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The McLean Little League Parade marches down Westmoreland Street toward the Opening Day Ceremonies at McLean Little League Park on Saturday, April 9 in McLean.



PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION

Members of the Langley High School baseball team give high-fives to the little league players on the way to the field.



Jayson Werth of the Washington Nationals baseball team threw out the ceremonial first pitch to catchers Jonah Miller, Zach Reid, Brooke Siegel and Michael Shank.

McLean Little League Parade Draws Big Crowds

More than 1,300 people on 108 teams attended.

More than 1,300 people on 108 teams attended the 61st annual McLean Little League Parade and Opening Day Ceremonies on Saturday, April 9 in McLean. Led by the McLean Volunteer Fire Department and Auxiliary Police and local dignitaries, the parade route started at McLean High School and proceeded down Westmoreland Street and ended at the McLean Little League Park, Field No. 2.

In spite of the rain, local dignitaries in attendance included Congresswoman Barbara Comstock, state Sen. Barbara Favola, state Del. Kathleen Murphy, state Del. Rip Sullivan, state Del. Marcus Simon and Dranesville District Supervisor John Foust.

Greeting the little league players on the field with high-five handshakes were baseball and softball team members from McLean High, Langley High, George Mason High and Potomac High schools.

At the awards ceremony on the field, the Scott Bradshaw Leadership Award went to American League player Matt Keay and National League player Brian Gatti. The Karen Vagley Inspirational Leadership Award went to Maria Urban. The Volunteer of the Year award went to (now deceased) Coach Ben Crawford, in memoriam, accepted by son Harrison (wife Stephanie Luongo). And the Honor Roll awards went to Kevin Camphausen, Bill Takis, and Chip and Cat Lippman. It was noted that Wayne Insulation has been a team sponsor for all 61 years.

Throwing out the ceremonial first pitches were Umpire Pat McDonough and Jayson Werth of the Washington Nationals baseball team. The catchers were: Jonah Miller, Zach Reid, Brooke Siegel and Michael Shank. Cooper Middle School Choir sang the national anthem.

— STEVE HIBBARD



The Washington Nationals sponsored by Shelter House heads down the parade.



The McLean Volunteer Fire Department heads down Westmoreland Street.



Local dignitaries included Congresswoman Barbara Comstock, state Sen. Barbara Favola, state Del. Kathleen Murphy, state Del. Rip Sullivan, state Del. Marcus Simon and Dranesville District Supervisor John Foust.



The Cooper Middle School Choir sang the national anthem.

Three Cents This Year: But 'Enough is Enough'

McLean Citizens Association calls for tax increase with restraint.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Nine board members of the McLean Citizens Association wanted the civic association to tell the Board of Supervisors it wants no real estate tax increase.

"There is nothing sacred about the advertised budget. It is only a proposal to load an increased burden on taxpayers who are already overburdened," said Board member Bill Crosby.

This might not be the right year, said board member Anne Gruner, but "at what time do we say, 'enough is enough.'"

Jim Turner said income is not rising commensurate with increasing tax burdens. "All I know is this can't continue," said Turner.

The Board of Supervisors advertised budget calls for a four-cent tax hike to real estate taxes.

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. Even with the full four-cent increase, the schools face a significant shortfall of more than \$60 million according to budget documents.

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 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.

But after 150 minutes of debate last Wednesday, April 6, 2016, which followed 90 minutes of committee discus-



PHOTO BY KEN MOORE/THE CONNECTION

"In a spirit of compromise," McLean Citizens Association advocates for the Board of Supervisors to adopt a 3-cent real estate increase not the advertised 4-cent increase.

sion, the McLean Citizens Association concluded by recommending a three-cent compromise.

"We argued for about an hour and a half and we came up with a compromise of three cents," said Dale Stein, chair of MCA's Budget and Taxation Committee who co-

authored the draft of MCA's budget resolution.

"This was done in a spirit of compromise," he said. "There are those who are passionate about education, libraries, parks ... and there are those who are passionate about taxes."

Sally Horn, past president of MCA, said she thinks it's a "reasonable compromise."

"We want to be responsible in terms of needs in the county," said Horn.

"This is a reasonable approach for this particular year," she said. "It's not only schools, it's parkland, it's libraries, it's human needs."

"I think the three-cent increase is important," said Glenn Harris, vice president. "I think if we go on record against it, it will have a negative impact on quality of life in Fairfax County."

"THE QUALITY of life in our community depends to a great extent on the services which Fairfax County provides — education for our children, public safety, parks, libraries, among others — and the costs of providing and improving those services continue to rise," according to the resolution, "now therefore be it resolved that the McLean Citizens Association commends the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors for their efforts to identify and fund budget priorities, with increasing focus on education and public safety."

Jeff Barnett, MCA president, testified before the Board of Supervisors the next day.

With its resolution, MCA urged the Board of Supervisors to look at "other opportunities for revenue improvement."

Possible measures included, "higher hotel occupancy taxes paid by hotel patrons, a higher cigarette tax consistent with the practice of surrounding localities, an admissions tax to places of amusement or entertainment, the possibility of a meals tax, and a reevaluation of permit and user fees, set consistently to fully recover costs," according to MCA's resolution.

"So we get to share the fun with others," said Stein, during the MCA's board meeting.

