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NEWS

Franklin Sherman's Grand Green Flag

Elementary school students awarded for environmental efforts.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Franklin Sherman Elementary sixth-grader Alex Verina enjoys the outdoor classroom the school recently built.

"We have more hours outside to improve our learning and thinking," said Alex.

Franklin Sherman students now spend about 60 minutes learning outside each week and Alex gives a first-hand account of National Wildlife Federation research. "Students who are given the opportunity to directly engage in outdoor education and experiential learning have been able to significantly increase their capacity for learning," according to the National Wildlife Federation, which honored the school.

Franklin Sherman, in McLean, earned the Eco-Schools USA Green Flag Award for its environmental efforts and initiatives.

"We've been working towards this award for several years," said principal Kathleen Quigley. "The process to earn the award is quite rigorous."

"This is a great honor for our school and for our students," said assistant principal



Teachers Sara Dubnoff (left) and Jamie Leitch (right) stand with Alex Verina, Ella Rose Fariva, Carly Fleming. They say the enthusiasm of students and their efforts are invigorating.

PHOTO BY
KEN MOORE/
THE CONNECTION

Josh DeSmyter. "They take pride in what they are doing."

STUDENTS RUN the Panda Paw Recycling station with numerous containers to separate different types of materials for recycling.

Their efforts have reduced the amount of trash it generates by 1,746.9 pounds.

"It's all student-driven and it's embedded in our school culture," said DeSmyter. "They

implemented a recycling station in our cafeteria at first. ... Now it is habit and they hold each other accountable."

All students participate in the green team. "It's important to us to develop their leadership capacity," said Quigley.

Teachers Sara Dubnoff and Jamie Leitch say they get invigorated by witnessing the excitement of their students in their environmental conservation efforts.

The school has reduced the electricity use

by 29,188 kilowatts.

"That's enough energy to power 82 42-inch plasma TVs for a whole year," said Quigley.

Students hold each other, and teachers, accountable for turning off classroom lights when they leave a room.

"It's really cool to find out our school is one of the schools in the country that has reduced use of electricity and is helping our environment," said Carly Fleming, a fifth grader.

"A major goal of our green team is to develop our students into global citizens and to really develop their awareness of becoming stewards of their environments," Quigley said. "And so the effort of our school to become a green school is to really help our children understand why we need to take these efforts and what their impact is when we do something here at school, how it impacts the community and in a broader sense their world."

Ella Rose Farivar, fourth-grader, said they have created raised beds where they plant species of flowers and vegetables and learn directly from the environment.

THE SCHOOL plans to have an indoor garden next year.

Students at the school pledge to continue their efforts.

They have a goal of becoming an ECO USA Gold School in the years ahead.

"We're pushing the envelope," said Alex.

McLean Rotary Club Celebrates 50th Anniversary

Tuesday, Nov. 10 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Rotary Club of McLean. The club celebrated with a catered reception at the McLean Community Center attended by past and present members, representatives of neighboring clubs, club friends including Dranesville District Supervisor John Foust, and representatives from Rotary District 7610.

In 1965 Dan Nastoff, a member of the Falls Church Rotary Club, was commissioned by the Rotary District Governor to organize a new club in McLean. A State Department employee, Nastoff became involved in Rotary when his landlord in Istanbul, Turkey, invited him to a Rotary meeting and he became a member. He found Rotary a perfect vehicle for expressing his own desire to serve, and for its ability to bring together people from all walks of life.

During the summer of 1965, Nastoff called on scores of McLean businessmen, most of whom knew nothing of Rotary, scheduled and convened Tuesday luncheon meetings at the Pikestaff Restaurant, and did all the paperwork to have the club accepted by the District and Ro-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Twenty-five past-presidents of the Rotary Club of McLean reunited at the 50th Anniversary celebration.

tary International. The charter for the club was approved on Nov. 10, 1965 with 22 members. Nastoff had to forego the honor of the first presidency of the club as the State Department assigned him to Pakistan where he joined the Islamabad Rotary Club. Local businessman George H. Wilson became the club's first president.

The club quickly became active in the McLean Community identifying projects of

community support, and providing volunteer and monetary support..

OVER THE YEARS the club has met at many local locations. The club moved its meeting location to the Evans Farm Inn, where it held its Tuesday luncheon meetings for many years. In January, 2000, the club moved to the Kazan Restaurant, then to the Pulcinella Restaurant, and in 2002

to its current location in the Fellowship hall of the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer. Lori Shepherd and later Jimmy Weissenberger have catered the clubs lunches.

The club has also met at a number of interesting and unusual locations including the CIA, the Air Traffic Control Center in Leesburg, the State Department with lunch at the Diplomat Club, and the McLean Police and Fire Station.

1974 marked the beginning of McLean Rotary's food and drink stand at McLean Day, an event designed both for fundraising and fellowship. Since then the Rotary tent has been the place to come for hot dogs, pizza, chips, water and soft drinks.

The McLean Club has been instrumental in starting other clubs. In 1983, it sponsored the Tyson's breakfast club. In 2002 it co-sponsored the Gainesville Club, and later the Great Falls Club and the Ashburn Club. The club has also supported Interact Clubs in our local high schools for many years.

The club held its first Youth Achieve

SEE ROTARY, PAGE 6



— REAL STORIES FROM THE EXPRESS LANES —

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- Jennifer G.
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Jennifer's story was one of our winning entries in our "Express Lanes Love Story" promotion.

NEWS

'You'll Be Laughing, You'll Be Crying'

Langley High School students perform 'Almost, Maine' this weekend at The Langley School.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Playwright John Ciarani convinced Richie Follin and Peter Ongman to stare into each other's eyes for 25 seconds. On stage.

"On stage, that's an eternity," said Follin. Ciarani gave Langley High School's theater cast hints for their upcoming theater performance this week of his play "Almost, Maine."

"At first we were like, 'Are you serious? You've got to be kidding me,'" said Ongman. "He had us doing some funny stuff," said Follin.

Ongman said he was dared into trying out for his role.

Jamie Goodson already has performed professionally. She acts throughout the year, during the school year and summer. She's learned that to "give it all you've got, to take chances, to take risks."

"I come alive on stage. It is the most fun thing to pretend you're somebody else," she said. "Theater is my safe place at school. I go there for my free period. I go there whenever I just want to chill out."

Caroline Bugge auditioned for her role, knowing she loved the character she will play.

"This is my first time trying out for something and it was such a treat to get a role," she said. "I like to be the center of attention, I'm not going to lie."

LANGLEY'S PRODUCTION will be performed this weekend at The Langley School while renovations continue at the high school.

"It's done in vignettes, each scene is 10 minutes, 15 minutes, and they are strung together," said Bugge. "When you sit back and watch the whole play, you see storylines are intertwined, even the slang is overlapped."



Langley High School students Liam Nimick of McLean and Bridget Fitzgerald of Great Falls perform in "Almost, Maine" this weekend at the Langley School.

Josh Haydn finds himself on stage, awakened by his girlfriend to be in the middle of a life-changing discussion.

"In my scene, my girlfriend, she wants me to return all the love she gave me, and she returns all the love I gave her, and there's all these big bags of love, and I'm just very confused," said Josh Haydn. "But it's nice because for my costume I get to wear sweatpants and socks and sleep. It's pretty grand."

Andal Paul plays a wife in her 30s who attempts to fix a broken marriage. "So she takes her husband Phil out to go ice skating with her," said Paul. "But the scene is kind of a revelation to her that the marriage is not going to be mended."

"It's kind of taking who I am and trying to find something in my life that translates to the character. You have to make it believ-



Valerie Karasek, teacher

able because that's how people that watch you are going to believe you," she said.

Bugge meets her friend, Sivan Tretiak, on stage after she hits him on the head with an ironing board at a laundromat.

"I play Marvalyn and I see her in so many little things that I do. She's kind of a mess and so am I. I'll be getting into the car and I'll hit my head and say, 'Oh that was such a Marvalyn thing of me,'"

On stage, her character has an abusive boyfriend. She's surprised by how sweet Sivan is. She kisses him.

Bridget Fitzgerald plays Rhonda, a character who likes to drink beer and is a snowmobiler.

