

and Oakton
Vienna
CONNECTION

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The annual Church Street Holiday Stroll is held the first Monday after Thanksgiving. Historic Church Street closes down for three hours. Santa listens to wishlists, children roast marshmallows and pet baby farm animals, and families listen to live music throughout the evening.



— REAL STORIES FROM THE EXPRESS LANES —

"My daily commute to work used to take me over an hour. Now, it only takes me 20 minutes. Those extra minutes allow me to spend quality time with my children."

- Jennifer G.
Alexandria, VA

Thanks to the 495 Express Lanes, Jennifer says she can balance being the mother of five young children and working at her job in Tysons. Traveling from Alexandria to Tysons Corner used to take her over an hour, but now it only takes 20 minutes. With those extra 40 minutes, Jennifer is able to eat breakfast with her kids and spend more time with them in the morning. She even has time to take her older children to school before heading to work—and now she can pick them up on the way home, too.

See more real stories from the Lanes at ExpressLanes.com



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



From left — Vienna Mayor Laurie DiRocco and VDOT megaprojects director Susan Shaw listen to comments and questions about the I-66 Outside the Beltway Preferred Alternate Plan for improvement at the Mayor's "Vienna at Your Service Meeting."

PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION



From left — Julie Hirka, Vienna Mayor Laurie DiRocco, Laurie Miller at the Mayor's "Vienna at Your Service" event. Hirka and Miller both voiced concerns about the plans and the impact on the community. Neither is convinced that VDOT's solution is the answer to the perennially congested I-66.

Discussing the 'Worst Freeway in America'

Residents talk I-66 with VDOT reps at Vienna Mayor's Meeting.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

Since the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)'s last large-scale public presentation of its plans to improve the I-66 corridor from Gainesville to the Beltway, that major commuter artery has won the dubious distinction of first place on the "Worst Damn Freeways in America" list. Using data from the Federal Highway Administration, the website Thrillist.com awarded the title to I-66 based on factors like the average number of hours of congestion per day, condition of the actual roadway, difficulty in predicting travel time, and the more-difficult-to-define "danger factor" of travelling on the road.

Even without this latest public condemnation, not many would argue that I-66 is anything but a major problem requiring a major solution. But not all of the residents who attended Mayor Laurie DiRocco's "Vienna at Your Service" forum on Tuesday, Nov. 10 agreed with VDOT's plan to improve the situation.

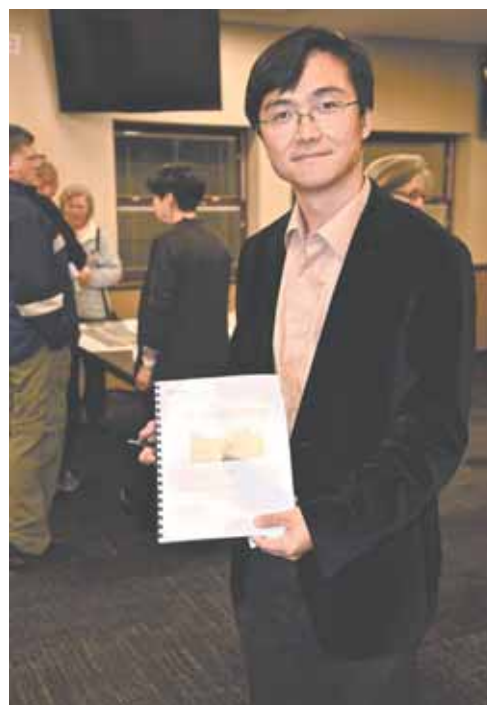
Susan Shaw was the evening's main speaker. The VDOT megaprojects director for the Northern Virginia District presented a scaled-down version of the department's Preferred Alternative Plan (what Shaw describes as the "pencils down" draft), focusing on the elements most likely to affect



Vienna resident Julie Hirka was one of several attendees who voiced concerns about the I-66 project, worried that the end result would change the face of parts of Vienna and clog much of Fairfax County, while basically constructing a "network of toll roads in Northern Virginia."

Vienna, including major changes to the Nutley Street/I-66 interchange, and the potential impact on several schools and parks in the area.

Because of the enormity and expense of the project (estimated at \$2.1 billion), the Preferred Alternative calls for construction in two phases. "We have problems today," said Shaw. Phase 2 would address issues further west than the Phase 1 project limits, and also offers the potential for expansion of Metrorail beyond the station in Vienna as well as additional commuter fa-



Erik Yang presented a petition to VDOT's Susan Shaw and to Mayor Laurie DiRocco with over 250 signatures, asking for the plan to leave undisturbed an existing mature tree-line. "Cutting these down would be a real blight," said Yang. He represents a group that has been collecting signatures both in person and also via an on-line change.org campaign.

cilities and interchange work, while Phase 1, in VDOT's estimation, meets the department's goals to move more people, reduce the hours of congestion per day, improve safety, connect the regional tran-

sit network, and expand mode choices and transit options. With a targeted completion date of 2021, "Phase 1 offers the best solution to bring relief as quickly as possible."

VIENNA RESIDENT Laurie Miller doesn't agree, especially taking issue with VDOT's description of their plan as being "multimodal." "Extending Metro is being treated like an afterthought," commented Miller. Miller came armed with facts and figures about the construction of the Metro system and wanted to know why more Federal Government assistance to enhance the system wasn't an option to curing the I-66 ills. "So many of the people commuting through our area are doing business because of the government. Why can't they take more responsibility in fixing the problem they helped create?"

Roy Baldwin also spoke out against the Preferred Alternative Plan. Baldwin, who said he had attended many of the VDOT public outreach meetings, began his comments by thanking Vienna Mayor DiRocco for hosting the forum. "This is the first time I have been able to get the microphone and tell someone how I feel." He asked the VDOT representatives why "none of the above" wasn't ever a choice "at all those meetings asking for public input. That would have been my answer."

Baldwin's greatest concerns? "The suffering we will go through to build all this is just not worth it. Keep adding lanes and they will just keep filling up...and the developers will just keep expanding along

SEE RESIDENTS, PAGE 6

TAFFY Brings Performing Arts to Children in Need

Vienna music teacher brightens day of underserved children.

DONNA MANZ
THE CONNECTION

There are scores of kids you do not read about in the newspapers; they're not award-winning students or scholarship-bound athletes. They are just kids ... some with severe medical conditions, some homeless, some physically or mentally-challenged. For many of these children, the performance arts uplift their spirits, give them a common reference point with their peers, and inspire their creative side. Cue TAFFY Presents here, a nationwide program where professional performers come to kids in need, brightening their days.

"We can make a difference in the lives of children who need an extra boost of 'bonding' through their personal contact with our performers," said director of East Coast Productions, Irene Light of Vienna.

TAFFY, an acronym for "Theatre Arts Festival for Youth," is launching its first Vienna-area show at the Kilmer Center in November. Award-winning musician Fred Karam dedicates the show to a local dog, Abby, whose passing touched many in the community. Karam sings "Hound Dog" and "How Much is That Doggie in the Window" in this school presentation.

