zone for us, although sometimes the police do it, too."

The aircraft averages 160 mph and can fly in 35-knot ground winds. Two crews a day are assigned to it, each working a 12-hour shift. There are five or six pilots, plus 10 police flight officers.

"We're involved in mutual aid with jurisdictions including Spotsylvania, Winchester, Prince William, Loudoun and even West Virginia," said Taormina. "We're the only police medivac helicopter from the Potomac to Richmond."

Each crew receives two to three hours of flying time a day, going on four to five missions.

The average call lasts an hour or two. "But we could be flying as much as 10 hours on a particularly busy day," said Taormina. "We usually burn a gallon of gas a minute and, at any given time, we normally have 100 gallons [in the tank]."

He's been with the Fairfax County Police Department's helicopter division since 2008.

The toughest part of his job, he said, is any accident involving really young children. Best, said Taormina, is "being able to fly around the area, loving aviation and doing both police and medivac work."

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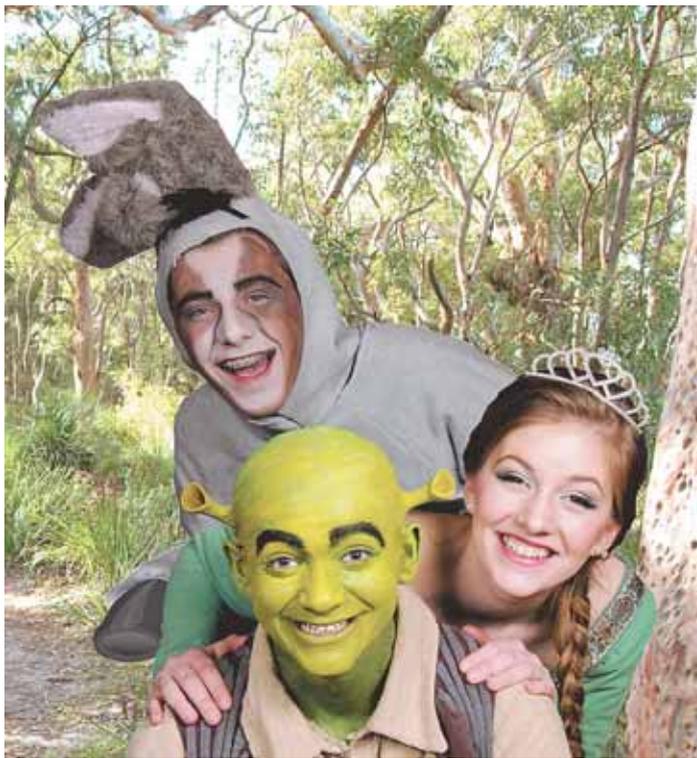


PHOTO BY DON FLOREY

Donkey (Tyler Williams), Shrek (Tyler Parowski), and Princess Fiona (Sarah Jane Scott) star in "Shrek The Musical." Shrek The Musical Opens at the Hylton

On April 25 and 26, Pied Piper Theatre will present performances of "Shrek The Musical" at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. at the Hylton Performing Arts Center, 10690 George Mason Circle. The Hylton provides training to young actors and those interested in the technical side of the theatre. The troupe, made up of young actors aged 8-18, will present the familiar tale of an ogre named Shrek who sets on a journey to rescue a reluctant princess. The Hylton provides Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$12 for children. Visit www.hyltoncenter.org for more information

FROM PAGE 7

SUNDAY/APRIL 19

Annual 5K and Candlelight Vigil. 4:30 p.m. at 4100 Monument Corner Drive, Fairfax. Find a resource fair, live music, walk, and vigil in honor of crime victims. Free. Visit www.ovc.gov.

MONDAY/APRIL 20

Centreville Garden Club. 7 p.m. at Sully Government Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd., Chantilly. Discover the influence of Scottish Gardeners on Mt. Vernon's horticulture. Free. Visit www.centrevillgardenclub.blogspot.com.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/APRIL 25-26

"Shrek: The Musical." 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. at the Hylton Performing Arts Center, 10690 George Mason Circle. Pied Piper Theatre presents the familiar Shrek Tale set to music. Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$12 for children. Visit www.hyltoncenter.org.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/APRIL 24-26

Chantilly Library Used Book Sale. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and 1-4 p.m. Sunday. Large selection of fiction and non-fiction books for adults and children, plus DVDs, CDs and audio books. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/events.

SATURDAY/APRIL 25

Centreville International Showcase. 6-9:30 p.m. at Centreville United Methodist Church, 6400 Old Centreville Road, Centreville. Find international food, music and dancing from around the world. Admission is free. Visit www.centrevilleinternationalshowcase.org.

BULLETIN BOARD

Email announcements to chantilly@connectionnewspapers.com. Include date, time, location, description and contact for event: phone, email and/or website. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

THROUGH APRIL 15

Free Tax Preparation. Tuesdays, 4-8:30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 1-5 p.m. at Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive, Centreville. For taxpayers with low and middle income. All ages, with special attention to seniors. Federal and Virginia tax returns prepared and electronically filed by IRS-certified volunteers. Tax questions can be answered. Bring your photo ID(s), Social Security Card(s), tax documents, and your prior year tax return.

