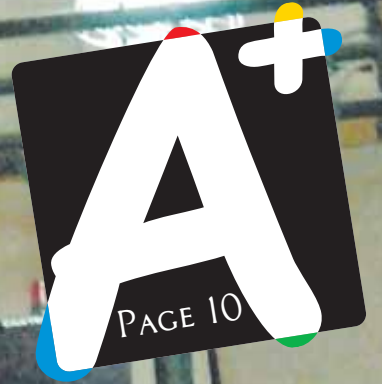


Langley on Top of Conference Standing

SPORTS, PAGE 16

Great Falls
CONNECTION



NEWS, PAGE 6

Public Hearing, Public Access

NEWS, PAGE 3

Student Art on Exhibit at The Arts of Great Falls School

NEWS, PAGE 6

Tavon Tarpley led Langley with 22 points during Friday's win over Madison. Langley moved into sole possession of first place in Conference 6.

OPINION, PAGE 8 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 15 ♦ SPORTS, PAGE 16 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 18

PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

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Public Hearing, Public Access

McLean delegates and senators discuss guns, foster care, nursing, student debt, Judge Jane Roush and more.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Alexandra Reed Lajoux advocates for youth in foster care without a home, “sans domicile fix, as the French say.” The Fostering Futures advocate said 5,375 youth aged out of Virginia’s foster care system between 2008 and 2015.

Reed Lajoux grew up in McLean, attended Chesterbrook Elementary, Longfellow Junior High, and McLean and Langley high schools.

“All the while, I had a permanent address,” she said. “This permanent address was mine to claim even in my 20s as I made the transition to the working world and to a family of my own.”

In fact, 56 percent of the country’s 18-26 year olds currently live with their parents, according to the Pew Research Center.

Youth in foster care aren’t so fortunate, said Reed Lajoux.

“Unfortunately, these kids don’t have a nest to come back to,” said Yusuf Jamaludeen, who mentors foster children.

THE TWO ADVOCATES spoke before McLean’s delegates Marcus Simon (D-53), Rip Sullivan (D-48) and Kathleen Murphy (D-34), and senators Janet Howell (D-32) and Barbara Favola (D-31) at a Town Hall meeting at the McLean Community Center on Saturday, Jan. 16.

They were calling for support of legislation called Fostering Futures that would leverage federal funds to help former foster children who age out of the system without being adopted or reunited with family.

More than one in five teenagers who age out of foster care without permanent connections will become homeless after 18; one in four will be involved in the criminal justice system within two years of leaving the foster care system, fewer than three percent will earn a college degree by age 25 compared to 28 percent of all 25-year-olds; and only 58 percent will graduate high school by 19 compared to 87 percent of all 19 year olds, said Jamaludeen.

On the other hand, foster youth who receive services after 18 are two-to-three times more likely to be enrolled in college, more likely to avoid homelessness, school dropout or incarceration, and are more likely to seek health and mental health treatment when needed.

“We can pay now or pay more more later,” Jamaludeen said.

MORE THAN 45 people attended the hearing Saturday, Jan. 16 at the McLean Community Center.

“We are very eager to hear what’s on your



Yusuf Jamaludeen and Alexandra Reed Lajoux advocate for “Fostering Futures.”



Sen. Jane Howell, Del. Marcus Simon (D-53) and Del. Rip Sullivan (D-48).

mind,” said Howell.

“To hear your ideas and have conversation about what you think is important,” said Favola.

“I look forward to hearing from you,” said Rip Sullivan.

“To hearing your questions and finding out what you want me to be working on,” said Marcus Simon.

“I love serving this district,” said Murphy.

OF COURSE THE RALLY from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in front of NOVA Firearms was on

many people’s minds. Organizers held the rally in support of House Bill 422 sponsored by Simon and Murphy to allow local government to prohibit retail gun sales, gunsmithing services, or operating a sports shooting range within 1,000 feet of a school. Favola has similar legislation in the senate.

Jonathan Sullivan, of McLean, voiced his support for common sense gun legislation.

“We live in a society where gun violence in schools is a reality. At Franklin Sherman they practice emergency drills where they practice huddling in a corner,” he said. “Just



Sen. Barbara Favola (D-31)



Del. Kathleen Murphy (D-34)



April Georgelas discussed problems with some VDOT “megaprojects.”



Franklin Sherman Elementary parent Jonathan Sullivan advocated for common sense gun legislation.

think about that.”

“So when NOVA Firearms opened up, I thought this doesn’t make sense,” Sullivan said. “My kids said, ‘Dad, we don’t feel safe with a gun store right out our window.’”

Kris Gregory thanked McLean’s representatives for their efforts thus far.

“Thank you for your persistence against

SEE DELEGATES, PAGE 17

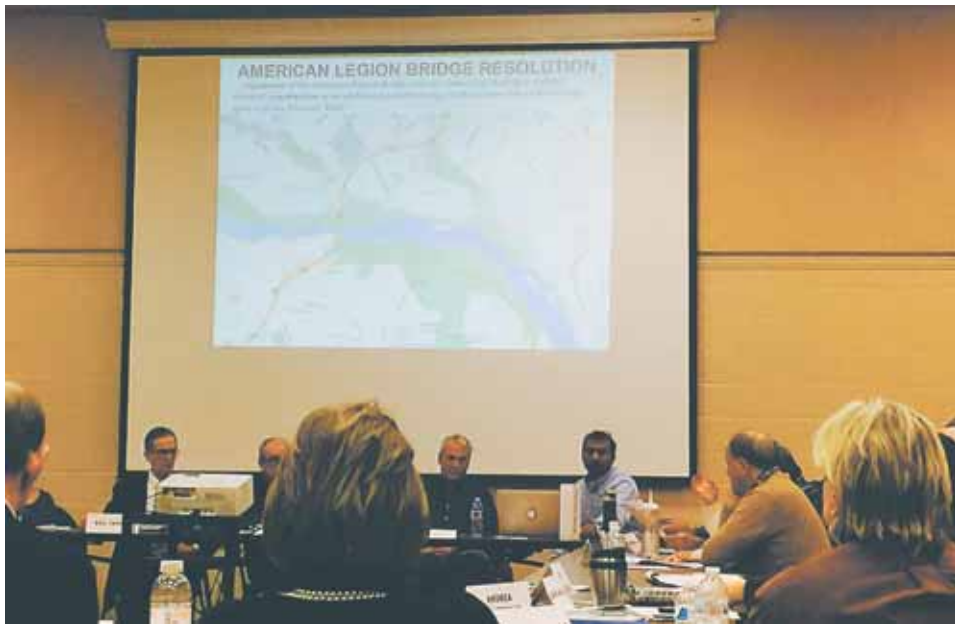


PHOTO BY KEN MOORE/THE CONNECTION

McLean Citizens Association meeting earlier in January where the influential association backed widening the American Legion Bridge.



Accident Ahead: McLean Citizens Association and many county business groups call for improvements to the American Legion Bridge in part because commuters clog McLean and Great Falls roads to circumvent the Beltway backup toward the bridge.

About Crossing the Potomac, Again

McLean Citizens Association, many county business groups, call for widening the American Legion Bridge, adding Express Lanes.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Each weekday, nearly 300,000 vehicles cross the American Legion Bridge, and each day traffic backs up into McLean, Great Falls and beyond.

Vehicle speeds during the afternoon commute slow to an average of 34.9 going towards McLean and 22.5 from McLean to the bridge, according to McLean Citizens Association. Traffic backs up for miles.

Glenn Harris, vice president of the McLean Citizens Association said it was important for MCA to get on the record. "I would like to see MCA come out in favor of fixing this enormous problem," he said. "This isn't exactly rocket science."

Sally Horn said it was time to do something. "It's time for us to act. If we're going to say something, we should change it at this juncture," said Horn, past president of the McLean Citizens Association.

"This is a huge issue and has enormous implications," said Jim Roberts, head of McLean Citizens Association's transportation committee.

The McLean Citizens Association passed a resolution at its last meeting urging the Commonwealth of Virginia, the State of Maryland and the U.S. Department of Transportation to "expeditiously develop and implement a joint plan for the expansion of the American Legion Bridge and its connecting roadways, and the eventual construction of an additional parallel bridge on the eastern side next to the existing span over the Potomac River."

This week, business groups from Herndon, Reston, Springfield, and around Northern Virginia, 20 in all, also call for a new Potomac River crossing west of the American Legion Bridge, plus new man-

aged lanes in each direction over the American Legion Bridge to 270. Signers include the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce, Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce, Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Tysons Regional Chamber, and others.

The American Legion Bridge is entirely in the State of Maryland.

MCA ACTED to encourage efforts between the Montgomery County Council and Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, which wrote to the Governors and Transportation Secretaries of Maryland and Virginia on Oct. 19, 2015, "asking the states to come together and focus on making improvements to address the severe congestion problems at the American Legion Bridge."

A Potomac River Crossing Conditions study conducted by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and presented to the Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) in July of 2015, found that the American Legion Bridge suffers from the worst congestion of all bridges crossing the Potomac River, and had the projected largest growth in traffic volume through 2040.

In 2009, The Maryland State Highway Administration and VDOT concluded The West Side Mobility Study in 2009. "VDOT staff recommended in that study that the 'top priority' for addressing Potomac River crossings should be extending the Express Lanes across the American Legion Bridge to the I-270 interchange."