TAFFY Presents, born in California about 27 years ago, is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization created by professional artists whose mission it is to enrich and entertain underserved children and families in schools, hospitals, and community venues incorporating the performing arts. Light took over the reins as director of East Coast



PHOTO COURTESY OF IRENE LIGHT/TAFFY PRESENTS, EAST COAST PRODUCTIONS

TAFFY musician Dan Crow brings out the enthusiasm of the kids at the Lab School of Washington.

Productions six months ago. She services a region north to New England and south to Florida.

Light has brought six productions to D.C.-area hospital pediatric units and to schools. The line-up is building for the remainder of 2015 and through 2016.

In Northern Virginia, TAFFY is partnering with shelters to bring smiles to homeless children and has instituted a mentoring program in which professional artists partner with a child in need.

For all that TAFFY gives, the nonprofit has funding needs. Currently, Light is submitting grant proposals to local service organizations, particularly those that focus on children. TAFFY accepts financial support from individuals and businesses, as well. East Coast TAFFY is projecting a 2016 budget of approximately \$70,000. The budget pays for TAFFY's programming; the Board of Directors serves without pay. Not all performers are paid; many volunteer their talents because they believe in TAFFY's mis-

sion of supporting underserved children, Light said. "Our performers are truly dedicated to helping the children."

Once TAFFY decides to adopt a location, Light said they find a way to begin programming there while Light searches for funding.

"Our performers always do interactive visits," said Light. "So they bond with the children at one-on-one bedside visits, create total involvement with the children at performances, and always leave something behind like a CD or a magic trick for each child who they have seen. Magicians teach these tricks to the children so that they can proudly show others their new ability."

Light said her group sends out, annually, 50 CDs/DVDs in the arts and education to each of the facilities TAFFY has adopted or has promised to adopt. "We want to keep the happiness going even when we are not there. We ask the locations what type of content they need for their libraries. At hospitals, many of these CDs are given out as rewards to pediatric patients undergoing uncomfortable medical treatments such as chemo."

Light, a licensed public school music teacher, is at liberty to create programming that meets the needs of the community. In Vienna, Light hopes to partner with Alternative House and continue to partner with the Kilmer Center. "I like to see TAFFY Presents help the whole child and leave permanent positive imprints in education," she said.

IF YOU ARE FAMILIAR with an organization or business seeking greater community involvement, e-mail Irene Light, at teacher@lightmotifs.com, or call her at 703-281-1536. Visit TAFFY Presents at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Theatre-Arts-Festival-For-Youth/128116700582392> or at <http://www.taffypresents.org/>.

WEEK IN VIENNA

Santa Coming to Freeman Store

Santa Claus is coming to Town. Historic Vienna, Inc. (the Freeman Store and Museum), 131 Church Street, NE, has announced that good old St. Nick will be visiting the Freeman Store on Sunday, Dec. 6, and again on Sunday, Dec. 13, from noon to 2 p.m. each day.

Seated in his special chair next to Historic Vienna's beautifully decorated Christmas tree - courtesy of the Optimist Club of Vienna and the Ayr Hill garden Club -- Santa will meet his young visitors and hear their Christmas wishes. Parents, grandparents and friends are encouraged to bring their cameras to capture the looks of joy and wonder as the little ones talk to Santa. For additional information call 703-938-5187 or visit www.historicviennainc.org.

The Freeman Store is a great place to visit to get your holiday shopping done now.

SEE WEEK, PAGE 7

Sheriff's Office Receives \$1,500 for Project Lifesaver

The Auxiliary to the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department donated \$1,500 to the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office for its Project Lifesaver program. The program serves the needs of children on the autism spectrum and adults with cognitive impairments who may wander away from their caregivers.

Project Lifesaver clients wear a wrist or ankle band that emits a silent tracking signal. When caregivers notify the Sheriff's Office that a client is missing, specially-trained sheriff's deputies respond to the area with state-of-the-art tracking equipment. The program currently has 67 clients with 35 more on the waiting list.

Costs for Project Lifesaver include the transmitters for each client; the wrist or ankle band to which the transmitter is attached; the battery for each transmit-



From left, Fairfax County Sheriff Stacey Kincaid, Vienna Volunteer Fire Department member Joan Dempsey and Lt. Jason Travis.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

ter, which must be changed every 60 days; and the receiver that the Sheriff's Office uses to track the transmitter's signal.

"Project Lifesaver is funded entirely by donations," said Sheriff Stacey Kincaid. "We are very grateful for the support from organizations like the Auxiliary to the Vienna

Volunteer Fire Department. These funds will enable us to purchase new or updated equipment and support more clients from the waiting list"

To learn more about Project Lifesaver, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/sheriff/lifesaver.htm.

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.

lost (adj): 1. unable to find the way. 2. not appreciated or understood. 3. no longer owned or known

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Vienna Residents Question I-66 Plans

FROM PAGE 3

side.” He believes that any relief afforded by the current plan will be short-lived before the congestion returns, “worse than ever.”

Baldwin, Miller, and others present also expressed concerns about the toll proposals for the plan’s new Express Lanes. “What we are building is a network of tolls in Northern Virginia,” observed Julie Hirka. “Where does it end?” If the procurement process ultimately chooses another private system to fund and maintain the new lanes, Baldwin added that Northern Virginia drivers “will be further at the mercy of the private owners of the road, just like the folks who use the Dulles Greenway.”

OTHER CONCERNS raised by Vienna residents ranged from big-picture scope, such as how the I-66 outside the Beltway project will coordinate with inside the Beltway works and other projects already underway, to fears about local impact. Project director Shaw noted that based on public input, changes to the design had been made to avoid impacting the recreational fields at Stenwood Elementary School and area parks. She also assured the gathering that VDOT was working on transit options that would “spread commuters out to other connection points like Tysons and East Falls Church stations when one resident worried that the Vienna station would be overwhelmed by new commuters from points west.

The construction of sound barriers along most of the route is a major part of the Preferred Alternative Plan. Shaw was able to clear up some confusion about this portion of the project. “The Bike/Pedestrian path will run on the outside, not between the walls and homeowners’ backyards.” Companies who will be bidding on the project will have clear instruction that a long lag time will not be accepted. “There won’t be tearing down of existing walls on day one,” she insisted, “only to have the homeowner wait four years for the new one to be built.

Even with those assurances, some residents are calling for VDOT to re-think damage to existing tree-lines along the route. Erik Yang of Vienna presented Shaw and Mayor DiRocco with a petition to that effect with 253 signatures gathered to date, many from an online campaign at www.change.org.

“There is no perfect plan, one that would satisfy everyone,” acknowledged Shaw. “...with the constraints of space, money, multiple municipalities, historic sites and private property...we’re not building ourselves out of congestion.”

Conceptual financial proposals from the short-listed construction teams are due by Dec. 1. VDOT plans to announce the preferred delivery method on December 9. Detailed information about the project, including all related studies and a video that depicts the project in geographic segments, is available to the public at www.outside.transform66.org.