Why does everything need to "be on the back of the real estate tax," he said.

Bringing Medical Aid to Guatemalan Children

At the McLean Woman's Club meeting on April 5, member Linda Wheeler described, with visual aids, her continuing work as an onsite volunteer in eastern Guatemala, providing medical aid to infants and children in remote mountain areas. Wheeler works with a program called Operation Baby Rescue, which brings babies and young children from these areas to a "rescue center" in a low-lying village, where medical care is available. The youngsters are usually seriously ill or malnourished, largely because of the lack of clean water in the region. The most serious cases brought down may be rushed to a nearby medical facility for extensive care.

On numerous occasions, Wheeler and her husband have travelled by plane, train, boat and on foot to the remote mountainous areas. Such trips can last up to six hours each way over rough and rocky terrain. Her next trip to Guatemala will take place in November. She had planned the trip for this month,

but because mosquitoes carrying the Zika virus will be present until fall in the areas of concern, she is postponing it for drier weather.

The total cost of such a trip is about \$1,800. At the Woman's Club meeting, a collection toward this cost was taken, and club members had brought contributions of clothing, toys, towels and over-the-counter medical supplies.

Operation Baby Rescue partners with a program known as Hope of Life International-Guatemala, which was begun some 30 years ago in the eastern part of the country and serves hundreds of thousands of people each year. Hope of Life-International is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Its website address is <https://www.hopeoflifeintl.org>. A link for Operation Baby Rescue-Guatemala can be found at <https://vimeo.com/31150334>.

—LAURA SHERIDAN



Woman's Club member Linda Wheeler describes her volunteer work in Guatemala.

PHOTO BY
LAURA SHERIDAN/
WOMAN'S CLUB

Progress Made, Challenges Remain

HomeAid NoVA hosts 'Keep the Homeless Housed' Forum.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

In 2008, Fairfax County partnered with the City of Falls Church to adopt an ambitious strategic plan to address the issue of homelessness in the region. The following year, the Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness was established to “manage, coordinate and monitor the day-to-day implementation” of the plan, with its ambitious target date of 10 years to achievement. In 2014, the county accepted the “Mayor’s Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness” as announced by First Lady Michelle Obama, and supported by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This one came with an even more aggressive deadline: accomplish the mission by the end of 2015.

The numbers for both goals are certainly encouraging. In November, Gov. Terry McAuliffe declared that Virginia had become the first state to reach that “Challenge” milestone, with every veteran having housing, except for those who had been offered, but refused shelter. By “functionally” ending veteran homelessness, the state certifies that it has in place systems to prevent veteran homelessness wherever possible, and to see that it is otherwise a “rare, brief, and non-recurring experience.” To maintain this status, being able to secure housing for willing veterans within 90 days, and having more homes readily available than the numbers of veterans without shelter, are parts of the requirements.

Among the general population of homeless, the numbers have also decreased. According to the 2016 “Point-in-Time” census (an annual survey where county personnel and volunteers scour the streets, woods and other areas to approximate the numbers of area homeless) conducted on Jan. 28, the total number of homeless declined by 42 percent since the implementation of the 10-Year Plan. In just the last year, the numbers fell from 1204 to 1059. While the number of homeless singles remains relatively unchanged since the last survey, homelessness among families declined from 715 to 577. Even better news is that there are 33 percent less families in emergency shelters, and at the time of the survey, shelters reported vacancies.

It looks like there are battles on this front finally being won, but with over 1000 of our neighbors - that we were able to count - still unhoused, the war on homelessness is far from over, according to Karen Cleveland, president of the Cleveland Coaching Group, president and CEO of Leadership Fairfax, and the moderator of the 2016 HomeAid Northern Virginia (HANoVA) Housing Forum, held on April 7. The an-



From left — The panel for the HomeAid “Keeping the Homeless Housed” were Minerva Labrador, Northern Virginia Family Service; Michele Porter-Will, Volunteers of America Chesapeake; Oliver Reid, New Hope Housing; and Blair Copeland, Carpenter’s Shelter. Moderator Karen Cleveland, the Cleveland Group, leads the discussion from the podium.

PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION



From left — Susan Mekenny, member of NVAR Cares, the charitable arm of the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors, speaks with U.S. Army Capt. Kerri Turner at the Forum. Turner, who is also Ms. Veteran America 2015, was the event’s Keynote Speaker and highlighted the plight of homeless female veterans, especially those with families.

nual gathering brings together those who work directly with the homeless and with those who are struggling to avoid homelessness, from across all of the jurisdictions of Northern Virginia. “This is a unique opportunity to meet with, and learn from, colleagues who understand your challenges, to share best practices, and brainstorm a bit and maybe come up with some new ways of tackling the problems,” noted Cleveland.

HomeAid Board president Greg Carter, a senior vice president with Bank of America Merrill Lynch, opened the event with a welcome, and an invitation for all to check out his company’s free website “Better Money Habits.” “When I say free, I really mean it,”

said Carter. “No passwords, no fees, so sign-ups, just access to easy-to-understand tips and instructionals on better financial planning and management...ways to save money.” Since assisting their clients with just these issues is often a part of their work, the attendees seemed interested and pleased to add the website to their resource kit.