"My costume," said Fitzgerald. "I have a total of five layers on. I've got a jump suit, and then I've got a sweater, I've got a ski suit, and then I've got a sweatshirt, and then I have a winter jacket."

SEE LANGLEY, PAGE 9

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McLean Rotary Supports Community Causes

FROM PAGE 3

ment Awards Program in 1985 at Langley High School with over 375 attendees. Awards were presented to 16 students. By the following year the program became a large fundraiser featuring a banquet. Mrs. Jihan El-Sadat, former First Lady of Egypt, served as guest speaker and TV personality David Schoumacher was the Master of Ceremonies. Other banquets featured Renee Cheney, Jeannie Baliles and Vietnam POW hero Captain Eugene "Red" McDaniel.

Over the years this event changed and became a fundraiser co-sponsored by several other clubs in Northern Virginia known as Monte Carlo Night. This year Monte Carlo Night raised over \$60,000 for local charities with the amount shared by the sponsoring clubs.

The Youth Achievement Awards program has been continued by the Rotary Club of McLean and awards are made annually at a regular luncheon meeting. The club also sponsors college scholarships for students with outstanding academic standing but with limited financial support.

In the fall of 1984 the club presented the first Rotary Cup trophy to the winner of the annual Langley High School vs. McLean High School football game, always the last regular game of the season for both schools.

In 1995 the club initiated a Women's Rotary Cup for field hockey teams at the two schools. Girls and boys basketball were added in 2005.

The McLean Club has always been able to attract famous speakers including: Redskins Defensive Tackle Dave Butz; Wolf Trap for the Performing Arts founder Catherine Filene Shouse; radio personalities Hardin and Weaver, publisher of the Washington Post Donald Graham; chairman of the National Geographic Society Gilbert Grosvenor; Madame Claire Chenault; Belgian Ambassador Raoul Schoumaker; ex-governor of Virginia Linwood Holton; Speaker Paul Trible; former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell; and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich. Candidates for local offices are also invited to speak.

The club has been a standout at the Rotary District level for many years. In 1981, and again in 2007, McLean was named the Most Outstanding Club in District 7610. In 2010 it received the Ylonen Trophy for the highest total giving for the previous three years in the district. That year the club achieved total historical giving to all Rotary causes of \$500,000. In 1987 Rotary International began to emphasize the eradication of polio as a major organizational goal. That year the McLean Club donated over \$5,000 to Polio Plus. The club has contrib-

uted in a major way to eradicating polio each year.

While the club throughout its history supported international projects, the support became more personal in 2005 when the club committed to establish a free reading and lending library in Meerut, India. Local Rotarian Sam Agarwal worked with his brother in the Rotary Club of Meerut on this project. Several container loads of quality books were sent to India to begin the library. The club has also supported Partner for Surgery in Guatemala by funding a hospital surgical suite. Partner for Surgery is a nonprofit founded by club member Dr. Frank Peterson. In 2007, club member Lois Wilson, DDS, led a Group Study Exchange team to South Africa. That trip inaugurated another long-term commitment to the country of Swaziland, first to provide solar water heating systems at an orphanage, then to help fund an ambulance for the Salvation Army there, and later to provide technical assistance and dental support to a special needs school. In 2010, member Bob Hahne embarked on his goal of packaging one-million meals for Stop Hunger Now. As of this year the McLean Stop Hunger Now program has packaged over 1.3 million meals. McLean Rotarian Bob Jansen has also been instrumental in helping to provide fresh water for several schools and communities in Uganda.

Many local organizations have received support for many years from McLean Rotary including the Falls Church-McLean Children's Center, the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia, Share, Capital Hospice, Langley Residential Support Services, the Safe Community Coalition, the Lifelong Love of Learning program at Timber Lane Elementary School, the McLean Project for the Arts, Alternative House, Chesterbrook Residences, and Homestretch.

THE ROTARY CLUB OF MCLEAN has played an active and important part in the McLean community for fifty years. Members of the community are invited to join the Rotary Club of McLean for their weekly luncheon meal. They meet every Tuesday at noon in the Fellowship Hall of the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, 1545 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. The Rotary Club of McLean is a service club actively involved in the McLean Community and in international areas related to our community. If you live and/or work in the McLean area and are interested in knowing more about Rotary and the Rotary Club of McLean, or if you are a Rotarian who has recently moved into the McLean area, consider joining them for a free lunch. Email at mcleanrotary.va@gmail.com so they know you are coming. For additional information visit www.mcleanrotary.org.

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Garza Presents Budget Task Force Report to School Board

Transparency and methodology of budget review questioned.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County Public Schools Superintendent Karen Garza is attempting to scale a towering projected budget shortfall for Fiscal Year 2017. On Nov. 9, she presented School Board members the report of budget cuts recommended by a 36-member task force she summoned earlier this year.

A dozen of the task force members were appointed by the School Board, the rest are representatives from civic associations, teachers associations and other county staff.

Garza instructed the team to make recommendations specifically for the 2017 budget with six criteria in mind: the number of students impacted, effect on employees and students, disruption to the system, permanent cuts instead of “one-time” cuts, magnitude of the cut and student outcomes especially on the core instruction.

“No one — including the Task Force members — wants to enact significant budget reductions that will impact classroom and student programs,” Garza said in a statement. “Their involvement in the process guarantees that a wide variety of voices and suggestions were heard and seriously considered.”

THE REPORT from the task force includes dozens of ideas for cuts and how those were supported by task force members, as well as employees, students and the community, based on input from the “UserVoice” program, outreach meetings, budget meetings with School Board members and the online Budget Proposal Tool.

The sets of cuts are divided into two groups — one set that would cut \$50 million from the projected budget and one that would cut \$75 million — and cover a wide area: Some examples are increasing facility use fees and student parking fees, increasing class sizes, eliminating foreign lan-



PHOTO BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

Members of the Fairfax County School Board meet at the school system headquarters where superintendent Karen Garza presented a report from the FY 2017 Budget Task Force.

guage immersion programs and eliminating Level IV Advanced Academic Program centers in favor of offering that advanced curriculum at each local school to reduce student transportation costs.

Garza admitted though the recommendations are just that, and far from final decisions, inevitable cuts would negatively impact essentially everyone involved with Fairfax County Public Schools.

“Reductions will be unavoidable unless we receive sufficient revenue to meet our expenditure requirements,” Garza said in her statement. “As I’ve said all along, we cannot cut our way to excellence.”

The recommendations were ranked by the percent of agreement among voting members of the task force. Two members of the task force abstained during voting on the recommendations: George Becerra, appointed by At-Large School Board member Ilryong Moon, and Mindy Carlin, representing the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce.

A representative from the chamber said Carlin would not be available to comment personally.

Becerra, who currently serves on the Board of Supervisors and School Board joint Successful Children and Youth Policy team, said he wished the task force had conducted its meetings publicly rather than in private,

and that they had been provided with more comprehensive program evaluation information on which to base their decisions.

According to the task force report, “Due to time constraints, the Budget Task Force was unable to review programmatic evaluations for every potential item and option.”

“How good that program is to a child, it’s not up to me, it’s up to the system to quantify it,” Becerra said. “Right now, I don’t have that information in front of me. If you’re going to cut your own family budget like this, I think there’d be a divorce in my family real quick.”

Springfield District Supervisor Pat Herrity sent out a statement on the day of Garza’s presentation, also critical the task force failed to review the school’s supplemental retirement system, outsourcing or the “functions of the many ‘teachers’ that do not spend time in the classroom.”

“The School Budget Task Force missed the mark,” Herrity said in the statement.

The task force report did explain that employee compensation, health insurance and retirement are among items being reviewed and studied, so they weren’t included in the online budget tool.

Kimberly Adams, president and task force representative for the Fairfax Education Association, did vote, and said her organization is “not supportive of the majority of

the recommendations as they stand now.”

Adams said the whole task force objective being focused on what to cut rather than where else to make up revenue was “hard to hear” from the perspective of educators.

“But you have to cut \$50 million out of the system, they have to find it somewhere,” Adams said. “We have to pick the best bad choices out of that list. Nothing very palatable. Raising fees for students is not something I want to see happen, but is it a less impactful way to cut money out of the budget?”

Matt Haley, who was appointed to the task force by School Board member Jane Strauss (Dranesville) and chosen to chair the group by Garza, said the meetings were kept private to encourage more open discussion by task force members.