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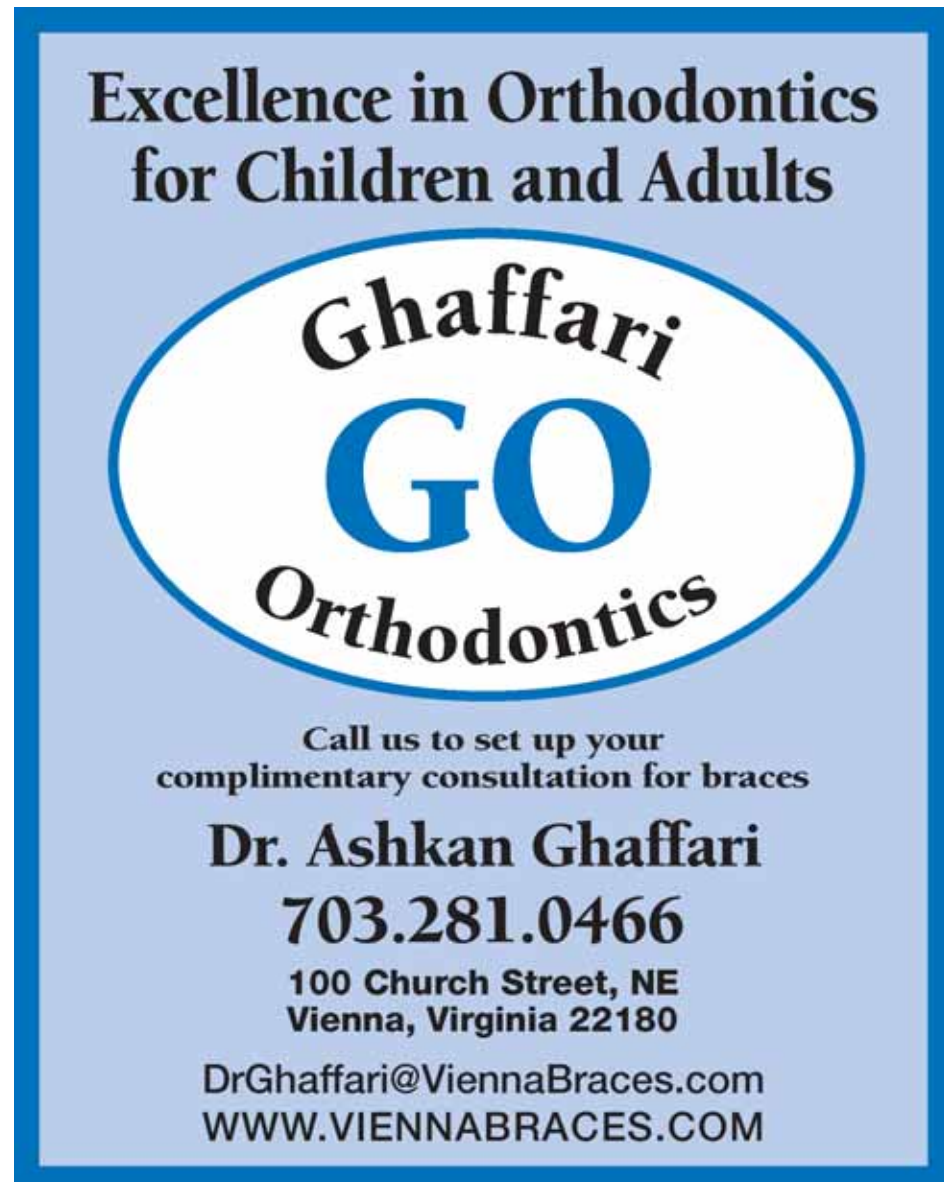
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Celebrate students, camps, schools, enrichment programs, colleges and more in our **A-plus: Education, Learning, Fun** pages, the third week of every month.

Questions? E-mail sales@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9431

THE CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS

NEWS

FROM PAGE 4

Among the new and vintage items for sale is the 2015 HVI Ornament, the 16th in the collection. The two-sided ornament features the original Vienna Volunteer Fire Department building on Church Street on one face, and the stores that later occupied the building, Worthington's gift shop and The Full Cry Shop, a ladies clothing store, on the other. In addition to toys, games and gifts for people of all ages, the store features a terrific selection of old-fashioned candies.

Ayr Hill Garden Club to Meet Nov. 23

The Ayr Hill Garden Club will meet on Monday, Nov. 23, at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 2589 Chain Bridge Road, Vienna. Complimentary refreshments will be provided at 12:45 p.m. followed by the 1 p.m. program. Guests are encouraged to attend.

"Growing Orchids" will be the subject of guest lecturer, Mark Patterson, a member of the American Orchid Society. In his lecture and demonstration, Patterson will speak on the care, maintenance and repotting of orchids, with special emphasis on orchids as wonderful gifts. His presentation will include a repotting demonstration. He has been raising orchids for 30 years and has more than 160 orchid specimens in his home and office. His main orchid interests are species paphiopedilums, dendrochilums, cymbidiums, hybrid phalaenopsis and cattleyas.

For more information about the Ayr Hill Garden Club visit <https://ayrhillgardenclub.shutterfly.com/>.

Vienna Author Launches 'Christopher's Kite'

McLean-based Chelonian Press, Inc. announces its new children's picture book, "Christopher's Kite," by Vienna author, Mark James. Christopher's Kite is a story about a little kite who yearns to fly and with the help of his young owner, Christopher, realizes his dream on a beautiful day meant for flying. This tale of surprise, learning and thoughtful satisfaction expands visually through the artistry of Harold Smelcer.

"Christopher's Kite" is the third book in the series by Mark James and Harold Smelcer following "Christopher's Little Airplane" and "Christopher's Little Airplane Coloring and Activity Fun Book." It is appropriate for children from two to eight years of age and is a 32-page hardcover book, with a suggested retail price of \$18.95.

Mark James will be autographing all three books at the National Air and Space Museum Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Chantilly from noon to 4 p.m. on both Saturday, Nov. 28 and Saturday, Dec. 12. All three books are also available from Amazon.com.

Work Underway to Replace Waters Field Turf

The Town of Vienna began replacing the turf at Waters Field. The field at Center and Cherry streets will be closed throughout installation, which is expected to be completed by Dec. 11. Work on the field will be undertaken, weather permitting, from 7 a.m.-10 p.m. weekdays; some work may be done on Saturdays as well.

The artificial turf that is being replaced was installed about 10 years ago, says Vienna Parks and Recreation director Leslie Herman. The field is used by a variety of community athletic leagues for recreational activities, including football, lacrosse and baseball. Installation of the new turf will cost approximately \$580,000, with funding provided by Fairfax County, Town of Vienna, Vienna Youth Inc. and Greater Vienna Babe Ruth.

Japanese Americans to Hold Bazaar for Care Fund

The Japanese Americans' Care Fund will hold its annual bazaar on Sunday, Nov. 22 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Patriot Hall Vienna American Legion Post 180, 330 North Center Street, Vienna. Admission is \$2 (free for children under 12).

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. Artists with Japanese heritage will participate in this Fair.

The embassy of Japan will be on site to accept overseas voter registration from 10 a.m. to noon. Medical consultation desk by Dr. Tsunewoka.

For more information, contact Care Fund office at 703-56-5223, carefund@jacarefund.org or www.jacarefund.org.

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MedStar Orthopaedic Institute

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Lorton, VA 22079

Hand & Upper Extremity

Thurs., Dec. 10, 2015 • 6 to 7 p.m.

MedStar Orthopaedic Institute

12825 Minnieville Rd., Suite 203

Woodbridge, VA 22192

Attendance is free but registration is required.