The American Legion Bridge can back traffic up into Virginia anytime of the day or night.

"We want to put some pressure on the state of Maryland," said Rob Jackson at the Jan. 6 MCA meeting.

"I don't know why people are reluctant," said Harris.

"It goes without saying," said Mark Zetts, head of MCA's planning and zoning committee.

The advocacy group Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance also recommends upgrading the American Legion Bridge with four conventional and two managed/HOT lanes in each direction, and extending the I-495 HOT lanes in Virginia to I-270 western spur in Maryland.

BUT THE RIVER CROSSING has caused intense debate and controversy for the last two decades, and had its critics at the Jan. 6 MCA meeting, as well.

MCA member Katie Probst urged caution. She suggested that the association not dictate the definite solution, but advocate that something needs to be done.

"I feel like this is a huge deal to support. It seems like a rather big issue," she said, stating that she believed she needed more information and more time to understand all the implications.

"Do you realize you just voted for adding two lanes to the American Legion Bridge without any public input?" said April Georgelas, who attended the meeting not as a member. "I've been here for 40 years and I've never seen anything like this."

Georgelas said later that McLean has suffered from ongoing express lane construction on the Beltway for years, and she doesn't welcome more.

Now, "the shoulder project added another lane of merging HOT lane traffic into an already overburdened and dangerous merging area of the Beltway up to the American Legion Bridge, all without public input," Georgelas said.

RESIDENTS ON THE OTHER side of the river in Potomac, Md. have advocated against second river crossing in Montgomery County.

During a multi-year Master Plan process, ratified in 2004 by the Montgomery County Council, Potomac's blueprint for landuse said a second bridge crossing through Potomac violates the responsibility of Potomac as a buffer and protection to the Potomac River.

SEE BRIDGE, PAGE 5

Bridge

FROM PAGE 4

However, members of the Montgomery County Council and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors jointly sent a letter to Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan (R) and Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe (D) on Oct. 19, asking that the two states “come together and focus on making improvements to address the severe congestion problems at the American Legion Bridge.”

Improving the American Legion Bridge should take priority over the possibility of building another crossing of the Potomac River, they said.

“Montgomery County believes strongly that our limited resources are best spent fixing the American Legion Bridge, and we should not be distracted by a divisive second crossing. That’s why we, as two bodies, are calling on our governors to move forward with this vital transportation improvement as quickly as possible.”

“The American Legion Bridge is the major chokepoint in our regional transportation system and it must be fixed,” said Councilmember Roger Berliner, chair of the Montgomery Council’s Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment Committee. “Adding an additional HOT lane in each direction will ease congestion and promote transit. Our two states must work together to make this happen.”

PROPOSALS for a possible new bridge west of the American Legion Bridge are not new, and neither is opposition to the concept.

In 2000, U.S. Rep. Frank Wolf (R-Va.), now retired, requested \$2 million to conduct a study on the feasibility of a Techway bridge over the Potomac River. Public outcry and preliminary analysis of the disruptions the bridge would cause prompted him to cancel the study seven months later.

In 2003, Maryland Gov. Robert Ehrlich (R) and Virginia Gov. Mark Warner (D) announced their support for a new Techway study because they believed the second crossing would benefit “U-shaped commuters” traveling from upper Montgomery County to western Fairfax County (e.g., from Gaithersburg to Reston). The Virginia Department of Transportation conducted a license plate study on the American Legion Bridge and found that only about 8 percent of Virginia and Maryland commuters would benefit from the Techway, because most commuters are traveling to destinations on or inside I-495 rather than to the suburbs outside it.

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GREAT FALLS CONNECTION ♦ JANUARY 20-26, 2016 ♦ 5

NEWS

Art teachers at the Arts of Great Falls School. (From left): Judith St. Ledger-Roty, Jill Banks, Jennifer Duncan, Julie Casso and Michela Mansuina.



PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION



Donna Barnako of Great Falls with her piece, 'Building Bridges, Mending Fences.'

Student Art on Exhibit at The Arts of Great Falls School

The Arts of Great Falls School and Gallery held its seventh annual student art exhibition and awards ceremony on Saturday, Jan. 16 at 756 Walker Road in Great Falls. The show included 51 pieces of art with still lifes, landscapes, portraits, drawings and mixed media art by 17 adult artists who contributed 30 pieces and 12 youth artists who contributed 21 pieces. Local artists Lori Goll and Jay Pigeon judged the show, which was divided into youth and adult categories.

"We love the student art show because it's the one time of the year when students of all skill levels can submit and display their work with fellow students," said Julie Casso, executive director of The Arts of Great Falls School and Gallery and director of the school. "It's really nice when they can do this one time in the year."

The artwork will be exhibited through Jan. 30; the hours for exhibit viewing are

during the Artists' Atelier open hours on Wednesdays from noon to 4 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Arts of Great Falls Gallery is at 756 Walker Road in Great Falls Village Centre.

The Arts of Great Falls School offers weekly workshops and classes for adults and youth. Among the different adult classes now through March are: Painting or Drawing the Portrait; Still Life Drawing and Painting; Still Life Plus Personal Painting Projects; Evening Painting in Oils; Abstracting the Still Life in Acrylics, and Portrait. For youth, the weekly classes include: Drawing and Painting for Children; and Creative Drama. Workshops starting in February include Beginning Classical Drawing and Painting and Intermediate Classical Drawing and Painting. Visit www.greatfallsart.org. Or contact Julie Casso, school director, at school@greatfallsart.org or 703-232-1575.

Award Winners

The following artists won awards for their artwork:

BEGINNER CLASS:

- ❖ First Place, "Looking Pretty," by Lilyrose Golden, 8;
- ❖ Second Place, "Colors of the Night," by Elliott Dell'Atti, 9;
- ❖ Honorable Mention, "Question Mark," by William Wu.

INTERMEDIATE CLASS:

- ❖ First Place, "Look Into My Eyes," by Olivia Fox, 13;

- ❖ Second Place, "Color Study," by Grace DeLuca, 16;
- ❖ Honorable Mention, "Skulls & Roses," by Miriam Burch, 12.

ADULT RECOGNITION

- ❖ First Place, "Fall Meadow," by Cindi Berry;
- ❖ Second Place, "Reflections of a Peach," by Erin Moore Thiebert;
- ❖ Third Place, "Kitty," by Linda Garden;
- ❖ Honorable Mention, "Deep Down," by Gwendolyn Cohen;
- ❖ Honorable Mention, "Pop," by Robin Rosner.



Gracie DeLuca, 16, of Great Falls won second place for 'Color Study.'



Lilyrose Golden, 8, of Great Falls won first place for "Looking Pretty."



Miriam Burch, 12, of Great Falls won Honorable Mention for her work.

Great Falls Scouts Complete Holiday Service Project

The Scouts of Troop 673 spent their last meeting of 2015 working on their annual holiday service project. They wrapped gifts and brought in food for two Fairfax County families they are sponsoring for the Christmas holiday. The project is under the auspices of Our Daily Bread-Fairfax, which works closely with Fairfax County public schools and other county agencies to identify several thousand individuals and families who need support for Thanksgiving and Christmas. The Scouts delivered the presents and food to their sponsored families, one with six kids who live in Fairfax, and the other a household of seven children in Alexandria.



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Tyler is impressed. “To see someone who has gone through so much and is now achieving her goals – it’s incredible. Barbara always wants me to challenge her, and I love it! What makes me most proud is the simple fact that she is proud of herself. I may have helped along the way, but if she hadn’t made the first step to come into Koko FitClub, none of this would have been possible.”

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Pay Attention

The Virginia General Assembly began its 60-day 2016 session on Wednesday, Jan. 13. Here in Northern Virginia, residents are often far more cognizant of national politics and government than state and local government. But there are several reasons why, especially in Virginia, especially if you live in Northern Virginia, you should pay attention.

In Virginia, localities have only the power expressly given by the General Assembly. So living in Fairfax or Arlington or Alexandria, your local governments and regulations are often not able to reflect the values and preferences of residents.

For example, for Fairfax County to have any say about whether a gun store can operate adjacent to a school, where students can see customers coming and going with weapons, the General Assembly would have to vote to give the county that authority. While this has been a hot topic here, and several legislators have introduced "authorizing legislation," it would be remarkable if the currently constituted assembly would allow this to go forward.

Living in the wealthiest areas of the Commonwealth also raises concerns. Localities have very limited options for raising revenue. The revenue that is actually based on someone's ability to pay, income taxes, is only collected by the state; localities cannot claim any portion of income tax. Of course Northern Virginia is the economic engine of the state, and so it makes sense that a significant portion of the

state budget would be funded with Northern Virginia dollars. But it is unfair that the General Assembly limits localities ability to access other revenue choices to fund local necessities like schools.

There are dozens of other examples, and most are complicated. But local officials are elected, and if local government takes action not supported by local voters, they will be voted out.

Because of gerrymandering of districts in both the House of Delegates and the Virginia Senate, the makeup of the General Assembly is far more conservative than the Commonwealth overall, as evidenced by Democrats elected to all statewide offices. This makes the control from Richmond all the more egregious.

Every resident is represented by one delegate and one senator in the Virginia General Assembly. You can visit the General Assembly website to find out who represents you, for contact information, for session livestreaming and more.