THROUGH APRIL

Kindergarten Registration. Greenbriar West Elementary School, 13300 Poplar Tree Road, Fairfax, is now accepting information for next year's Kindergarten classes. Parents of students within Greenbriar West's boundaries, who will turn 5 years of age by Sept. 30, 2015, should call the school office at 703-633-6700.

MULCH SALES

Westfield High School. Mulch delivery is scheduled for April 10-11. Order early to guarantee driveway delivery. Delivery limited to the WHS boundary area only. High-quality, double shredded mulch, \$4.95 per

limited availability. Volunteers needed. Email bulldogmulch@westfieldhs.org for more.

SATURDAY/APRIL 4

Community Passover Seder. 6:30 p.m. at Temple Beth Torah, 4212-C Technology Court, Chantilly. Temple Beth Torah celebrates their 16th Annual Community Passover Seder. Menu includes ritual Seder items, gefilte fish, matzoh ball soup, roast chicken, vegetables, kosher wine/juice and Passover desserts. \$20, adults, children 13 and older; \$10, 12 and younger; free, 3 and younger. Call 703-217-8938 or visit www.BethTorah.net for more.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 8

Kindergarten Registration. 5-7 p.m. at Colin Powell Elementary School cafeteria, 13340 Leland Road, Centreville. Forms and other information are available on line at: <http://www.fcps.edu/start/kindergarten.htm>. Due to the time required, parents only should come to school for registration. Call 571-522-6000 for more.

FRIDAY/APRIL 10

Writing Conference. 10 a.m.- 3 p.m. at NOVA-Manassas, 6901 Sudley Road., Manassas. Paul Rogers and Donald Gallehr will host workshops designed for educators on how to incorporate writing into the classroom setting. Free. Visit www.novawritingconference2015.eventbrite.com to register.

TUESDAY/APRIL 14

Ladies' Book Club. 7:30 p.m. at Temple Beth Torah, 4212-C Technology Court, Chantilly. Join this synagogue-sponsored "pot-luck" style book club that meets every other month on the second Tuesday at Temple Beth Torah. This club is open to all women. Bring a drink or appetizer to share. April book is "The Boston Girl" by Anita Diamant. Call 703-217-8938 or visit www.BethTorah.net for more.

THURSDAY/APRIL 16

Kindergarten Orientation. 3 p.m. at Colin Powell Elementary School cafeteria, 13340 Leland Road, Centreville. Newly registered kindergarten students and parents are invited to attend orientation. Parents will receive an overview of the curriculum. Since this is a special time for new kindergartners, other babysitting arrangements should be made for siblings. Call 571-522-6000 for more.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 15

Classes for Caregivers. 1:30-3 p.m. at Insight Memory Care Center, 3953 Pender Drive, Suite 100, Fairfax. "Dementia and Legal Concerns: Capacity, Guardianship & Healthcare Decision Making." Free. RSVP to Christi Clark at 703-204-4664 or christi.clark@insightmcc.org.
Seminars for Family Caregivers. 7-8:30 p.m. at Chantilly Regional Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly. Learn strategies about how to help your aging family member adjust to life as a senior. Free. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/OlderAdults.

THURSDAY/APRIL 16

Kindergarten Registration/Orientation. 2:30 p.m. at Greenbriar East Elementary School, 13006 Point Pleasant Drive, Fairfax. Contact the school office at 703-633-6400.

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Richard Graff, formerly of Vienna, showed Nysmith students from Herndon a photo taken of himself on V-E Day in 1945. He still wears his uniform when sharing experiences of the war.



Al Burris, formerly of Springfield, helped evacuate medical patients in the Korean War. He is pictured here with Alexandra Murphy and Anika Schipma, students at The Nysmith School in Herndon.



PHOTOS BY KEN MOORE/THE CONNECTION

Keith Wilkinson enlisted in World War II when he was 17 years old. Nysmith Students from Herndon recorded veterans' experiences for a Library of Congress Veterans History Project.

First Hand Experience with World War

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Richard Graff didn't hesitate to describe his darkest days while serving in World War II. "Every combat soldier has to get used to the bodies," he said.

"Whenever I think back to that one day when I didn't think I would have another day, you bet, I'm glad to be here," Graff said.

When speaking about World War II, Graff, formerly of Vienna, also brings a portrait photo taken on V-E Day, May 8, 1945, when

war in Europe came to an end nearly 70 years ago. He has a captured Nazi flag which is signed by comrades he served with.

Seventh and eighth graders from The Nysmith School in Herndon visited Ashby Ponds retirement community to record one-hour interviews with six veterans for The Library of Congress' Veterans History Project, including Graff, formerly of Vienna, Al Burris, formerly of Springfield, Keith Wilkinson, Al Beyer, Lee Holmberg and Bruce Petree.

More than one-quarter of the 850 residents at Ashby Ponds are military veterans, said Jessica McKay, public affairs manager.

"Who wouldn't want to hear the experience of a veteran?" said Nysmith student Emily Elkas, who talked to and recorded Keith Wilkinson. Wilkinson, formerly of New Hampshire, spent 32 years in the military, "mostly in the Air Force," he said.

"As we talked more and more, his story got so interesting," said Emily Elkas.

"I think it's wonderful that we live in a time that we have technology so we can record their stories on video," said Anika Schipma, who talked with Al Burris. Burris brought a model of the helicopter he flew to help evacuate soldiers who needed medical attention.

"Thank you so much. And thank you so much for your service," Alexandra Murphy, told Burris. "I learned a lot, so much that I didn't learn from textbooks at school."