Space is limited. To register call 855-788-6464. Light refreshments will be provided.

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OPINION

Holidays Are About Giving

Give thanks and share locally; tens of thousands of families around us are in need.

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.

Where to Give Locally

- ❖ **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.

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.

EDITORIAL

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 homeless, there are things we can

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Vienna & Oakton CONNECTION

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

Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

**1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314**

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FAITH

Faith Notes are for announcements and events in the faith community. Send to vienna@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Friday.

The **Churches of the Ecumenical Council** are offering a Blue Christmas worship opportunity Sunday, Dec. 13 at 2:30 p.m. at Katie's Coffee House, 760 Walker Rd., Great Falls. This is an opportunity to come together expressing the griefs, losses and challenges of our lives as we connect to hope and faith. Call Carol 703-582-1640 with questions.

Chancel Choir, children and youth of the Great Falls United Methodist Church invite you to join them for worship as they offer "Welcome to Our World," a musical for Christmas written by Claire Cloninger and Robert Sterling on Sunday, Dec. 13 at 10 a.m. The musical includes traditional carols, newer praise songs and original material.

Robert R. "Mitch" Mitchell, Director of Music Ministries at Great Falls UMC, former U.S. Army Bandsman, and local area Piano teacher/freelance Musician will be conducting the choir and narrators. Church keyboardist Thomas Pandolfi will be accompanying the musical. Great Falls United Methodist Church is located at 10100 Georgetown Pike, right next to the Fire Station in the center of

the village. All are welcome.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 2589 Chain Bridge Road, Vienna, is holding Sunday evening worship service in a less formal atmosphere and more intimate setting to help you get ready for the week ahead. Sundays, 6 p.m. Communion offered. No childcare. 703-938-2119 or www.elcvienna.org.

The Antioch Christian Church offers a time of Prayer and Healing on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. for anyone wanting encouragement and healing through prayers. People are available to pray with you or for you. Antioch Christian Church is located at 1860 Beulah Road in Vienna. www.antiochdoc.org

HAVEN of Northern Virginia offers a variety of free bereavement support groups, meeting on a weekly basis. 703-941-7000 or www.havenofnova.org.

Alternative House


FROM PAGE 8

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



Families welcome Santa and his elves into their neighborhoods during the week-long Santa Runs sponsored and executed by volunteers of the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department.

PHOTOS BY DONNA MANZ/THE CONNECTION



The Winter Walk of Lights at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens is ablaze with more than a half-a-million colorful LED lights in scenes and decoration.



The antique fire truck belonging to the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department, decorated with festive lights, cruises around Vienna during the week prior to Christmas, holiday music blaring. Santa waves to his fans and elves jump off the fire truck with candy canes for kids and biscuits for dogs.



COURTESY OF WOLF TRAP NATIONAL PARK FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

The Wolf Trap Holiday-Sing-A-Long, free admission, features music of the season.

Festive Fun Guide for the Holiday Season

From caring and sharing to Santa and shopping, Vienna-Oakton celebrates.

By DONNA MANZ
THE CONNECTION

From food drives and coat drives to festive holiday events and activities, there is something for every age group living in the Vienna-Oakton area. Keep this calendar close by ...

Annual Food Drive sponsored by the Northeast Vienna Citizens Association (NEVCA) for the benefit of the Committee for Helping Others (CHO), Nov. 1 to Dec. 31.

All non-perishable, unexpired food items are accepted. In greatest need are diapers (sizes 3, 4, 5 and 6), canned fruit and apple sauce, pancake mix and syrup, oatmeal, grape jelly, canned salmon, Spam, small canned hams, canned chili, spaghetti sauce, cooking oil, white rice, laundry detergent and dish soap.

Girl Scout Cadet Troop 2684 from Kilmer Middle School joins NEVCA by picking up the food at the locations where food boxes will be: Town Hall, 127 Center St. S; Uniquities, 421 Church St. NE; Evolution Fitness, 216 Dominion Rd. NE; Bikes@Vienna, 128A Church St. NW; Caffé Amouri, 107 Church St. NE; Rexall Drug Store, 150 Maple Ave. W; Vienna Arts Society, 115 Pleasant St, NW; Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave, E. Co-sponsored by NEVCA and Supervisor Cathy Hudgins.

1st Stage holiday production, "Harvey," Nov. 12- Dec. 20.

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, "Harvey" is a story of whimsy and imagination suitable for families. Uncle Elwood's imaginary friend, a six-foot-one-and-a-half-foot tall rabbit named Harvey, causes a stir among family members caught in Uncle Elwood's fantasy.

Harvey runs at 1st Stage on Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 and 8 p.m., and Sun-

days at 2 and 7 p.m.

General admission tickets are \$30. Senior (65+) tickets are \$26, and student and military tickets are \$15.

Tickets, subscriptions, and Flex Passes can be purchased online at www.1ststagechildrens.org or by calling the 1st Stage box office at 703-854-1856.

Meadowlark Gardens' Winter Walk of Lights, Nov. 14 to Jan. 4, evening/night, daily.

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.

Admission charge. To buy timed tickets, go to <http://winterwalkoflights.com/>.

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, Annual Holiday Bazaar, Nov. 21 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and on Nov. 22 from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Open to the public, free admission. Art, jewelry, glass bowls, photography, and additional crafts and goods for sale.

UUCF is located at 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Contact Mary Ellen Larkins at 703-281-7847 for more information.

Christmas tree sales from community service organizations open Thanksgiving weekend.

Over Thanksgiving weekend, both the Optimists of Greater Vienna and the Vienna Lions' Club open their Christmas tree sale season. Support service organizations that give back to the community with your purchase of a Christmas tree from the Optimists or the Lions. The Optimists hold their tree sale in the Giant Food parking lot, adjacent to the bank there. The Lions hold their tree sale in parking lot of Walgreen's. Support those who support the community.

Vienna Small-Business Saturday, Nov. 28, throughout Vienna.

Support the locally-owned businesses in Vienna and Oakton that give back to the community with financial support and their time and skills. You know the businesses who donate to kids' sports teams, schools, and special events.

Sponsored by Vienna's Town/Business Liaison Committee, the event offers the community a small town-town shopping experience.

Church Street Holiday Stroll, Monday, Nov. 30, 6 to 9 p.m.

The Historic Church Street corridor closes at 5:45 p.m. Santa arrives at 6:15 p.m. in an antique fire truck and listens to childrens' wish lists throughout the evening.

Santa and the Mayor light the tree at 6:20 p.m. Historic Vienna, Inc. invites the community to roast marshmallows over an open fire, visit the animals in the petting zoo, listen to performances by local choruses, and mingle with neighbors. Church Street merchants remain open during the stroll.

There will also be a canned food and monetary donation collection.

For more information, call Historic Vienna, Inc. at 703-938-5187 or visit viennava.gov.

Wolf Trap Holiday-Sing-A-Long, Saturday, Dec. 5, 4 p.m. Filene Center, Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts, Vienna.

Dress warmly, grab some bells and candles, and make your way to one of the region's most-loved holiday concerts, the free "sing-a-long," featuring "The President's Own" marine corps band and local choruses and musicians.

Members of the U.S. Marine Corps will be on-hand to accept donations on behalf of Toys for Tots.