<http://viriniageneralassembly.gov>

Vote Now for Presidential Primary

Who will be the next President of the United States also matters.

In order to vote in either of Virginia's presidential primaries on March 1, voters must be registered by Feb. 8. Voting "absentee in per-

General Assembly action matters more in Virginia.

son" (early voting available for myriad reasons, including anyone who will commute to work on Election Day) is already underway.

In Virginia, voters do not register by party. In the primaries for President, you can vote either the Democrat or Republican ballot, but not both. If you choose to vote the Republican ballot, you will be required to sign the following statement first:

Section 24.2-545 of the Code of Virginia allows the political party holding a primary to determine requirements for voting in the primary. The Republican Party of Virginia has determined that the following statement shall be a requirement of your participation. STATEMENT: My signature below indicates that I am a Republican.

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EDITORIAL

Transportation Improvements Will Bolster Economy

Northern Virginia Business Transportation Coalition 2016 policy statement.

We, the undersigned Northern Virginia organizations representing the vast majority of businesses and employees of Northern Virginia's private sector and non-profit workforce, believe that a strong, efficient regional transportation network is essential to our region's future economic competitiveness, security, and quality of life. We believe that unlocking Northern Virginia's transportation grid requires a strategic regional approach.

We believe that achieving the best solutions to our transportation challenges requires a big picture perspective — regionally as well as statewide. Efforts to constrain, either by law or regulation, the Commonwealth Transportation Board's ability to determine the best investments for the state, are counter to the goals set forth in House Bill 2, 2014 legislation

designed to address the commonwealth's congestion reduction and economic development needs.

The focus of the Commonwealth Transportation Board and the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, our region's designated transportation planning body, should be on the investment of regional, state, federal, and private sector transportation dollars for highway, transit improvements, and intelligent transportation systems that will:

- ❖ Move the greatest number of people throughout the region;
- ❖ Reduce congestion and travel time between major regional employment centers and communities;
- ❖ Increase reliability of the network region-wide while producing the best long-term return on investment;
- ❖ Promote regional economic

development and growth; and

- ❖ Enhance regional security.

We are concerned that the law requiring the long-term benefits of Northern Virginia's regional funds be distributed proportionally among jurisdictions impedes the ability of the regional body to address the region's most critical transportation needs.

We believe that regional transportation funds should be primarily focused and leveraged, where appropriate, with federal, state, and private funds on projects of large-scale regional significance. These include:

- ❖ I-66 — construct new lanes and enhance transit from US Route 15/Haymarket to Theodore Roosevelt Bridge.
- ❖ New Potomac River Crossing — constructed west of American Legion Bridge.
- ❖ American Legion Bridge — add new express/managed lanes in each direction.
- ❖ Metro — improve maintenance, operations, safety and rail fleet.
- ❖ Bi-County Parkway — construct between I-66/Route 234 Bypass in Prince William County

and Route 50 in Loudoun County.

- ❖ Route 28 — upgrade to eight lanes.

❖ Fairfax County Parkway — convert to limited access facility.

❖ I-395 — convert HOV lanes to express/managed lanes between the Capital Beltway and the 14th Street Bridge.

❖ Regional Express Bus network — implement in the I-66, I-95, I-395, I-495, Dulles and other major regional corridors.

We support performance-based statewide and regional transportation plans that focus on new and existing corridors of regional and statewide significance, the evaluation of highway and public transit projects utilizing the same criteria, and the prioritization of investments first and foremost on the ability to reduce congestion and improve travel time.

Brian M. Gordon, MPA, Apartment and Office Building Association
Leo J. Titus, Jr., PE, Committee for Dulles

Patricia Nicoson, Dulles Corridor Rail Association

Mark S. Ingrao, Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce Greater

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FAITH NOTES

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

St. Francis Episcopal Church, 9220 Georgetown Pike in Great Falls, offers musical, educational, outreach and fellowship ministries in addition to worship services, including a 7:45 a.m. worship service without music; 9 a.m. worship service, children's chapel and children's choirs; 10 a.m. Sunday school and adult forum; and 11 a.m. worship service with adult choir. 703-759-2082.

The Jewish Social Services Agency (JSSA) offers a wide variety of support groups for those with emotional, social, and physical challenges. www.jssa.org/growth-learning.

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

McLean Bible Church Fitness Class at Body & Soul Fitness. Gain balance, energy and strength at 9:45 a.m. Mondays and Fridays. Free childcare for registered students. bodyandsoul@mcleanbible.org.

St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church, 1830 Kirby Road in McLean, holds a third Sunday service every month at 10:15 a.m. which allows children to play active roles in the music and as greeters and ushers. Traditional services are every Sunday at 8:15 and 10:15 a.m.

Chesterbrook United Methodist Church is at 1711 Kirby Road, McLean. Worship service is at 11 a.m. Sunday school is at 9:30 a.m. for adults and children. 703-356-7100 or www.ChesterbrookUMC.org.

Centering Prayer Group meets

Fridays, 9:30 a.m. at Andrew Chapel United Methodist Church, 1301 Trap Road, Vienna. The hour includes a brief reading related to Centering Prayer, followed by a 20-minute prayer period. E-mail Martha Thomas at mmthomas211@hotmail.com or call the church at 703-759-3509.

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton, offers the Religious Exploration (RE) program for all children, from pre-K toddlers through high school seniors, emphasizing exploration of all religious traditions while developing a personal spiritual path. The RE program offers classes on Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings. 703-281-4230.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington and the Jewish Outreach Institute offer the Mothers/Parents Circle, an umbrella of free educational events and resources. Jewish rituals, ethics and the creation of a Jewish home, regular meetings and group Shabbats and holidays. Participants include Sha'are Shalom, Congregation Beth Emeth, Temple Rodef Shalom and the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia. ShalomDC.org.

Trinity United Methodist Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean. Sunday worship services are at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday School for adults is at 9:30 a.m. and for children during the 10:30 a.m. worship service. Youth Group for grades 7-12 meets Sundays at 6 p.m. A 20-minute service of Holy Communion is held each Wednesday at noon. 703-356-3312 or umtrinity.org.

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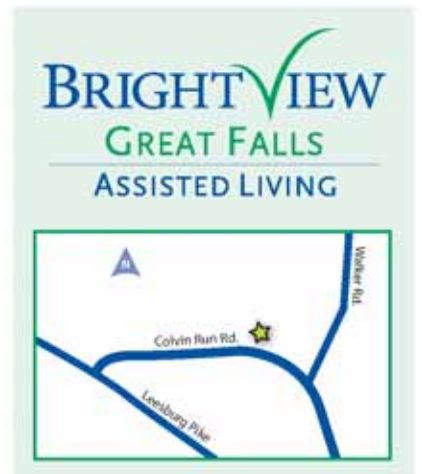
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Victor Not Victim

Modelling what it takes for success, Nyrisha Beckman overcomes childhood of foster care.

By JOAN BRADY
THE CONNECTION

At tall, striking figure in red, Nyrisha Beckman stands in front of a room of recent Fairfax County high school graduates; not as a cautionary tale, but rather a true inspiration.

Her journey has been one of unrelenting perseverance—of getting knocked down and picking herself up, of being her own cheerleader. Today, despite many obstacles, the home she owns with her fiancé displays a wall of degrees including an associate's, a bachelor's and a master's. Shortly, a second master's will join the others.

Beckman wants these high school graduates, who are Fairfax County foster care alumni, to know that they can do it too. Quoting one of her favorite poems, Beckman tells them, "Rest if you must, but don't you quit."

And that determination was the example set by her older sister, Taneka, who says, "We couldn't help how we were brought up. It was on each of us whether, as adults, we were going to be a success or a failure."

Placed in foster care for the first time at age 6, Beckman lived in two different foster homes before returning to her mother's home where she lived for the next few years.

About to start sixth grade, social services intervened again and she and her five under-age sisters were removed from their mother's household for good. Beckman and three of the sisters were taken in by an aunt. Beckman was grateful to be placed with a family member and to have her sisters for support.

But for children living a precarious childhood, there are often no adults to confide in and when things went south at her aunt's, "We were afraid to go to the social worker. We stayed there until things got so bad that we ran away," she said. By that time, she was a 10th grader.

RUNNING AWAY did get her removed from her aunt's house, but being split up from her sisters and living in four different foster homes over the next three years wasn't easy. "You were on eggshells in someone else's house. You never felt like you were part of that family," she said.

Educational success can be elusive for children who spend time in foster care. "Children often have many moves from foster home to foster home," said Marilyn Durbin, LCSW, BCD of Centreville and 25-year veteran of Fairfax County Foster Care and Adoption caseworker and supervisor.

"This can result in changing schools. With the educational disruptions, the trauma of moving and the trauma of the abuse and/or neglect that brought them into the system in the first place, learning can be diffi-

cult and sometimes impossible."

A recent study commissioned by the state of Virginia found that children who aged out of foster care were 37 percent less likely to have earned a high school diploma than their counterparts who were not in care.

Beckman and her siblings had an uncle who somehow managed to instill in them the idea that education was the key to success. Even with all of the turmoil and diagnoses of ADD/ADHD and learning disabled, Beckman didn't drop out of high school.