Graff also told the Nysmith students some advice he learned from war and from the relationships through serving in the war.

"Learn all you can about every subject you can," Graff said. "Next, make all the friends you can. It always helps."

Finally, "have all the fun you can," he said. Nysmith students will return to Ashby Ponds, located on a 132-acre campus in Ashburn, throughout the spring.



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Senior Living

'Your Life Is Today and Tomorrow'

Residents of local senior living communities share their experiences.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

“I didn't want to come here,” said Bill Woessner, referring to Brightview Assisted Living Community in Great Falls.

“That's right,” agreed Sheila, his wife of more than 50 years, with plenty of her native Scottish brogue to be heard in her voice. “He really didn't. We have a lovely house here in Great Falls and I don't think he was ready to budge. But how long after we got here did that change?” she turned to her husband and asked.

“At least a day,” he laughingly replied. “Seriously,” said Bill Woessner, “it probably wasn't more than the first 48 hours.”

What changed his mind, especially after what many would call a major life-upheaval?

“The food!” was his answer. “We have



PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

Always ready for a few hijinks around Brightview Assisted Living Community in Great Falls are L-R: Sheila Woessner, Porta Nickles, Sophia Coulopoulos, Bill Woessner, and director of Community Sales, Joanna Banks.

gourmet food at every meal, served by the nicest people in the most beautiful surroundings, and we never have to cook it or clean up afterwards.”

According to Sheila, while the food really is that good, what probably impacted her husband's initial attitude was “the amazing staff, the friendly and interesting residents, and the freedom. Of course, we're retired, so we're not bound to the responsibilities of work.” But neither are the Woessners bound to home maintenance concerns, housekeeping, cooking and cleaning.

Or “shoveling snow, like we would have been doing last month if we weren't right here,” gloated Bill. “We have the time to do what we like, to try new things and meet new people, without that worry.”

Bill and Sheila Woessner chatted about their experiences as residents in a senior living community with friends and fellow residents Porta Nickles and Sophia Coulopoulos, over lunch in the Brightview dining room.

Porta Nickles, who is 99, admitted to a bit of a sweet tooth. “My father owned a candy and ice cream shop in upstate New York,” she said, recommending the homemade coffee ice cream for dessert.

The ice cream is made using the recipe of the area's beloved Thelma Feighery. Brightview is built on the site of Thelma's Ice Cream, once the hotspot for local gathering in Great Falls. Thelma and her husband Frank

started with a gas station on the site in 1950. Thelma took over and served her own recipe ice creams and other goodies after Frank's death in 1988, until her own in 2001.

Long-time Great Falls resident Sheila Woessner said she used to go to Thelma's “just to catch up on all the local doings” even though she's not one for sweet treats. “I think Thelma would be pleased. Not only do we have our own “Thelma's” on site and make ice cream to her specifications, but it's still the place for us to gather and keep up with what's going on.”

Porta Nickles came to Brightview after living the last 70 years in Middletown, N.Y., where she helped run the family's Coney Island hot dog franchise, and later went on to enjoy a career in education with the local school district. Having lived somewhere that long, it's understandable that the move took some adjusting to, but Nickles found herself comfortable and more than content in short order. “I was lonely there,” she said. “And I didn't even know how lonely until I got here, starting making new friends, finding out there were so many things I could still do and learn and enjoy. And now I get to see my kids, grandkids and great-grand kids.”

“And so do we all,” added Bill Woessner. The youngsters in Porta's extended family (many of whom live close by) are favorites at family related social events held at Brightview, holidays, birthdays, and some “just because” occasions. Having family nearby, the visits, and having opportunities designed to promote interaction with different age groups, all help make Brightview

a home environment in the estimation of this group of residents.

The Brightview Great Falls location has only been open since September of last year. Sophia Coulopoulos, who had lived for several years in the Maryland suburbs around the District, actually came here from another area community, where she lived with her ill husband until his death. Speaking of him caused a quick smile, but also brought a hint of tears. Porta on her one side and Brightview Community Sales Director Joanna Banks seated on her other side, were immediately offering hugs, pats and encouragement.

“Get involved and take advantage of your time,” was Sheila Woessner's advice for new

SEE 'YOUR LIFE.' PAGE 4



With Dale Jarrett on the piano performing some of the residents' favorites, Garrey Stinson, owner of Dancing With Garrey, Therapeutic Ballroom Dancing for Seniors, brings a smile to Sophia Coulopoulos.

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Senior Living

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Your Life Is Today and Tomorrow

FROM PAGE 3

residents.

Sheila Woessner has always been a game player “and she knows the words to every song going,” Porta Nickles said in admiration.

During her days with the British Information Services in New York City with Bill, Sheila Woessner took home some hefty prize money by playing on the televised “Name that Tune” game show, money that she used to finance their wedding. The couple even appeared on Johnny Carson’s “Who Do You Trust?” game show. Nowadays, Sheila uses her ability to help out at the community’s sing-a-longs.

Many activities are organized and facilitated by Brightview’s Vibrant Living Director, Josh Graf.

Bingo is Sophia’s favorite. She’s been pretty lucky, winning often enough to splurge with her earned Brightview “bucks” at the monthly “gift shop” where you never know what interesting items might be on offer.