“We felt it was important for them to be able to share how they felt and what was feasible, possible, without being questioned on every statement by their constituents,” said Haley, a retired strategy consultant with Accenture.

Haley said that no program evaluation information in existence was withheld from the task force. “There was no less data available to us than is available to the School Board or Board of Supervisors,” he said. “We looked at everything that’s been studied. We had hundreds of questions fed through a staff answered for us. We have a lot more detailed information than just about any group has had in the past, though it is possible more analysis could be done.”

Adams agreed she would like to see more evaluative data in the future. “We had to assume every program is doing what it’s supposed to do, meeting their goals,” she said.

Garza will make her formal budget presentation to the School Board in January 2016. The School Board is scheduled to make their final decision on the proposed budget and vote at the May 26, 2016 meeting.

FOR GARZA’S PRESENTATION and the full report from the task force, visit the Fairfax County Public Schools online document-sharing program at www.boarddocs.com/vsba/fairfax/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=A3KSVY653B27.

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The holidays are about giving, and giving thanks. The holidays are about children and family. The holidays are about sharing, about joy. The holidays are about being thankful and about faith and appreciation. The holidays are about alleviating suffering for others.

Northern Virginia is among the wealthiest areas in the country, and many if not most of us go through our usual routines without encountering evidence of needy families among us.

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- ❖ **Cornerstones**, 11150 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 210, Reston, serving Reston and Herndon. 571-323-9555, www.cornerstonesva.org. Nonprofit providing support and advocacy for those in need of food, shelter, affordable housing, quality childcare, and other human services. Programs and services include the Embry Rucker Community Shelter, Emergency Food Pantry, Hypothermia Prevention Program, Thanksgiving Food Drive, Gifts for Kids and annual Coat Drive. Sign up this week to give Gifts for Kids, Alacia Earley at 571.323.9568 or alacia.earley@cornerstonesva.org. Hunter Mill District Winter Coat Closet distributed over 5,500 winter coats and jackets last winter, plus over 4,000 hats, gloves, mittens and scarves to individuals and families in need of winter gear. Bring coat donations to the North County Governmental Building, 1801 Cameron Glen Drive, Reston, VA 20190 through Feb. 29, 2016, 24 hours a day.
- ❖ **SHARE** of McLean operates a food pantry; provides assistance to families to avoid eviction, keep utilities on and meet other needs in a crisis; provided gift cards and holiday presents to over 230 needy families, including 650 household members, last holiday season. Donate online or contact 703-229-1414. www.SHAREofMcLean.org. info@shareofmclean.org.

EDITORIAL

But more than 51,000 children who attend Fairfax County Public Schools are poor enough to receive free or subsidized meals, a significant measure of poverty. That's 28 percent of students in Fairfax County Public Schools.

In Arlington more than 31 percent of the students are poor enough to receive free or subsidized meals; that's 7,749 students at last count.

In Alexandria, 8,664 students are poor enough to receive free or subsidized meals. That's 59 percent of the 14,671 students enrolled.

These are children who are living in families who may be on the brink of homelessness, families who must choose between medical bills, car repair, heat and food. These are children who may not be sure that they will have a meal between the meals they get in school. School holidays can bring uncertainty and hunger, a far cry from the celebrations, gifts and plenty that we associate with Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Hundreds of homeless students attend the public schools, and their needs are greater.

There are literally hundreds, probably thousands, of ways to give locally this season. Here are a few ideas. We will rerun this list again during the holiday, so let us know what we have missed.

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

- ❖ **Alternative House** — Abused and Homeless Children's Refuge, 2100 Gallows Road, Vienna, 703-506-9191. Now have a new program to help young people who are homeless while still in high school and who don't have the support of a parent or guardian. Requests for food and clothing are up more than 50 percent. www.thealternativehouse.org.
- ❖ **LINK**, serving Herndon, Chantilly, Loudoun and more, needs contributions of food, coats and holiday toys for children, plus volunteers. More than 4,000 adults and children have signed up for help with Thanksgiving and Christmas meals. 703-437-1776, www.linkagainsthunger.org.
- ❖ **Herndon-Reston FISH** (For Immediate Sympathetic Help), 336 Victory Drive, Herndon, 703-391-0105, <http://herndonrestonfish.org>
- ❖ **Committee for Helping Others (CHO)**, Vienna, organized in 1969 by a group of churches and individuals in the Dunn Loring, Merrifield, Oakton, Vienna community to provide simple, loving charity to those in need. Last year 450 children had a special Christmas through the annual Christmas Store. Collecting gently used jackets and bikes, new toys, gift cards for teens, and food gift cards. Drop gently used bikes off at the Vienna Presbyterian 10 a.m.-2 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 28. On Friday, Dec.

11, bring new, unwrapped toys for children ages 1-12, gift cards for teens, and food gift cards. Volunteers needed Saturday, Dec. 12, we to help clients shop at Vienna Presbyterian Church, call at 703-281-7614 and leave a message in box #1. <http://www.cho-va.com>.

- ❖ **Northern Virginia Family Service**. Mail check or Shoppers Food Warehouse gift card to Northern Virginia Family Service, ATTN: Operation Turkey, 10455 White Granite Drive, Suite 100, Oakton, VA 22124. Gifting for Families was able to bring some extra holiday cheer to 2,122 children in Northern Virginia last year. Monetary contributions and online donations help the most. www.nvfs.org. Contact Pam Boyle at pboyle@nvfs.org or 571-748-2537.
- ❖ **Touching Heart** in Herndon is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to educate children to have giving hearts. <http://www.touchingheart.com>, 703-901-7355.
- ❖ **Assistance League of Northern Virginia** is an all-volunteer organization that clothes, feeds, educates and nurtures those in need focusing five of the neediest elementary schools. Volunteers and donors are always needed. Contact ALNorthernVA@yahoo.com or see www.northernvirginia.assistanceleague.org.

More Support Needed for Runaway, Homeless Youth

BY JUDITH DITTMAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
ALTERNATIVE HOUSE



November is National Runaway Prevention Month and The National Runaway Safeline estimates are that nationally 1.3 to 1.7 million runaway, thrown away and homeless youth live on the street. Fairfax, even with its excellent schools and supports for young people, is not immune from this problem. Alternative House, a Fairfax nonprofit organization, provides emergency shelter and counseling to more than 150 young people each year. The Fairfax County Public Schools homeless liaison's office reports that there were 324 homeless youth under the age of 18 who didn't have the support of a parent or guardian during the last school year.

About Alternative House

The Alternative House, a Northern Virginia nonprofit organization, provides emergency shelter, transitional living programs and community based supports for homeless, runaway, abused and at-risk young people. Alternative House has provided services for young people for more than 43 years.

Why do young people run away or become homeless? They run for many different reasons. Sometimes young people are experiencing "typical" teenage behavior. They get mad at their family and leave home usually going to a friend's house. But even this can be dangerous. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children estimates that one in six endangered runaways is a victim of sex trafficking. It's unfortunately too easy for even a suburban teen to be sucked into this horror when they've left home.

Many young people are fleeing

family conflict or an abusive situation. According to the National Runaway Safeline, 47 percent report conflict in their home, 80 percent of runaway girls report being physically or sexually abused and 43 percent of runaways have experienced physical abuse. These are young people who believe the street is safer than home and more than 50 percent of youth who are on the streets are there because their parents told them to leave or didn't care if they left.

Once they have left home young people are at higher risk to become victims of sex trafficking, and assault. Young people are simply not

prepared to fend for themselves. It's not surprising that mental health issues increase significantly with 32 percent of runaway and homeless teens reporting having attempted suicide.

Unfortunately, there are few resources for these young people. Here in Fairfax we have Alternative House. It is the only emergency shelter for teenagers in Northern Virginia. There is only one other shelter like it in the entire state of Virginia and that one is far away in Virginia Beach. In the past 15 years four other Northern Virginia emergency shelters for teenagers have closed. Fairfax needs more housing and supports for our runaway and homeless young people.

In addition to working to provide more safe shelters for those youth who have runaway or are

SEE ALTERNATIVE, PAGE 9

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NEWS



It's "hell week" this week for actors and crew, but Langley students live for the performances they give to the community.