When she graduated, several of her older siblings were setting a good example by pursuing higher education. This sets the Beckman siblings apart. Fewer than two percent of foster care alumni earn a college degree by age 25, compared to 28 percent of all 25-year-olds, according to the Chapin Hall Midwest study.

WHEN BECKMAN began her freshman year at The State University of New York at Buffalo, in the city where she had grown up, she was 18. Having aged out of foster care, she was on her own without the safety net and support that parents often provide. Beckman found herself far behind the rest of her classmates academically. She struggled to keep up while working to ensure she had a roof over her head and food to eat. Going to school also meant less time to hang out with her friends. It was too much. She dropped out after her freshman year.

With few options, Beckman joined the Army National Guard where she served for four years as a chemical specialist.

By 2003, she had fulfilled her military commitment and was juggling motherhood with several jobs in an effort to support their little family.

"My inspiration was my son," Beckman said, "I was working two - three jobs to support us. I knew I wanted Bryant to have a life where he had choices. To give him that, I needed to go back to college."

But her plans were derailed when her application to return to the University at Buffalo was not accepted.

Instead of crumbling under the rejection, Beckman pressed on: "Cannot" is simply not in my vocabulary." She was determined not to let obstacles of money, childcare and academic challenges keep her from succeeding. She got out a piece of paper and starting writing down her goals.

With college at the top of her list, she matriculated at Erie Community College. Unable to afford evening childcare, Beckman brought her baby son with her to class. As a result, some of Bryant's earliest memories are of classrooms with just one window and the single sheet of paper he had to entertain himself.

DESPITE THE SETBACKS, Beckman con-



Aaron and London Hall with Bryant and Nyrisha Beckman.

PHOTOS BY JOAN BRADY/THE CONNECTION



Nyrisha Beckman with her son Bryant.

tinued to push forward to achieve her goals. "That seed, planted by her uncle, might have been what it took to help instill the resiliency she needed to fight to return to college," said Jackie Stout, a licensed clinical social worker specializing in the treatment of trauma and childhood issues using EMDR therapy.

Two years later when she re-applied to the University at Buffalo, Beckman was armed with an associate's degree from Erie Community College in business administration and a 3.5 grade point average.

Acceptance back into the University at Buffalo meant continuing to juggle a full-time job with motherhood and her full course load, Beckman remembers how supportive her professors were, even entertaining young Bryant while she took exams.

When she accepted her bachelor of arts, she was ready to start working toward her next goal. The university had awarded her with a full-ride scholarship to complete a master's in Rehabilitation Counseling. Daniel J. Smith, adjunct professor, Graduate School of Education remembers Beckman from those days, "She wasn't writing or researching on a graduate level [when she started]. But she went back and forth with me on her papers, accepting criticism and not giving up until she felt she had done her best. By the end of her third class with me, she was writing in the top 30 percent." And today, he said, "her writing is Ph.D. level."

Smith didn't know prior to being interviewed for this article that Beckman had had a difficult child-

hood. He said, "I wish I had known, I wouldn't have been so hard on her." But then thought better of it. He shouldn't have expected less of her than she expected from herself, and that is to be the very best that she can be, he said.

In 2013, Beckman earned her master in rehabilitation counseling. She says that over the thousands who came to celebrate the graduates, she could hear her then 11-year-old son cheering for her. Bryant remembers that day too; both his pride in his mother and how loudly he screamed "MOOOOOOM!" when she accepted her diploma.

In addition to raising her son and merging their duo with her fiancé and his daughter, London, she is working on her second master's, works full-time during the week and has a part-time job on weekends. "[Nyrisha's] heart is as big as the world," her fiancé, Aaron Hall, said.

HER WILLINGNESS to help others without judgment is key to her success as an employment/workforce specialist for Linden Resources, Inc. Beckman is deployed to Fairfax County and works at the Merrifield Behavioral Health Outpatient Program.

"Her success in matching clients with employment is more than double the average. That's unheard of," said Lori Bell, Mental Health manager and Beckman's direct supervisor. "She is a superstar and ignites everyone around her to strive to be the same."

SEE SUCCESS STORY. PAGE 12



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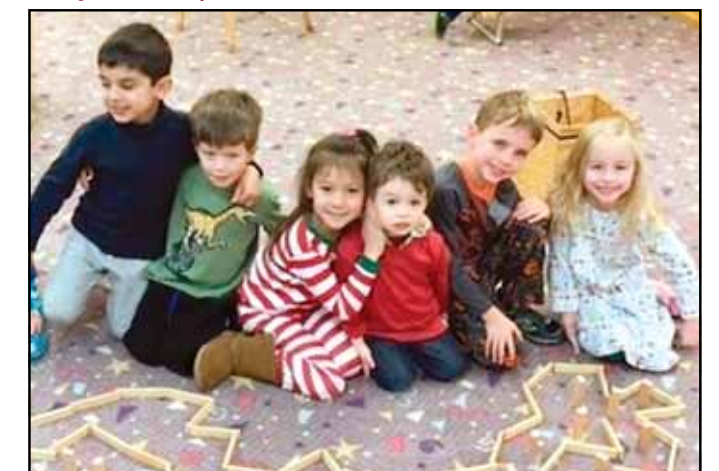
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Foster Child's Success Story

FROM PAGE 11

Director of Mental Health Services LaVurne Williams can't say enough about Beckman's impact. "You can't be in the same building with Nyrisha and not meet her. Her personality is that magnetizing. Nyrisha works with clients with struggles that contribute to difficulties finding and keeping employment. Without jobs, they are unable to obtain housing and meet the basic needs of themselves and their families. She works tirelessly to figure out creative ways connect her clients with jobs. She changes the lives of everyone around her."

Beckman says she uses her own experiences to help her clients.

"You can't take care of yourself without employment and education. I can set an example. If I can do it, they can too."

Friends, classmates, colleagues and supervisors confirm the value of Beckman.

"Everyone wants to be around her," said Teresa Zutter, director of Education at First Star Greater Washington Academy, where Beckman volunteers.

"She has a 'pull yourself up by your bootstraps' attitude which she uses to encourage others," said Chauncey Strong, Chapter Liaison, Foster Care Alumni of America.

"She has a natural empathy," said Krystal Edmead, graduate school classmate.

"She has shown me that whatever you want to do

in life, you can do, just stick with it," said Lillian Imes Gates, a childhood friend.

"She is a go-getter, a very impressive self starter," said Liesa Snodgrass, internship clinical supervisor

Beckman, reflecting on how she juggles a family, full and part-time work and her many volunteer commitments, posits that even the ADHD may have helped her along the way, "Maybe it's that hyperactivity that allows me to juggle and accomplish so many things," she said with a smile.

She is sympathetic to the people who failed her during her childhood. Her parents, a mother with a seventh-grade education and an untreated mental illness and a father who struggled with drug addiction, did the best they could, she says. Relatives and foster parents who failed her, were not properly trained.

Every day, Beckman wears something red. To her, it is the color of energy and it helps to fuel her drive. It is also her mother's favorite color, she notes.

Despite all of her success, Beckman is wistful when she talks of her one stuffed animal, long ago lost in one of those many childhood moves and of the pictures of her childhood never taken. She is unwavering in her resolve that Bryant and London's childhoods be different, with mementoes kept safe and memories captured in pictures.

Now 36-years-old, Beckman doesn't waste a single minute, setting an example every day as to what it is to be a victor, instead of a victim.



PHOTO BY JOAN BRADY/THE CONNECTION

Nyrisha Beckman at her desk.




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Calling Great Falls Sixth-Graders

Great Falls Writers Group hosts second annual Youth Writing Contest on Feb. 6.

BY CHRISTINA TYLER WENKS
FOR GREAT FALLS CONNECTION

Cash often motivates students to do any thing — even homework. Sixth-graders have an opportunity to write for monetary prizes and fun. To encourage, inspire, and reward young writers, the Great Falls Writer's Group (GFWG) hosts its second annual Youth Creative Writing Contest for sixth graders on Saturday, Feb. 6. The contest is at the Great Falls Library at 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls.

"What we're doing with this contest is creating excitement among young people about the craft of writing," said Kristin Clark Taylor, who founded GFWG in August 2012.

In the contest's second year, the GFWG expands opportunity to all sixth-graders who reside in the 22066 ZIP code or attend public school in Great Falls. Sixth-graders who attend Great Falls Elementary School, Forestville Elementary School and Colvin Run Elementary School are asked to bring a current progress report with the child's name and grade on it as proof of enrollment. Private-schooled sixth-graders and home-schooled students must provide proof of residency within the 22066 ZIP code.

At the time of the contest, parents must provide contact information for notifying winners. Parents are encouraged to bring a self-addressed stamped envelope at the time of the contest to return original works after judging as a keepsake for their children and to cultivate more creative thought.

"Some of last year's entries could have been developed into much bigger stories," said Laura Malone Elliott, a best-selling author who served as a judge of the inaugural year's contest.

"We're reaching out and drawing in," said Taylor. "Our ultimate goal is all of this is to make sure our young writers come face-to-face with the fact that the words they create have value, impact and staying power."

Forestville Elementary School principal Todd Franklin says having no warning of the writing prompt and no parental or outside aid levels the playing field for participants. He sees the GFWG Youth Creative Writing Contest as an opportunity for students to display their skills and put their thoughts, feelings and perspectives on paper. He is sharing contest information with other principals and educators to encourage their sixth-grade students to build skills and confidence through opportunities such as this.