Brightview Great Falls is part of Baltimore-based Brightview Senior Living, LLC with a number of communities in Virginia, Maryland and beyond. Brightview Great Falls offers independent living, assisted living, and accommodations for residents with Alzheimer’s and memory impairment. The community also offers outdoor space with unspoiled views and a Natural Wildlife Habitat accreditation.

Transitioning to senior community living is not always as easy as the lunch lunch at Brightview experienced. Sometimes the move starts with heartache or circumstances that speed up what should be a more lengthy and considered process. That was certainly the case for both Jim Draper and Rachel Garbee,

residents at The Hermitage in Alexandria.

Draper was a pastor for many years in the southern portions of the Commonwealth. He and his wife of 53 years were actually engaged in ministerial duties when she fell and hit her head. “It was a simple fall outside a Wendy’s, could happen to anyone.” Two weeks later, Draper was a widower. He continued on, but experienced several medical episodes associated with his own health issues. Eventually, the decision was made for him to move to Northern Virginia, close to family. “It’s been hard,” he admits. I really had my heart set on a retirement place near Richmond. And I miss my wife so much.” To make the transition more difficult, because of his medical condition, Draper can no longer drive. “That’s a real blow,” he said.

Rachel Garbee was living in North Carolina and “doing pretty good.” Then one night her furnace exploded. Living alone, she had no one with her to handle the situation. “It was very scary. I didn’t really know what had happened, couldn’t figure out how to turn off the alarms. I went to my neighbors for help and that’s when we found out about the furnace.” Luckily, Rachel Garbee and her home survived the experience, but when her son received the call in the middle of the night, “I was packed up pretty quickly and here I am.”

Both Jim Draper and Rachel Garbee have taken some time to adjust, but things are getting better with the help of staff like Lynette Mitchell, The Hermitage director of marketing and outreach. “She’s a special lady,” said Draper, “really made for the job.” Other residents have also helped Jim, Rachel, and others settle in to this new phase of their lives.

Gladys Laclède knows what it’s like to be a “newbie” from out of state. Moving here to be closer to her sons, she offers support and assistance where she can.

Peg Bixler remembers when Jim Draper



PHOTOS BY ANDREA WÖRKER/THE CONNECTION

In the lounge at The Woodlands Retirement Community in Fairfax, Col. James McAllan (US Army-Ret) with Riley on his lap and Linda McAllan offered up some thoughts on their senior community living experience. The McAllans were celebrating their Woodlands one-year anniversary that day.

first arrived. “I remember when we met in the elevator,” she told him. “I could tell it was hard.” She recalls telling him to just “Wait a bit. It does get easier.”

Of course, by the description of her daily activities, it sounds like Peg Bixler doesn’t have much time for waiting. A former nurse, she volunteers at the Kennedy Center, with the Wounded Warrior and Honor Flight projects, and more. She also fits in some serious walking to keep fit and limber, as well as activities offered at The Hermitage and visits with her daughter who lives in the area. Peg is grateful that she is still in good health and still able to be “a fairly quick walker.”

She tilts her head at friend Bea Larson, who is laughing that Peg “nearly finished me off” when she took Bea for their first few walks together.

Rachel Garbee also walks, but mostly sticks to Hermitage hallway strolls, often in the evenings after dinner. “It’s quiet then, and where else could I take a walk in my pajamas, bathrobe and slippers?”

The Hermitage offers its residents a number of activities and amenities, although Peg, Bea and Gladys think that more people should take advantage of what’s on offer. Gladys Laclède was on the community’s activities committee and they were always on the lookout for something new and fun to get the residents involved.

Peg Bixler offered advice to those who might have such a move coming in the future. “Get rid of a lot of stuff as soon as you can. Don’t wait. And do what you can to make it easier on your kids.” Bixler thought she had done a good job of downsizing before the move, but still found herself “with a lot of stuff I just don’t need.”

Rachel Garbee encourages other “newbies” to not be afraid to ask questions or ask for help, especially if your move to senior community living is an abrupt one like hers.

“All of my questions and concerns have been met with nothing but genuine care and helpfulness here.”

“Be open,” is what Gladys Laclède advises. Pastor Jim Draper, who has started using more of his time to help others in need around the community, thinks just speaking to everybody and actively looking for friendship is key to making the most of this next life chapter.

Bea Larson certainly hasn’t lost her sense of humor with her new living arrangements. “My advice,” she said, “is don’t be hard of

hearing!”

Col. James McAllan (U.S. Army Ret.) and his wife Linda, who retired from an administrative career with the IRS, started their research on retirement living options six years ago. As you would expect from a military intelligence officer (Army, Civil Defense/FEMA) and a woman who made order and efficiency part of her life’s work, these two had a plan and a checklist of requirements. While living in Falls Church, they visited dozens of communities over the years.

“We didn’t want one of the really big places,” said Col. McAllan. “We were looking for someplace with a diverse population and where we could comfortably remain, even if our health circumstances changed.” The couple also decided they would prefer a community that was locally owned, and better still, locally managed. Their extensive research and personal inspections eventually took them to The Woodlands Retirement Community in Fairfax. “It checked all the boxes.”

The community is, in fact, locally founded and operated by the Bainum family. The size fits for the McAllans, as well, with only 102 units. The Woodlands is also what is known as a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC), meaning that residents can avail of a lifetime range of care, from the independent living that the McAllans now

enjoy, to more assisted living through to advanced nursing care without having to uproot and move to a completely new community.