Langley High Presents 'Almost, Maine'

FROM PAGE 5

"It gets very hot back there. I was back there for 20 minutes and I felt like I ran a marathon," she said.

"This was definitely one of the scenes I thought was very funny, just crack up," she said.

Goodson calls her scene serious, but the serious scenes transition to others that are "hilarious."

"You'll laugh your butt off, as well," she said. "You'll be laughing, you'll be crying, you'll be smiling, maybe all at the same time."

IT'S HELL WEEK for the actors, actresses and tech crew, meaning they rehearse each night until 9 p.m. or later on top of continuing to be students for a full day of school, family members, athletes, friends.

"We're a community, we're a family, we all feed off each other, we all get closer because we're all going through the same things. We say it's a lot of work, but when it's done all we all want is to get into another show," said Paul.

They call their teacher, Valerie Karasek, Mrs. K. "She says sometimes the scene will find itself in a different way than it did the night before. She's always looking for us to play off each other. Sometimes the stakes will be higher than they were the night before," said Paul.

"It feels like you went there, yourself, as the character," she said. "It feels, you gained a part of yourself, you lost a part of yourself."

"IT'S FUNNY. We have some romance action, fun for the whole family. It should be interesting to watch," said Haydn.

"The characters are very real," said Follin. "John Cariani told us that the characters are based off people he knew. Even so you say, I've been in a situation like that, maybe not as extreme as some of them, but there is something in every scene where you can totally relate to that character."

"You can go see a movie or you can come see your friends be the stars," said Bugge.

"Come see the show," said Follin.

Alternative House

FROM PAGE 8

homeless, there are things we can do as individuals and as a community to provide the support young people need to stay safe. Additional counseling resources can help families learn to better communicate. Since family conflict is one of the primary reasons young people leave home this can have a huge impact. Studies also show that

increased mental health supports and substance abuse treatment options for both youth and families help prevent runaway episodes.

Our young people deserve to have caring adults and a safe place to stay so they can grow to their full potential. If we can create this, we can prevent the tragedy that faces young people who run away and become homeless.

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HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT, DINING & GIFT GUIDE



House 1 on Annual Holiday Homes Tour.



House 2 on Annual Holiday Homes Tour.



House 3 on Annual Holiday Homes Tour.



House 4 on Annual Holiday Homes Tour.

Annual Holiday Homes Tour Moves to West McLean

The annual Holiday Homes Tour of the McLean Woman's Club moves to west McLean this year, with tour houses in three choice neighborhoods: McLean Hundred, Woodside Estates and Millwood. The three neighborhoods are distinguished by large, elegant houses on half- to one-acre lots and are easily accessible from Lewinsville Road and other major arteries. The homes will be festively decorated in accordance with owners' wishes, and music of the season will be featured in some homes or nearby. Set for Thursday, Dec. 3, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., the tour will coincide with a boutique, also sponsored by the Woman's Club, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., at Historic Pleasant Grove Church, 8641 Lewinsville Road, McLean. Tickets for the tour are available at Mesmeralda's Ltd., of McLean, 1339 Chain Bridge Road; Karin's Florist Inc., 527 Maple Ave., East, Vienna; and Great Dogs of Great Falls, 9859 Old Georgetown Road, and also will be available at the tour homes and the boutique on tour day. The cost is \$25 before Dec. 3 (the day of the tour) and \$30 on Dec. 3. There is no admission charge for the boutique.

Tour Houses

Three of the tour homes are in McLean Hundred and Woodside Estates, subdivisions off the western end of Lewinsville Road. The fourth home, in Millwood, is just off Swinks Mill Road, which runs from Lewinsville to Old Dominion Drive and ends at Georgetown Pike. A map of the tour area can be found in the tour booklet/ticket. Ample street parking is available near each of the houses. For ease of reference, the homes are designated Houses 1 through 4 here and in the tour booklet/ticket. Specific addresses also appear in the tour booklet.

House 1, at the south corner of Mayhurst Blvd. and Lewinsville Road heading west, and House 2, on Woodhurst Blvd., a left turn off Mayhurst Blvd., are both in McLean Hundred. They are large, elegant homes of conservative design, built in the late 1990's, but are strikingly different. House 1 has a light-colored exterior with beautiful but re-



Historic Pleasant Grove Church will host Holiday Homes Tour Boutique.

strained landscaping and looks out on a busy intersection, while House 2 has a long, red-brick exterior shaded by large, old trees and sits on a cul-de-sac with a small park. House 1 has undergone major changes, including the addition of a bedroom, a second kitchen, extra fireplaces and a new walkout base-

ment. The home contains many antique furnishings and rugs, custom draperies and fine artwork. House 2 has also undergone major alterations, in part to create a greater sense of interior space with the addition and expansion of multiple windows and doors. The foyer and first-floor rooms were extensively

remodeled and are said to suggest contemporary California style. The home reflects an eclectic taste in original art, including photography by the hobbyist owner.

House 3 is in Woodside Estates, accessed by Woodside Drive, which branches off the north side of Lewinsville Road about a half-mile west of House 1. House 3 has a large, impressive, brick-and-stone façade and is sited on an attractively landscaped 1.2-acre lot. The façade uses conventional architectural elements in an unusual way, and the resulting shape seems complemented by the undulating landscaping. This is another case of a newer home (built in 2005) being expanded and augmented. Additional bedrooms and baths were created, for a total of six bedrooms and six full and three half-baths. A sizeable recreation room was built, a 368-square-foot swimming pool was added in the back and a pool house was constructed. The owners are fortunate to be near Woodside Lake, a private, seven-acre, spring-fed pond, where they have enjoyed fishing and boating over the years.

House 4 is on Carlton Place, just off Swinks Mill Road. (Follow Lewinsville Road west from Route 123, turn right on Swinks Mill Road, and go north, crossing Old Dominion Drive, to a left turn at Carlton Place. The house is the second one on the right). It is perhaps the largest of the tour houses, with over 15,000 finished square feet on four levels. With a symmetrical façade but an unusual window and roof configuration, the home can be said to be "contemporary." There is a two-story atrium foyer, steps on either side of a fountain to an upper lobby and stairs to the next level. The main level also has a large lobby and a formal living room and dining room. An elevator serves three levels. The home has five bedrooms, three of which are master suites. There is a large recreation room with a full kitchen and a 1,250-square-foot outdoor pool with an adjacent full bath.

Homes Tour Boutique

The Homes Tour Boutique will be held at Historic Pleasant Grove Church, 8641 Lewinsville Road, McLean, about a quarter-

mile west of House 1. It will feature holiday items, a variety of gifts, jewelry, scarves, handbags, drinks and desserts, baked goods, tour tickets and a silent auction. The restored church dates from the late 1800s and follows the Carpenter Gothic style used for Virginia country churches. A museum dedicated to the founders is on the lower level and displays a unique collection of late 19th- and early 20th-century household furnishings, tools, photographs and memorabilia. Off-street parking is available.

All proceeds of the Homes Tour and the Homes Tour

Boutique will be donated to local charities and nonprofits, including Alternative House, Fisher House, the Wounded Warrior program, Capital Caring, Share, Inc., the McLean Symphony, the McLean Project for the Arts and the McLean Volunteer Fire Department, as well as used for scholarships and education. The honorary host for both events will be Bill DuBose, McLean financial planner and advisor.

For more information call 703-556-0197 or visit www.mcleanwc.org.

—LAURA SHERIDAN

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Enough with all the snowflake ties and reindeer sweaters, too. This year, there are lots of great ways to give *and give back at the same time*. Now you can donate to any of these Fairfax County nonprofits in honor of anyone on your gift list. It makes shopping easy and offers you a nice tax deduction. But best of all, it helps those organizations succeed in bringing goods and services to those who need them most at this special time of year. Learn more at givefairfax.net

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HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT AND GIFT GUIDE

The Gift of Quality Cigars

McLean Cigars PG Boutique offers cigars, fine pens, lighters and leather goods.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE CONNECTION

For holiday gift-giving for the man who has already everything, McLean Cigars PG Boutique, located at 1429 Center Street in McLean, offers top-of-the-line cigars, fine pens, lighters and leather goods. Owned by Paul B.K. Garmirian, Ph.D., 72, and his son, Kevork, 39, both of McLean, the store carries under 50 brands of quality cigars, including their own high-end PG products of cigars.