"Writing across the curriculum is a region and county goal for us educators this year," said Franklin. "Writing extends well beyond our language and reading curriculum and needs to be promoted and nurtured across all subjects."

The inaugural writing contest was administered as an in-class writing assignment at Forestville Elementary School last February. Students were intentionally not given advance notice of the assignment.

More Information

Who: All sixth-graders in Great Falls

What: Youth Writing Contest hosted by the Great Falls Writer's Group

When: Saturday, Feb. 6 at 9 a.m., 10:30 a.m., noon and 1:30 p.m.

Where: Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls

Register online at <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0845a4a82ba4fa7-2016>

Sign-up is first-come, first-served. Bring proof of residency within 22066 or proof of attending a public school in Great Falls, pencils, loose-leaf paper, and a self-addressed-stamped envelope for returning original work after judging.

Sixth-grade teacher Jennifer Donlon challenged her students to think creatively. They were required to do the assignment for a class grade, but they could choose whether to enter the contest — and more than 110 eagerly did.

Donlon believes the contest showcased writers of all academic abilities. A few honorable-mention awards went to students who must work harder to make the grade than many peers, but the words carried weight and resulted in being a point or two from receiving a cash award.

"Last year's contest winners included a number of children who otherwise did not achieve high grades," said Donlon. "The looks of pride and accomplishment on their faces as I read the winners was priceless!"

Feedback from students, parents and teachers persuaded GFWG to expand the contest to the greater Great Falls community.

Sixth-graders who wish to participate must register online at <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0845a4a82ba4fa7-2016>. The contest provides four sessions accommodating 40 students each, to be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

"The biggest challenge is finding a space to accommodate as many students as we can," said Michael Cappitelli, contest committee chairman. "We'd like to open it up to a much larger geographical area, but we are limited by space and the number of volunteers we have."

Writing will be judged and scored upon its creativity, originality, content and relationship to the prompt topic, grammar and story development. In the event of a tie, categories will be eliminated and scores recalculated to determine top scores. Students will be assigned a number to place on entries so judging is done blindly and without names and schools attached.

Published authors, college professors and librarians are generously giving their free time between personal deadlines to judge entries.

First, second, and third-place winners will receive cash awards to be distributed in late spring. The Friends of the Great Falls Library is contributing prize money.

GFWG members Michael Cappitelli, Pat Britz, Kate Schwarz and Christina Tyler Wenks created the contest and recruited judges. This year, Mary McKay, Myrna Stewart, Merrill Lishan and Nullie Stockton join the youth writing contest committee as the contest grows.



Emelie Parker of CCH and some Haitian students in their Shots for Shots T-shirts.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

GFHoops to Host Second Shots for Shots Campaign

A long line in a grocery store can be tedious or lead to great things. Last year a chance meeting in one of those long lines allowed GFHoops the opportunity to change lives. GFHoops commissioner Michelle Claude met the Community Coalition for Haiti's (CCH) Emelie Parker in a long checkout line and the two began a conversation that led to GFHoops' first fundraiser, the Shots for Shots campaign.

The Shots for Shots campaign is a player shooting contest in which players compete against their teammates and then against other players in their age group. The winners in Great Falls receive a T-shirt and the children in Haiti are winners when they receive their vaccinations. Most children don't think getting a shot is much of a prize but for a child in Haiti that vaccination means they can go to school, which gives them a "shot" at a better future.

Through GFHoops' players' efforts CCH was able to meet its vaccination goal, but in a country where most families live on \$2 per day GFHoops and CCH were able to do much more. With the funds raised by the Great Falls players CCH has been able

to launch a multi-pronged wellness program. The program's goals include providing school-based health services involving mobilized wellness clinics to reach rural schools and provide curative and preventative health screenings; community health and wellness days to provide health education to communities where access to clinics is too difficult; and building parent to parent networks in which a core group of parents are identified and trained to identify health and wellness needs and train other parents on health and wellness interventions.

CCH has been working in Haiti since 1989. Their vision is to transform lives one by one through long-term community driven solutions in healthcare, education and community development. In other words, their philosophy is not to give a handout but rather give the Haitians a hand up. GFHoops is excited to host the Second Annual Shots for Shots contest the weekends of Jan. 23-24 and 30-31, and use lay-ups during the half times of the GFHoops basketball games to give a hand up to Haiti.

—MALIA KISHORE

WEEK IN GREAT FALLS

Senior Center Event to Discuss Human Genome Project

The Great Falls Senior Center (GFSC) speaker for February is Carla L. Easter, Ph.D., chief of the Education and Community Involvement Branch at the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI). Her topic will be The Human Genome Project. She played a major role in the development of the NIH/Smithsonian exhibition, Genome: Unlocking Life's Code, and its accompanying website, and serves as a liaison to the K-12 and university community as a speaker on genome science and career preparation and pathways. Dr. Easter also serves as an adjunct faculty member at the University of the District of Columbia department of Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

The Feb. 2 event will be held at United Methodist Church Doylestown, 10100 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. and includes lunch. The event sponsor is the Rotary Club of Great Falls. The Rotary Club meets at the River Bend Country Club on Thursdays at 7:30 a.m. for breakfast and the public is invited. For more information, visit www.rotarygreatfalls.org.

Space is limited so reservations are a must. To reserve, email Polly Fitzgerald at pollyfitz1@verizon.net or call 703-759-4345. Visit gfseniors.org.

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NEWS

Great Falls Boy Scouts Earn Eagle Scout Rank

Boy Scout Troop 55 achieves its 100th Eagle Scout.

Boy Scout Troop 55, sponsored by St. Francis Episcopal Church in Great Falls, promoted five scouts to the Eagle Rank.

The new Eagle Scouts are Andrew Dudzik, Corey Hodge, Joseph Kee and Paul Youssef, all attending Langley High School; and Nick Dunie who attends Fort Union Military Academy. Each of these Eagle Scouts demonstrated service to the community, leadership and mentored other scouts. In addition, they each planned and executed a complex project as described below.

Andrew Dudzik's project constructed a roof over St. Francis Episcopal Church's utility area to protect equipment. Andrew said, "The most important thing I learned is how to be a follower, as well as a leader. This shows respect for those that are in charge."

Nick Dunie's Eagle project constructed a foot-bridge over a stream and cleared the trail around the new crossing. Dunie said, "I have been able to apply the leadership skills I learned in Scouting to many other areas of my life."

Corey Hodge led a team that implemented a community-wide collection of children's books for an underprivileged elementary school in Ohio. Hodge stated, "I learned leadership and public speaking in Boy Scouts, and these are incredibly important skills. I credit Scouts for helping me with both."

Joseph Kee is the 100th Eagle Scout for Troop 55. Joseph's project built two cook-top shelves for Restore in Chantilly. Kee said, "The most important thing I've learned from scouting is how to cook. I'll use these skills when I go to college this Fall."

Paul Youssef's project constructed a new staircase in the parking lot at St. Thomas a Becket Catholic Church in Reston to allow parishioners to avoid climbing a muddy hill. Paul stated, "The most important thing I learned from Scouting is discovering who I am. Scouting has provided a template for success and opportunities that no school, occupation, organization or amount of money could ever have offered me."



Current and future Eagle Scouts. Bottom, from left, Patrick Ryan, Paul Youssef, Scoutmaster Gary Pan, Kevin Devlin and Wesley Pan. Top from left, Drew Dudzik, Thomas Windus, Will Frank, William Molster and Justin Meeker.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



From left, Diane Perrino, Congresswoman Barbara Comstock, Eagle Scout Paul Youssef and Ash Youssef.

Each Eagle Scout was recognized for their accomplishments at a formal Court of Honor. Gary Pan, the Scoutmaster for Troop 55, presided over the ceremonies.

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MIDWEEK SERVICES, WED. 7:00 PM

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SPECIAL CONNECTIONS CALENDAR

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday unless noted.

FEBRUARY

2/3/2016..... Valentine's Dining & Gifts I
2/3/2016.. Wellbeing – Nat'l. Children's Dental Health Month
2/10/2016.....HomeLifeStyle
2/10/2016.....Valentine's Dining & Gifts II
2/17/2016.....A+ Camps & Schools
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CALENDAR

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

THURSDAY/JAN. 21

"Brush Up Your Shakespeare." 7:30 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave. McLean. Experts from the Shakespeare Theatre, American Shakespeare Center and the Folger Shakespeare Library are back to give you a guided tour of the world of Shakespeare in preparation for American Shakespeare Center on Tour's Shakespeare Weekend at The Alden. Tickets: \$6/\$3 MCC district residents; free with the three-play ASC weekend package. Single tickets available at the box office only. <http://www.mcleancenter.org/>. 703-790-0123.

Zen Coloring. 7-8 p.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave, McLean. De-stress and meet new people while working on detailed coloring pages for adults. Coloring pages and colored pencils provided. Teens and Adults. 703-356-0770.

FRIDAY/JAN. 22

American Shakespeare Center on Tour's Shakespeare Weekend at The Alden: "Julius Caesar." 8 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave. McLean. In this profoundly moving, breathtaking and deeply human play, Shakespeare shows us a world on fire; a world turned upside down; a world where some of history's most famous men commit horrific crimes in the name of patriotism and honor. "Julius Caesar" is a dazzling thrill ride of betrayal, violence and perhaps most surprisingly, love. \$20-\$35 (three plays for \$50-\$88). <http://www.mcleancenter.org/> or 703-790-0123.