No charge but unwrapped new toys are welcome.

Holly & Ivy: A Christmas Market-place, Dec. 5, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Dec. 6, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Our Lady of Good Counsel Church. Holiday bazaars are in full-

swing, particularly those sponsored by community churches.

Our Lady of Good Counsel church is located at 8601 Wolftrap Road, Vienna, 22182.

Epiphany United Methodist Church and Epiphany Preschool, Annual Christmas Bazaar on Saturday, Dec. 5 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Silent auction, crafts, homemade wreaths, poinsettias, See's Candy, baked Goods. Lunch is available for purchase. Epiphany is located at 1014 Country Club Drive, Vienna. For more information, go to www.epiphanyumc.com or call 703-938-2391.

Jingle on the Lake, Saturday, Dec. 5, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Lake Anne, Reston

Community organizers and plaza retailers host a variety of festive activities ranging from a visit from Santa – who arrives on a lake barge – to strolling carolers, a petting zoo, dog adoptions, music, wine tastings, merchant specials, children's crafts, cookie decorating, holiday arts and crafts market, holiday entertainment and surprises.

Santa arrives at PetMAC in Lake Anne Plaza for pet photos. Donations will be given to New Love Dog Rescue and Oldies but Goodies Cocker Spaniel Rescue. Appointments recommended; call 571-325-2099 to make photo with Santa appointments. See www.petmac.org for news updates.

Santa Claus will be visiting the Freeman Store on two Sundays this year, Dec. 6 and Dec. 13, from 12 to 2 p.m. each day.

Freeman House is located at 131 Church Street NE, and is decorated for the holidays by the Ayr Hill Garden Club. Santa holds court in the period rooms upstairs.

Freeman Store, specializing in nostalgic gifts and made-in-Virginia products, will be open for shopping.

For information call (703) 938-5187 or visit www.historicviennainc.org.

Holiday Tea, Friday, Dec. 11, 2 to 4 p.m., sponsored by Shepherd's Center of Oakton-



The annual Church Street Holiday Stroll is held the first Monday after Thanksgiving. Historic Church Street closes down for three hours. Santa listens to wishlists, children roast marshmallows and pet baby farm animals, and families listen to live music throughout the evening.

Vienna and Vienna Parks and Recreation. Seniors of Vienna and Oakton celebrate the season with tea, snacks, and music by the Tallwood Trio at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, DeSales Hall, 8601 Wolftrap Road, Vienna. Tickets are \$10 each and should be purchased by Dec. 2. To reserve a ticket, call SCOV at 703-281-0538.

Vienna Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary All-you-can-eat pancake breakfast with a visit from Santa is Dec. 12 from 8 a.m. to noon. Santa arrives at 10:30 a.m.

The Fairfax County Sheriff's Office will be there to provide Free Child ID with a paid admission to the pancake breakfast. Admission is \$8 for adults; \$7 seniors; \$6 children age 12 and under; free for children under age four.

The pancake breakfast is held in the fire station's Flame Room. The station is located at 400 Center St. S.

Simbang Gabi, Filipino Christmas Celebration, Dec. 19, 7 to 8 p.m., Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, 8601 Wolftrap

Road, Vienna VA 22182.

Vienna Volunteer Fire Department "Santa Runs" begin the week leading up to Christmas Eve.

Santa and his elves climb aboard VVFD's antique fire truck and zoom through the streets of the Town of Vienna and outlying communities. Festive holiday music blares as the truck cruises through neighborhoods. Wherever there are children, the fire truck stops and the elves jump off with candy canes as Santa waves. Seniors come to their doors or outside to wave to Santa. Check VVFD.org, for daily itineraries.

Vienna Choral Society concert: Harmony and Light – a Jazz-inspired Christmas, Dec. 19, 4:30 p.m.

Ticket prices are \$25, adults; \$20, over 65 and ages 15 to 18; free for students 14 and under, with paying patron. The concert will be at Vienna Baptist Church, 541 Marshall Road, SW. For details and to purchase tickets, go to <http://viennachoralsociety.org/>.

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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE



PHOTOS BY DONNA MANZ/THE CONNECTION

The 2015 Rachel Peden hand-painted ornament is two-sided; one side remembers shops no longer in Vienna, and the other, a rendition of the original Vienna Volunteer Fire Department station house.



Virginia ABCs stock a seasonal selection of gift-packs and holiday-themed liqueurs, from peppermint mocha to bourbon-based eggnog.



CULINARIA COOKING SCHOOL

Yes, you can ...Pastry Chef Dan Michel instructs a two-part workshop on gingerbread house construction at Culinaria Cooking School. The series is held on Dec. 12 and 19. You get to take home your masterpiece.

Vienna-Oakton Gift-giving Guide

From unique goods to honoring a loved one, local businesses offer diverse options.

shopper's paradise.

The Vienna ABC is located at in the Wolfraptrappe Shopping Center, 436 Maple Ave. E, and holds a Black Friday sale. The Oakton ABC is in the Hunter Mill shopping Center at Rt. 123 and Hunter Mill Road.

Gifts with that old-time holiday spirit, Freeman Store

If you're looking for gifts right out of a Norman Rockwell painting, look no further than Freeman Store on historic Church Street. The shop pretty much complies with your wishes.

The store sells replicas of old-time toys and games, but its strength lies in its collection of Virginia-made products and Vienna-logo goods. There are preserves and beeswax candles made in Virginia and a diverse collection of Vienna-logo stoneware made in Pennsylvania. And, there are ornaments galore.

New in 2015 is HVT's first two-sided ornament, the 16th in the series designed by Virginia artist Rachel M. Peden. One face of the ornament is the original Vienna Volunteer Fire Department building. The opposite side pays homage to Worthington's and The Full Cry Shop. The Vienna Volunteer Fire Department was founded in 1903. Its original apparatus was stored under the porch of the Freeman Store. Freeman Store sells the 2015 hand-painted ornaments for \$19.50 each. Ornaments from previous years, including Freeman House painting, are available for purchase at the same price.

Freeman Store is open Wednesday through Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. The Civil War-era building is located at 131 Church Street NE, across the street from the red caboose. The store and museum are operated by administered by Historic Vienna, Inc.

For information on holiday events and Freeman Store, go to <http://historicviennainc.org/>.

Your very own custom-designed gingerbread house or cooking class

Next to the Christmas tree, a gingerbread house is one of the season's most iconic images. While you can buy gingerbread house kits – the pieces are cut out already – there is nothing as much fun for families as designing and fabricating their own gingerbread memory. Culinaria Cooking School offers the community's only workshop on gingerbread house

Shoppers seeking a special gift for the special people in their lives like to consider the interests and tastes of their recipients. Some times, the "perfect" gift is a thing, while at other times, it's an intangible, a way to honor a loved one. The Vienna-Oakton Connection looks at both kinds of gifts in this holiday guide, the first of the season. We will have a second, last-minute-gift guide in December.

A Christmas "star" in honor of a loved one

How better to honor a loved one than with a donation supporting the recipient's cause? The Stroke Comeback Center of Vienna offers family and friends an opportunity to purchase a gold star for the center's Caring Tree to honor a stroke or brain injury survivor. SCC is the only center of its kind in the Washington, D.C. area.