Since the holidays are fast-approaching, Paul Garmirian is recommending a few gift ideas: "When people come in, if it's a casual gift we recommend a four-pack of cigars for around \$40-\$50, and an ash-tray," he said.

"If it's a semi-formal gift, depending on the budget, we go for a box of 10 cigars and maybe a lighter up to \$100."

For a more formal gift, to say, a visiting dignitary, he recommends a top-of-the-line box of 25 cigars that goes for \$300 to \$600; and a 22-karat gold lighter that ranges from \$1,500 to \$3,000. In addition, he recommends French-manufactured pipes for \$139, and humidors that range from \$50 to \$3,000.

and men's bags from DuPont, for \$1,650 to \$2,100; cigar cutters from England for \$20; PG ashtrays from Belgium for \$100; and PG lighters from France, \$550 to \$3,000 (his own models are \$1,500 to \$1,750). They also carry imported high-end torch lighters in the \$200 range; and DuPont pens from France in the \$300 to \$600 range.

A retired professor of international politics and international marketing, father Paul formerly worked in real estate and has lived in McLean for 35 years. In 1990, he published the book, "The Gourmet Guide to Cigars," which is now in its 11th printing.

Son Kevork graduated from McLean High School and studied marketing at JMU before coming back to work with his dad importing cigars, as well as distributing his book and accessories. "I realized it would be nice to move our office from our warehouse by Dulles Airport into an existing tobacco shop," he said.

Paul calls the store that he opened in 2004 an educational center that caters to smokers who are both amateurs and seasoned. "We do everything we can to educate, to inform, and to share information with those who enjoy cigars," he said. "But the purpose is never to encourage anyone to smoke. The whole concept is to deal with established smokers and edu



PHOTO BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION

Paul B.K. Garmirian, Ph.D., with son Kevork at the McLean Cigars PG Boutique located at 1429 Center Street in McLean.

THE STORE also sells high-end executive briefcases

SEE CIGARS, PAGE 13



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McLean to Welcome Holidays with WinterFest Parade

Parade set for Dec. 6 at downtown McLean.

On Sunday, Dec. 6, McLean residents will welcome in the holidays as more than 50 entries proceed down Old Chain Bridge Road for the seventh annual WinterFest parade. The stage will be set in the Langley Shopping Center, with Peggy Fox from WUSA Channel 9, again calling the parade. Parade entries will begin at Fleetwood Road and proceed down Old Chain Bridge Road to Elm Street, if in a vehicle or to Curran Street if marching. Old Chain Bridge Road will be closed to all traffic from 2:15 to 5:30 p.m. on the day of the parade.

Pre-parade entertainment begins at 2:30 p.m. and will be provided by Bob Rosenbaum on the keyboard, and choruses from Springhill Elementary School, Franklin Sherman, Kent Gardens and Westgate Elementary. Food vendors will be available in the Langley Shopping Center parking lot



CONNECTION FILE PHOTOS

Members of the McLean Old Firehouse Teen Center march in the 2013 parade.

and will include Mama's Donut Bites, Crepe Love and California Sliders. Giant Foods will donate warm apple cider and hot coffee in the volunteer tent.

The parade steps off at 3:30 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 6. Follow updates and more about McLean WinterFest at www.mcleanwinterfest.org.

Cigars with History

FROM PAGE 12

cate new smokers."

With over 1,500 brands of cigars in the U.S., and offering under 50 brands at his store, Paul said his idea was not to carry something that is available in every tobacco shop "because the choices that we make is a projection of what we are, and not so much what sells at other stores."

"I think a lot of cigar smokers intrinsically trust our word and our recommendations, which sets us apart from other stores," said Kevork. "We put our stamp of approval on our products."

Paul added: "We have products that fit every pocketbook within the context of quality of that particular product."

THEY SPECIALIZE in their own brand of PG Cigars from the Dominican Republic. Other popular brands they carry, after the PG, is Imperio Cubano, Padron, and Fuente. They also purchase cigars from Nicaragua and Honduras, which sell for \$5 to \$30 per cigar. Some of the high-end cigars are vintage that have been aging since 1991.

Paul, who has 55 years of experience with cigars, said that aging improves the flavor and texture of some tobaccos. "If the tobaccos get along fine, they are going to produce a harmonious result," he said. "If they clash due to a bad blending, it's going to reflect that in the cigar.... Like grapes and wine, they are going to intermarry and the result can be sensational."

Their store manager, Emile Nassar, has 22-plus years of experience and is more of a cigar advisor. "Many times when a customer comes in, Emile knows what they smoke," said Paul. "If somebody says they want a medium cigar, we've classified the cigars from 1 to 10, with 10 as very strong, and 5 as medium; there is also a 2, which is extremely mild."

"So, in addition to the strength level, we try to match the flavor profile to what people are looking for flavor-wise." That could mean nutty, floral, smooth, strong or rough.



Paul B.K. Garmirian with store manager, Emile Nassar, at the McLean Cigars PG Boutique located at 1429 Center Street in McLean.

PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION



Boxes of PG Cigars, Family Reserve Four-Packs from 1999 to 2001, from the PG Gourmet Series.

Incidentally, Paul added that there are a total of 200 stores in the U.S. that carry their PG Cigars brand of products.

McLean Cigars PG Boutique is located at 1429 Center Street in McLean. Call 703-848-8095 or visit the website at www.mcleancigars.com.

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HOLIDAY CALENDAR

ONGOING

Meadowlark Gardens' Winter Walk of Lights. Nov. 14-Jan. 4. Meadowlark, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. A half-a-million colorful LED lights span the lakeside and gardens of Meadowlark Botanical Gardens off Beulah Road in nostalgic and fairytale scenes of the holiday season. <http://winterwalkoflights.com/>.

SATURDAY/NOV. 14

Nutcracker Storytime. 10:30-11:30 a.m. Barnes and Noble Tysons Corner, 7851 Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Costumed dancers from BalletNova Center for Dance read the Nutcracker to children followed by a mini-performance, crafts, and the chance to meet the dancers. Free.

FRIDAY/NOV. 20

Tysons Corner Center Tree Lighting. 6 p.m. Tysons Corner Center, 1961 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Tysons Corner Center will host their tree lighting ceremony on The Plaza emceed by Alison Victoria of HGTV's Kitchen Crashers featuring Loo and Chilli from 97.1 WASH-FM and an intimate holiday concert by American Idol's, Elliot Yamin from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Stay till the end of the show as special guest, Santa Claus himself, will make an appearance after the concert with a very special entrance featuring some of his favorite reindeer.

SATURDAY/NOV. 21

36th Annual Christmas Bazaar. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. St. John's Academy Gym, 6422 Linway Terrace, McLean. Over 30 vendors, Live music all day including McLean High School orchestra and Bach to Rock, Bratwursts, beer, bake sale, and Lobster Maine-ia. Free admission. Womenscouncilofsjb@gmail.com.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/NOV. 21-22

The Enchanted Forest. Check website for activity times. The Westin Tysons Corner, 7801 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Fundraiser presented by the Junior League of Northern Virginia. Decorated holiday trees for silent auction throughout the weekend, live entertainment, a model train display, hands-on activities for children, a festival holiday marketplace and An Enchanted Affair evening gala. Visit www.jlnv.org/the-enchanted-forest for tickets and information.

TUESDAY/NOV. 24

Holiday Crafts for Children. 5:30-9 p.m. Meadowlark, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. Visit the craft table and make a free craft to decorate for the holidays. <http://winterwalkoflights.com>. 703-255-3631.

SUNDAY/NOV. 29

Breakfast with Santa. 9 a.m., 10 a.m., noon. Wildfire, Tysons Galleria, 2001 International Drive, McLean. Chilli, morning show co-host on 97.1 WASH-FM at iHeartMedia, will be Wildfire's special guest host for the event. In addition, children will get to visit with Santa and receive a special gift bag. \$15 for children under 12, \$20 for adults. Reserve at



"A Christmas Carol" with a kid-friendly twist comes to The Alden in McLean for a two-show performance on Saturday, Dec. 12.

703-442-9110.