Robyn Hitchcock. 8 p.m. The Barnes, Wolf Trap, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. One of England's most enduring contemporary singer/songwriters, Robyn Hitchcock began his career performing folk rock in Cambridge. Come enjoy his performance with Emma Swift, who is an alt-country songstress and award-winning radio broadcaster. \$25-\$28. <http://www.wolftrap.org> or 703-255-1900.

McLean Art Society Meeting. 10 a.m.-noon. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Beverly Ress, a graphic artist who does Botanical illustrations, will be the featured presenter. 703-790-0123.

Playdate Cafe. 10 a.m.-noon. Meeting Room, Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Toys and playspace for children. Coffee and conversation for grownups. Ages birth-5. 703-757-8560.

Family Game Time. 3:30-5:30 p.m. Meeting Room, Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Drop-in and play assorted board games. All skill levels and ages welcome. 703-757-8560.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/JAN. 22-24

Henry IV, Part 1. Friday-Saturday, 8 p.m. Sunday, 4 p.m. Green Hedges School, 415 Windover Ave., Vienna. The Britches and Hose Shakespeare Company is thrilled to announce its upcoming production of William Shakespeare's play. The Britches and Hose Shakespeare Company is a gender-blind theater group devoted to creating innovative productions. \$10. <http://www.britchesandhoseshaakespearecompany.com/>

Hope on Ice. 3-9:30 p.m. Tysons Skate Rink, 1961 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Community ice skating extravaganza benefiting American Cancer Society and honoring cancer survivors. DJ Civil, live music, entertainment and Luminaria on ice ceremony. First 50 cancer survivors receive commemorative T-shirt. \$12. skatetysonscorner@gmail.com. 703-673-8044.

SATURDAY/JAN. 23

All Aboard! Ticket to Ride Game Event. 2 p.m. Barnes and Noble Tysons, 7851-L Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Customers of all ages can join booksellers and learn to play the popular Ticket to Ride strategy board game. 703-506-6756.

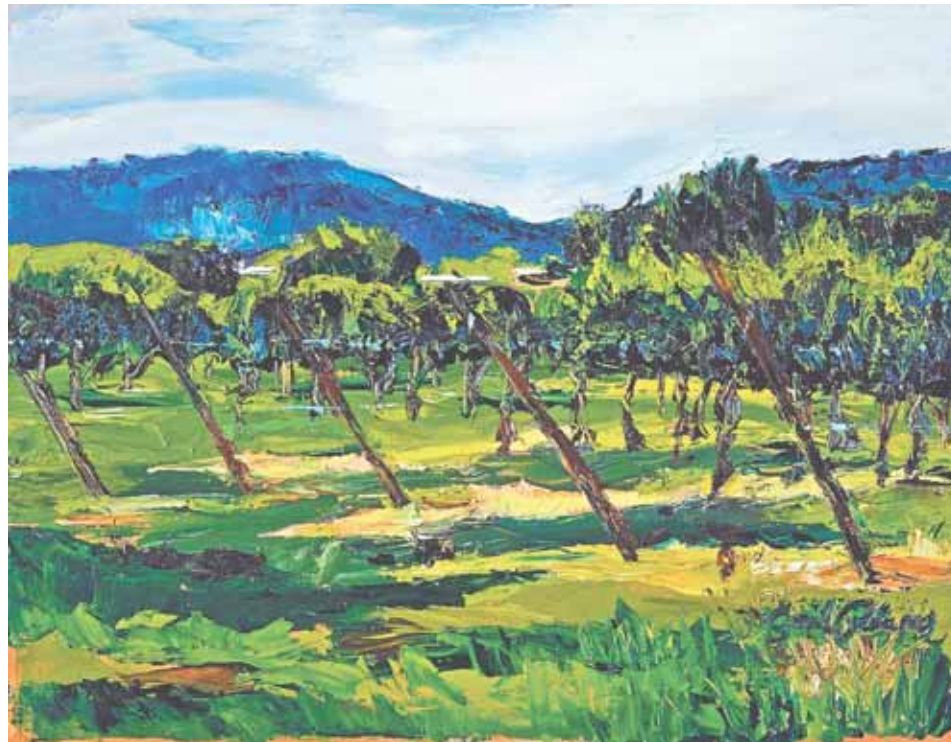
American Shakespeare Center on Tour's Shakespeare Weekend at The Alden: "The Importance of Being Earnest." 2 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave. McLean. Oscar Wilde's brilliant and wicked comic masterpiece defines wit and style. This "trivial comedy for serious people" is at once blissfully silly and outrageously shrewd. One-hundred twenty years after its first performance, "The Importance of Being Earnest" continues to delight audiences with its playful language, charming characters and

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PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

American Shakespeare Center on Tour presents "Henry V" at the Alden Theatre on Saturday, Jan. 23.



Gail Péan, 'Vineyard Dance:' Péan's impasto oil paintings - 'Excellent Schoolmasters' - are on exhibit at Katie's Coffee House/Old Brogue in Great Falls, Jan. 1-31.

biting look at contemporary society, and ASC on Tour's production will have you in absolute hysterics. \$20-\$35 (three plays for \$50-\$88). <http://www.mcleancenter.org/> or 703-790-0123.

American Shakespeare Center on Tour's Shakespeare Weekend at The Alden: "The Life of King Henry V." 8 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave. McLean. The story of England's hero-king and the greatest upset in European military history is Shakespeare's finale to his great history plays. More than that, Henry V — at once touching, heroic, savage and comic — explores the nature of greatness and its connection to theatre; and, perhaps more than any other of Shakespeare's works, it makes the audience part of the story. \$20-\$35 (three plays for \$50-\$88). <http://www.mcleancenter.org/> or 703-790-0123.

Marcia Ball. The Barnes, Wolf Trap, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. Grew up in Vinton, La., she began playing piano at age five and debuted with the country rock album Circuit Queen in 1978. Since then, she has released more than a dozen records, including her Grammy-nominated collaboration with blues stars Irma Thomas and Tracy Nelson, Sing It! (1998). \$35-\$40. <http://www.wolftrap.org> or 703-

255-1900.

The Imaginary Landscape: Workshop with Carol Barsha. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. McLean Project for the Arts, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Participants will create a series of sketches leading to a final composition — combining elements from the natural world within an imaginary landscape. \$60/\$55. <http://www.mpaart.org/events-2/>. 703-791-1953.

Exploring the Psychic World. 1-2:45 p.m. Meeting Room, Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave, McLean. Noted psychic Sherry Sherry presents a program on psychic phenomena, the paranormal, and the spirit world. Seating is limited. Registration is highly recommended. Registration begins Dec. 20. Adults. 703-356-0770.

SUNDAY/JAN. 24

The Philadelphia Orchestra Chamber Ensemble. The Barnes, Wolf Trap, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. Join esteemed players from one of the nation's finest orchestras, under the direction of Yannick Nézet-Séguin, in a rare evening of chamber music. The centerpiece of the performance will be Mozart's Clarinet Quintet (K. 581), featuring principal

Ongoing

Pigments of My Imagination. Jan. 4-March 31. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Long time Great Falls resident Donna Barnako, has created over a dozen colorful and whimsical small works. Her subjects are varied, from pigs to puppies and cowboy boots.

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

"The Blues" Exhibition. Jan. 5-23. Vienna Art Center, 115 Pleasant St., NW, Vienna. Exhibition of VAS members paintings with the theme, "The Blues." Free. 703-319-3971. www.ViennaArtsSociety.org.

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.

Gentle Yoga. Thursdays, 6:30 p.m. Emmaus United Church of Christ, 900 E Maple Ave. E, Vienna. Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Gentle Kundalini Yoga, one free introductory session, senior discounts. Increase your flexibility, improve your breathing and health, reduce your stress. Ravi Kaur has 15 years experience teaching yoga. \$15 per session. www.edimprovement.org. 571-213-3192.

"Poetry in Motion" Exhibit. Tuesdays-Saturdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. From Feb. 2-27. Exhibition of VAS members paintings with the theme "Poetry in Motion." Free.

Trail and Ales with Caboose Brewing and Grass Roots Fitness. Mondays through Jan. 31. Caboose Brewing Company, 520 Mill Street, NE Vienna. Come Run with us every Monday night. \$1 Off All Pints! All paces welcome. We will run between 3-5 miles with options to go shorter or longer. You can walk or run. Dog and stroller friendly. Contact Joann Meginley at joannandfrancine@grassrootsfitness.org.

Tai Chi Beginners' Practice. Saturdays, 8-9 a.m. St. Luke's Catholic School Gymnasium, 7005 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Weekly Tai Chi practice. Group has met for over 20 years. Free. FreeTaiChi.org. 703-759-9141.

clarinetist Ricardo Morales. Tickets: \$35. <http://www.wolftrap.org/> or 703-255-1900.

TUESDAY/JAN. 26

Pre-School Storytime. 10:30-11:15 a.m. Meeting Room, Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Join us for stories, songs, and activities. Age 3-5 with adult. 703-757-8560.