The recipient receives an acknowledgement of the star in his honor. Each star is \$15 and supports the programs and scholarship fund of the Stroke Comeback Center. Stars can be purchased on SCC's website, <http://strokecomebackcenter.org/>

The Stroke Comeback Center provides long-term programs for survivors with aphasia and other communication difficulties

Stroke Comeback Center is located at 145 Park Street, S.E., Vienna. To learn more about the center's programs, call 703-255-5221 or visit www.strokecomebackcenter.org

Holiday spirit from Vienna-Oakton ABCs

For many, the holiday spirit includes holiday "spirits." The Virginia ABC stores stock a selection of gift packs that include logo glasses at a price equal to the individual bottles. From small-batch bourbon to seasonal spirits, the ABCs are a spirit-

SEE GIFTS, PAGE 13

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

Gifts Galore in Vienna, Oakton

FROM PAGE 12

construction. A gift certificate to this class – or any other Culinaria cooking class – inspires the holiday spirit. Pastry chef Dan Michel, who conducts the two-part gingerbread house series in mid-December, is a maestro of decorative gingerbread and chocolate engineering. To register for class or to buy a gift certificate good for Culinaria's cooking classes, go to www.culinariacookingschool.com or call 703-865-7920.

Culinaria Cooking School is located at 110 Pleasant Street NW, Vienna Virginia, just off Maple Avenue.

Original art works

The Vienna Arts Society wants to make high-quality original art pieces affordable to everyone. Taking that view, VAS members offer small pieces in its annual gift emporium at special sale pricing, all less than \$100 per piece. Sale pieces include paintings, ceramics, jewelry, photography and notecards.

This year's emporium features hand-crafted jewelry, silk scarves, pottery, and fused glass, as well as painted pieces. All gifts are priced at \$99 or less.

Exhibition hours are Tuesdays through Saturdays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. or by appointment.

The Vienna Arts Society Art Center is at 115 Pleasant Street, NW. Phone 703-319-3971 for details or go to www.Viennaartsociety.org.



PHOTO BY DONNA MANZ/THE CONNECTION

Joyce Simmons had a stroke in 2008, and has been an active Stroke Comeback Center member for five years. Until she got her driver's license back recently, it took Joyce two hours getting to the center from Woodbridge ... first, catching a bus to the "slug" lines, "slugging" it to the closest Metrorail station, then taking a bus into Vienna, walking the remainder of the way to the center on Park Street. Joyce's mother, Khadijah Aquil, purchased a "star" in her daughter's name.

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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/>.

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.jlrv.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 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



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

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 processional 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.

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.

SATURDAY/DEC. 12

Traditional Holiday Tale, "A Christmas Carol." 1 and 4 p.m. The Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Perhaps the best loved holiday story of all time, Theatre IV's adaptation of Charles Dickens' classic is particularly suited to children. \$10, \$15. <http://mcleancenter.org/alden-theatre>. 703-790-0123.

SUNDAY/DEC. 13

Christmas Festival. 6-7:30 p.m. Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. The church choir will be joined by a string ensemble as they prepare for Christmas with a program entitled "Dance and Sing! Christ is Born!" The music includes those carols written with the rhythms of dance of many styles as well as songs about dance, including the final movement of the Bach Brandenburg Concerto No. 5. The program will be followed by dessert in St. Andrews Hall. Free. www.lewinsville.org.



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

The 53rd Annual James A. Bland Contest. Through Monday, Feb. 15. Vienna Assembly of God Church, 100 Ayr Hill Avenue, Vienna. Sponsored by the Vienna Host Lions Club, the contest will include school age (elementary and high school) vocalists and instrumentalists who will each present a song or piece of no more than eight minutes and will be judged by local experts in their field. Cash prizes will be awarded to 1st and 2nd place winners in each category. Contest will be on Saturday, Feb. 20, at 1 p.m. Information and an application can be obtained by contacting Lion Susan Stiles at sandcs89@yahoo.com or 703-938-1142. The deadline for applications is Monday, Feb. 15.
"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/>.

53rd Annual James A. Bland Contest. Through Monday, Feb. 15. Vienna Lions Club invites elementary and high school vocalist and instrumentalists to present a song or piece for cash prizes. For information and application, contact Susan Stiles at sandcs89@yahoo.com or 703-938-1142.

THURSDAY/NOV. 18-19

Suzanne Vega Duncan Sheik. 8 p.m. The Barns, Wolf Trap, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. Grammy Award-winning folk star of "Luka" and "Tom's Diner" (Vega) and Tony Award-winning Spring Awakening composer (Sheik) join forces for a night of their hit songs, as well as music they created for Vega's Off Broadway musical debut, Carson McCullers Talks About Love. Tickets: \$55-\$60. For more information, visit <http://www.wolftrap.org/> or call

703-255-1900.

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

Rickie Lee Jones. 8 p.m. The Barns, Wolf Trap, 1645 Trap Road Vienna. Experience the critically acclaimed singer/songwriter's "exceptional blend of jazz, soul, [and] rock" (NPR) that defies convention, as Rickie Lee Jones, Double Grammy-winning singer, delivers fan favorites and songs off her new, "most absorbing album" (Uncut), The Other Side of Desire. Tickets: \$35-\$45. For more information, visit <http://www.wolftrap.org/> or call 703-255-1900.

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

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 15

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 14

sneak peek at where the stars get ready. Tours are limited to 30 participants. 703-255-1827 to RSVP or for additional information.

Sonny Landreth. 7:30 p.m. The Barns, Wolf Trap, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. Louisiana-based Sonny Landreth has collaborated with a multitude of rock legends, including Jimmy Buffett and Eric Clapton. Landreth has been a regular performer at Clapton's Crossroads Guitar Festival since its inception in 2004 and released his first all-instrumental album, *Elemental Journey*, in 2012. Tickets: \$27. For more information, visit <http://www.wolftrap.org/> or call 703-255-1900.

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

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 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.

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

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.

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/NOV. 27

John Eaton. 8 p.m. The Barns, Wolf Trap, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. Join renowned pianist and vocalist, John Eaton, as he interprets the Great American Songbook. Eaton is one of the flagship artists of the Wolf Trap Recording label and he has released eight albums to date that include the music of Richard Rodgers, Ray Charles, the Beatles, and Cole Porter. Tickets: \$25-\$27. For more information, visit <http://www.wolftrap.org/> or call 703-255-1900.

SATURDAY/NOV. 28

Dream Discs: the Wild, the



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).

Innocent & the E Street

Shuffle/Moondance. 7:30 p.m. The Barns, Wolf Trap, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. Experience a thrilling tribute to two of rock 'n' roll's best-loved albums, made famous by Van Morrison and Bruce Springsteen, as they're performed in their entirety by some of the finest musicians and vocalists in the D.C. area. Tickets: \$25-\$27. For more information, <http://www.wolftrap.org/> or call 703-255-1900.

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.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 2

Eric Hutchinson. 8 p.m. The Barns, Wolf Trap, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. Singer/songwriter Eric Hutchinson takes the stage with radio favorites, including "Rock & Roll" and "Watching You Watch Him" and more and performs his foot-tapping brand of pop and rock. Tickets: \$22 advance; \$25 day of. For more information, visit <http://www.wolftrap.org/tickets/calendar/performance/1516barns/1202show15.aspx> or call 703-255-1900.