The McAllans hadn’t planned to move in when they did. “My knees really made that decision for us,” said James. But once they decided, they found that only one apartment was currently available. Not wanting to risk a long encampment on the waiting list, they went ahead and closed the deal on their two bedroom, 2.5 bath apartment with separate kitchen, dining room and den. Their daughter, who lives just minutes away, told them it was “all meant to be.” And the icing on the cake was that The Woodlands would accept the other member of the immediate family, 4-year-old shih tzu Riley, who has been dubbed “The Mayor” by many of the other residents. Riley is not particularly fond of the only other four-legged community dweller, but he adores visiting – and being properly fussed over by – residents, staff, and visitors.

“Coming down to the lobby is his favorite activity,” said Linda. “I think he fakes some of his requests for his outside needs,” she added, “since half the time when we get down here he suddenly finds plenty of time to check out whoever is around.”

The Woodlands offers physical and entertainment activities, including an indoor heated pool and a well-equipped exercise room, but Linda noted that the variety of groups, clubs, lectures and discussions available.

“We’ve had the first Ambassador to Israel as a speaker, a violinist who spent 40 years with the Washington Opera orchestra, a retired opera singer, and so many more, in addition to book clubs, poetry clubs, gardening,” Linda McAllan said. A presentation by the authors of “Worry Free Retirement Living” was on the March schedule, and “Aging Well: Aging is Not a Spectator Sport” is on the April agenda. The McAllans also like that co-founder and manager Kevin Bainum holds monthly “Kevin Talks.” There are other regular town hall-type meetings and several councils or committees, but in Mr. McAllan’s words, it’s “this kind of relaxed, open communication that really brings us all together.”

Betty Marshall, whose apartment is frequently used as a stop on any tour of The Woodlands, couldn’t agree more with her neighbors, the McAllans. A Fairfax resident for more than 25 years, Marshall,

who was born on Cyprus when her South Carolinian mom followed her father to his native Greece for a time, has also seen a bit of the world thanks to her husband’s military postings in Alaska, Okinawa, Greece and Paris. Like the McAllans, Betty did quite a bit of planning for this move. When her husband, Col. Charles Marshall (Ret) died in 2013, she put those plans into action. Picking which pieces to take with her from a lifetime of international travel wasn’t as hard as she thought it would be. Of course, Betty Marshall, a music major who taught the instrument wherever the couple went, couldn’t leave the piano behind. Nor could she leave her favorite furnishings and artwork, many from her Okinawa days.

When not busy with activities outside of The Woodlands world like volunteering at the Fair Oaks Hospital gift shop or heading up the Flower Guild at the Providence Presbyterian Church, Betty is involved with the goings on in her own community. “And the people here make it easy on every level.” Betty sings the praises of the maintenance and facilities staff, in particular. “They are so willing to do anything you need. Hang a picture, move furniture, fix anything. They even prepare the plots for us gardeners. I just have to get out there and do the planting.” Of course, she does reward them with the fruits of their combined labor. “Zucchini bread for everyone this year!”

Having learned flower arranging, Betty teaches those skills as well as crafting to interested residents. She’s also organizing

a Caribbean cruise for a group of residents and family members. The Woodlands staff will be handling the transportation to and from Baltimore when the travelers embark on their sea-faring adventure.

“I would just tell people to never look back,” Marshall said. “Keep the memories, they are what made you. But your life is today and tomorrow. Keep looking ahead. Plan. And find a place where you can really thrive.”

If it’s time to start contemplating the transition to senior independent or assisted living for yourself or a loved one sorting through the information and the available properties and options can seem overwhelming.

There are properties that resemble four-star resorts. There are communities that are extensions of a particular faith institution or religion. Others, like non-profit Vinson Hall in McLean were founded to serve our large commissioned military officers population and government workers of equal rank. There are properties set in rural locations, while others like The Jefferson, a Sunrise Senior Living community located steps away from the Ballston Metro and Ballston Common Mall in Arlington, are set right in the thick of things. Westminster at Lake Ridge and Ingleside at King Farm in Maryland offer small town living right in the Washington area. There are communities offering every possible range of care, service and amenities in all price ranges.



Gladys Laclède, Bea Larson, Jim Draper, Rachel Garbee and Peg Bixler share a table and a photo op in the library of The Hermitage, a senior assisted living community in Alexandria. Peg is the veteran in the group and does her best to welcome newcomers.



Betty Marshall is so noted for her gracious hostess skills that she is often called upon as an “ambassador” for The Woodlands Retirement Community. One look around her two-bedroom apartment and you know why it is frequently chosen as a stop on the

County Adult Centers Offer Seniors Activities, Social Interaction

In 2014, the attendance at Fairfax County senior centers was 277,342.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

At the Kingstowne Center for Active Adults, volunteer Frank Bauer sees zumba and yoga classes “flowing into the main room sometimes,” he says, revealing how popular those classes are at the center, which caters to seniors 55 and older. This Kingstowne center, one of 14 senior centers throughout Fairfax County, offers classes and activities to keep seniors active.

“It keeps them mentally engaged, it’s a very friendly atmosphere,” said Bauer, who lives nearby and puts in about 30 hours a week at the Kingstowne center.