Legos in the Library. 3:30-5:30 p.m. Meeting Room, Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Get creative with legos. Legos provided. Ages 5-12. 703-757-8560.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 27

Animals on the Move. 10:30-11:15 a.m. Meeting Room, Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave, McLean. Learn about migration, hibernation and active winter animals, through interactive activities, stories and songs. Presented by Riverbend Park and sponsored by the Friends of the Dolley Madison Library. Ages 3-5. 703-356-0770.

Pokemon League. 4:30-6:30 p.m. Meeting Room, Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Drop-in and play Pokemon with your friends! 703-757-8560.

THURSDAY/JAN. 28

Grant-Lee Phillips + Steve Poltz. 7:30 p.m. Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave E, Vienna. Join the two singers as they take a stage together to share some of their songs. \$20. <https://jamminjava.com/>. 703-255-1566.

Genealogy Program. 7:30-9 p.m. Kilmer Middle School, 8100 Wolftrap Road, Vienna. Fairfax Genealogical Society monthly meeting and program. Speaker: Sharon Hodges on Expanding Research to Resources Not Available On Line. Free. 703-644-8185.

SPORTS

Langley Beats Madison for First Place in Conference 6

Saxons' Tarpley comes up clutch in victory over Madison.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

The Langley boys' basketball team dominated Madison in the first half of Friday's showdown for first place in Conference 6, using its size advantage and on-point perimeter shooting to build a 13-point lead.

While the Saxons appeared in control, head coach Scott Newman sensed the second half wouldn't be easy.

"I said at halftime that I thought we were going to have to take a punch from them in the second half," Newman said. "They were going to make adjustments to their press. They did, they rattled us a little bit ..."

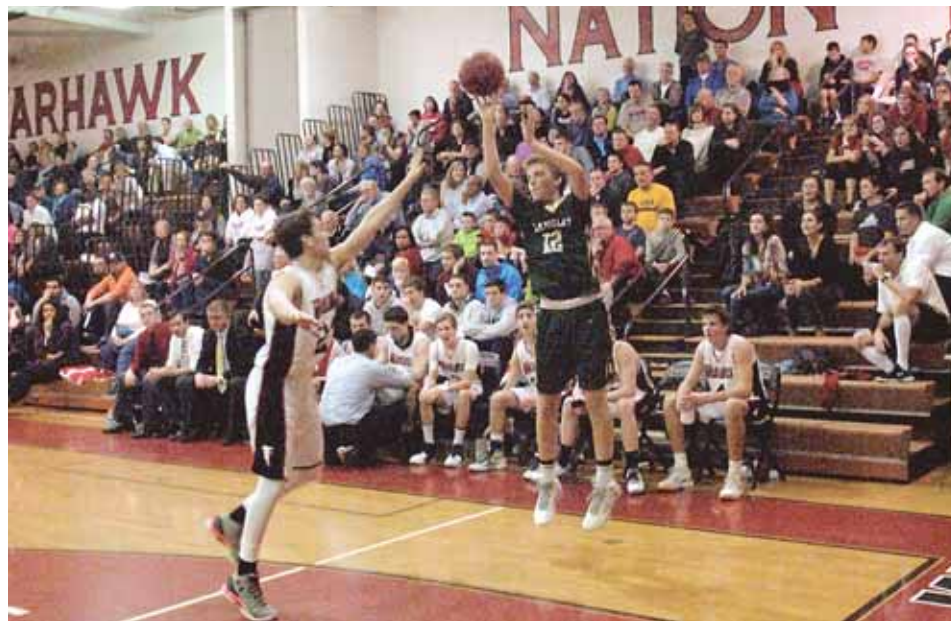
Pressure defense and an aggressive mentality helped Madison reduce its deficit to as little as two points in the fourth quarter, but an alert defensive play by leading scorer Tavon Tarpley helped the Saxons hold off the resilient Warhawks.

Down by three, Madison had a chance to tie with less than 30 seconds remaining, but Tarpley stepped in a passing lane and snagged the steal. Langley made 2 of 4 free-throw attempts in the final 15 seconds and pulled out a 62-57 victory on Jan. 15 at Madison High School.

"I slid to the gap, I saw him throw the ball," Tarpley said, "I ran at it and I got it."

The victory improved Langley's record to 10-4 and gave the Saxons sole possession of first place in Conference 6 with a 6-0 mark. Madison dropped to 11-2, including 5-1 in the conference, and had its 11-game win streak snapped.

"It really boosts our confidence, but mentality-wise, we're still hungry," Langley se-



Langley's Jay Goettman made a trio of 3-pointers against Madison on Friday.

PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

nior Nate Shafer said. "We know it's not even close to where we want to be at the end of the season. We're still hungry. We're going to go into every game like we're the underdogs."

While Tarpley's defensive play helped Langley secure the win, the 6-foot-3 senior guard was also a force at the offensive end. Tarpley, who transferred from Forest Park to Langley prior to his junior season, led the Saxons with 22 points, doing most of his damage in the paint.

"It's starting to click for Tavon," Newman said. "He is a special player when he's attacking the basket and he can be one of the best perimeter defenders in the region when he wants to. He's come so far, he's matured, and his approach has improved. If he gets his defense going and he does what he does best, which is attack the basket, we're dangerous."

Shafer, a 6-foot-5 senior forward, finished

with nine points and 12 rebounds for Langley. Junior guard Jay Goettman made a trio of 3-pointers and finished with nine points. Sophomore guard Colter Carton made a pair of 3-pointers and scored eight points, and junior guard Grant Hughes made two from behind the arc and finished with seven points.

Langley made eight 3-pointers.

"We played great in the first half, I thought, because not only did we pound the ball inside, but when [Madison] collapsed, we kicked the ball out and we were sticking shots," Newman said. "I think we're dangerous when we've got the inside and the outside game going."

Taiga Walker led Madison with 24 points, including 18 in the second half. The senior guard showed emotion on several occasions, letting out passionate screams after multiple and-ones.

"I just think that we played with more



Senior guard Taiga Walker led Madison with 24 points against Langley on Friday.

passion and aggression as a team," Walker said about the Warhawks' second-half performance.

Madison opened the third quarter with an 8-0 run and trailed 45-37 entering the fourth. A 3-pointer by Brett Wellde pulled the Warhawks within five at 45-40, early in the fourth quarter, and a jumper by Walker cut the Langley lead to 57-55 with 1:51 remaining. Another Walker bucket cut Madison's deficit to 59-57 with 46.3 seconds left, but the Saxons scored the final three points.

Galiani led Langley with 15 points. Sophomore guard Jordyn Callaghan scored eight points junior guard/forward Ariana Aulisi added six.

McWeeney led Madison with eight points.

Langley Defense Stifles Madison in Conference 6 Matchup

Saxons hold Warhawks without field goal for nine-plus minutes.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

Members of the Langley girls' basketball team realized their defense stifled Madison during the opening quarter of Friday's matchup, but the Saxons knew there was more work to be done.

Langley held Madison without a field goal for the first nine-plus minutes of the contest and limited the Warhawks to just one point in the first quarter. The Saxons' defense held strong for the final three quarters, as well, and Langley bounced back from its second loss of the season with a 38-27 victory at Madison High School.

Aidan McWeeney produced Madison's

first field goal when she dropped in a layup with less than 7 minutes remaining in the second quarter, cutting Langley's lead to 6-3. The Saxons led for the remainder of the contest.

"We noticed, but we're trying to keep our defense up," Langley senior Paige Galiani said about the Saxons' defensive effort in the first quarter. "We're not really trying to give ourselves credit yet. We still have three more quarters left."

Madison twice cut the Langley lead to one, including when Megan Miskell's bucket with 7:37 left in the fourth quarter trimmed the Saxon advantage to 24-23, but Langley scored 14 of the game's final 18 points.

The win improved Langley's record to 12-2, including 5-1 in Conference 6. Three days

earlier, the Saxons lost to undefeated Fairfax, 51-39, in a battle for first place in the conference.

Fairfax was the first team this season to score more than 45 points against Langley, which is allowing an average of 37 per contest. The Saxons have held opponents under 40 nine times and under 30 three times.

Langley excelled using the 2-3 zone Friday.

"It was good to be back in 2-3," Galiani said. "We played a lot of 2-3 last year, so we knew how to go about it, but this year we have been playing a lot of man. It was great to be back in 2-3. Two-three is my favorite defense, so I was really excited."

Langley senior Stephanie Sipple said the



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Paige Galiani led Langley with 15 points during the Saxon's 38-27 victory over Madison on Friday.

Saxons take pride in their defense.

"Especially when [opponents are] usually up in the 50s and 60s and we manage to keep them to half of that," Sipple said. "That's a really big thing."

Delegates, Senators Meet Constituents

FROM PAGE 3

such entrenched opposition in the legislature," she said.

"We will be in Richmond on Jan. 18 for a vigil for victims of gun violence," Gregory said, along with more than five busloads of people who will then lobby for gun legislation. In particular, they want localities to have the right to regulate how close guns stores can operate to school zones.

Virginia is a Dillon Rule state, which means that localities have only the powers expressly given to them by the General Assembly.

"I'm incensed by what is happening with gun violence here in Virginia and across the country," said Howell. "I keep hitting myself in the face, and say, 'Remember, you're in Virginia, darling.'"