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.

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.

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SPECIAL CONNECTIONS CALENDAR

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday unless noted.

NOVEMBER

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

1/6/2016 Wellbeing, Renewal, Resolutions

1/13/2016 HomeLifeStyle

Martin Luther King Jr. Day is Jan. 18

1/20/2016 A+ Camps & Schools

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- Mount Vernon Gazette
- Oak Hill/Herndon Connection
- Potomac Almanac
- Reston Connection
- Springfield Connection
- Vienna/Oakton Connection

Madison Volleyball Earns Return Trip to State Tournament

Warhawks fall to Langley in region championship match.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

Kelsey Smith wasn't quite sure how she did it, but when the Madison sophomore stepped to the service line Nov. 12, it was the West Springfield Spartans who were left looking puzzled.

With Madison leading 11-5 in the fifth set, Smith produced three consecutive aces, helping the Warhawks beat the Spartans 3-2 (23-25, 25-18, 23-25, 25-15, 15-6) in the 6A North region volleyball tournament semifinals at West Springfield High School.

Madison secured a state tournament berth and a trip to the region championship match for the second straight season. The Warhawks lost to Langley in four sets in the region final on Nov. 14 and traveled to face 6A South champion Kellam 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.

Against West Springfield, Smith's back-to-back-to-back aces gave Madison match point. After the Spartans scored on a Warhawk error, Madison outside hitter Jaynie Carter ended the match with a kill.

"She's got, like, this little hook thing going on," Madison head coach Carrie Hall said about Smith's serving technique. "... We moved her (along the service line) to where she's more comfortable."

Smith, a middle blocker, finished with eight aces.

"I guess it's the way I turn my body," Smith said when asked what makes her serve so tough to handle.

"To be completely honest, I'm not really sure. It just kind of works."

Smith was on the varsity team as a freshman last season, but saw limited postseason action during the Warhawks' run to the state final. Thursday's win-or-go-home region semifinal was the most pressure-packed match Smith has played in at Madison, but No. 14 said she wasn't bothered by the atmosphere — thanks in part to her teammates.

"Everyone's super supportive on the team and even if you do happen to make a mistake, no one gets mad at you, which I think is really awesome," Smith said. "I actually felt really calm. I think it's because I was surrounded by the team. I felt ... clutch."

While Smith's teammates made her feel comfortable, Madison's senior trio of Carter, outside hitter Natale Zanellato, and setter



Natale Zanellato led Madison with 15 kills during the Warhawks' win over West Springfield in the 6A North region semifinals on Nov. 12.

Kendal Hall also succeeded in making plays, helping Madison overcome dropping two of the first three sets.

After West Springfield won the third set and took a 2-1 lead in the match, Zanellato responded with six kills in the fourth set, helping the Warhawks win 25-15.

"I thought No. 13 (Zanellato) really stepped it up in the fourth set," West Springfield head coach Stephanie Noriega said.

Zanellato finished with a team-high 15 kills.

A kill by West Springfield outside hitter Brittany Padgett gave the Spartans a 1-0 lead in the fifth set, but Madison took control by scoring eight of the next nine points. The Warhawks also scored five of the final six points, including a pair of Carter kills.

Carter finished with 12 kills. Junior right side hitter Emily Calhoun had seven kills and two blocks. Kendal Hall totaled 39 assists. Padgett and Megan Marin each had 12 kills for West Springfield. Tyler Wernecke had 18 digs and Jasmine Roy had 14 digs. Sara Khatouri totaled 34 assists, and Hailey Olsen had a team-high six blocks.

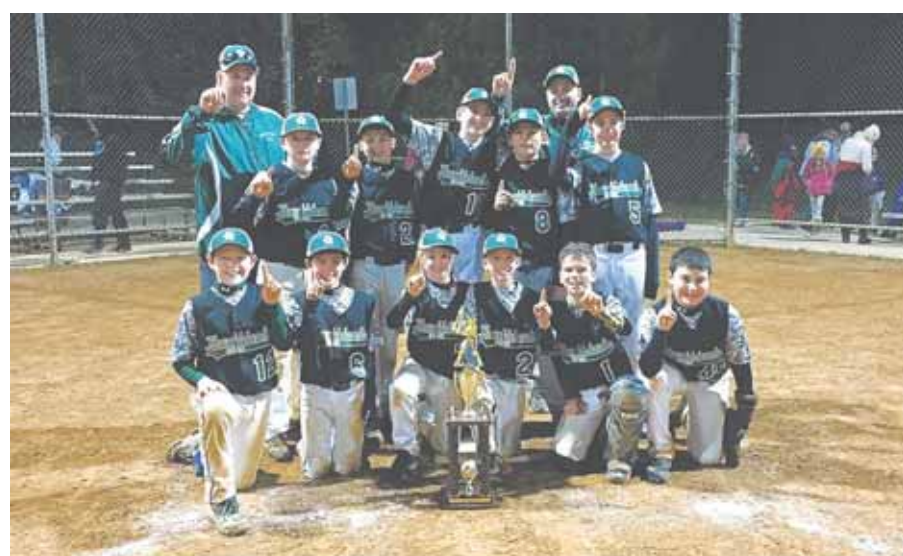
Madison and Langley will meet for the



Madeline Blake and the Madison volleyball team earned a state tournament berth with a win over West Springfield on Nov. 12.

fourth time this season in Saturday's region championship match. The Warhawks took two of three from Langley, including a

sweep of the Saxons in the Conference 6 tournament championship match on Nov. 5.



Vienna Youth Baseball Wins Championship

The 12U Vienna Knuckleheads concluded their fall season by winning the Northern Virginia Baseball Travel League fall tournament. The Knuckleheads won 9 out of their last 10 games and also captured two runner up tournament finishes. Pictured are (front row): Dean Vance, Ethan Rowles, Luke Van Demark, Kevin Wilson, Braden Coward, Edrees Noory; (middle row): Sean Lavey, Alex Hebenstreit, Jack O'Connor, James Mills, Mac Kopka; (back row): Coaches Adam Vance and Greg Rowles.

Crafting Perfect Admissions Essays

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

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Cinger 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.

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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."

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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.

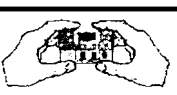
Living life has to be more than just about me; how boring! I don’t want to live inside. I want to live outside. What matters most is what goes on around me; not through me/because of me. I want to be stimulated by external goings on, not internal comings off. Granted, if I’m not in some sort of internal 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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Finding Himself Onstage

A Vienna native hosts, produces and performs in a variety of stand-up comedy shows.

BY ASHLEY SIMPSON
THE CONNECTION



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Allan Sidley, the 2007 graduate of George C. Marshall High School, will host The Sublime Stand-up Comedy series on Nov. 20.

To Go

For more information on attending the Sublime Stand-up Series on Nov. 20 at the Hill Center in Washington D.C., visit hillcenterdc.org/home/programs/2611. Those who will find themselves in New York the same weekend, on Nov. 21, can see Sidley at the Broadway Comedy Club at 6 p.m.

material.