Fairfax County’s senior centers are sponsored by the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services that offer classes, health and wellness programs, and internet access, as well as trips and tours. The activities provide seniors an opportunity to socialize with others and stay connected with the community. In 2014, the attendance at the senior centers was 277,342, according to program officials.

“Our participants consistently rank developing social connections and enhancing emotional and physical health and wellness as the top two benefits from attending senior centers,” said Evan Braff, one of the regional managers at the Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services. “We work to meet the needs and interest of our participants.”



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

The Kingstowne Senior Center is in the south part of the county.

According to the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP), senior centers are valuable resources in communities across the nation. Many centers sponsor Meals-on-Wheels programs and provide volunteer opportunities, as Bauer has found. According to Ginger Thompson, the associate state director of communications at AARP Virginia, “some programs in the center are funded through the Older Americans Act which AARP is urging congress to reauthorize. AARP is calling on Congress to prevent seniors from losing access to services they count on for their health and financial security by renewing the Older Americans Act.” “The Older Americans Act supports services including Meals-on-Wheels, in-home care, transportation, elder abuse prevention and caregivers who make it pos-

sible for seniors to live in their homes. “The OAA also helps save federal and state tax dollars by keeping seniors out of costly nursing homes and preventing unnecessary hospital re-admissions,” Thompson said.

In Fairfax County, officials are also trying a different approach, called Centers Without Walls. These are senior centers without a county building to gather in, and an alternate set of basic activities the other centers may offer. Two of these programs are in Burke/West Springfield and Great Falls. The Senior Centers Without Walls are developed through a public-private partnership between the county and businesses to create centers in churches. So far, the Accotink Unitarian Universalist Church, the Burke United Methodist Church and the Durga Temple were the first to support the Center Without Walls, but according to Braff, the county is looking at expanding that program. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors is supportive of that effort. “As additional needs present themselves, we stand ready to expand implementing the Centers Without Walls in another location,” said Braff.

There is a fee to participate at the county centers, based on income, ranging from \$24 to \$48 a year and meals are provided “if they need it,” Braff said. A meal donation is suggested based on a sliding scale. Transportation to the centers is available through Human Services Transportation.

The Kingstowne Center for Active Adults is open during the weekday hours, and Bauer sees many participants that live with their adult children and come over to the center when the children are at work. On the weekends though,

Center Locations

Bailey’s Senior Center

5920 Summers Lane, Falls Church, VA 22041
Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Phone: 703-820-2131, TTY 711

South County Senior Center

8350 Richmond Highway, Suite 325, Alexandria, VA 22309
Senior+ Program
Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Phone: 703-704-6216, TTY 711
Fax: 703-704-6699

Herndon Senior Center

873 Grace Street, Herndon, VA 20170
Senior+ Program
Operating Hours: Monday - Thursday, 9 a.m. - 8 p.m., Friday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Saturday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Phone: 703-464-6200, TTY 711

Hollin Hall Senior Center

1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria, VA 22308
Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Phone: 703-765-4573, TTY 711

James Lee Senior Center

2855-A Annandale Road, Falls Church, VA 22041
Senior+ Program
Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Phone: 703-534-3387, TTY 711

Kingstowne Center for Active Adults

6488 Landsdowne Center, Alexandria, VA 22315
Operating Hours: Monday - Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Phone: 703-339-7676, TTY 711

Lewinsville Senior Center

1609 Great Falls Street, McLean, VA 22101
Senior+ Program
Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Phone: 703-442-9075, TTY 711

Lincolnia Senior Center

4710 North Chambliss Street, Alexandria, VA 22312
Senior+ Program
Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Phone: 703-914-0330, TTY 711

Little River Glen Senior Center

4001 Barker Court, Fairfax, VA 22032
Senior+ Program
Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Phone: 703-503-8703, TTY 711
Fax: 703-653-3548

Lorton Senior Center

7722 Gunston Plaza, Lorton, VA 22079
Senior+ Program
Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Phone: 703-550-7195, TTY 711
Fax: 703-541-2092

Pimmit Hills Senior Center

7510 Lisle Avenue, Falls Church, VA 22043
Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Phone: 703-734-3338, TTY 711

Providence Senior Center

3001 Vaden Drive, Fairfax VA 22031
Operating Hours: Monday - Saturday, 9 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Phone: 703-865-0520, TTY 711

Sully Senior Center

5690 Sully Road, Centreville, VA 20120
Senior+ Program
Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Phone: 703-322-4475, TTY 711

Wakefield Senior Center at Audrey Moore

RECenter
8100 Braddock Road, Annandale, VA 22003
Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Phone: 703-321-3000, TTY 711
Fax: 703-764-2204

City of Fairfax

4401 Sideburn Road, Fairfax, VA 22030
Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Phone: 703-359-2487, TTY 711

City of Falls Church

223 Little Falls Street (next to City Hall), Falls Church, VA 22046
Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Phone: 703-248-5020, TTY 711

the center is occasionally rented for other activities such as board game events, or groups to gather. For example, on a recent Saturday, an instructional bee keeping lecture was held by a bee keeping group in one room, while a ‘gaming club’ was holding a benefit for wounded warriors in the main area.

The centers’ rental aspect came in handy for Bauer last year when his daughter’s rehearsal dinner picnic was threatened by tornadoes, and the outdoor location was suddenly nixed. Bauer stopped by the center, made a call, and rented the location for the group who got out of harms way just in time. “It worked out very nicely,” he said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY

One of the county’s Senior Center activities involves mural painting at a local school.