THURSDAY/DEC. 3

Holiday Homes Tour. 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Lewinsville Road, McLean. The four homes are all large, elegant houses on half- to one-acre lots and are easily accessible from Lewinsville Road and other local arteries. Each house will be decorated with the holidays in mind and will highlight family life in McLean. www.mcleanwc.org.

Face Painting. 5:30-9 p.m. Meadowlark, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. Children will enjoy festive snowflakes, snowmen and other holiday face painting images. Free. <http://winterwalkoflights.com>. 703-255-3631.

FRIDAY/DEC. 4

Happy Holidays from Rocknoceros. 10:30 a.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. Happy Holidays from Rocknoceros is a musical "Norman Rockwell" that captures the essence of the procession of holidays that punctuate each year with a festive exclamation point. \$5. www.jamminjava.com.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/DEC. 4-5

Annual Renaissance Feaste. 7 p.m. Capital Church, 10233 Leesburg Pike, Vienna. Journey back to Merrie Olde England for a festive evening of Renaissance-style dining and musical entertainment. Enter the Greate Halle for a spectacular holiday celebration featuring costumed servers, jesters, minstrels, musicians and the Langley Madrigals. Reservations required. Go to <http://www.langleychorus.com/monthly-calendar/> to find out how to reserve your spot.

SATURDAY/DEC. 5

Wolf Trap Holiday Sing-A-Long. 4

p.m. Filene Center, Wolf Trap, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. This annual musical celebration hosts a performance by the United States Marine Band and a Sing-A-Long of Christmas carols and Hanukkah songs with choir and vocal groups from the metropolitan Washington area. Bring a candle and join the tradition of exiting the Filene Center with a candlelight procession during the last verse of "Silent Night." Free admission. For more information, visit <http://www.wolftrap.org> or call 703-255-1900.

Christmas Bazaar. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Epiphany United Methodist Church, 1014 Country Club Lane, Vienna. Handmade Wreaths, See's Candy, silent auction and more. 703-938-3494. www.epiphany.com.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 5-6

Great Falls HolidayFest. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday, 10 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Great Falls Grange and the Old Schoolhouse, 9818 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Shopping, art, food, lights, crafts. Noon-4 p.m. Santa will be at the Old Schoolhouse for pictures. On Sunday, 4:30-6:30 p.m. will be the Celebration of Lights, which will have hot cider and cocoa, Yule log, choral groups, petting zoo, pony rides, live nativity scene and the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus by antique fire truck. Town Christmas tree will be lit. Free. www.GreatFallsStudios.com.

THURSDAY/DEC. 10

Face Painting. 5:30-9 p.m. Meadowlark, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. Children will enjoy festive snowflakes, snowmen and other holiday face painting images. Free. <http://winterwalkoflights.com>. 703-255-3631.



From left, Tonya Beckman, and Kelsey Meiklejohn in "Harvey" at 1st Stage. The show runs through December 20, 2015 in Tysons Corner. Photo by Teresa Castracane.

CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

Weekly Storytime. Wednesday and Saturday. 11 a.m. Barnes & Noble, 7851 L Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Themes and Titles vary. Free admission.

"Harvey." Check for show times. Nov. 12-Dec. 20. 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, this beloved classic is a treat for the whole family. Veta Simmons and her daughter Myrtle Mae have just moved back into town and are making quite a splash on the social scene. Gatherings and engagements abound as Myrtle Mae peruses for a viable suitor. \$15-\$30. www.1ststagetysons.org. 703-854-1856.

Meadowlark Gardens' Winter Walk of Lights. Nov. 14-Jan. 4. A half-a-million colorful LED lights span the lakeside and gardens of Meadowlark Botanical Gardens off Beulah Road in nostalgic and fairytale scenes of the holiday season. <http://winterwalkoflights.com/>.

THURSDAY/NOV. 19

Vietnam Veterans of America Inc. Chapter 227 Meeting. 7:30 p.m. Neighbor's Restaurant, 262D Cedar Lane, Vienna. Col. Ben Buckley, USA (Ret.), chapter member, will discuss "General Grant's Overland Campaign in Virginia."

Funny Photo Night. 5:30-9 p.m. Meadowlark, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. You provide your camera and smiles, and we will provide the props and staff to take your photo. <http://winterwalkoflights.com>. 703-255-3631.

FRIDAY/NOV. 20

McLean Art Society Meeting. 10 a.m.-noon. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Sue Moses, a watercolorist whose work is defined by strong values, light and shadow and emphasis on composition, will be the featured artist. She will be doing a painting demonstration. Guests are welcome. 703-790-0123.

Nature Night. 5:30-9:30 p.m. Meadowlark, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. Visit with the naturalist and his reptile and amphibian friends. <http://winterwalkoflights.com>. 703-255-3631.

Tysons Corner Center Tree Lighting. 6 p.m. Tysons Corner

Center, 1961 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Tysons Corner Center will host their tree lighting ceremony on The Plaza emceed by Alison Victoria of HGTV's Kitchen Crashers featuring Loo and Chilli from 97.1 WASH-FM and an intimate holiday concert by American Idol's, Elliot Yamin from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Stay till the end of the show as special guest, Santa Claus himself, will make an appearance after the concert with a very special entrance featuring some of his favorite reindeer.

SATURDAY/NOV. 21

Filene Center Backstage Tour. 2 p.m. Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts, 1551 Trap Road, Vienna. Stand on a world-class stage, learn how a theater runs, and get a sneak peek at where the stars get ready. Tours are limited to 30 participants. 703-255-1827 to RSVP or for additional information.

36th Annual Christmas Bazaar. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. St. John's Academy Gym, 6422 Linway Terrace, McLean. Over 30 vendors, Live music all day including McLean High School orchestra and Bach to Rock, Bratwursts, beer, bake sale, and Lobster Maine-ia. Free admission. Womenscouncilofsjb@gmail.com

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/NOV. 21-22

The Enchanted Forest. Check website for activity times. The Westin Tysons Corner, 7801 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Fundraiser presented by the Junior League of Northern Virginia. Decorated holiday trees for silent auction throughout the weekend, live entertainment, a model train display, hands-on activities for children, a festival holiday marketplace and An Enchanted Affair evening gala. Visit www.jlnv.org/the-enchanted-forest for tickets and information.

SUNDAY/NOV. 22

Japanese American Care Fund Annual Bazaar. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Patriot Hall, Vienna American Legion Post 180, 330 North Center St., Vienna. Japanese books including manga, locally grown Japanese vegetables, and various donated items will be sold. Authentic Japanese foods will be sold as take-away packages and served at the food court. The Embassy of Japan will be on site to accept overseas

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 15

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 14

voter registration from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Medical consultation desk by Dr. Tsunewoka. \$2 admission. Free to children under 12.

www.jacarefund.org. 703-256-5223.
Amadeus Orchestra with the Silver-Garburg Piano Duo. 4 p.m. St. Luke Catholic Church, 7001 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Silver Garburg Piano Duo will play Vivaldi, Bach and Mendelssohn. \$30. Free to 17 and under. http://www.amadeusconcerts.com. Hobie.Audet@comcast.net.

TUESDAY/NOV. 24

Holiday Crafts for Children. 5:30-9 p.m. Meadowlark, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. Visit the craft table and make a free craft to decorate for the holidays. http://winterwalkoflights.com. 703-255-3631.

WEDNESDAY/NOV. 25

7th Annual Pre-Thanksgiving Wine Tasting Extravaganza. Noon-6 p.m. The Vineyard, 1445 Laughlin Ave., McLean. Pouring 25-30 perfect wines for Thanksgiving dinner and the rest of the holiday season. Special discounts on all the wines being tasted, as well as special prizes throughout the day. Free. www.thevineyardva.com. 703-288-2970.

THURSDAY/NOV. 26

Wildfire Thanksgiving. 10:30 a.m.-8:30 p.m. Wildfire, Third floor, Tysons Galleria, 2001 International Drive, McLean. A special family style menu featuring spit roasted turkey and all the traditional Thanksgiving dishes. \$45.95 per person, \$19.95 for children 12 and under. Portion of the day's proceeds will be donated to Food for Others. 703-442-9110. www.wildfirerestaurant.com/mclean.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/NOV. 27-29.

33rd Annual Thanksgiving Art and Craft Show. Friday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Spring Hill RECenter, 1239 Spring Hill Road, McLean. Featuring original, handmade craft and artwork of approximately 80 local artists and artisans. \$5. www.nvhg.org.

