

Oral surgeon Christopher Bonacci, whose practice has been in Vienna for more than 15 years, has taken his passion for fresh, natural food in a new direction. Bonacci, through his new business, has begun importing olive oil from Italy's olive oil capital, Trevi, in Umbria.



Importing [Liquid] Gold

NEWS, PAGE 8

Four-Cent Tax Rate Increase, With Side of Vitriol

NEWS, PAGE 3

Elegant Temptations

NEWS, PAGE 9



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WEEK IN VIENNA

Historic Vienna Announces 2016 Used Book Sale

The Historic Vienna, Inc. (HVI) Annual Used Book Sale will be held from Friday, April 1, through Sunday, April 3, at a new location. This year's venue will be Patriot Hall, on the second floor of Dyer-Gunnel American Legion Post 180, 330 Center Street, N, Vienna. Hours for the event are 7-9 p.m. on Friday, April 1; 9 a.m. till 7 p.m. on Saturday, April 2; and noon until 5 p.m. on the Sunday, April 3.

Friday evening will be a special reception and pre-sale for Historic Vienna members only. Those wishing to attend the pre-sale who are not members of Historic Vienna will be able to join at the door.

Persons wishing to donate books are asked to leave them on the front porch of the Freeman Store and Museum, 131 Church Street, NE, Vienna. Books are being sorted into several dozen categories including cooking, history, arts, mystery, religion, health, travel, foreign language and much more. Children's books are most welcome. Please do not donate magazines, textbooks, condensed books, romance novels or sets of encyclopedia.

All proceeds from the book sale are used to support the operation of Historic Vienna and the Freeman Store and Museum.

Vienna Citizen Survey on Town Services

Town of Vienna residents will soon receive the 2016 Town of Vienna Citizen Survey in their mailboxes. Surveys, accompanied by a cover letter from Mayor Laurie DiRocco, are scheduled to arrive about mid-month at randomly selected households.

The survey provides an opportunity for residents to rate the Town on a variety of qualities and services. Among the more than 100 questions on the five-page survey are queries like: How would you rate the quality of life or sense of community in the Town of Vienna? Are you satisfied with police response times, leaf pick-up service, and accessibility to Town parks? What do you think about the Town calendar and website?

Citizen responses will be critical to helping Town of Vienna councilmembers and staff better plan, manage, and improve services and programs.

Bereavement Group to Hold Volunteer Training

Comfort Zone Camp, a nonprofit organization that provides free therapeutic grief programs for young people ages 5-25 who have experienced the death of a parent, guardian, or sibling, is holding a volunteering training on Saturday, April 9 at St. Mark Catholic Church in Vienna.

Volunteer opportunities include: Big Buddy mentor (matched 1:1 with a camper), nurse, support group facilitator, photographer, general camp volunteer (logistical support staff).

Make a difference in the life of a grieving child – become a mentor or group facilitator.

Training provides education regarding childhood bereavement, and prepares volunteers to take part in camp programs. All volunteers are required to complete the six hour training before attending camp.

The church is located at 9970 Vale Road, Vienna. Training is from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

For more details and to register as a volunteer for training, go to <http://www.comfortzonecamp.org/volunteers/application>.

Vietnam Veterans to Host Strategic Nuclear Threat Talk

Chapter 227, Vietnam Veterans of America Inc., invites all veterans, friends and the general public to attend the April 21 chapter meeting at Neighbor's Restaurant, 262D Cedar Lane, Cedar Lane Shopping Center, Vienna, at 7:30 p.m. For information, call Len Ignatowski at 703-255-0353 or visit the web site at www.vva227.org. Jay E. Kalner, Vietnam War veteran and retired CIA senior analyst, will discuss how the CIA assessed Russia's strategic nuclear weapon threat for arms control negotiations during the 1970s and 80s. He served as the intelligence adviser for Ambassador Max Kampelman at the Nuclear and Space Arms Talks in Geneva in 1985-1987.

The membership serves as a "Fire Support Base" for veterans who are seeking closure on their Tour of Duty and a renewal of their Vietnam camaraderie. The chapter supports veteran's activities and non-veteran community projects.

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Four-Cent Tax Increase, With Side of Vitriol

Reconsideration hours later gives same result;
board will consider putting meals tax to referendum in November.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Tuesday morning, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors voted for a four-cent tax rate increase, advertising a tax rate of \$1.13 per \$100 of assessed value. Hours later, a call to reconsider a higher rate sparked bitterness, anger and even disgust.

In the end, the outcome was the same.

The board rejected Budget Chair Jeff McKay's motion for a five-cent increase on a 5-5 vote and Mount Vernon Supervisor Daniel Storck's motion to have a six-cent increase by a 3-7 vote.

But hours later Tuesday afternoon, March 1 after afternoon public hearings were finalized, Supervisor John Foust's motions to reconsider its advertised tax rate raised jointly by Sully Supervisor Kathy Smith — a tool permitted by Roberts Rules of Order — set off fireworks.

"I'm sorry, it's appalling, it's embarrassing," said Providence Supervisor Linda Smyth. "We're starting a budget session on the worst foot. We had a full discussion this morning."

"A robust discussion," said Hunter Mill Supervisor Cathy Hudgins.

Hudgins said she had come to the meeting planning to advocate for a five-cent increase, but said she was "disturbed" by the reconsideration. "This is childish play, that once you didn't get your way, you're going to bring it back."

Speaking of the School Board, she added, "You can't always have it your way."

Mason Supervisor Penny Gross: "I don't think we should be supporting voter's remorse."

"The ends do not justify the means," said Braddock Supervisor John Cook, who had reluctantly supported the four-cent increase. "I don't want anybody thinking there was a mistake."

Foust kept composed. If there's not enough support, he said, "we'll find out. We have this process available to us."

Lee Supervisor McKay said, "I support this, to get back to the original, responsible motion that I made," for a 5-cent increase.

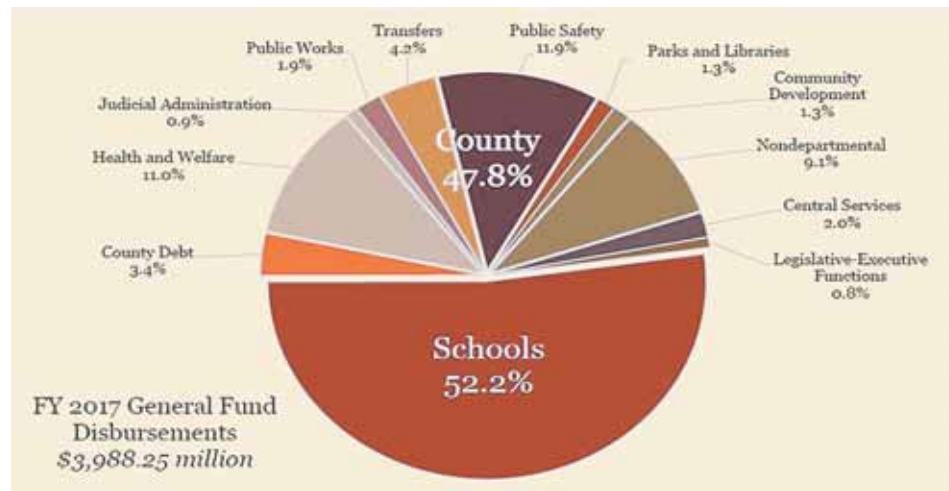
Chairman Sharon Bulova kept order, and supported the motion to reconsider.

"There's a process that allows for this," said Bulova. "So I am respectful that a member asked for it to be reconsidered."

The motion to reconsider failed with a 5-to-5 tie vote.

THE BUDGET BUILT and presented by County Executive Ed Long calls for a four-cent tax rate increase, about \$300 for the average household in Fairfax County, but also left Fairfax County Public Schools with a shortfall of \$68 million.

The Fairfax County School Board, parents



Budget Town Meetings

❖ Providence District Budget Council Budget Town Hall Meeting

Wednesday, March 9, 7 p.m., Providence Community Center - 3001 Vaden Drive, Fairfax - Multi-Purpose Room 2

❖ Mason District Budget Meeting

Wednesday, March 16, 7 p.m., Mason District Government Center, 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale - Main Community Room

❖ Springfield District Budget Meeting

Wednesday, March 23, 7 p.m., West Springfield Government Center - 6140 Rolling Road, Springfield - Community Room

❖ Dranesville District Budget Meeting / McLean Citizens Association (MCA)

Wednesday, March 23, 7:30 p.m., McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean

❖ Braddock District Budget Meeting

Monday, March 28, 7:30 p.m., Robinson Secondary School - "Recital Hall" - 5035 Sideburn Road, Fairfax

❖ Lee District Association of Civic Organizations Community Budget Meeting

Wednesday, March 30, 7 p.m., Lee District Governmental Center - 6121 Franconia Road, Alexandria

❖ Dranesville District / Great Falls Citizen's Association Budget Meeting

Thursday, March 31, 7 p.m., The Great Falls Grange, 9818 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls

and other school advocates have been leaning heavily on the Board of Supervisors to advertise a higher tax increase to "fully fund" the school budget. The discourse has not always been collegial.

"The Board of Supervisors' decision today to set the advertised (maximum) tax rate at four cents is disappointing because it guarantees that the county and schools budgets cannot both be fully funded, denying the community its rightful role in that conversation. Today's decision is discouraging for the thousands of community members who have reached out to the School Board and the Board of Supervisors this year to advocate for a voice in this very important conversation about values and priorities," said

School Board Chairman Pat Hynes.

Cook directed a rebuke at the School Board. "If we don't do it exactly the way you want, [you say] 'you are bad people.' We're not. I have children in the school system too."

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS can adopt a tax rate that is lower, but not higher, than what was advertised at its board meeting Tuesday, March 1.

Each penny on the real estate tax rate provides \$23 million in revenue.

The motion to advertise a four-cent increase passed 7-to-3.