Following a quick “stand up and introduce yourself” exercise, Cleveland introduced a panel of four – Minerva Labrador with Northern Virginia Family Service, Michele Porter-Will of Volunteers of America Chesapeake, Oliver Reid with New Hope Housing, and Blair Copeland from Carpenter’s Shelter – and the discussion on “Keeping

People Housed” began.

THE PANELISTS shared success stories and some of the methods by which they overcame obstacles to success with certain clients and situations. Despite the different jurisdictions in which they operated and the different aspects of the problems they specialized in, all four agreed on some common issues and some common positive approaches.

“Affordable housing. That’s the stumbling block over and over again,” declared Porter-Will to the nods of agreement from her fellow panelists and most of the audience, as well. “Especially for families,” she added. “People with good-paying, stable employment can find it difficult to afford a decent, safe place to live in our region. Now try doing it on minimum wage or less.” Credit issues, health issues, poor job histories, and the unexpected difficulties of life like divorce, abandonment, domestic abuse, and sudden job loss also contribute to pushing people into homelessness.

Lack of affordable housing has been further highlighted by the recent focus on “Rapid Re-housing” as the first priority. Reid explained that the paradigm shift to quickly finding housing for the homeless, then “wrapping the services around them in this more stable environment,” means less time to work with the client to find suitable housing or to help them correct barriers to good housing options like poor past credit. Historically, assistance to the homeless meant accepting them into shelters where case managers and others would work with them to solve the problems and issues that had led to their situation, sometimes for months, if not even years, before placing them in independent housing. The “Rapid Re-housing” model sometimes leads to a “race against time” was Blair Copeland’s assessment. While agreeing that the model offered a stable environment from which clients could begin their journey upward and was especially favorable for homeless families, Copeland admitted that it often left them scrambling to find housing before they could address the obstacles, prepare the client, and create a partnership with a landlord willing to take on what they might view as a higher-risk tenant. Reid’s New Hope Housing in particular requires a strong relationship with landlords since his organization often deals with clients who have served prison time, and some who are registered sex offenders.

The change to “Rapid Re-housing” also meant that new roles – like Housing Locators - have had to be created in the organizations and agencies represented, and other personnel have had to learn new skills and deliver them “even more rapidly,” said Minerva Labrador. “The more traditionally specialized roles of service staff are becoming more integrated. There’s a lot less ‘you’ll have to wait until Tuesday for the case worker to address that’ than we had before.

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WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Forum On Ending Homelessness

FROM PAGE 4

That's a good thing," said Porter-Will. Working cross-jurisdictionally within the region, and even out of state, was another significant challenge discussed by the service providers. Copeland noted that sometimes to find suitable and affordable housing meant relocating clients out of the area. Some of the attendees spoke of relocations to Winchester, Front Royal, Hagerstown, Maryland, and even towns in North Carolina, but all expressed concerns about the follow-up and continued services these movers would receive – and there might be the perception that Northern Virginia is merely "moving the problem along, and that is not what we are trying to do," insisted Copeland.

After the panel concluded, the attendees were treated to U.S. Army Captain Kerri Turner as the Keynote Speaker. Capt. Turner also happens to be Ms. Veteran America 2015 and is a spokesperson for Final Salute, a nonprofit whose mission is to find safe and affordable housing for women veterans and their families. By the looks on their faces, Turner shocked quite a few in the audience when she informed them that neither the Veterans Administration nor the Department of Housing and Urban Development had kept any records on homeless female vets before 2011. Final Salute's founder was a female veteran and single-mother who served her country for 15 years, but when faced with serious adversity – including head, throat and neck cancer – she was advised to seek assistance through welfare programs since the military did not have programs for female veterans with families. Not long after her circumstances and health improved, Jaspen Boothe started Final Salute to assist "the forgotten soldiers." Since 2010 the organization has assisted over 900 women veterans and children in over 30 states and territories.

A CHAPTER of HomeAid America, HomeAid NoVA is a nonprofit that was started in 2001 by members of the Northern Virginia Building Industry Association. Founded on the belief that the "best way to solve homelessness is to ensure that everyone has a safe and stable place to live," the organization's partners build and renovate housing and shelter facilities. To date, they have completed over 100 projects, and



PHOTO BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

Let's talk about it – the attendees at the HomeAid Housing Forum break into groups to share their experiences and expertise and look for ways to collaboratively prevent and end homelessness in the region.

with so much donated labor, expertise, materials and resources, they are able to help shelter organizations save significant amounts of money that can be used to fund vital programs and services to keep their clients housed and leading better lives, and to help others avoid homelessness.

The attendees at the HomeAid Housing Forum want everyone to realize that ending homelessness really does "take a village" and that it is in everyone's best interest to help prevent it, and to help return our homeless neighbors to safe and productive lives in the community. For information on the issue and how to help, there are numerous agencies and organizations to contact. Starting points can be HomeAid NoVA at www.homeaidnova.org, or the Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness at www.fairfaxcounty.gov.



Northern Virginia Transportation Commission Open House and Public Hearing on Transform 66 Inside the Beltway Multimodal Components

Thursday, May 5, 2016

6:00 p.m. Open House – 7:00 p.m. Public Hearing

2300 Wilson Boulevard, First Floor Conference Room, Arlington, VA 22201

The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) is seeking public input on the Multimodal Components submitted for FY 2017 funding consideration as part of the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT's) Transform 66 Inside the Beltway Project.