Senior Living

Women of the Nova United, part of the National Senior Women's Basketball Association get exercise with a team sport. They are part of a new fitness trend.



Fit for the Golden Years

Fitness programs for seniors are part of a trend.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

One night each week, Sue Thompson can be found dribbling a basketball down the court, leading her team, the Nova United, to victory. Thompson, who is in her 60s, is one of the youngest players in her league, the National Senior Women's Basketball Association.

"There are women who play with me who are 80 and living out their dream to play basketball. We were way before Title IX," said Thompson, who is also a professor of physical education at Northern Virginia Community College in Annandale and Alexandria, Va. "The women are fit, but with seniors, the social part is really important. Some of the ladies have been widowed or have spouses with health issues. They've really been a support group for each other."

According to the American College of Sports Medicine, Thompson is part of a national fitness trend: fitness programs for older adults, including strength training and team sports. Fitness programs for the now-retired and retiring baby boom generation are increasing in popularity.

New research continues to show the benefits of exercise, aerobic and strength training, range from delayed cognitive decline and a boost in social functioning to an ability to manage chronic diseases and even turn back time.

"There are a lot of benefits for the aging population," said Lisa M.K. Chin, an assistant research professor at George Mason University's Department of Rehabilitation Science in Fairfax, Virginia. Exercise "slows physiological changes that come with aging. ... The other thing that exercise manages is chronic diseases that come with aging, such as cardiovascular problems or diabetes."

Mark Brasler, a 69-year-old who lives in Springfield, Va., has been active for most of the past 20 years. He moved into a retirement community four months ago and got a fitness assessment in the property's gym. The results led him to up his fitness game.

"I still walk every morning and do weights and resistance machines every other day," said Brasler. "I was also told that I needed to take balance class. We focus on agility, how to stand up straight and how to get up when you fall. We also do stretching, yoga and Pilates. I feel more confident about myself."

Such fitness classes can help preserve mobility and cognitive function, say researchers. "It helps in terms of preserving bone mass and maintaining mobility longer," said Chin. "If you're using your muscles, especially during weight-bearing exercises, ultimately it reduces the risk of falling and improves balance."

An exercise class that includes both aerobic, strength and balance exercises can help preserve freedom and independence for seniors. "The key components of staying physically active are having strong muscles, reasonable flexibility and endurance, such as the ability to keep walking or doing an activity and not getting tired and fatigued right away," said Rita Wong, professor of physical therapy and associate dean of graduate and professional studies at Marymount University in Arlington. "It's essential to keep oneself mobile and active."

It's almost never too late to increase fitness levels, Wong said. "Often with older adults, people think that they can't improve anymore so why bother. But research has shown time and time again that older adults have an ability to improve that is as similar as young adults'."

One fitness class that is multi-generational and incorporates aerobic exercise, balance and strength training is the newly formed TRUE Fit in Arlington, Va. The goal of the all-outdoor class sessions is to marry effective exercise with camaraderie, much like Brasler's experience.

"People need community [and are] finding it in a holistic approach to exercise at their own comfort level," said Nina Elliot, founder of the TRUE Fit program and co-owner of TRUE Health and Wholeness. "People work out to the best of their ability and everybody gets a workout that's right for their body. They're given modifications and the focus is to do your best, have fun and enjoy exercise."

Elliot believes exercising in groups has an accountability factor. "The number one thing that can keep you from aging is exercise," she said. "Aging can be very isolating for some people. The more people can get out and be around people, the better."

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Why do some people reach age 80, 90, and older living free of physical and cognitive disease? National Institute on Aging (NIA) researchers on the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging (BLSA) are exploring this question through the IDEAL (Insight into Determinants of Exceptional Aging and Longevity) Study. Although research exists on the relationship between long life and functional decline, we still know relatively little about why certain individuals have excellent health well into their 80's while others experience disease and physical decline earlier in life.

IDEAL Study participants can help NIH researchers uncover secrets of healthy aging.

Participants are 80 years or older and:

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Creative Aging Festival Coming in May

Includes 114 performances, poetry readings, art exhibits, lectures, classes and more.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE CONNECTION

A Creative Aging Festival will take place throughout the month of May at 100-plus local venues in Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax, Arlington and Alexandria. The month-long festival includes 114 performances, poetry readings, art exhibits, lectures, classes and more.



The festival is being sponsored by Fairfax County, AARP Virginia, the Fairfax County Arts Council and several other community organizations and businesses, and

coincides with Older Americans Month. It will also include programs that unlock the creative spirit through yoga, tai chi and even a walk through a garden labyrinth.

“What we’re hoping is that people will discover where the opportunities for art are for Fairfax County. We want them to know that it’s here; it’s in the community and we’re hoping they will participate,” said Grace Lynch, manager of communications with the county’s Division of Adult and Aging Services. She said the festival “gives us permission to do something that we may not have done before and to explore ourselves in a more creative and artistic way.”

“Fairfax County is home to over 200 non-profit art organizations many of them offering exciting events for the 50-plus com-

munity. The Creative Aging Festival is a wonderful opportunity for our arts organizations to market their existing programs by and for 50-plus residents, encouraging older adult participation in the county’s many arts offerings, and showcasing opportunities to engage in our community,” said Lisa Mariam, grants director and master arts plan coordinator at the Arts Council of Fairfax County.