"I'm disappointed that the same people who advocated for flexibility voted against

flexibility," McKay said. "They've boxed in the Board of Supervisors and tied our hands. It's now nearly impossible to meet the superintendent's request. I strongly believe that would have been possible at 5 cents and that is why I put forward this responsible rate."

Springfield Supervisor Pat Herrity spoke against raising the tax rate. "Our residents are having to make difficult decisions around their kitchen tables as job and wage growth stagnates. We need to get our economy going and the commercial tax base back. ... Until then, we have to make the same tough choices that our residents are having to make and until we do I cannot ask them to absorb a six-percent increase this year."

"The Board of Supervisors' decision today to set the advertised (maximum) tax rate at four cents is disappointing because it guarantees that the county and schools budgets cannot both be fully funded, denying the community its rightful role in that conversation."

— School Board Chairman Pat Hynes

The board also asked for more information regarding putting a meals tax on the ballot in November. The board's legislative agenda has supported diversifying the tax base, taking some tax burden off homeowners, according to a statement by the county. Under state law, if the board wishes to adopt a meals tax, the voters must decide in the form of a referendum. The restaurant industry and chambers of commerce have strongly opposed a meals tax.

The County Executive's Advertised Budget, which calls for a four-cent increase, transfers more than \$2 billion to FCPS and provides over 52 percent of County General Fund revenues to the schools, according to county documents.

There are a number of opportunities for residents to share comments and concerns regarding the county budget between now and April 19. In addition to budget town meetings and forums throughout the county, three days of budget public hearings will be held at the Fairfax County Government Center on April 5-7.

Commission Recognizes Outstanding Women in Fairfax County Government

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

Edwyna Wingo of the Chantilly area began her career with Fairfax County as a nurse in the Health Department on Sep. 1, 1965 and worked her last full day Oct. 1, 2011.

Wingo graduated from the University of Virginia nursing school in 1964 and decided she didn't much care for rotating and night shifts. Looking for a more regular schedule, she found work in "Home Health," providing health services for individuals outside the hospital.

"The bug of public health really stuck," she said. "And I was on the cutting edge of public health back then. Home visits, community clinics, I did it all. And I never gave up on my love of patient care."

Wingo now works as part-time on special projects for the Fairfax County Health Department, including a car seat program for families whose income is low enough to make them eligible. She started with the project four years ago and said to date thousands of car seats have been given out.

Wingo is the longest-tenured of 12 women honored by the Fairfax County Commission for Women on March 1, Super Tuesday, at the Government Center prior to the Board of Supervisors regular meeting.

"I was absolutely floored when I got the email," Wingo said. "Fairfax County has been very dear to me. I've had opportunities in Fairfax County with the Health Department."

Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova spoke to the group before moving into the Board's auditorium to begin the regular business meeting.

The Chairman opened with her response when people ask her what the obstacles were to her achieving her success in public elected office.

"I've benefitted from years of wonderful leadership of women in Fairfax County," Bulova said, referencing the late Jean Packard, the first woman to serve as Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Audrey Moore and Kate Hanley.

"They've paved the way for me," Bulova continued. Then transitioning and acknowledging the 12 women being recognized by the Commission, she thanked them each for "your knowledge, and the way you served Fairfax County."

Eleven women, each having spent 40 years or more with Fairfax County govern-



Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova addresses the Fairfax County Commission for Women recognition program.

"I've benefited from years of wonderful leadership of women in Fairfax County."

—Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova

Laura Sizemore, a junior at Lake Braddock Secondary School and in her second year as the student representative to the Fairfax County Commission for Women, was in the audience for the recognition ceremony.

"I bring the perspective of teenagers to the commission," Sizemore said, "I know the school side of issues like dress code and sexual harassment."



Lake Braddock Secondary School junior Laura Sizemore is the student representative to the Fairfax County Commission for Women.



Pat Harrison is Deputy County Executive for Human Services and spoke on behalf of the Commission for Women during the proclamation ceremony with the Board of Supervisors recognizing March as Women's History Month.



Donna Bird a business analyst for Special Projects with the Department of Public Safety Communications.



Pat Burton is a management analyst II with the Department of Cable and Consumer Services.



Beth Imming is a public health nurse II with the Department of Public Health, Annandale office.



Linda O'Brien is an administrative assistant III with the Reston District Station of the Fairfax County Police Department.



Mary Rezzarday-White is currently library assistant II for youth services in the Fairfax City Regional Library.



Nancy Stallings is an investigator for the Departments of Planning and Zoning, and Code Compliance.



Deanna Velasco is an administrative assistant IV in the Department of Family Services, Self Sufficiency Division, Fraud and Investigation Unit.



Edwyna Wingo works as a public health Nurse II with the Department of Public Health.



Susan Woodruff retired Jan. 21, 2016, as Director of the Department of Human Resources.



Doris Robey is a manager in the Department of Tax Administration, Personal Property and Business License division.

ment, represented a collective 433 years of service.

The 12th, Deputy County Executive for Human Services Pat Harrison, was scheduled to speak on behalf of the Commission for Women during a proclamation ceremony with the Board of Supervisors recognizing March as Women's History Month.

To see the 12 women honored for their vast careers with Fairfax County, Sizemore said it inspires her to work hard and do what she wants with her life, "not what people want me to do," she said.

The junior said computer science is a big passion and she plans to pursue a career in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or government.

VIENNA CRIME REPORTS

Notable incidents from the Town of Vienna Police Department from Feb. 26 to March 3.

Fraud - 1100 Block Pekay Street, SW. Between Feb. 1 at 12:01 a.m. and Feb. 27 at 7:36 p.m. A resident reported she attempted to apply for a loan and found that someone else had attached their name to her account. She stated the access to her credit report had been blocked and flagged as fraudulent. This case is being investigated.

Destruction of Property - 1000 Block Park Street, SE. Between Feb. 22 at 12:24 p.m. and March 01 at 12:24 p.m. A resident reported he placed a "For Rent" sign in his front yard, which was secured with a chain to a utility pole. He stated he returned to the property and found the frame to the sign, still intact, but the printed portion had been torn from the sign.

Vandalism - 377 Maple Ave., West. Feb. 25 between 5 p.m. and 11:13 p.m. An employee returned to his vehicle, after his shift, to find his vehicle had been keyed.

- 700 Block Courthouse Road, SW. Feb. 26, 3 p.m. A resident reported she was at the Vienna Dog Park with her dog when another dog, a medium to large, Labrador mix, approached her dog and would not leave it alone. She stated she attempted to separate the two when she was bit on the lip and ear. She stated the dog did not appear to have an owner and fled the area. An officer informed her he would make every attempt to locate the dog and owner. The citizen informed him she had started the post exposure treatment. This case is being investigated.

Open Door - Jiffy Lube, 210 Maple Ave., West. Feb. 26, 7:13 p.m. An alarm company reported a business alarm had been activated. An officer responded and found a door had been left unlocked. He along with another officer searched the business and found nothing out of place. As they were leaving an employee returned and stated he may have left the door unlocked.

toxicated - 500 Block Tapawingo Road, SW. Feb. 27, 7:53 p.m. An officer responded to the area for the report of a two vehicle crash. Upon arriving on the scene he determined the driver of the striking vehicle was traveling eastbound on Tapawingo Road, SW when he struck a legally parked vehicle. Upon his interaction with the driver he

determined he may have been impaired. After failing to complete a series of field sobriety tests, and concerned for the injuries he sustained in the crash, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue personnel were summoned to evaluate the injuries the driver had sustained in the crash. The driver was transported to an area hospital for treatment of those injuries. He was also given the opportunity to provide a sample of his blood for analysis. After the analysis, and treatment for his injuries, the driver, a 39-year-old man from Frederick Street, SW in Vienna was transported to the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center where he was

Animal Case – Quarantine

Arrest – Driving While In-

SEE CRIME, PAGE 16



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OPINION

Bringing Back the Electric Chair

In a word: Barbaric.

No doubt Virginia and Texas will be the last two states to continue with the death penalty until, inevitably, evolving standards of decency lead the U.S. Supreme Court to declare that the death penalty is unconstitutional. But fear of loss has motivated the Virginia General Assembly to amend a law that allows prisoners facing execution to choose between lethal injection and the electric chair so that the electric chair is used if drugs for lethal injection are not available.

It's barbaric, and execution debacles with electrocution and unproven drugs for lethal injection could speed overall rejection of the death penalty.

Most representatives from our area voted against, but in the House of Delegates, which voted 62-33 for the electric chair, Dave Albo, Jim LeMunyon and Vivian Watts voted in favor; Tim Hugo didn't vote but registered that he intended to vote yes. (Voting no were Jennifer Boysko, David Bulova, Eileen Filler-Corn, Charniele Herring, Patrick Hope, Mark Keam, Paul Krizek, Mark Levine, Alfonso Lopez, Bob

Marshall, Ken Plum, Mark Sickles, Marcus Simon and Rip Sullivan. Kathleen Murphy didn't vote but registered that she intended to vote no.)

The Virginia Senate voted for the electric chair 22-17. From our area, only Dick Saslaw voted in favor of the electric chair. Voting no were George Barker, Adam Ebbin, Barbara Favola, Janet Howell, Dave Marden, Chap Petersen, Scott Surovell and Jennifer Wexton.

EDITORIAL

Residents of the 35th Senate District could rightfully question whether they are getting the repre-

sentation they expect from Senator Saslaw (D), who without doubt will continue to be reelected until he chooses to retire. Saslaw voted for mandatory use of the electric chair if lethal injection drugs are not available, worked to kill legislation that would protect consumers from predatory lending and interest rates of more than 200 percent, and was chief patron of the notorious proffer bill, which, if signed by Gov. Terry McAuliffe as passed, will result in localities losing the ability to temper costs of development and likely property tax increases.

Making Good Choices On Saint Patrick's Day

Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), will offer the 2016 St. Patty's Day SoberRide program, providing free cab rides to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area next Thursday, March 17.

SoberRide will be available for 12 hours starting 4 p.m. on St. Patrick's Day and continuing until 4 a.m. on Friday, March 18 as a way to help keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk holiday.