NVTC will select multimodal components for presentation to the Commonwealth Transportation Board for funding using toll revenues from VDOT's Transform 66 Inside the Beltway Project. The principal objective of the Transform 66 Inside the Beltway Project is to select and fund multimodal components that meet the improvement goals, which are to (1) move more people, (2) enhance transportation connectivity, (3) improve transit service, (4) reduce roadway congestion and (5) increase travel options. The improvement goals will benefit the users of the portion of I-66 between I-495 (the Capital Beltway) and U.S. Route 29 in the Rosslyn area of Arlington County.

NVTC urges the public to get involved by learning about and commenting on the proposed multimodal components during the **Open House and Public Hearing on May 5, 2016**. The meeting will be held at NVTC's offices at **2300 Wilson Boulevard, First Floor Conference Room, Arlington, VA 22201**. The Open House will begin at 6:00 p.m. The Public Hearing will start at 7:00 p.m.

The list of submitted multimodal components for the Transform 66 Inside the Beltway Project is too extensive for publication in this advertisement. Beginning April 5, 2016, the proposed project list may be accessed via www.novatransit.org/i66multimodal; by calling NVTC at 703-NVTC-321 (703-688-2321); by e-mailing i66multimodal@nvtc.org; or by visiting NVTC's offices at 2300 Wilson Blvd., Ste. 620, Arlington, VA 22201, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Comments may be submitted beginning April 5, 2016 by e-mail to i66multimodal@nvtc.org or via phone at 703-NVTC-321 (703-688-2321). The public comment period will be open from April 5, 2016 through the close of the Public Hearing on May 5, 2016. For additional information on the Open House and Public Hearing on May 5, 2016, contact NVTC at 703-NVTC-321 (703-688-2321).

Beginning April 5, 2016 you may pre-register to speak by:

- e-mailing NVTC at: i66multimodal@nvtc.org **OR**
- calling NVTC at 703-NVTC-321 (703-688-2321)

ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES OR SPANISH LANGUAGE SPEAKERS: The hearing is located at a facility believed to be accessible to persons with disabilities. Any person with questions about the accessibility of the facility should contact NVTC at 703-NVTC-321 (703-688-2321) or i66multimodal@nvtc.org. Persons requiring special assistance or a Spanish language translator must notify NVTC at 703-NVTC-321 (703-688-2321). Those requiring interpreter services for the deaf must call NVTC at 703-NVTC-321 (703-688-2321) or via Virginia Relay by dialing 7-1-1. All requests for special services must be received no later than April 28, 2016.

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OPINION

Award Winning Connection Newspapers

Still striving to be the Connection to your community.

Connection Newspapers won dozens of awards from the Virginia Press Association for work done in 2015. Award winners were announced on Saturday, April 9, at an awards banquet in Richmond.

While the papers won awards in many categories, the common underpinning was community journalism, accessibility of information, and reporting on critical issues like transparency in government.

Thematically, the papers won multiple awards for stories and sections that were informative and helped make communities, events and resources more accessible to our readers.

Examples included Ken Moore's reporting on Robert Simon's role in Reston, which included coverage of Simon's 101st birthday, Simon's ongoing influence, and his obituary. The series won first place.

Print newspaper obituaries play a vital role in local communities, reflected in Jeanne Theismann's first place award for three obituaries in the Alexandria Gazette Packet. Earl Lloyd was born into "the cradle of segregation" yet persevered to become the first African American to break the color barrier in the NBA. Dr. Robert Wineland, "Dr. Bob," was a WW II

veteran and survivor of the Battle of the Bulge. He was a beloved local doctor for more than 60 years. And Ferdinand Day was the first African American to be elected to chair a public school board in the state of Virginia.

We are lucky to have cartoonist Steve Artley to skewer and edify many issues, including his first place cartoon that suggests Alexandria could solve parking and housing problems by placing both on barges in the Potomac River.

Jean Card, Renee Ruggles and Laurence Foong have collaborated over several years on the Insider's Guide to the Parks, which won awards in Mount Vernon and Vienna/Oakton, capping several awards for informational graphics.

Our Newcomers and Community Guide to Arlington was described as "Informative, well written, with good use of graphics." Winners included Steven Mauren, Eden Brown, Vernon Miles, Shirley Ruhe, Laurence Foong.

Sarai Johnson, Hope Nelson, Shirley Ruhe, and Steve Hibbard won second place for entertainment pages in the Alexandria Gazette Packet, weekly coverage of arts, entertainment, food and things to do in Alexandria.

Reporting on elections, the environment, health and fitness, and organizations that are designed to help others also garnered awards.

Kenny Lourie won for his ongoing column writing about living with cancer. Lourie both lives and writes with humor and perspective. The judge said, "Though filled with heavy subject matter, the author hooks readers by using his first-person perspective, humor and emo-

tion to describe the events of his life. These columns grab your attention from the first paragraph."

Abigail Constantino's photo that shows the great aunt of Natasha McKenna at a protest of McKenna's death in custody, won second place for general news photo. Eudora Paul's sign displays McKenna's last words: "You promised you would not kill me."

Tim Peterson's coverage of McKenna's death won second place in In Depth/Investigative. Peterson garnered the most awards of any Connection staff member, winning seven.