"It took me a year to achieve a mental breakthrough where I finally felt ready to tell jokes alone on the stage," Sidley recalled. "It started one day when I was working from home, and instead of doing any work, I started messing around with that. All day, I wrote jokes. Looking back at it, what I came up with was terrible, but it was fun. Writing jokes was just so fun for me."

Sidley's first solo act was at a show at Arlington's RiRa Irish Pub last year, where he performed amongst a lineup of well-established comedians and admitted that his edgy jokes fell flat and all his lines lacked punch.

"At this time, in 2014, RiRa was where established people went to perform," Sidley explained. "I, on the other hand, only had three minutes on a stage smaller than a table, and I pretty much got up there and cursed a million times. I wanted to make people uncomfortable and laugh at the same time, but nobody laughed."

It takes those humbling moments to weed out the weak and to encourage the hungry. Well, Sidley was one of the hungry, driven ones. It has taken him humility and swallowing nerves, but since his disappointing performance at RiRa, has since performed on a wide variety of stages, from "depressing" dive bars in D.C. to Comedy Clubs in New York.

Today, when Sidley is performing, audiences can enjoy his provoking punchlines for sets that range from eight minutes to thirty. And with his already respectably diverse comic resume, Sidley is ready to show his audience a good time at the Sublime Stand-up Series on the 20th.

Robert Andrew, one of the comics performing on the 20th, re-

called performing at a show with Sidley at Union Jack's in Bethesda earlier this year.

"The first time I saw Allan, the crowd had kind of thinned out, and it's easy to lose an audience when there are so few left," Andrew explained. "But he engaged them and had them laughing. And he's only gotten better in a short amount of time. He's very quick-witted and that serves him well onstage."

Andrew said locals will most certainly experience the Sidley wizardry if they attend the Sublime Stand-up Comedy series.

"The audience can expect to see in Allan a guy who's maybe a little crazy, but knows how to get a laugh," Andre said. "And he's put together a great lineup of comics for the night."

Sidley appreciates and acknowledges all the positive reinforcement and his rapid rise to the top of the game. He attributes these triumphs to trusting his instincts whenever he's on stage.

"I've gained a lot of positive momentum that it's been a bit of a snowball effect," he said. "Now I can be seen as a highlight in shows. It happened out of nowhere. It was all of a sudden. In this game, I've learned that's how it works. I'm beginning to fully trust myself in front of every audience."

AS A PART-TIME COMEDIAN, Sidley admits that he's not in it for the money yet, joking that "I think in total I've made a few hundred dollars," but that one day he would like for it to be his livelihood. While he enjoys his corporate job, he said that comedy is undoubtedly his calling.

"I think I've found myself when I'm onstage," Sidley said.

Vienna Police Reports

Incidents from Nov. 6-12

Incidents

Lost Property - 400 Block Druid Hill Road, NE. Between Oct. 9 at 9 a.m. and Nov. 9 at 1:46 p.m. A resident reported she lost her Virginia Driver's License.

Arrest - Drunk in Public/Possession of Marijuana. Jammin' Java, 225 Maple Ave., SE. Nov. 6, 12:05 a.m. MPO Nelson responded to the area after receiving the report of a possible domestic dispute in progress. Upon arriving he located a man and woman who stated they were boyfriend and girlfriend. They informed him they had been in a verbal argument only, no physical altercation occurred. After speaking with the boyfriend, MPO Nelson determined he was intoxicated. The boyfriend was given the opportunity to get a ride from his girlfriend but indicated he would rather go to jail. MPO Nelson granted his request and arrested the 26-year old man from Oxley Road in Dundalk, Md. for Drunk in Public. As he was preparing him for his ride he located a measurable amount of marijuana in his possession. He was transported to the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center where he was charged with Drunk in Public and Possession of Marijuana.

Petit Larceny - 900 Block Symphony Circle, SW. Nov. 6 between noon and 1 p.m. A resident reported he removed a tire from his granddaughter's vehicle, placed it in the front yard and then went to lunch. When he returned from lunch he discovered the tire was gone.

Destruction of Property - 300 Block Westview Court, NE. Nov. 6, 2:02 p.m. Officer Slebonick responded to the area after receiving a report of a possible burglary in progress. Upon arrival he spoke with the resident who stated he had been having on-going problems with his daughter-in-law. He stated she arrived at the residence and when he wouldn't let her in she took an object and began to swing at the door, causing significant damage. This case is being investigated.

Natural Death - 100 Block Casmar St., SE. Nov. 6, 6:10 p.m. Officer Herrera responded to the area after receiving a report of an elderly female who had passed away. After speaking with the family he determined there were no signs of foul play. A detective will follow up with this case.

Mental Case - Cedar Lane, SE. Nov. 7, 12:03 a.m. Officer Herrera responded to the area after receiving the report of a security guard needing assistance with a manic and agitated person. Upon arriving he located the mother of the agitated person, she informed him her son suffers from a mental condition and had made statements about hurting himself. Due to his mental state Officer Herrera transported him to an area hospital for treatment.

Firearms Violation - 100 Block Casmar St., SE. Nov. 7, 12:54 a.m. Officer Hylinski responded to a residence in reference to a natural death

(Natural Death above). While at the residence he spoke with the son of the deceased who informed him he was a convicted felon, making it illegal for him to be in possession of a firearm. He stated there were several guns in the residence that belonged to his parents. He asked Officer Hylinski to take possession of the guns for destruction. The guns will be held at the Vienna Police Station for destruction.

Police Service - 700 Block Hunter Court, SW. Nov. 7, 9:39 a.m. MPO Vazquez responded to a residence after the resident reported an individual had performed work on her property, which she felt was not to her satisfaction. She stated she wanted the workman trespassed from the property. MPO Vazquez informed the workman to leave the property and not return.

Missing Person - 100 Block Elm St., SW. Between Nov. 7 at 11 a.m. and Nov. 9 at 12:04 p.m. A resident reported her adult son had left home for Virginia Beach. She stated he suffers from a medical condition that sometimes causes him to become confused and forgetful. After not being able to make contact with her son she contacted the Vienna Police Department to report him missing. Case Update: On Nov. 10, the mother contacted Officer Lyons and informed her that her son had returned home safely.

Mental Case - Westview Court, NE. Nov. 7, 11:10 a.m. Officer Slebonick responded to the area after receiving the report of an individual in need of medical treatment. Upon arrival he met with the individual and her family who determined rescue personnel should be summoned. After being evaluated by Fairfax County Rescue personnel she was transported to an area hospital for treatment.

Trespassing - 1400 Block Desale St., SW. Nov. 7, 8:28 p.m. A resident reported a Hispanic male had been seen living in the woods behind his house. Officer Hylinski responded and located the man, who had set up a makeshift residence in the wooded area. The man was informed he was not permitted to sleep in the woods and at the direction of the officer he collected his personal property and left.

Arrest - Drunk in Public - Jammin' Java, 225 Maple Ave., East. Nov. 7, 11 p.m. An employee reported a customer had jumped up on the stage and attempted to take the microphone from a musician in an attempt to take over the show. When the employee ordered the man off the stage he became combative and aggressive. Officer Herrera responded and after speaking with him he determined he was intoxicated. He arrested the 23 year old man from Randolph Road in Rockville, Md. for Drunk in Public. He was transported to the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center where he was to be held until he was sober.

For more Vienna Police highlights, go to viennava.gov.