Make your own plans to celebrate safely by having a designated driver, celebrating where you can take public transportation or spend the night. But if those plans go awry, area residents celebrating with alcohol may call the toll-free SoberRide phone number 1-800-200-TAXI (8294) for a no-cost (up to a \$30 fare), safe way home.

For more information, visit www.soberride.com.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Supervisor Hudgins on Proposed County Budget

"I remain committed to all our county residents and to our school system and would like to share the following information.

As you may know, the annual real estate tax is a combination of the Jan. 1 assessed property value and a real estate tax rate determined each year by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. This year Fairfax County property increased 1.2 percent over last year's assessed values. In Hunter Mill District, as a whole, property values do better than the county average; our increase was 1.6 percent.

On March 1 2016, at the General Meeting of the Board of Supervisors, the Board voted to advertise a maximum Real Estate Rate of \$1.13 per \$100 of assessed value of property. This is an increase of \$0.04 from the previous year.

As in past budget cycles, the Board of Supervisors tried to set the Real Estate Tax Rate at a level sufficient to fund the service needs of the county, which includes the needs of Fairfax County Public Schools. Before casting my vote on the rate to be advertised, I heavily consid-

ered the impact on all the real estate taxpayers.

In the FY 2017 budget, the County Executive recommended a three percent increase in the funds transferred to the school system. It was, and remains, my belief that our school system requires additional support, and we must have a serious conversation about those needs, the county's needs, and the ability of our residents to support our collective needs.

A word of explanation: In this budget, each penny in the Real Estate Tax rate produces approximately \$23 million in revenue. Therefore, the Board approved advertised rate of \$0.04 higher at \$1.13 will raise the average homeowner's tax bill \$303.86 over last year's tax bill.

As a taxpayer and supervisor, I recognize and share concerns regarding the increase to our tax assessment. I hope you share my concern in the limited taxing authority Fairfax County has compared to Virginia's cities and towns, and the Board of Supervisors inability to diversify our revenue streams. In order to allevi-

ate some of the burden from our homeowners, we must minimize overdependence on the Real Estate Tax revenue. Therefore, at March 1 Board meeting, on my motion, the Board directed county staff to provide the following information regarding a Meal Tax:

- An updated report from the 2014 "Meals Tax in Fairfax County Task Force;"
- A timeline of implementation of the meal tax for the restaurant industry should a meals tax referendum be successful;
- An explanation of the cost relating to implementation to help the industry prepare for implementation should a meals tax referendum be successful; and
- An implementation timeline for the Board of Supervisors and steps necessary to be in compliance for a November 8, 2016 voters referendum.

Again, I remain committed to our county residents and to our school system."

Supervisor Catherine M. Hudgins
(D-Hunter Mill)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Protecting Arts Programs in Schools

To the Editor:

After reading the article, "Fairfax County: Parents, Community

Supporters Rally to 'Invest in Kids' by Tim Peterson (Connection, February 18-24), spending on public education is clearly becoming a huge concern. Being a former student of Fairfax County, I re-

member how important programs related to the arts were to many students. Many students gained an interest in music beginning at an early age. Without the availability of the classes or the teachers, many young children may have never discovered their hidden talents or interests in the field.

I strongly believe spending should not cut out the arts from public education, and students should continue to receive the same opportunities we did when

we were in elementary school.

Roxana Jahanbani
Great Falls

Lifting Stigma from Drug Users

To the Editor:

I believe that your in-depth look at Northern Virginia's heroin subculture ("Police Arrest 20 for Heroin Use in One Day," Connection, March 2-8, 2016)) was a step

in the right direction towards helping to lift the stigma from drug users. You chose to expand upon the stories of the 20 people recently apprehended for the possession and/or distribution of heroin instead of simply focusing on the crime itself. I applaud how the fine men and women of the police departments of Loudoun, Fairfax, and Prince William counties chose to opt for rehabilitating those arrested instead of simply detaining

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 13

Vienna & Oakton CONNECTION

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PEOPLE

Megan Caulfield Joins Vienna Office of Ameriprise Financial

Megan Caulfield, has joined Matt Felber's office at Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc., as a financial advisor. Her new office is located at 133 Maple Ave. East, Suite 306, Vienna. As a financial advisor, Caulfield provides financial advice that is built on a solid understanding of client needs and expectations, and provided one-on-one relationships with her clients. For more information, contact Megan Caulfield at 703-766-9300 x12.



FAITH NOTES

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

St. John's Episcopal Church in McLean welcomes everyone to special music and worship at afternoon and evening Good Friday services on **March 25**.

***From Noon until 3 p.m.** Meditations will be given by the Rector on "The Seven Last Words of Christ" and "The Seven Last Words of Jesus from the Cross" by Théodore Dubois will be sung by the St. John's Choir with organ, harp and timpani. All are welcome to attend any portion of the service.

***At 7:30 pm** "Christus (An Unfinished Oratorio)" by Felix Mendelssohn will be sung by the St. John's Choir with organ and string quartet. The service begins with a brief Good Friday Lit-

urgy. All are welcome. No tickets are required.

Other Lenten services are as follows:

Palm Sunday, March 20: 7:45, 9:00, 11:15 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist

Tuesday and Wednesday, March 21-23: 6:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist

Maundy Thursday, March 24: 7:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist

Easter Vigil, Saturday, March 26: 8 p.m. First Eucharist of Easter

Easter Day, Sunday, March 27: 7:30, 9:00, 11:15 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist - Music with brass and timpani at each morning service.

St. John's Episcopal Church is located one mile east of Beltway Exit 44, at 6715 Georgetown Pike in McLean. For more information, call the Parish Office at 703-356-4902 or visit www.stjohnsmclean.org.

- ATTENTION -

Fairfax County Public School Employees

If you are a participant in the **Fairfax County Public Schools 403(b) Plan**, we would like to speak with you about our investigation of the fees charged on your **Great-West Mutual Funds**.

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Importing [Liquid] Gold

From the rolling countryside of Umbria to the neighborhoods of Vienna, local oral surgeon brings the best of the best to local tables.

BY DONNA MANZ
THE CONNECTION

What do you call Washington Magazine's "Top Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon" living out his alter ego dream in a parallel universe — overseeing production of 100 percent pure Italian olive oil and importing the finished product to the U.S? If you are in the Vienna-Oakton-McLean area, you might call him Dr. Bonacci, Christopher Bonacci, armed with both medical and dental surgery degrees, and a passion for the best of living Italy offers.

"I'm trying to get people to understand that olive oil is not all the same," Bonacci said, noting that only about 20 percent of purported Italian olive oils are made from Italian olives only. "The olives take on the nuances of nature, of the growing season, of picking the olives and bottling the oil the same day the olives are picked." If you are paying less than \$25 for a bottle, it's unlikely to be authentic Italian olive oil. "It can't be produced, bottled, and shipped for under \$25 a bottle."

Cheaper olive oil calling itself Italian is shipped by tankers to Italy from lower-cost nations for processing.

"My message is, 'consumer beware,'" Bonacci said.

In October 2015, while visiting several of the most renowned olive groves and mills in Umbria, Bonacci and his wife Kristin personally chose Olio Metelli to produce the 2015 Bonacci extra-virgin olive oil. The Metelli family owns approximately 15,000 olive trees in the foothills between Foligno and Trevi — Italy's olive oil capital — in Umbria. Light, age, temperature and soil all affect an olive's growth.

"These craftsmen have produced culinary treasures passed down from generation to generation," said Bonacci. "It is truly a family business, where every Metelli takes responsibility for an aspect."

OLIVES are picked in the late fall. Metelli handpicks and presses only in the middle of October through the end of November. To maintain maximum health and flavor benefits of olive oil, the olives should be picked, pressed and bottled on the same day. Bonacci is enthusiastic as he shows the label on his bottles of extra virgin olive oil: the lot number indicates the olives were picked, pressed and bottled on Nov. 19, 2015. "Nuovo" Italian olive oil is very rarely exported to the U.S. because the locals consume it as soon as it is produced. Bonacci's debut batch of 500 bottles — that were processed, packed and delivered in less than a week — disappeared almost immediately. Bazin's on Church bought a case for restaur-



PHOTO COURTESY OF NONNIE IMPORTERS

Dr. Christopher Bonacci unpacks a box of bottled Bonacci olive oil, pressed and bottled the same day the olives are hand-picked by Olio Metelli, a family-run business.

rant specialty use. Nonnie Importers, the Bonacci business name, will take orders for the 2016 production that Bonacci will oversee.

When an attorney friend from Montefalco, Umbria visited the Bonaccis in McLean, they talked about Italy's unstable economy that exists under some of the world's greatest culinary resources.

Inspiration came from several places. Bonacci said he felt he had to start thinking ahead to retirement in a decade or so from now. He owned and operated his namesake oral and maxillofacial surgery offices for more than 20 years. Last year, his associate Dr. Kim joined him as a full partner in the surgery/implant center. With one child in college and another not far behind, translating the Bonaccis' dreams into an economically-viable epicurean business began in earnest this fall.

Last winter, Bonacci and his wife Kristin sat down and asked one another, "what do we love to do?"

"We love to eat, to travel, go on food adventures, to drink good-quality wine," Bonacci said. "We look for restaurants featuring ingredients from small local farms, knowing where our food comes from."

Bonacci's father comes from Umbria, the "green heart" of Italy, a region that borders



PHOTO COURTESY OF NONNIE IMPORTERS

Trevi, Umbria, Italy, is Italy's olive oil capital, and the area in which Nonnie Importers gets its olives. Bonacci and his wife Kristin are hands-on in October and November when the olives are harvested.



PHOTO BY DONNA MANZ/THE CONNECTION

Oral surgeon Christopher Bonacci, whose practice has been in Vienna for more than 15 years, has taken his passion for fresh, natural food in a new direction. Bonacci, through his new business, has begun importing olive oil from Italy's olive oil capital, Trevi, in Umbria.