Mary Kimm's editorials on lack of police transparency and local government accountability won second place for editorial writing.

Kemal Kurspahic's opinion pages in the Herndon Connection won third place.

Jeanne Theismann, whose profile includes that she "dreams of one day writing headlines for the New York Post," won second place for headline writing in the Alexandria Gazette Packet. Headlines: Some Like It Haute, - story about the 10-year anniversary of a boutique warehouse sale; Soul Providers, a story about volunteers recognized for service to seniors; Something to Wine About, - on the opening of a new wine cellar; Luck Be a Lady, - on the opening of a new bath apothecary called Ladyburg; To the Rescue, about - a nonprofit started by firefighters to collect toys for underprivileged children.

— MARY KIMM

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Connection Awards - Partial Listing

- ❖ Ken Moore, Oak Hill/Herndon Connection, First Place – Feature writing portfolio included a trip to the farmers market, remembrance of Latin teacher Christine Sleeper and celebration of the one-year birthday of the Silver Line.
- ❖ Marilyn Campbell, Oak Hill/Herndon Connection, Second Place – Health, science and environmental writing
- ❖ Kenneth Lourie, Oak Hill/Herndon Connection, Second Place – Column writing. Judge: "Though filled with heavy subject matter, the author hooks readers by using his first-person perspective, humor and emotion to describe the events of his life. These columns grab your attention from the first paragraph."
- ❖ Ken Moore, Oak Hill/Herndon Connection, Second Place – General news writing for election coverage. "Excellent coverage. ... Balanced and thorough. Effective at conveying why this is relevant for readers."
- ❖ Jon Roetman, Oak Hill/Herndon Connection, Second Place – Sports writing portfolio.
- ❖ Kemal Kurspahic, Geovani Flores, Laurence Foong, Mary Kimm, Oak Hill/ Herndon Connection, Third Place – Editorial pages
- ❖ Ken Moore, Reston Connection, First Place – Feature series or continuing story, on Reston founder Robert Simon. Judge's comment: "This was an in-depth series, very informative and interesting to read." Moore covered several key moments, including celebration of Founder's Day 2015 and Simon's 101st birthday; later, Moore wrote Simon's obituary and covered the celebration of Simon's life.
- ❖ Jean Card, Laurence Foong, Renee Ruggles, Vienna/Oakton Connection, Second Place – Informational graphics, Connection Insiders Guide to the Parks.
- ❖ Mary Kimm, Great Falls Connection, Second Place –



PHOTO BY ABIGAIL CONSTANTINO

Natasha McKenna's great aunt Eudora Paul carries a sign with McKenna's words the day she was tasered by officers from the Fairfax County Sheriff's Department. Photo by Abigail Constantino won second place for General News Photo.

Editorial writing for multiple editorials on police transparency. Judge: "Brings important pressure to bear on people in power."

- ❖ Ken Moore, Great Falls Connection, Second Place – Health, science and environmental writing; stories covering issues of deer, cleanup of groundwater contamination from gas station and tree preservation. Judge: "Excellent and informative."
- ❖ Laurence Foong, Great Falls Connection, Third Place – Informational graphics, Map of Property

Assessments. Judge: "A very interesting concept."

❖ Ken Moore, McLean Connection, Third Place – Feature writing portfolio. Judge: "Great reads on interesting topics. Who knew there was such a thing as pinball championship, especially out of someone's basement? Pull out information added neat and tidy facts and/or information."

❖ Abigail Constantino, Fairfax Connection, Second Place – General news photo, Natasha McKenna's great aunt holds a sign: "You promised you would not kill me." Judge: "Good capture of emotionally charged event."

❖ Tim Peterson, Springfield Connection, Second Place – Personal service writing, coverage of three worthy causes. Judge: "This submission quickly makes the reader care about the causes championed in the stories. ... There was good detail presented in such a way as to make the reader want to donate to each of these causes by the end of the story — I was ready to get my checkbook out after reading each one."

❖ Tim Peterson, Springfield Connection, Third Place – Government writing, coverage on aftermath of police shooting of John Geer, Virginia General Assembly. Judge: "A very comprehensive look at the Geer case was well-thought out and I was very impressed with the state legislature package."

- ❖ Tim Peterson, Springfield Connection, Third Place – Public safety writing, stories on sex trafficking, police and fire department training and National Night Out. Judge: "Each of the stories in this submission is comprehensive in its handling of the topic, as well as engaging for the reader. The information offered is very good, and the presentation attractive. There was adequate space given to each story, which was then complemented by excellent artwork."