SUNDAY/NOV. 29

Breakfast with Santa. 9 a.m., 10 a.m., noon. Wildfire, Tysons Galleria, 2001 International Drive, McLean. Chilli, morning show co-host on 97.1 WASH-FM at iHeartMedia, will be Wildfire's special guest host for the event. In addition, children will get to visit with Santa and receive a special gift bag. \$15 for children under 12, \$20 for adults. Reserve at 703-442-9110.

THURSDAY/DEC. 3

Holiday Homes Tour. 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Lewinsville Road, McLean. The four homes are all large, elegant houses on half- to one-acre lots and are easily accessible from Lewinsville Road and other local arteries. Each house will be decorated with the holidays in mind and will highlight family life in McLean. www.mcleanwc.org.

Face Painting. 5:30-9 p.m. Meadowlark, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. Children will enjoy festive snowflakes, snowmen and other holiday face painting images. Free. http://winterwalkoflights.com. 703-255-3631.

THURSDAY-SATURDAY/DEC. 3-5
"She Kills Monsters." 7:30 p.m.



Musicologist, humorist and jazz pianist John Eaton will share the history and harmonies of some favorite seasonal songs from the American Songbook at a special "Holiday Spectacular" on Saturday, Dec. 19 at The Alden.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Jane Getter Premonition performs at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna, on Monday, Dec. 14. She will be joined by Adam Holzman on keyboards (Miles Davis), Stu Hamm on bass (Steve Vai/Joe Satriani) John Mader on drums (Pat Benatar, Steve Miller) and guitarist Alex Skolnick (Ozzy Osbourne).

McLean High School, 1633 Davidson Road, McLean. TheatreMcLean, the recently renamed award-winning theatre department at McLean High School, launches its new season by entering into the fantasy role playing realm of Qui Nguyen's "She Kills Monsters." This show marks the first production directed by new theatre faculty members Chip Rome and Phillip Reid. \$12-\$15. Mature audiences. visit https://sites.google.com/site/theatremclean/

SATURDAY/DEC. 5

Holiday Open House. 1-4 p.m. Brightview, 10200 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Join the Brightview Great Falls community in ringing in the Winter Season! Enjoy the decorations, music, refreshments and good cheer.

Artist's Reception, Public Welcome. 3-6 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Former Corcoran docent Ralph Dashner describes the printmaking techniques that led to his 23-piece exhibit, "Truth and Beauty: Fine Art Prints in the Digital Age." The exhibit will be on display through December. Free. DashnerFineArts@gmail.com.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 5-6
Great Falls HolidayFest. 10 a.m.-5

p.m. Sunday, 10 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Great Falls Grange and the Old Schoolhouse, 9818 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Shopping, art, food, lights, crafts. Noon-4 p.m. Santa will be at the Old Schoolhouse for pictures. On Sunday, 4:30-6:30 p.m. will be the Celebration of Lights, which will have hot cider and cocoa, Yule log, choral groups, petting zoo, pony rides, live nativity scene and the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus by antique fire truck. Town Christmas tree will be lit. Free. www.GreatFallsStudios.com.

SUNDAY/DEC. 6

Calmus. 7:30 p.m. The Barns, Wolf Trap, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. Experience the German a capella quintet as they sing traditional and contemporary holiday music. Tickets: \$35. For more information, visit http://www.wolftrap.org or call 703-255-1900.

MONDAY/DEC. 7

Lowland Hum. 7:30 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. Indie-folk duo Lowland Hum have released their self-titled sophomore album. They were also recently featured on NPR's All Songs Considered, where the song "Olivia" was premiered. \$12. www.jamminjava.com.

IT IS A GOOD THING TO GIVE THANKS UNTO THE LORD - Psalm 92

Thanksgiving Day Service Thursday, Nov. 26, 10:30 A.M.

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Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday unless noted.

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11/25/2015 Celebrating Gratitude, Thanksgiving

DECEMBER

12/2/2015 Wellbeing

12/9/2015 .. Holiday Entertainment & Gift Guide II

12/9/2015 .. HomeLifeStyle; Home for the Holidays

12/16/2015 A+ Camps & Schools; Holiday
Entertainment & Gifts Pages

12/23/2015 Special Issue - Safe for the Holidays

12/30/2015 Children's Connection

JANUARY

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1/13/2016 HomeLifeStyle

Martin Luther King Jr. Day is Jan. 18

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SPORTS

Langley Volleyball Wins 6A North Region Championship

Saxons avenge conference tournament loss to Madison.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

Saxons sophomore setter Elena Shklyar stood in the Langley High School gymnasium following an August practice and shared the team's lofty goals for the 2015 season, which included the desire to win multiple titles.

Langley's first shot at a title arrived Nov. 5, but the Saxons fell flat and were swept by Madison in the Conference 6 championship match.

Nine days later, having already secured a state berth by beating Battlefield in the region semifinals, the Saxons had a second opportunity to win a championship and a chance for revenge against the Warhawks.

This time, Langley would leave with the first-place hardware.

The Saxons held off a late Warhawks rally in the fourth set to win 3-1 (25-17, 21-25, 25-23, 25-22) in the 6A North region championship match on Nov. 14 at Madison High School.

A kill by senior middle blocker Katie Sissler gave Langley match point at 24-18. Madison responded with four consecutive points to make things interesting before Saxons sophomore middle blocker Allison Franke provided the match-winning kill.

"We've been trying to do this all year and this has been our goal," Shklyar said. "Obviously, states is our next goal."

How did the Saxons go from getting swept by Madison in the conference final to beating the Warhawks in four sets on Saturday?



The Langley volleyball team won the 6A North region championship on Nov. 14 with a four-set victory over Madison.

"We had the right game plan in the conference (tournament), but we couldn't pass and ... they just weren't in it," Langley head coach Susan Shifflett said. "(We had) pretty much the same game plan tonight, but they were ready. You beat Oakton (in the region quarterfinals), you beat Battlefield (in the semifinals); they've been on a tear lately and they were ready."

OFFENSIVELY, Langley had a balanced attack, with four players producing at least eight kills. Sissler led the Saxons with 12 kills, and Shklyar, Franke and senior outside hitter Jess Donaldson each had eight.

Defensively, Langley's tall front row made life difficult for Madison hitters.

"They really improved on their blocking in just a week-and-a-half time and that's all

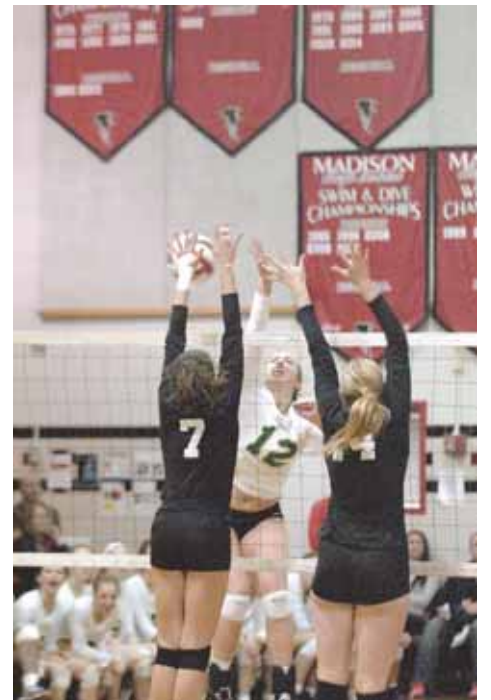
them," Shifflett said. "... I didn't do anything different."

Franke finished with two solo blocks and five block assists. Senior outside hitter Kristian Stanford had two solo blocks, Shklyar had one solo block and five block assists, Sissler had one solo block and two block assists, and junior right side Raya Mufti had five block assists.

"When we get the block, it not only affects the front row, it affects the back row," Franke said. "For us, a lot of times the block will get us more excited than the hit just because we stopped them."

Donaldson was named MVP of the region tournament. Franke and Sissler were named to the all-tournament team.

Saturday's region championship was Langley's second in three years. After los-



Langley sophomore Elena Shklyar finished with eight kills against Madison during the 6A North region championship match.

ing to Yorktown in the 2013 conference semifinals, the Saxons bounced back to win a region title and state championship.