"This is about the power of the individual, we're making our dream come true ... Doing what I love, a passion of the heart here."

Dr. Christopher Bonacci, president, Nonnie Importers

Tuscany and is known for its olive groves, wine grapes, black truffles and iconic pork products. From these rich rolling hills and farms comes a wealth of foods and wines revered for their high quality. Christopher

and Kristen Bonacci turned to Umbria as the bed of their business in fall of 2015.

"I had this moment of clarity," said Bonacci. "Maybe, we should think about importing some Umbrian products. I know the people. I have roots there. Now, how do we go about doing this?"

"A lot" of motivation came from friends, from the attorney in Umbria to a radiologist living in upstate New York — who recommended a food and beverage attorney who just happens to live in Oakton. A dinner at Bazin's in August of 2015 joined by Bonacci, the Oakton attorney and the radiologist culminated in Nonnie Importers, formed in September. The name pays homage to Bonacci's grandmother. "It seemed like the best way to remember her," he said.

"All of these roads collided over a bottle of Sagrantino Montefalco," Bonacci said.

While Bonacci's vision is to bring the finest wines, black truffles, vinegars, sausages, and pottery from Umbria to the Washington, D.C. area and beyond, for now, Christopher and Kristin Bonacci are satisfied bringing the highest-grade, purest olive oil to the region. He looks to hosting a culinary/experiential tour around Umbria someday not far away. A cousin to pioneer farm-to-table chef Alice Waters, Bonacci said that cooking fresh, seasonal food is in his DNA.

"Farm-to-table products and meals are on the rise. People are asking, 'who made this? What's in it? Where does it come from?' I want them to be aware of where their foods come from."

Dr. Bonacci opened his practice in Vienna in 1999 and lived in the town until a few years ago when the family — Kristin and two children — moved to McLean.

Bonacci said he wanted to show his children that you can still dream, and, with hard work and determination, you can create something special. "This is about the power of the individual, we're making our dream come true," Bonacci said. "Doing what I love, a passion of the heart here."

TO LEARN MORE about "Bonacci" Umbrian extra-virgin olive oil and what lies ahead for Nonnie Importers, go to <https://www.facebook.com/nonnieimporters/?fref=ts>.

Elegant Temptations

Sweet secrets of Silva's Patisserie in Vienna.

BY ALEXANDRA GREELEY
THE CONNECTION

Probably the most delightful gift comes wrapped in sugar, or chocolate or a sweet glaze. Or maybe it's wrapped in foil or boxed handsomely, hiding a French baguette or assorted scones. Such elegant temptations are whipped up and assembled at Vienna's remarkable European-inspired pastry shop, Silva's Patisserie.

Managed by Silva Sarkees, it features her son, Harry Sarkees, who is the imaginative, hardworking and inspired baker who keeps the glass case shelves stocked with a rotating array of baked treats. Just examining each shelf could give a sugar high, so colorful and tempting are the scones and cakes, baguettes and croissants.

How did Sarkees get so engrossed in a baking career? As it turns out, he is a fourth-generation descendant of French-Armenian bakers. "I grew up in the business," he said, adding that his mother's uncles have a baking business in France. "I am self taught. I learned from my grandfather and mother. I worked in a restaurant, which was a good base, but all else I learned on my own." (Note: His restaurant experiences include working for Michel Richard at his now-closed Citronelle, the executive pastry chef for Sam & Harry's in D.C., and at the Kennedy Center.)

His techniques and skills are excellent, but what makes his work stand out is his creative imagination. Take, for example, the sweet treat that he created years ago for St. Patrick's Day, the Irish potato. For this, he shaped a "potato" out of cream cheese, cinnamon, sugar and shredded coconut, then dusted it with chocolate to give it an earthy look. But instead of a savory mouthful, the potato is sugary and crunchy, and has become so popular that Sarkees has kept it as a regular in the patisserie.

"This 'potato' is great with French-roast espresso," he said, but honestly, it is fabulous just on its own.

For those who look for other St. Paddy's Day goodies, Sarkees also bakes an Irish soda bread, which he describes as a cross between regular bread and a quick bread lightened with yeast. Other special Irish treats include shortbread cookies in the shape of clover and of Irish hats. He also bakes a Bailey's Irish Cream cake, which he describes as his take on the Latino favorite, the *tres leches* cake.

At any given time, he said, he stocks the glass cases with between 100 and 130 different kinds of pastries and baked goods. He added that he likes to challenge himself in creating unusual and delicious treats. To that end, he will even travel to sample the competition. Take his coffee crumb cake, for example. "These are popular up north," he said, "so I drove up to New Jersey to taste samples. I went to three or four bakeries, but tasted nothing special. So I created my own with all butter to make a moister, softer cake."

Perhaps the most popular baked goods here are Sarkees' genuine



Harry Sarkees: An inspired baker.

macarons, made with almond flour. But because of his baking skills, nothing on display and from his kitchen disappoints, and the reason is this: "I try to stay true to the character of the pastry," he

said, adding that his basic ingredients are European butter and heavy cream.

Silva's Patisserie, 167 Glyndon St SE, Vienna. 703-255-6880. Hours: 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. daily, closed Mondays.

SPECIAL CONNECTIONS CALENDAR

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday unless noted.

MARCH

3/23/2016..Spring Fun, Food, Arts & Entertainment
FCPS Spring Break 3/21-3/25

APRIL

4/6/2016.....Wellbeing – Senior Living Pullout
Easter Sunday is March 27

4/13/2016.....Real Estate Pullout – New Homes

4/20/2016.....A+ Camps & Schools

4/27/2016.....A+ Camps & Schools Pullout

4/27/2016.....Mother's Day Celebrations,
Dining & Gifts I

4/27/2016.....Spring Outlook 2016

MAY

5/4/2016.....McLean Day Pullout

5/4/2016.....Mother's Day Dining & Gifts II

5/4/2016.....Wellbeing
Mother's Day is May 8

5/11/2016.....HomeLifeStyle

5/18/2016.....A+ Camps & Schools, Proms,
Summer Planning

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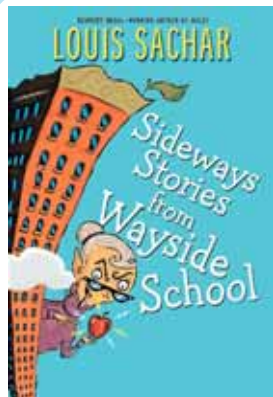




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Here's What's Happening at MCC



**An Alden Theatre
Production**
**"Sideways
Stories from
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**Sat. and Sun.,
Mar. 12-13, 3 p.m.**
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Old Firehouse Spring Break Trips
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Monster Mini Golf**
Monday, Mar. 21, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
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G-Force Indoor Go Karts
Tuesday, Mar. 22, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
\$75/\$65 MCC district residents

Dave & Buster's
Wednesday, Mar. 23, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
\$65/\$55 MCC district residents

Baltimore, Md.
Thursday, Mar. 24, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
\$85/\$75 MCC district residents

**Hogback Mountain
Paintball**
Friday, Mar. 25, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
\$70/\$60 MCC district residents

Welcome the Spring Season



**Spring
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Noon**
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The McLean Community Center
www.mcleancenter.org
Home of the Alden Theatre
www.aldentheatre.org
1234 Ingleside Ave.,
McLean, VA 22101
703-790-0123, TTY: 711



CALENDAR

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

THURSDAY/MARCH 10

Vienna Art Society Meeting. 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Speaker will be Davi D'Agostino who will discuss and demonstration her paintings in oils and acrylics and how she plans subject matter for her own works and also for the classes she teaches. Free. viennaartssociety.org. 703-319-3971.

Game Night: Sheriff of Nottingham. 7 p.m. Barnes and Noble Tysons, 7851 L. Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Bring friends, grab a snack from the Cafe and get ready for some board game fun. Free. 703-506-6756. <http://stores.barnesandnoble.com/store/2238>.

SATURDAY/MARCH 12

Model Trains and Thomas at Open House. 1-5 p.m. Historic Vienna Train Station, 231 Dominion Road NE, Vienna. See and hear model trolleys and steam and diesel trains plus Thomas and some of his friends. The layout reflects the mountainous terrain and towns of Western North Carolina with award winning structures. Free. Donations accepted. www.nvmr.org. 703-938-5157.

Churchill Road Elementary School Book Fair. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Barnes and Noble Tysons, 7851 L. Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Students, parents, staff will host activities to entertain children including an 11am Storytime, bookmark making, face painting and student performances. 703-506-6756. <http://stores.barnesandnoble.com/store/2238>.

Author and Illustrator Reading and Signing. 3 p.m. Barnes and Noble Tysons, 7851 L. Tysons Corner Center, McLean. McLean native Scott McBride and co-author Rod Thompson will read and sign copies of their book "The Adventures of Connor the Courageous Cutter: Saving Sarah." Illustrator Brian Martin will join them. Free. 703-506-6756. <http://stores.barnesandnoble.com/store/2238>.

Look to the Rainbow. 6-10 p.m. Charles Wesley United Methodist Church, 6817 Dean Drive, McLean. Come celebrate with the World Children's Choir with songs, dance, drumming and activities. Featuring songs with a Celtic spirit in honor of St. Patrick's Day. \$10-\$30. worldchildrenschoir.org. 571-344-2206.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/MARCH 12-13,

"Sideways Stories from Wayside School." 3 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Delightfully demented comedy about the strangest school ever built, where the students battle supernatural teachers and endure madcap lessons. Performed by youths. Ages 7 and up. \$15/\$10. mcleancenter.org. 703-790-0123.

SUNDAY/MARCH 13

Capitol Steps. 4 p.m. James Madison High School, 2500 James Madison Drive, Vienna. Comedy troupe. Performance benefits rowing team. \$25-\$40. madisoncapitolsteps2016.brownpapertickets.com.

TaBois Galerie Re-opening. 2-6 p.m. 1800 Old Meadow Road, McLean. Music by Dave Danze. Premiering International Association of Self-Proclaimed Artists and Writers exhibition. Ctabois@ctabois.com.