McLean
CONNECTION

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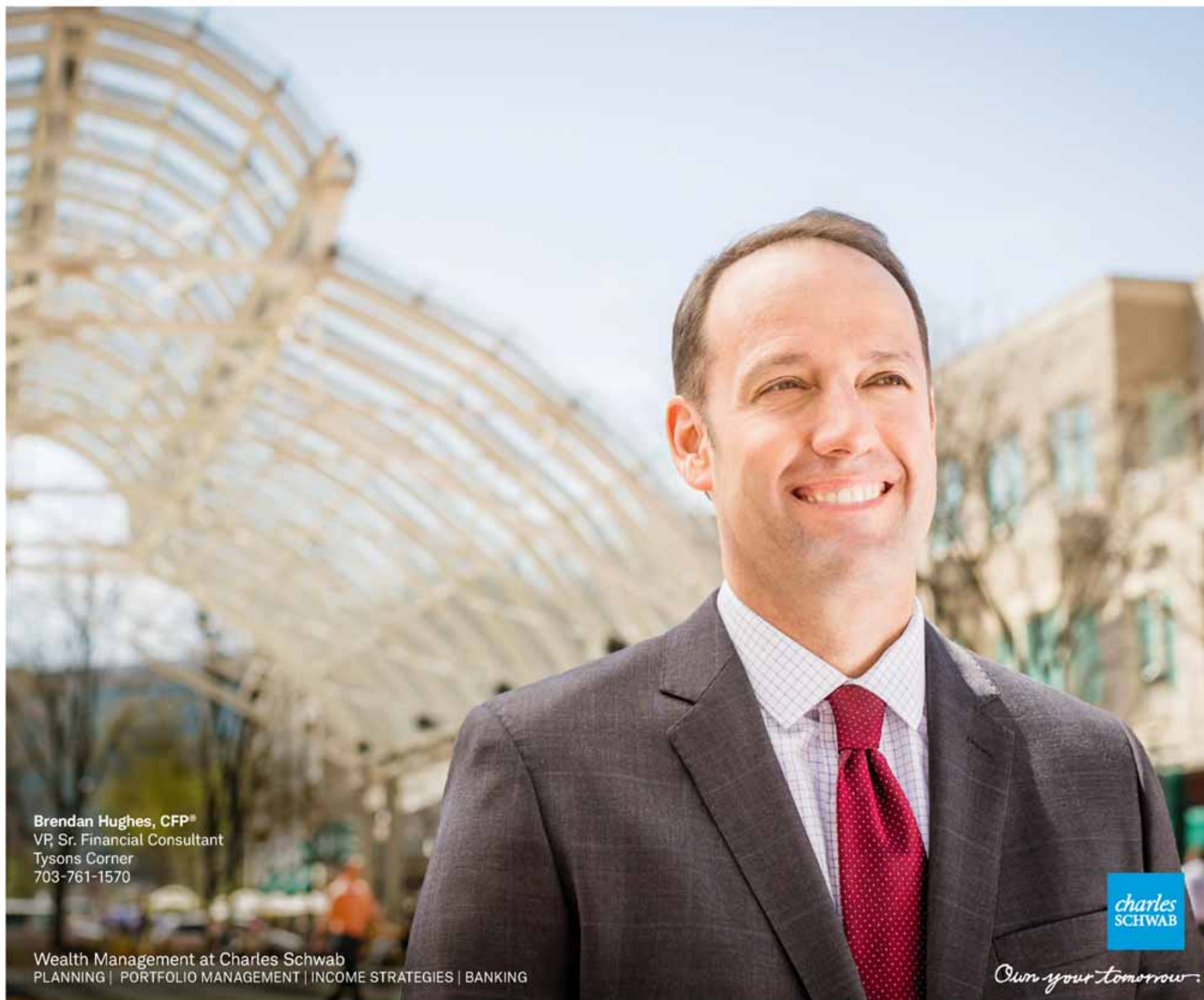
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Bathroom and Kitchen Features. Incorporating a curbless shower or grab bars in the bathroom or roll out drawers in the kitchen are great features to consider. Not only will they potentially be helpful down the road, but are nice to have at any age.

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CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

"Unnecessary Farce." Fridays-Sundays. April 29-May 14. Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Call for times. Classic farce with a contemporary American plot: the police procedural. \$18-\$20. www.mcleanplayers.org. 866-811-4111.

Driven to Abstraction. April 1-30. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Features over 20 works. 703-757-8560.

April Artist Showcase. April 1-27. Broadway Gallery, 1025-J Seneca Road, Great Falls. Great Falls Gallery will feature the paintings of Australian artist Ken Strong. broadwaygalleries.net. 703-450-8005.

"Proof." March 31-May 8. 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons. Pulitzer Prize-winning play. \$30/\$26/\$15. 1ststageTysons.org. 703-854-1856.

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>.

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

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.

THURSDAY/APRIL 14

Spanish Storytime with 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. Join us as we welcome the animated teachers from CommuniKids Preschool for a fun-filled Storytime. <http://stores.barnesandnoble.com/store/2238>.

FRIDAY/APRIL 15

Steve Case. 5 p.m. Barnes and Noble Tysons, 7851 L Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Internet entrepreneur Case will speak, take questions and sign copies of "The Third Wave." <http://stores.barnesandnoble.com/store/>



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

New York Neo-Futurists brings its "theatre for people who want to be part of the action" on Saturday, April 16 at McLean Community Center's The Alden.

2238. **Glow Party.** 7-9 p.m. The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. A disc jockey keeps the fun alive with great music while the game room is open for ping-pong, pool and other arcade games. The event will be supervised by Old Firehouse staffers. A parent or guardian (age 18 or older) must pick-up his or her child by 9 p.m. \$25/\$35. mcleancenter.org.

SATURDAY/APRIL 16

Bluebells at the Bend. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Celebrate the Virginia Bluebells as they blanket the banks of the Potomac River. Bring the whole family for fun including games, music, wildflower walks, wagon rides, and more. Registration not required. <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend-park/>.