LANGLEY hosted 6A South region runner-up First Colonial in the state semifinals on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. The 6A state championship match is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 20, at VCU's Siegel Center in Richmond.

"I love to win, so it's always good," Shifflett said after winning the region title. "... I want states, so I'm excited, but I'm done now. It's time for states."

McLean High Athletes to Play at Colleges



PHOTO BY NATALIE LUU

The following McLean High School student-athletes signed a National Letter of Intent this week to play a sport on scholarship in college (from left): Bella Norton, Indiana University (softball); Jon Clines, Virginia Military Institute (baseball); Delaney Gallagher, San Diego State University (diving); and Karynne Baker, Ohio University (field hockey).



PHOTO BY MIPAD

The following McLean High School student-athletes also signed a National Letter of Intent this week to play a sport on scholarship in college (from left): Isabell Wyerman, Boston College (crew); Kaela Wilbur, Clemson University (crew); Autumn Brenner, College of William and Mary (volleyball); and Conor Grammes, Xavier University (baseball).

Crafting Perfect Admissions Essays

Local educators offer advice on how to write effective independent school admissions essays.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Ginger Wilner spent almost every morning last month hovering over her MacBook Pro, at a window seat in Starbucks, scouring a series of essays. She was looking for fatal mistakes. Errors ranging from comma splices to illogical arguments could torpedo weeks of late-nights spent in front of a computer. The words weren't hers, though. They were those of her 13-year-old daughter, who is in the midst of applying for a slot at one of the Washington-region's independent schools.

"I haven't spent this much time proofreading since I was in college," said Wilner, an Arlington mother of two. "She's a good writer and put a lot of effort into these essays. But that's probably true of the other type-A students who are applying to these schools, too."

That's right: 'Tis the season for independent school admissions. Families are scrambling to meet the application deadlines for local private schools. In addition to school tours, open houses, applicant interviews and standardized tests, many independent schools require prospective students to demonstrate their writing and critical thinking abilities in the form of an essay.

"It ... gives the applicant another opportunity, beyond the interview, to share more about their passions, interests, character and creativity," said Lisa Knight, director of admission and financial aid at Flint Hill School in Oakton.

The essay is a chance for the applicant to give the admissions committee a glimpse of the qualities that distinguish them from hundreds or even thousands of other students who seek one of a handful of slots at a school.

"We hope that the students will reveal something about themselves," said Clare M. Dame, director of enrollment management at Randolph-Macon Academy in Front Royal. "We want to get to know them and what motivates them. Hopefully some of their personalities will come through as they write about their goals or the person they admire."

Admissions officers at independent schools that are considered academically rigorous are looking for well-read students who have a solid command of grammar and punctuation. "As we are reviewing ... essays, we are assessing their ability to write," said Dame. "As a college prep school, we expect every student to go from Randolph Macon Academy to a four-year college. In order to succeed ... a student needs to know how to write fairly well."

In addition to writing abilities, admissions committees review applicants' aptitudes for analytical thinking, creativity and intellectual curiosity. "Are they making a thorough and well-structured argument?" asks Mark Reford, D.Phil., of BASIS Independent School in McLean. "How intellectually resourceful are they? How do these kids think and are they able to express themselves thoughtfully and carefully and clearly in writing?"

"They should come ... with an ability to express arguments clearly and concisely," he continued. "Over the long term, what that involves is an education where the students are used to investigating topics where there isn't a right or wrong answer. They have to be used to thinking through a problem. What's important is the quality of their analysis."

Admissions officials look for applicants who demonstrate excitement about attending a particular school. "The ... essay gives us an idea of why they are considering our school," said Dame. "It helps us to know them and what motivates them to come to a college-prep, Air Force JROTC school."

Applicants should use specific examples that show they understand the school's culture and environment and how they would fit into it. "In writing why they want to come to Randolph-Macon Academy, they need to be able to talk about the school itself so that we understand that it is an essay written specific to our programs, and not just a generic essay generated for all the schools that they might be considering," said Dame.

Admissions officers can spot essays for which applicants have received an abundance of help. Such assistance can become particularly apparent when a student's application includes a writing sample from a standardized test, such as the Secondary School Admission Test (SSAT), which requires students to organize and write essays in a limited amount of time without help.

"We really value the essay from the SSAT because you're seeing their thought process and how they express themselves in a first draft," said Terri Collins, director of admissions, Oakcrest School in McLean.

Applicants should not eschew all assistance, however. In fact, school officials encourage applicants to get help proofreading their essays. Many families actually seek guidance from an independent educational consultant.

"We follow a strict code of ethics, so we don't help them write the essays or help them pretend to be someone else," said Leigh Ann Cahill of Independent School Options, an educational consulting firm in Alexandria. "But we show them how to present their best selves."

At the same time, essays that read like they've been written by the student, using age-appropriate language, are often the most engaging and most credible. "Don't necessarily try to write in the most erudite and intellectual manner unless that is natural for you," said Dame. "Efficient, concise language is most effective and often says what you mean to say better than trying to use the thesaurus."

Be a part of our **Wellbeing** pages, the first week of every month.

Delight in our **HomeLifeStyle** sections, the second week of every month. Peek at the top real estate sales, glimpse over-the-top remodeling projects, get practical suggestions for your home.

Celebrate students, camps, schools, enrichment programs, colleges and more in our **A-plus: Education, Learning, Fun** pages, the third week of every month.

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NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

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NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

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Introspective Perspective Not Effective



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

One of the greatest challenges – for me – in having cancer, is trying to live a “normal” life. And by “normal” I mean: emotionally. Obviously, having chemotherapy every three weeks – with its week-long side effects, diagnostic scans every three months – with its associated anxiety waiting for results, regular lab work, recurring appointments with my oncologist, the change in diet, the pills, the non-Western alternatives that I have semi embraced into my routine, the many well-meaning (and much appreciated) inquiries about my health/status, the occasional fatigue and ongoing food/taste issues, the neuropathy in my feet which makes walking and even sleeping difficult, the planning of my comings and goings and what else I might be doing in the future ALWAYS being contingent on my infusion schedule, and a few other effects I’m probably forgetting because of another effect I’m not remembering: “chemo brain,” (now a documented side effect), complicates living that “normal” life. However, if I don’t find a path of least resistance somehow and get to where I want to be, I risk getting lost in a cycle of abnormality which no doubt will upset more than my figurative apple cart.

The problem is, sometimes you become who you don’t want to be (or at least who I don’t want to be): a self-indulgent victim of circumstance. As I droned on about in the opening paragraph, there are ample reasons for me to not be who I want to be; and whenever I find myself crossing that line of caring about myself at the expense of caring about others, I worry that I’ve allowed the cancer to do more than just invade my body, that now I’ve allowed it to invade my mind.

Somehow, I have to remain true to myself in order to keep the cancer from doing what cancer so often does. I need to maintain my sense of humor and sunny disposition; I need to look more to the future and preoccupy less with the past or even the present – too much, anyhow; I need to live my life like I’m living, not like I’m dying – despite the lyrics of a recently popular Country song; and most importantly, somehow, I need to maintain an interest in things outside of me, myself and I. Way back when, I remember being told by a person whose opinion I value and whose cancer experience predated mine: “It’s all about you, Kenny.” And though I often took that advice to heart, and even employed it a few times, it was more a coping/temporary mechanism than it was a permanent/live-your-life mechanism.

Living life has to be more than just about me; how boring! I don’t want to live inside. I want to live outside. What matters most is what goes on around me; not through me/because of me. I want to be stimulated by external goings on, not internal comings off. Granted, if I’m not in some sort of internal balance, what goes on externally likely won’t matter, but excluding the latter won’t enhance the former. They go hand in hand. Actually, they go hand in glove.

Cancer is insidious enough on its own. The physical damage doesn’t need to be compounded, exacerbated even, by additional emotional damage. Maintaining one’s personality and not getting consumed emotionally by your disease is the goal. Fighting back against this killer is more than just hoping and praying, “doctoring” and “protocolling;” it’s about dignity and determination. I am determined to not become someone I’m not and when I am (like this past week), I feel as if I’ve been made worse for the experience. I don’t know if I’ll ever beat cancer, but never do I want to feel like it beat me.

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

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