TUESDAY/MARCH 15

Whiskey Classics Dinner. 7-9 p.m. Ruth's Chris Steak House-Tysons



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Rescheduled performance of "The Importance of Being Earnest" will be at The Alden Theatre on Wednesday, March 30.

Ongoing

Time Traveler Tuesdays. 4:30 p.m. March 29-June 7. Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. This weekly series will take participants on an interactive journey through time, focusing on a different period in Virginia history each week. Register at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/colvinrunmill/events.htm>.

Scholarship. Deadline April 1. The Bull Run Civil War Round Table in Centreville is offering a \$1,500 scholarship to a high school senior who resides in Fairfax or Prince William counties and will attend college or community college in fall 2016. Information and application instructions can be found at <http://bullrunrwrt.org>.

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.

Margaret Newton Original Oils. Through March 31. Modern History Collection, 8100 F Old Dominion Drive, McLean. Great Falls original oil paintings. Opening reception with artist, Thursday, April 7 from 6-8 p.m. 703-942-6507.

"Witness: Close Encounters of the Painting Kind." March 1-31. Katie's Coffee at the Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760 Walker Road, Great Falls. Jill Banks' solo exhibit of backyards, bars, beaches and other scenes keenly captured. JillBanks.com.

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

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.

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.

"Wishes and Dreams" Exhibit. March 1-April 2. Vienna Art Center, 115 Pleasant St., NW, Vienna. Free. viennaartssociety.org. 703-319-3971.

Goldstein Artist Showcase. March 1-23. Broadway Gallery, 1025-J Seneca Road, Great Falls. Great Falls Gallery will feature the pastels and mixed media paintings of local artist, Lynn Goldstein. www.broadwaygallery.net. 703-450-8005.

Corner, 8521 Leesburg Pike, Vienna. Ruth's Chris Tyson's Corner and Macallan Highland Single Malt Scotch Whisky presents a five-course "Whiskey Classics Dinner" prepared by Executive Chef Jean Bosch. \$99.99. <http://www.ruthschris.com/restaurant-locations/tysons-corner>. 703-848-4290.

Perennial Personalities. 10 a.m. Vienna Presbyterian Church, 124 Park St., Vienna. Karen Rexrod, plant expert and former owner of Windy Hill nursery, will present her favorite perennial personalities.

Karen's expertise and knowledge of perennial plants and their habits. Free. lmc323@aol.com.

Cocktails and Conversation. 5-6:30 p.m. Capital Grille, 1861 International Drive, McLean. The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia invites you to a private event for substantial supporters and friends of the Community Foundation. Reserve at www.cfnova.org/cocktails or call Tara Nadel at 703-879-7637.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 16

McLean Newcomers and Neighbors Monthly Luncheon. 11:30 a.m. Peking Gourmet Inn, 6029 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Cabi clothing stylist, Allison Bateman, will speak, providing us with all the latest spring trends for 2016. \$24. RSVP by March 11 to Susie Osser at ssosser@verizon.net. McLeanNewcomers.org.

THURSDAY/MARCH 17

Spanish Storytime featuring CommuniKids. 11 a.m. Barnes and Noble Tysons, 7851 L. Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Give your child the love of language at a fun, engaging Storytime in Spanish. 703-506-6756. <http://stores.barnesandnoble.com/store/2238>.

Game Night: Splendor. 7 p.m. Barnes and Noble Tysons, 7851 L. Tysons

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

Corner Center, McLean. Bring friends, grab a snack from the Cafe and get ready for some board game fun. Free. 703-506-6756. <http://stores.barnesandnoble.com/store/2238>.

St. Patrick's Day Chef's Table. 6:30 p.m. Wildfire, Tysons Galleria, 2001 International Drive, McLean. Taste the talents of executive chefs, Edwin Amaya and Moreno Espinoza, as they prepare and personally present a custom four-course menu with optional beer pairings. \$40-\$55 per person. To reserve, call 703-442-9110.

FRIDAY/MARCH 18

Flashlight Egg Hunt. 7 p.m. Glyndon Park, 300 Glyndon St., NE, Vienna. Enjoy a family evening searching for eggs and prizes in the dark! Please bring a flashlight so you can find the eggs. Jump like a bunny in the moon bounce and visit the Easter Bunny. 703-255-6360.

McLean Art Society Meeting. 10 a.m.-noon. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Linda Maldonado, a painter who uses mixed media and creative collage, will be the presenting artist. Guests welcome. 703-790-0123.

SATURDAY/MARCH 19

Easter Egg Hunt at Colvin Run Mill. Starting at 10 a.m. Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Hunt for eggs filled with treats and treasures of the grounds of Colvin Run Mill Historic Site. Separate hunts by age group. Before the hunt, make egg-cellent crafts to take home. Bring your own basket; program will be held rain or shine. Ages 2-9. \$6/\$8. Register at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/>

colvinrunmill/events.htm.

Old-Fashioned Egg Hunt and Roll. 10:30-11:30 a.m. Freeman House, 131 Church St., NE, Vienna. Children 12 and under and their parents are welcome to participate in an egg roll and visit with Easter Bunny, hosted by Historic Vienna, Inc. 703-938-5187.

Mr. Jon and Friends. 10:30 a.m. Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave., Vienna. This energetic family music is all about fun, movement, and laughter. Mr. Jon & Friends makes music for kids and their families that inspire fun, laughter, and dancing. \$25. Family pack available. <http://jamminjava.com/event/1032603>.

Author Reading and Signing. 2 p.m. Barnes and Noble Tysons, 7851 L. Tysons Corner Center, McLean. New York Times bestselling children's author Jonah Winter will read and sign copies of his new picture-book biography "Hillary." Free. 703-506-6756. <http://stores.barnesandnoble.com/store/2238>.

THURSDAY/MARCH 24

Game Night: Codenames. 7 p.m. Barnes and Noble Tysons, 7851 L. Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Bring friends, grab a snack from the Cafe and get ready for some board game fun. Free. 703-506-6756. <http://stores.barnesandnoble.com/store/2238>.

SATURDAY/MARCH 26

Meet Biscuit. 2 p.m. Barnes and Noble Tysons, 7851 L. Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Special Storytime with one of the most beloved children's book characters of all time - Biscuit! A brief Meet and Greet with Biscuit will follow Storytime. Free. <http://stores.barnesandnoble.com/store/2238>.

Capitol Steps to Perform at Madison High

Capitol Steps – the renowned political comedy troupe — will perform at James Madison High School auditorium on Sunday, March 13, at 4 p.m.

The troupe will present a show based on songs from their current album "Mock the Vote." Each show consists of tasteful lampooning guaranteed to leave both sides of the political spectrum laughing. The troupe started in 1981, when John McCain was only 63 years old! Since then, they have appeared on The Today Show, Nightline, CBS Evening News and for many years in specials for National Public Radio. Capitol Steps Troupe member and JMHS alum Mark

Eaton has helped to bring this opportunity to James Madison High School Auditorium.

Advance ticket prices: \$30, adults; \$25, students and seniors (over 65). Door prices: \$40, adults; \$35, students and seniors (over 65).

Tickets are available online through brownpapertickets.com. Search "Capitol Steps" or go directly to madisoncapitolsteps2016.brownpapertickets.com.

Questions or special requests? Email madisoncapitolsteps2016@gmail.com

Proceeds from the show benefit the James Madison Crew Boosters organization.

Area Students Named to 2016 Virginia All-State High School Honors Choir

Sixty-five Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) high school students have been named to the Virginia All-State Honors Choir for 2016 and will perform as a group on Saturday, April 30 at the Sandler Center for Performing Arts in Virginia Beach. Additionally, 39 FCPS students were named alternates to the All-State Honors Choir.

Area students selected for the 2016 Virginia All-State Honors Choir and as alternates include:

❖ Langley High School: Camila Maric, Akbari Ammad, Regan Herberg, and alternates Trevor Goldhush, Matt Arrison, and Paloma Ferraz (Mac Lambert, director).

❖ Madison High School: Ben Schwartz, Jordyn

Pistilli, and alternate Kate Gibson (Claire Rowan, director).

❖ Marshall High School: Sarah Koo, Conor Kelly, and alternates Sammy Graceson and Alexandra Stenseth (Keri Staley, director).

❖ McLean High School: alternates Daniel Thomas and Eric Juneau (Linda Martin, director).

❖ Oakton High School: Megan Griggs, Andie Carroll, Kathryn Conley, Jack Lankenau, and Jillian Tate (Tiffany Powell, director).

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Oakton junior Delaney Connolly finished with 15 points against Woodbridge on Saturday.



Maddie Royle and the Oakton girls' basketball team advanced to the state semifinals for the second straight year.

PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Hot Start Propels Oakton to State Semifinals

Cougars open with 20-2 run against Woodbridge.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

With the Oakton girls' basketball team having secured a return trip to the state final four, head coach Fred Priester explained what the Cougars learned from last year's semifinal loss to Bethel that could help during this season's quest for a state championship.

"Last time, I don't want to say we came out timid, but Bethel dropped about five 3-pointers on us in the first minute-and-a-half," Priester said, "and we were playing scramble ball the rest of the time."

Judging by Oakton's performance against Woodbridge in the state quarterfinals, the Cougars have a firm grasp on what it takes to start a game in non-timid fashion.

Oakton, the 6A North region champion, opened Saturday's contest with a 20-2 run and defeated 6A South No. 4 seed Woodbridge 70-47 at Robinson Secondary School. The Cougars remained undefeated and advanced to the



Oakton senior Alex Marquis scored 12 points during the Cougars' state quarterfinal victory over Woodbridge on Saturday.

state semifinals, where they faced Langley on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline.