Flower Show. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Small Standard Flower Show presented by The Great Falls Garden Club. A competitive exhibition of floral designs and horticulture, affiliated with National Garden Clubs, Inc. 703-759-3130.

Spring Community Garage Sale. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 1420 Beverly Road, McLean. Vendor spaces are available on a first-come, first-served basis for \$45. No spaces will be sold on the day of the sale. Residents selling used household items are welcome. Limited commercial vendors or flea market dealers are also welcome. Advanced registration is required. mcleancenter.org.

New York Neo-Futurists. 8 p.m. The Alden, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Theatre for people who want to be part of the action, love a rush of adrenaline, take a little of everything from the buffet and are, well... a little strange. \$25/\$15. mcleancenter.org.

SUNDAY/APRIL 17

Young Soloists Recital. 3 p.m. The Alden, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. This free classical music series, now in its 41st season, features professional musicians who have won international recognition for their artistry. Free. mcleancenter.org.

Spring Cleaning Workshop. 1-4 p.m. KW Realty Office, 774-A Walker Road, Great Falls. Workshop hosted by AV Architects & The Canto Group. www.thecantogroup.org. 703-599-0453.

MONDAY/APRIL 18

50+ Employment Expo. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Sheraton Tysons Hotel, 8661 Leesburg Pike, Vienna. Meet job recruiters. Attend seminars on changing careers, online job searching, continuing education, starting your own business, job training, and job interviewing. Chief meteorologist Doug Hill from ABC 7/WJLA-TV News is the keynote speaker. Free. Find out more at www.accessjca.org/50plusjobexpos or call Micki Gordon at 301-255-4209, TTY 711.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 20

McLean Newcomers and Neighbors Monthly Luncheon. 11:30 a.m. Brio Tuscan Grille, 1961 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. CICI Williams, food writer and author, will speak. \$32. RSVP by April 15 to ssosser@verizon.net. McLeanNewcomers.org.

THURSDAY-SATURDAY/APRIL 21-23

"Loserville." 7:30 p.m. George C. Marshall High School, 7731 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. It's 1971 and geeks shall inherit the Earth in this



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

"Goodnight Moon and Runaway Bunny" celebrates nighttime rituals on Saturday, April 23 at the McLean Community Center.

high-octane, pop-rock, feel-great musical. \$15/\$10. Statesmentheatre.org. 703-714-5450.

FRIDAY/APRIL 22

Bev Ress. 10 a.m.-noon. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. McLean Art Society with artist who does 3D nature drawings. 703-790-0123.

SATURDAY/APRIL 23

Meet Corduroy (Costume character event). 2 p.m. Barnes and Noble Tysons, 7851 L Tysons Corner Center, McLean. brief Meet & Greet with Biscuit will follow Storytime. <http://stores.barnesandnoble.com/store/2238>.

"Goodnight Moon and Runaway Bunny." 2 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. "Goodnight Moon" is a celebration of familiar nighttime rituals, while "The Runaway Bunny" is a pretend tale of leaving home that evokes reassuring responses from a loving mum. Ages 4+ . \$15/\$10. mcleancenter.org.

SUNDAY/APRIL 24

Tysons Regional Chamber of Commerce 5K. 8:30 a.m. Near Bloomingdale's Tysons Corner Center, 1961 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. \$25-30+ . <http://www.tysonschamber5k.com/>.

Love Worth Fighting For. 5 p.m. McLean Bible Church, 8925 Leesburg Pike, Vienna. National marriage event featuring actor Kirk Cameron. \$20-\$50. www.loveworthfightingfor.com.

Spring Fashion Show. 10 a.m.-noon. Bloomingdale's Tysons Corner, 8100 Tysons Corner Center, McLean. By the Great Falls Friends and Neighbors Scholarship Fund, Inc. Proceeds will go toward schoarships to post-college

Margaret Newton's Paintings on Display in McLean

Twenty-four paintings of Great Falls by Reston artist Margaret Newton are on display through May 7 at Modern History Collection, 8100F Old Dominion Drive in McLean, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Monday-Saturday. From more than 100 drawings came 26 paintings, two of which are currently on display at the JoAnn Rose Gallery in Reston, also through April. The textural, modern, energetic paintings reflect the falls in all her moods and includes the wildlife observed over the past six months. Newton worked primarily as a figure sculptor over the past 20 years and her paintings include a sculptural and energetic style of Gustav Klimt.

"I began visiting Great Falls for the purpose of gathering sketches for a series of paintings. As a sculptor it seemed fitting to embrace the paintings sculpturally. Having created figurative art for the past 20 years, taking the figure into the landscape was natural. To me, the earth is a beautiful woman. To translate the moods of the Falls, after a rainstorm, after the first snow, during a windy day, in the



PHOTO BY MARGARET NEWTON

"Great Falls-Daylight," 24" x 30" original oil painting by Margaret Newton.

early morning, as the sun set, as the leaves fall, as buzzards perch in branches was part of the process of observation. I love how rivers reflect our own arteries and veins from the vantage point of the sky," said Newton.

Another solo exhibit of Margaret Newton's work is being held at the Herndon Senior Center through April. For more details, email info@modernhistorycollection.com or call 703-942-6507.



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SPORTS

Langley Girls' Lax Starts 7-0

The Langley girls' lacrosse team is off to its best start since 2009, winning its first seven games.