Murphy, Favola and Rip Sullivan attended the rally in McLean earlier in the day.

"We were just at a rally and we watched very quickly when hate is involved that common sense goes out the window," said Murphy.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY is "off to a rousing start," said Rip Sullivan, with a "very partisan issue" involving Judge Jane M. Roush, who Republicans are trying to keep off the Virginia Supreme Court, de-



A constituent makes a point to Murphy, Sullivan and Simon.

PHOTOS BY KEN MOORE/THE CONNECTION

spite an exemplary reputation and record as trial attorney and Fairfax County Circuit Court Judge, he said.

"Get involved," he said. "She should remain on the Virginia Supreme Court."

Simon discussed a George Mason University student whose debt started at \$25,000 but increased to \$65,000.

He wants a student loan ombudsman officer where debt and student loans can



April Pinch-Keeler is the CEO of MVLE Working with Purpose, and advocates for employment for people with disabilities. "It's amazing what people can do given the opportunity."

be monitored.

And he wants to add sexual orientation to Fair Housing laws to prohibit discrimination.

APRIL PINCH-KEELER is the CEO of MVLE Working with Purpose, and advocates for people with disabilities and the employment of people with disabilities.

"It's amazing what people can do given the opportunity," she said. "Medicaid reform has to happen."

Robert Stewart spoke on behalf of Social Action Linking Together and its legislative priorities, including medicaid expansion that could benefit as many as 400,000 low income uninsured Virginians among other issues.

Rings True Still

'1776' the musical arriving at the Alden.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

"I have come to the conclusion that one useless man is called a disgrace, that two are called a congress. And by God, I have had *this* Congress!" Nope, those are not thoughts from contemporary political commentary on some cable news network. Those are the words of John Adams in "1776," the musical production about the signing of the Declaration of Independence some 240 years ago.

Performed by the McLean Community Players, "1776" uses quotes from the actual letters of the participants to create a musical rendition of how strong temperaments, gathered together in the heat of summer, led to the Declaration of Independence. The dialogue by Peter Stone with musical numbers by Sherman Edwards bring forth the passionate perspectives of the likes of John Adams who takes a center stage in "1776" and the dozens of others to what could have been

"just dusty history, but instead kicks away the cob webs" said director Annie O'Neill Galvin. The musical won three Tony Award, including for Best Musical.

In interviews at the McLean Community Center, director O'Neill Galvin with cast members Jeff Westlake (Ben Franklin), Brent Stone (John Adams), David Weaver (Joseph Hewes), Marissa Chapman (Abigail Adams), Shawn Cox (John Dickinson), Bob Cohen (Thomas McKean), spoke how the production "rings true" today.

It is a tale of fervent "struggles and compromises by flawed, real human beings" over contentious issues that still vex, noted Westlake. Stone suggested that "many of the issues raised then, are still with us."

Chapman noted the political importance of Abigail Adams to the thinking of her husband John in a day when women were not often visible, but could be viewed as mere "trophy wives."

Veteran music director John Edward Niles and a 10-piece band will set musical bearings to "1776" with its fifteen numbers. The songs include many involving John Adams and his prickly personality such as "Sit Down, John" or "But, Mr. Adams" as well as the strong sentiments of "Molasses to Rum" that indicts Northern hypocrisy about slavery delivered by James Myers as the delegate from South Carolina, Edward



PHOTOS BY IRISH EYES PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOBY/COURTESY OF MCLEAN COMMUNITY PLAYERS

McLean Community Players in rehearsal for "1776:" John Adams (Brent Stone) convinces Thomas Jefferson (Scott Gustaveson) to write the Declaration of Independence.

Rutledge.

The set design by Bill Glikbarg and George Farnsworth will include a very visible hand marked vote tally board giving visible expression to tensions of "how close it all was as voting for independence proceeded," added O'Neil Galvin.

Where and When

McLean Community Players present "1776" at the Alden Theater, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave, McLean. Performances Feb. 5-21, 2016. Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets: Call 866-811-4111 or visit www.mcleanplayers.org

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21 Announcements

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Pills A-Poppin'



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I ingest between 40 and 50 pills per day. It's the first thing I do before breakfast, an occasional thing I do before/during/after lunch, and the last thing I do before dinner and sometimes before bedtime as well. To say I'm pill-centric would be an overstatement; I will admit to be pill-mindful though. Either I'm arranging them, organizing them, counting them or ordering them. Whether it matters or not to my health, I try never to be off my schedule too much or be too many days without my normal pill allotment/inventory. If I leave the house at pill time, I will take pills with me and swallow them accordingly. If people ask for any details, I offer as few as possible and move on. Not that I'm uncomfortable with any of the questions, it's more that there are infinitely more interesting topics of conversation.

Being away from home and routine does present some problems, however, especially if the trip involves planes. Trains and automobiles are not the problem. Not having a dedicated travel case, like the "train" case my mother had for her cosmetics, I simply stuff my 25-plus bottles into a plastic shopping bag and knot the handles at the top. No fuss, no muss. Planes, or rather the carry-on rules about such things are another matter entirely. I have never inquired – or gone on the TSA Website, to determine pill procedures. Certainly I'm aware – post-9/11, of the limits concerning toiletries, etc., and the plastic bags into which it all must fit. Not wanting to risk having hundreds of dollars of expensive pills confiscated at the airport, I've always preferred checking my bags (containing the pills) and avoided the potential nightmare. As to the alternative solution of segregating 40-odd pills (into three-times-a-day packets) times however many days into some kind of daily packaging – and leaving the bottles home instead – that has not been a solution I've been able to conjure. Not that any of this is an impediment, more like a challenge and inconvenience. And most definitely a consideration.

Still, it's a small price to pay – so to speak, to incorporate/assimilate a pill plan into my everyday life. I mean, for all I know, and I know very little, these pills might actually be responsible for my life-expectancy odds having been so badly beaten. Accordingly, I see no reason to stop now, especially considering that the majority of the drugs I take are designed to build up my immune system. Which, when one understands that at its core, cancer treatment weakens one's immune system, enhancing its resilience is crucial.

Recently, an entire new class of drugs called Immunotherapy ("OPDIVO") have been introduced. They have been designed – among other reasons, to stimulate the body's own immune system to fight the cancer. Rather than the process occurring externally and unnaturally as before, these new drugs will fight the cancer internally and naturally. It's an extremely encouraging and exciting evolution in the cancer treatment world, and holds great promise for many of us cancer patients burnt out (no pun intended) on the toxic chemotherapy drugs of our past.

In the interim, since I am not now on Immunotherapy, as a prudent and logical adjunct, I will continue to give myself and my body every opportunity, dare I say advantage, in its efforts to keep the cancer at bay. The pills are never really a problem, more so a piece of the puzzle. And the longer I live, the more convinced of it I become.

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

BULLETIN BOARD

To have community events listed in the Connection, send to north@connectionnewspapers.com. The deadline for submissions is the Friday prior to publication.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 20

Fairfax Commission on Aging.

Noon. Oakton Regional Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. The public is welcome to attend and join in the comment period that begins each session. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/coa.htm. 703-324-5403, TTY 711 for meeting access needs.

McLean Newcomers and

Neighbors Monthly Luncheon.

11:30 a.m. Ristorante Bonaroti, 428 Maple Ave., East, Vienna. Eileen O'Grady, a nurse practitioner and wellness coach, will speak about the Science of Flourishing. \$29. For further information on the club, visit www.McLeanNewcomers.org. RSVP Ann Skelly at mfskelly@verizon.net by Jan. 13. Prospective members invited.

Dyslexia, An Overview for Parents.

7-8:30 p.m. Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services, 2334 Gallows Road, Entrance 1, Dunn Loring. Workshop presented by specialists from FCPS Office of Special Education. Register www.fcps.edu/dss/osp/prc or 703-204-3941.

THURSDAY/JAN. 21

Model Investment Club. 6-9 p.m.

Meeting Room, Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave, McLean. Learn about investing following an investment club model. New visitors welcome. Adults. 703-356-0770.

Transportation

FROM PAGE 8

James C. Dinegar, Greater Washington Board of Trade
Anthony Howard, Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce
Virgil Frizzell, Northern Virginia Association of Realtors

Jim Corcoran, Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce

Mark Looney, Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance

Lori Y. Lopez, Tysons Regional Chamber of Commerce

Pat Dean, Associated Builders and Contractors, VA

James N. Larsen, Dulles Area Transportation Association

Eileen D. Curtis, Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce

Nancy-jo Manney, Springfield Chamber of Commerce,

Ken Garrison, Heavy Construction Contractors Association

Martha D. Marks, NAIOP, Northern Virginia Commercial Real Estate Development Association

Jon Lindgren, Northern Virginia Building Industry Association

Bobbie Kilberg, Northern Virginia Technology Council

Deborah Jones, Prince William Chamber of Commerce

Keith Merlin, Washington Airports Task Force

The Northern Virginia Transportation Coalition is a group of chambers of commerce and industry organizations throughout Northern Virginia that share a common belief that greater investment in regional transportation infrastructure is essential to sustained regional prosperity.

21 Announcements

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ABC LICENSE
BVP Exxon, Inc. trading as BVP Exxon, 4746 Lee Hwy, Arlington, VA 22207. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer off Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Arpit Sethi, President
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-Werner Heisenberg

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