After a pair of Woodbridge free throws cut the Oakton lead to 6-2 with 5:29 left in the opening quarter, the Cougars scored 14 straight points, including a pair of 3-pointers by Maddie Royle. Oakton ended the first quarter with a 23-5 advantage and extended the lead to 27-5 with buckets by Alex Marquis and Delaney Connolly early in the second quarter. A Connolly 3-pointer gave Oakton a 34-14 halftime advantage and the Cougars led by as many as 27 points in the second half.

"We come out with a really high intensity every single game — a lot of energy," Connolly said. "We push the ball hard. We kind of adjust our speed depending on the

team that we're playing and all of us know our roles so we come out knowing what we have to do to score points." Marquis said the Cougars weren't taking Woodbridge lightly after Herndon, the 6A North region's No. 4 seed, upset 6A South champion Woodside the previous night.

"We knew that Herndon came out and beat the No. 1 ranked team of their region," Marquis said, "so we knew that anything could happen and we knew that we were going to have to come out strong and just play our game and we couldn't take anything for granted."

Royle led Oakton with 21 points, including 11 during the Cougars' dominant first quarter, and grabbed eight rebounds. Connolly finished with 15 points and nine rebounds. Kailyn Fee scored 14 points and knocked down four 3-pointers, and Marquis added 12 points.

Oakton finished with eight 3-pointers.

With so many scoring options, how does Priester decide who gets the ball?

"It's not a seamless process, I will tell you," the Oakton head coach said. "We have certain rules for certain people, but the fact of the matter is, if someone hits one, let's get them the ball again as quickly as possible. ... I always have had a rule for as long as I've been coaching, especially when you have shooters: I'll tell you when



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Paige Galiani, seen during the region tournament, and the Langley girls' basketball team advanced to the state semifinals with a win over Landstown in the quarterfinals on Saturday.

Galiani's Clutch Shot Sends Langley to State Semis

Paige Galiani is the Langley girls' basketball team's go-to offensive player and on Saturday she stepped up in the season's biggest moment.

Galiani knocked down a deep 3-pointer that gave Langley, the No. 3 seed from the 6A North region, the lead with less than a minute remaining and the Saxons held on for a 34-32 victory over 6A South runner-up Landstown in the state quarterfinals at Old Dominion University.

Langley advanced to the semifinals, where the Saxons faced Oakton on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline.

Trailing 32-30, Galiani saved Langley's season with a clutch shot from behind the arc.

"It was off a play we've run many times before, and the team ran it really well and Paige saw her window and took a gutsy shot," Langley head coach Amanda Baker wrote in an email. "... Taking into account that we are in the state

tournament and that shot helped send us to the final four, it's hard to think of a bigger shot this season."

Galiani led Langley with 17 points. Ari Aulisi finished with eight points and Jordyn Callaghan added four.

The victory improved Langley's record to 25-5.

"We kept our composure really well, especially after missing free throws and losing the lead," Langley head coach Amanda Baker wrote in an email. "I give the players a lot of credit for being able to bounce back so quickly during the game."

Langley advanced to face undefeated 6A North champion Oakton on Tuesday. The Cougars defeated the Saxons 44-41 in the region semifinals on Feb. 26.

On Feb. 20, Langley won its first conference/district championship since 1988, beating Fairfax 42-38 in the Conference 6 tournament final.

— JON ROETMAN

to stop shooting."

Oakton improved to 29-0 with the win over Woodbridge. It was the Cougars' 55th victory in their last 56 games dating back to December of 2014, including a pair of Conference 5 and 6A North region championships. Oakton's only defeat during that stretch was the 73-63 loss to Bethel in the 2015 state semifinals. Despite falling behind 17-4 in the first quarter, the Cougars had a chance to tie or take the lead in the fourth quarter.

"Last year was [our] first time ... going to the state tournament," Marquis said about the players on the 2015-16 Oakton roster, "so I think now that we've been there, we know what it's like and we know how it feels to lose in the semifinals and none of us want that to happen again, so we'll be ready."

Oakton's last state championship came in 2012, when the Cougars finished 31-0.

NEWS

UVA Backs Students' Research Projects

From examining how James Joyce's work relates to civil unrest to quantitative eco-labeling schemes, and from researching Roman property law to analyzing the pathology of Alzheimer's disease, 50 University of Virginia undergraduates will pursue 46 grant-funded research projects this summer.

Forty-five proposals involving 49 students received Harrison Undergraduate Research Awards and another student has had his research underwritten by the Stull family of Dallas. This marks the 17th year of the program, which helps further a key component of the UVA student experience: pursuing hands-on research.

The research awards support students who present detailed plans for projects that have been endorsed by a faculty mentor. In February, a Faculty Senate committee selected the winners, who receive up to \$3,000. Faculty mentors who oversee the projects receive \$1,000.

"The Harrison Undergraduate Research Awards provide an opportunity for undergraduate students to participate in a core purpose of the University by creating and advancing new knowledge," said Brian Cullaty, director of undergraduate research opportunities at UVA's Center for Undergraduate Excellence. "The program aspires for these student-faculty collaborations to make an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline."

The center received more than 70 grant applications, which were reviewed by nearly 50 faculty members, including the members of the Faculty Senate's Research, Teaching and Scholarship Committee.

"The winning applications were those that addressed an important societal problem, addressed a clear question and described a well-designed research approach," said Silvia Blemker, Commonwealth Associate Professor of Biomedical Engineering and chair of the Faculty Senate's Research, Teaching and Scholarship Committee. "It was a very competitive selection process; the committee was extremely impressed with the creativity, passion and depth illustrated by all the applications."

The research awards open new avenues of learning for the undergraduates.

"The Harrison Award is a unique opportunity for students to work intimately at the edge of knowledge, defining their own research direction while being closely mentored by faculty members," Blemker said. "Many Harrison awardees go on to present their findings at national conferences and publish their work in peer-reviewed journals."

This year's Harrison Undergraduate Research Award winners and their research topics include:

❖ Emily Jane Cox of Fairfax, a second-year art history major with a minor in French, is researching how Impressionist artist Camille Pissarro exploited spatial and temporal liminality in his nocturnal scenes to explore the political and social shifts that transformed Paris in the 1880s and '90s, particularly the relationship between the artist's works and his anarchist philosophy.

❖ Katherine Crump of Oakton, a third-year biomedical engineering major, is researching the use of yoga therapy as a complementary treatment modality for chronic diseases with musculoskeletal involvement.

❖ Zack Dailey of Great Falls, a third-year neuroscience major, is researching the effects of a protein on the development of hair cells in the inner ears of mice.

❖ Patrick Depret-Guillaume of Fairfax, a third-year student double-majoring in history and archaeology, is researching the evolution of religious practices of the pueblo of Acoma, from the founding of the first settlements on the mesa to the Mexican War of Independence in the early 19th-century.

❖ Jenny Liu of McLean, a third-year human biology major, is researching how molecules and cells operate on a macro scale.

❖ Kyle Scott of Clifton, a third-year biomedical engineering major, is investigating the effects of a particular protein expression on malignant cancer cell growth and metastasis.

❖ Sabrina Yen of Fairfax, a second-year pre-commerce student with a minor in statistics, will study Germany's implementation of quantitative eco-labeling schemes to see what can be used in creating quantitative eco-wine certification criteria and procedures in the U.S.

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 6

them and risking that they return to drugs. Instead of placing a "bandage" on the chronic issue, they decided to treat the wound itself in order to prevent it from happening later on. It was very thoughtful and sensitive of them to realize that this

wasn't just a private trouble in the lives of the addicts, but instead a public issue in their community that needed to be rectified. Helping the victims out of their addictions instead of just incarcerating them may have also helped in reducing the number of deaths attributed to heroin and the health

consequences that result from its use as well. All in all this was a very well written paper and your dedication to providing the whole truth about the situation is refreshing and welcomed.

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Basic Burger, LLC trading as Basic Burger, 2024 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA 22201. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer On Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Dave Diamond, Operations Director
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And It's Just So Happening Now



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

The day after my seven-year anniversary. And not that I want to stop recounting the years since February 27, 2009 – years for which I am most proud to have survived – and thrived even, I must look forward because it's the future that lies ahead, not the past. Medicine, science and nutrition are particularly evolving disciplines with revelations, discoveries and life-changing/life-saving/life-affirming research in the offing. Nevertheless, having beaten my original, extremely discouraging, life-expectancy odds/prognosis: "13 months to two years," (received at age 54 and a half no less), doesn't mean that I can rest on my unexpected and certainly unpredicted survival. I wish the past was indeed prologue but we're discussing cancer here; I'm more afraid the past may simply be a prelude and that my epilogue may suffer the consequences.

But not to worry. I'm not weakening in my resolve, just being realistic and honest. Cancer is not the preferred diagnosis when one is planning one's future. Even so, rates of survival seem to rise every day now, and research studies, clinical trials (and tribulations) and non-Western alternatives, assure that presently, if not in the very near future, great promise exists that many more of us afflicted with this terrible disease can begin/return to live relatively normal lives, making cancer more of a chronic, treatable/manageable-type condition rather than what it is now, in many cases (not all, of course): a terminal one, or at least one with an abbreviated life expectancy.

Still, I'm not counting on any magic pill to cure what ails me. This whole cancer thing is my responsibility. I must do all I can to keep my own house in order. Relying, depending or anticipating even that some opportunity will present itself to rid me of my cancer cannot be my plan "A." Plan "C" maybe? As such, in the interim, I must steady on and stay the course and try to remain open to new and different strategies, all the while attempting to find calm in the midst of a very distressing set of circumstances.

And diagnosis-to-date, I think I've done a pretty good job of bearing the unbearable. Not that I had any training or experience in such endeavors (I had a relatively easy childhood in a middle-class home, with two loving parents, and minimal sickness and/or loss with which to contend). Nevertheless, through DNA or a nurturing environment or thousands of years of evolution, it turns out I'm made of sterner stuff than I might have imagined. As an effect, or so it seems, I have endured my challenges with aplomb and good humor; and if ever there were a situation that called for it, receiving a terminal diagnosis at age 54-plus would certainly qualify.