Planners are now developing the program and expect to post the full calendar of events in early April (see sidebar). Some of the examples include:

- ❖ An open house allowing guests to participate in an organization’s dance, music, visual art, yoga, gardening programming;
 - ❖ A speaker on art, gardening, yoga, etc.; or
 - ❖ An older adult artist, writer, actor, poet, dancer or musician to speak about their art.
- “We’re not about bingo anymore. We’ve really raised the bar. We’re focusing on yoga, tai chi, in addition to painting and music, performing arts and dance,” said Julie Ellis, Director of Hollin Hall Senior Center in Mount Vernon.

Many Fairfax County programs will be held at local libraries, 14 senior centers, adult day healthcare centers and park programs are planning to be involved. For example, seniors here will have the opportunity to experience movement classes with professional choreographer Janet Storms of the Choreographers Collaboration Project. “She’s going to talk about the joy of movement as you age,” said Ellis.

The festival’s objectives are to encourage audiences for the arts, especially for art created and performed by older adults; encour-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY STAN SCHRETTER

Seniors take part in programs at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at GMU.

age older adult participation in the county’s many public and private art programs; promote public understanding of the benefits of older adult participation in the arts; establish the festival as an annual event each May with Older Americans Month.

“Research has shown a strong connection between participation in the arts and the cognitive health of older adults,” said Richard Chobot, chair of Fairfax Area Agency on Aging. “The Creative Aging Festival will provide examples of the variety of arts experiences available to older adults, and individuals of all ages.

“The Creative Aging Festival gives the public an opportunity to dive into the soul of the many programs the area offers for adults with dementia,” said Isabel Castillejo, CTRS, of the Herndon Adult Day Health Care Center. “Fairfax County’s Adult Day Health Care Centers understand the value behind creative arts and the opportunity to see someone’s unique expressions through art, music and various other mediums. We encourage the public to get a glimpse of these wonderful gems their community has to offer.”

“The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at (GMU) is excited to take part in the festival, offering four events that will showcase our popular acting and Tai Chi classes, fabulous musical performers, and first rate fine artists and photographers,” said Jennifer Disano, executive director.

As part of the festival, GMU will be hosting an “Arts, Aging & Well-being” panel on Monday, May 18 from 9 a.m. to noon, on the Fairfax campus. “When we connect with others through creative expression, great things happen,” said GMU Associate Professor Holly Matto, Ph.D. “The arts and health research shows that participation in the creative arts can enhance cognitive, emotional and interpersonal functioning,

Chantilly, Centreville Events

Qi Gong. Experience the gentle, rhythmic movements of Qi Gong to reduce stress, build stamina, and enhances balance. May 18, 9-10 a.m. First program free, then \$5. At **Sully Senior Center**, 5690 Sully Road, Centreville. Call 702-322-4475 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs

Photography in the Natural World. Join natural photography expert Wayne Wolferberger in this eight session class at Chantilly Library. May 28, 7-8 p.m. At **Chantilly High School**, 4201 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly. Call 703-222-4664 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes/

Art Exploration. Join us for an all level art experience, where you can develop and enhance your skills, working with a variety of mediums, including watercolor, charcoal, and pencil. May 5, 10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.; May 12, 10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.; May 19, 10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.; May 26, 10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. First program free, then \$5. At **Sully Senior Center**, 5690 Sully Road, Centreville. Call 703-322-4475 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs

Gentle Yoga. Gentle Yoga is a way to open the body through passive stretching in relaxing postures. This practice is ideal for those seeking deep relaxation, slower pacing or for those new to yoga. May 29, 10 a.m. -11:15 p.m. First program free, then \$5. At **Sully Senior Center**, 5690 Sully Road, Centreville. Call 703-322-4475 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs

For more see <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/fairfax-creative-aging-festival.htm>

Entertainment and Art Display. Herndon Adult Day Health Care Center welcomes you to their Open House with program tours, art displays and entertainment courtesy of the National Theatre (11a-12). Light refreshments will be offered. May 15, 10:30 a.m.-Noon; Free. At **Herndon Adult Day Center**, 875 Grace Street, Herndon. Call 703-435-8729 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/adhc/

ArtSpace’s Herndon Senior Tea. Enjoy Behind the Scenes with the Loudoun Sketch Club, light refreshments, and the companionship of art lovers. A local music group will offer entertainment during the tea. May 15, 1-2 p.m.; Free. At **ArtSpace Herndon**, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Call 703-956-6590 or visit www.artspaceherndon.org



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY STAN SCHRETTER

Seniors take part in tai chi programs to stay fit at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at GMU.

and studies on the arts in health care settings show biological effects such as pain reduction and improved immune functioning.”

Festival partners include: the Arts Council of Fairfax County, the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging, the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, Fairfax County’s Department of Neighborhood and Community Services, Public Libraries, Adult Day Health Care Centers, Long Term Care Coordinating Committee, George Washington University, the National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations, the National Center on Creative Aging, Goodwin House at Alexandria and Bailey’s Crossroads, AARP Virginia, and Pure Prana Yoga Studio. Most programs are free. Because of the variability in venue space, participants should call respective venues to register and inquire about program information, fees and parking.

The festival calendar will be posted by early April at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/fairfax-creative-aging-festival.htm>