But just like, at a fairly young age, crying over spilled milk doesn't change the facts, neither does bemoaning the facts of a malignant diagnosis – in whatever alternative state you get to: denial and/or drink or disillusion, change anything. It may blur your reality, but the reality is: this particular problem is likely not going away, and the sooner you buck up and gain control, the sooner you can get on with your life. Granted, you have to allow for the shock of the diagnosis/prognosis to permeate your brain, almost like osmosis, and it definitely won't happen overnight, that's for sure. Probably it will happen when you experience your first chemotherapy infusion/radiation treatment. That's when you'll know you're not in Kansas anymore – unless you're actually in Kansas. And when symptoms and hair loss occur, you'll be one-hundred-percent convinced that you've officially entered your own "twilight zone."

And that's what this anniversary part two column has been about: moving forward somehow. Whether staying the course or changing protocols/treatment, maintaining a positive attitude in this constant cycle of wondering if you can still live long and prosper, the future likely holds out more hope than the past.

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

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The Nowruz Festival celebrating the Persian New Year will be held on Sunday, March 13 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Tysons Corner Center.



This year's festival, with more than 55 booth vendors, is free and will be held in front of Bloomingdale's at Tysons Corner Center.

Celebrating the Persian New Year

The Nowruz Festival will be held Sunday, March 13 at Tysons Corner Center.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE CONNECTION

Following 3,000 years of customs and traditions, the colorful Nowruz Festival — the Persian New Year celebration — will be held on Sunday, March 13 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. This year's festival, with more than 55 booth vendors, is free and will be held in front of Bloomingdale's at Tysons Corner Center.

Nowruz, which normally falls in early Spring, is when Persian-Americans will join locally to celebrate the new year. There will be 55 vendors offering traditional and exotic foods as well as jewelry, artwork, crafts and other traditional Persian products. A main stage will be set up that provides entertainment around the clock with 60 musicians, dancers, artists, costumed characters and traditional players.

"Enjoy music, dance, dramatic performances and meet with costumed characters roaming the festival. Shop in our bazaar or savor the flavors of Persia in our food court,"



A main stage will be set up that provides entertainment around the clock with 60 musicians, dancers, artists, costumed characters, and traditional players.

said organizer Shohreh Asemi.

The Nowruz Festival is a family-friendly, fun celebration that celebrates life, love and good will. Of all the Persian national festivals, the New Year celebrations are at once the most important and the most colorful. This festival embodies a wealth of ancient rites and customs, and is about the only one in Persia which is not confined to the tradi-

tions of only one religious group. It symbolizes that continuity of the ancient Persian culture which has survived so many adversities and vicissitudes.

The venue provides a fun place for people to celebrate with family and friends, to taste delicious Persian food and enjoy traditional and modern Persian entertainment. Among the traditions, is a ceremonial table called

the cloth of seven dishes (each one beginning with the Persian letter Sin). The symbolic dishes consist of Sabzeh or sprouts, usually wheat or lentil, representing rebirth. Another is Samanu or a sweet, creamy pudding. Another is Seer, which is garlic in Persian, which represents medicine.

In addition to attracting people from Virginia, Maryland and the District, this year, organizers hope to attract international guests from other countries that celebrate Nowruz, including Turkey, Afghanistan and Tajikistan, among others.

The goal is to share the Nowruz Festival with both Persians and non-Persians. The event sends out positive messages, like celebrating earth, spring time, love and peace to the community. Planners want to bring different musicians and dancers from other countries that celebrate Nowruz, as well as new musicians that offer more variety to the festival. They also want to bring different historical and costumed characters from Persia (like Haji Firuz, a traditional herald of Nowruz dressed in a red costume and tambourine) that will interact with the crowd.

The Nowruz Festival will be held Sunday, March 13, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Tysons Corner Center in front of Bloomingdale's, which is at 8100 Tysons Corner Center, McLean. For details, contact organizer Shohreh Asemi at 202-369-1515 or visit <http://nowruzfestival.org>.

CRIME

FROM PAGE 5

charged with Driving While Intoxicated. He was to be held until he was sober.

Arrest - Narcotics Violation - Beulah Road at Delancey Drive, NW. Feb. 27, 9:07 p.m. An officer was on patrol when

he observed the driver of a vehicle commit a series of traffic offenses. As a result of those offenses he conducted a traffic stop. Upon his interaction with the driver he detected the odor of marijuana coming from the vehicle. After further interaction he located a measureable amount of marijuana. The driver, a 19-year-old

woman from Seneca Road in Falls Church, was issued a summons for Reckless Driving and Possession of Marijuana. She was released after signing the summonses.

Vehicle Tampering - 500 Block Nutley Street, SW. Feb. 27, 9:44 p.m.

A resident reported someone

had entered his unlocked vehicle and rummaged through the center console and glove compartment.

Police Service - Cloud Nine Homes, 340 Mill St., NE. Feb. 29, 9 a.m. An employee reported that after terminating an employee the ex-employee became upset and

stormed out of the business without completing the termination paperwork. The employee was concerned the ex-employee would return and be confrontational. An officer informed him to contact the Vienna Police Department if he returns.



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Buying or Selling?

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

Here we are, once again right on the heels of the Spring/Summer real estate season when it seems like “For Sale” signs become the most common lawn ornament or condo window decoration. Television shows like “House Hunters,” “Property Brothers,” “Love it or List It,” and their like make the process of buying or selling a property seem mostly a breeze, filled with afternoons sipping cocktails at the Tiki Bar while you make one of the most important decisions of your life. Selling, and certainly *buying* a new home should be an occasion for celebration, but you might not be doing too much of that unless you understand the basics of either process and have them well under control.

With help from some knowledgeable sources like the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors (NVAR), the National Association of Realtors (NAR) and some respected local experts, here’s a bit of a primer on buying or selling a property. We’re going for the basics here with a few comments about our local market. We will give you some resources for more information before we sign off. Ready? Here we go!

Let’s start with our sellers, since for the most part, they have the most work to do to get the job done. First question. Use an agent or go it alone? Strictly a personal decision. You may think only saving the real estate agent fees is the basis for the answer, but if you decide to be your own agent, be sure you have done the homework on legal and regulatory requirements, and be prepared for the paperwork. Sadly, one misstep here could be pretty costly and there goes those potential savings. And are you ready to be your own marketer and be available night and day and weekends to show your property? Another thought...many potential buyers are not comfortable dealing directly, especially during negotiations, with the homeowner and would prefer the buffer of a trustworthy agent that they can really share their thoughts with. Statistics have also shown that properties for sale by owner more often receive lower initial offers, since the buyer might mistakenly believe that the seller is in a more difficult financial situation and may accept a lower-than-market value offer.

Let’s assume that you are working with an agent. Hopefully, you asked all the right questions before signing an agreement to sell. Don’t be shy. It’s okay to “interview” several agents and ask for references. Ask to make contact with their last two or three clients – not just the ones that they offer up as testimonials. What’s their typical “Days on Market” and how do their times compare to others. And a biggie – what’s the average variation between the initial listing price and the final sales price? The answer here may spare you some disappoint-



PHOTO BY ANDREA WORKER

What’s wrong with this picture? It’s a gorgeous kitchen, but real estate agents will tell you that the green plastic cup, the dishwashing soap and the drainboard should all vanish from the selling photos of your house, and certainly during any showings.

ments and provide some indication about your real estate agent’s skills at pricing your property and negotiation the best price.

Now what? Put on your thickest skin, open your wallet just a tad, listen to that agent, and before you even have that first showing:

Be realistic about your asking price. “Don’t be too aggressive,” cautioned real estate agent Jennifer Boyce of Long and Foster in Burke. Anita Lasansky, CRB, managing broker-vice president Long and Foster Reston North Hills-Herndon, agrees with that advice, and adds that sellers around the Wiehle Metro station in Reston shouldn’t expect a big bump in sales price just because of Metro’s arrival. Lasansky has seen sellers factor in 5-10 percent increases on that basis, but “it just hasn’t had that effect,” she said. Getting a pre-appraisal or advice from a lender can help in setting the best realistic sales price, since most buyers will need a mortgage.

Think about getting a pre-sale home inspection. This could cost a bit. Think at least \$500, depending on the size and age of the property. The buyer will have an inspection done, but being proactive could help locate potential problems that might stall, or even end a sale. Even if you don’t go for the professional inspection, take a look around and get on with those repairs or more affordable upgrades you’ve been meaning to tackle. If you think that bigger ticket items like a new roof or replacement of major appliances might be an issue, at least get estimates on costs to help in negotiating with your potential buyers. While you’re at it, locate those warranties and

manuals - something that really impresses those buyers, while last-minute searches could pose a problem at closing.

Clean and get organized. Here’s where you need that thick skin. Your agent isn’t casting aspersions on your personal taste or “dissing” your kids, pets, hobbies, etc. when she tells you to neutralize as much as possible, put away the toys and pet paraphernalia, and all the other stuff that is part of our comfortable living. Your agent is merely looking out for you, and making your home appealing to the widest pool of potential buyers. Pay special attention to closets and bathrooms, and no, don’t use the spare bedroom as the storage catch-all. If there isn’t space inside the house, consider the smallest space at a storage facility for the the extra boxes, furniture, gadgets and whatnots while your property is on the market.

First impressions. That means check out curb appeal, from the condition of lawn and landscape to the front entryway. Trim those bushes. Edge that grass. Put down some new mulch, and clean up those oil spots on the driveway. Inside might await an affordable Taj Mahal, but if your buyers won’t cross the threshold because of what they see on the outside... Even adding a pot of bright flowers, a seasonal wreath, and maybe a new doormat can help.

Photos. Unless you are one gifted photographer, let the professionals handle this one. Most buyers today do their scouting online. Lots of quality photos attract the most visitors. Equally, photos that don’t show off each room to advantage, or con-

tain pets wandering by, the piled-high laundry basket, or a reflection of the photographer can put your property on the “don’t want to see that one” list.

YOUR REAL ESTATE AGENT can give you a more comprehensive checklist and do a walk-through before an Open House or to prepare for showings, but here are some of the “musts” as advised by some of our area experts:

- ❖ Double check for clutter, and clean, clean, clean. A thorough cleaning by a professional service is much recommended. Don’t forget the windows and the carpets.

- ❖ Do the “**Sniff Test.**” This one is critical for homes with pets or smokers. Again, put on your thick skin armour. Refrigerators, garbage disposals, trash cans and carpets can be odoriferous stumbling blocks to a good showing. Give your home a thorough airing out before show time, especially in the kitchen.

- ❖ Double check for sticking doors, burned out light bulbs, loose knobs.

- ❖ **Stage it** – Consider a professional “stager” or at least give each space a neutral, de-cluttered living “story” that helps buyers visualize themselves right at home. To highlight upgrades or bring attention to items/features in a room, you might add an attractive picture frame with a few well written and formatted sentences on classy writing paper. Of course, a little light music and a plate of yummy cookies make everyone feel welcome.

- ❖ **Put away small valuables, jewelry and medications.**

- ❖ **Don’t hang around** – and take Fido or Fifi with you if possible. If not, confine pets to crates or one room and be sure to warn agents in advance. Be sure you have left contact information in case of questions or issues. I speak from experience on this one. A potential buyer’s 3-year-old son decided to let my crated dog out for some “play time.” Thankfully, I left my cell number right there on the kitchen counter – along with those cookies – so the showing agent could quickly contact me before my poor pooch took to the hills.

- ❖ **Make your property accessible** – If potential buyers can only see your property from 10 a.m. until noon on Tuesdays and Thursdays, prepare for a long wait before a successful closing. Selling a home is often a numbers game. As disruptive as it can be, the more people who look, the better chance of a sale.

FOR BUYERS. Just as with the sellers, buyers should shop around for a trusted real estate partner. Again, ask those questions, get those referrals and be sure that your agent understands your needs and expectations and that you understand the process as they describe it.

SEE BUYING OR SELLING, NEXT PAGE

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Tips

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Buyers don't have to do all that physical prep work until it's time to get ready for their actual move, but there are a lot of considerations to deal with on this side of the real estate fence, as well. The best starting place is making sure that you know what you are looking for. Single family house with an enormous backyard or a "zero lot?" A condo in an urban setting with Metro access, or a more resort feel with access to walking/biking trails or other amenities? The National Association of Realtors suggests developing a "Home/Neighborhood Wish List," prioritizing from "must have" to "it would be nice if ..." and reviewing the list after a few viewings to see if your thoughts have changed.

Some of the basics as advised by the NVAR and NAR and some of their area experts:

❖ **Get pre-qualified.** Better yet, get pre-approved by a lender before you start looking. That way you will know what you can afford, be ready to make an offer and be a more attractive buyer since the seller knows you can make good on that offer. In many markets within Northern Virginia, buyers still out number inventory, so pre-approval can help set your offer apart.

Megan Bailey of Bailey Fine Properties says "Buyers must be pre-approved before going out to look at homes with me. It's important to know that they feel comfortable ... by having the lender provide them with a "Good Faith Estimate" to break down the costs and to make sure the lender can finance the home. Taking someone to look at homes out of their price range ... sets the client up for disappointment."

❖ **Be ready to move** – sounds simple, but buyers have lost out on deals because they weren't ready. Worse yet, they may put their "Earnest Money Deposit" at risk if they can't go through with a sale as contracted.

❖ **Think about resale.** This may sound counter intuitive at this point, but especially for first-time buyers with an average of 10 years in the home, it's good to think ahead and consider what the area and the home might be like when it's time to move on.

❖ **Keep repair, maintenance and running costs in mind.** Even a brand-new home may require some work or customizing to suit your lifestyle, so consider those costs. You may have the approval for that attractive "McMansion" but are you prepared for the electric bills, mowing that acre, and the property taxes on top of the monthly mortgage? Ask the seller for details on utility costs and other maintenance that the property requires, i.e. pool upkeep.

❖ **Don't go "house-blind."** When you are so taken with the house that you might ignore factors that will ultimately make for a poor buying decision. Visit the property

several times, inside and out, at various times of the day and on different days of the week to get a real feel for the neighborhood. Track travel distance for more than your work commute. What about your favorite stores and activities? Take a ride through the entire neighborhood and even its surroundings to see if you like what you will be seeing for a long time to come.

❖ **Research.** Your agent can direct you to resources where you can check out local schools. Even if you don't have school-aged children, it's something to think about for re-sale down the road or any kids you may be adding to the family.

For those buyers considering a condo or property with an HOA (Home Owners Association) there are even more questions to ask and things to be considered. These can get pretty specific and detailed, so your best bet is to ask that agent.

Now, about the local market. Checking the data from RealEstate Business Intelligence (RBI), an arm of the local MLS system, Fairfax County had the most closed sales in 2015, up 14.6 percent from the previous year. Alexandria, Fairfax City, Arlington and Falls Church round out the top five markets in the area for closed sales last year. The figures for January 2016 show an uptick in sales volume, but a slight decrease of 2.5 percent in median sales price across the Metro region. Average days on the market in January was 44 days, an increase from last year, but analysts feel much of that number can be attributed to the effects of Storm Jonas.

The best news for sellers was that the homes sold in January averaged 96 percent of their asking price. Maybe even more pleasing for sellers to hear is that RBI forecasts inventory growth in 2016 will likely turn negative at some point. Buyers be prepared. This could lead to those multiple-offer wars we have seen in the past.

Sellers be cautioned. That doesn't mean your best strategy is to over-price your property. "A properly priced property in good condition is still the fastest mover," are the words to the wise from Anita Lasansky CRB, managing broker-VP, Long and Foster Reston North Hills-Herndon with her more than forty years of local experience.

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Nanny Suites Add Value

High-end live-in quarters attract au pairs and can increase property values.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

When Peggy Delinois Hamilton relocated to the Washington, D.C. area and began working full-time after spending eight years as an at-home mother of two children, childcare was one of her top concerns. She decided that a live-in au pair was the best choice for her family.

"I like the live-in because I don't have to worry about issues with transportation on the caretaker's part," said Hamilton. "I don't have to worry about them having competing obligations."

Finding and keeping a live-in nanny in a competitive childcare market can be a high stakes game. To lure and retain experienced, nurturing caregivers, many families shell out as much as \$100,000 to create stylishly appointed living space for their au pairs. From kitchens with marble countertops and stainless steel appliances to bathrooms with luxury showerheads and rich wood cabinetry, local designers create living quarters so enchanting and thoughtfully designed that a nanny wouldn't dream of leaving.

"If you're a live-in nanny, you want your own space. In fact, nannies won't take a job from a family that won't provide it," said Jackie Wood-Gobuluk, owner of Metropolitan Nannies in Herndon, Virginia.

The spaces most often used for nanny suites are the lower level or attic, says Christopher Dietz of Dietz Development. "We try to create a close mimic of the main house and the primary kitchen and bathrooms of the main house," he said. "We don't do Formica or IKEA cabinets. We generally use ... granite, marble or Silestone. You don't want people to say, 'Wow, we can tell you really cut corners on this space.'"

Maintaining a continuity in quality while being budget conscious requires judicious planning. "We may splurge on custom window treatments and a bedskirt and save on things like furniture using retail pieces," said Marika Meyer, principal of Marika Meyer Interiors in Bethesda.

When an Arlington, Va. family enlisted architect J.P. Ward of Anthony Wilder Design/Build, Inc. to design an au pair suite for their home, they wanted him to maintain continuity in both color and materials. A cathedral ceiling, granite countertops, and under cabinet lighting were key as he blended the rich aesthetic quality of the original home with the new space. "We used a higher end tile and materials that blended with the rest of the house," said Ward. "It turned out to be like a high-end studio apartment that you could get high rent for."

The au pair's space has a separate entrance, something that offers privacy to both



PHOTO COURTESY OF TRUPLACE

The space serves as a nanny suite in an Alexandria home. Additional living areas can increase a property's value, say real estate agents.

the nanny and the family. "We made it so that the au pair has an independent way of coming in and so they're not working 24 hours a day," said Ward.

Contractors say the cost of adding a nanny suite can range from \$5,000 on a property where there is an existing bathroom and space for a bedroom to more than \$100,000 on properties where plumbing must be installed or an small addition is required. "[A] bathroom is the biggest expense because of the plumbing," said Ward.

Because such an addition requires a significant investment, Kai Tong of Hopkins and Porter Construction in Potomac, Md. encourages clients to think long term. "One of the most important and useful realizations when considering nanny suites is that, unlike your kitchen or bath or bedroom, the nanny suite will only be a nanny suite for a finite amount of time in your lives," he said. "As your children grow, the nanny will move on, and the nanny suite is destined to become something else."

In the Washington, D.C. area, adding an au pair suite to one's home can make a property more appealing. "Particularly in neighborhoods with lots of young, affluent families, nanny suites are a popular, although not essential, amenity," said David DeSantis, Partner and Managing Broker of TTR Sotheby's International Realty. "Ideally these suites are somewhat separated from the family sleeping quarters and have their own entrance so the nanny can come and go freely."

A nanny suite can offer a good return on investment. "The fact that it could be used as a nanny suite is a plus, but it's the same sort of thing as an in-law suite [so] it offers the ability for multigenerational living with some level of privacy," said David Howell,

may make a difference in price from 5 to 10 percent as they ... would count as an additional bedroom," said real estate agent Nancy Itteilag, of Long and Foster Christie's International Real Estate.

"We try to create a close mimic of the main house and the primary kitchen and bathrooms of the main house."

— Christopher Dietz,
Dietz Development

Ann Dozier Michael, an Alexandria-based associate broker with McEneaney Associates, has a current listing that includes a nanny suite. "When you have a property listed that can serve the various needs of buyers, then that will add value because you have a larger buying pool," she said.

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PHOTO BY MORGAN HOWARTH

Families create spa-like living quarters to attract and retain live-in