Langley improved to 7-0 with a 20-4 victory at Washington-Lee on April 7.

Langley is led by first-year head coach and former Langley and University of Oregon lacrosse standout Maggie Kovacs. Coach Kovacs is supported by another Langley alum, coach Annie Swanson, and local coach Bucky Morris.

Langley has a strong group of senior co-

captains: Halle Duenkel, Morgan Kuligowski, Mackenzie Regen and Samantha Suib.

The Saxons have strong chemistry coming into this year. Goalie Megan O'Hara looks strong in the net with defensive support from Lilly Byrne, Ali Leto, Charlotte Smith and Lauren Bell. Anna Hofgard, Marina Smith, Emma Crooks, Elise Kim, Claire O'Connor and Sareena Dhillon have been big contributors on the offensive side of the ball. Many of the girls have played together



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

The Langley girls' lacrosse team is off to a 7-0 start.

since grade school.

A different Saxon led the team in scoring in each of the first six games.

"We are starting to play like a team," Kovacs said, "and that's the only way we are going to achieve our high goals."

Langley's Shafer Excels at Nova Classic All-Star Event

Madison's Ungerleider, Walker compete for Fairfax North.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

Langley senior Nate Shafer, a 6-foot-5 shot-blocking force, admitted he prefers structured basketball over the run-and-gun style of an all-star game.

But while Shafer enjoys a team-oriented approach, that didn't stop the defensive standout from excelling in Sunday's dmvstream.com Nova Challenge — an event that featured some of the top seniors from Northern Virginia competing in a pair of all-star games, a 3-point shootout and a dunk contest.

Shafer scored 10 points, grabbed 10 rebounds, blocked seven shots and helped the Fairfax North All-Stars defeat the Loudoun County All-Stars 108-101 on April 10 at Marshall High School.

All-star games are known for offense, but Shafer, the 2016 6A North region Defensive Player of the Year, made life difficult for Loudoun County players who tried to score in the paint.

"I can still apply some tactics that we use [during structured basketball] to an all-star game," Shafer said. "I typically find a guy that can't shoot as well so I can camp in the paint and that gives me more blocks and more contested shots and more rebounds, so that sort of pads my stats in an all-star game like this, which is fun."

SHAFER, who will play at Swarthmore College, said he enjoyed making defensive plays in an offensive environment. During one possession, Shafer swatted multiple Loudoun County shots.

"Those kinds of plays get the gym on their feet," he said, "so I like to do that."

Shafer's teammate at Langley, Tavon Tarpley, finished with 12 points for the



PHOTOS BY JON ROETMAN/THE CONNECTION

Langley senior Nate Shafer, middle, finished with 10 points, 10 rebounds and seven blocks during the dmvstream.com Nova Challenge on Sunday.

Fairfax North All-Stars.

"I always love playing with T," Shafer said. "I'm just glad I [got] another opportunity to do it."

Blake Francis, a member of the state champion Westfield Bulldogs, earned team MVP honors for Fairfax North, finishing with 23 points, six rebounds and five assists. He knocked down a 3-pointer at the halftime buzzer, cutting the Fairfax North deficit to 64-50. Fairfax North outscored Loudoun County 58-37 in the second half.

Francis, who shot 8-for-17 from the floor and 5-for-12 from 3-point range, is still weighing his college options.

"It's good experience," Francis said, "going against the top talent in the Northern Virginia area."

Hank Johnson, Francis' teammate at Westfield, scored four points and grabbed nine rebounds.



Langley's Tavon Tarpley (4), Westfield's Blake Francis (0) and Madison's Daniel Ungerleider (1) competed for the Fairfax North All-Stars on Sunday.

"Hank, we're going to be good friends for a long time," Francis said. "It's just good playing with him."

Centreville's William Unterkofler scored 12 points and grabbed four rebounds. He also won the dunk contest, earning a perfect score of 30 on his final attempt, when he jumped, brought the ball between his legs and threw it down with his right hand.

Unterkofler will attend Virginia Tech but doesn't plan to play basketball. He said he could first dunk a basketball in ninth grade.

"It was pretty cool," said the 6-foot-5 Unterkofler. "I've wanted to be in a dunk contest for a long time because I practice dunking all the time and I never get to show it, so it's really exciting to get to come out and do it."

Fairfax High's Alex McNaughton, who will play at Salisbury, scored 17 points and shot 6-for-9 from the floor, including 3-for-4

from behind the arc. Fellow Rebel Manny Miller had six points and seven rebounds.

Marshall's Tyler White finished with nine points and five rebounds. Chase Barrand, White's teammate at Marshall, had six points and three rebounds.

South Lakes' Marty Gryski scored two points. Madison teammates Taiga Walker and Daniel Ungerleider finished with four and three points, respectively.

"It feels pretty good," Ungerleider said about getting the victory. "Mostly, we're just out here having a good time, but [I] always want to win."

Ungerleider, who will attend the University of Virginia but doesn't plan to play basketball, reached the finals of the 3-point shootout.

"It was pretty scary," Ungerleider said, referring to

media attention during the contest. "I had to get in a little zone and zone out everything around and just shoot."

EARLIER IN THE DAY, the Prince William All-Stars defeated the Fairfax South All-Stars 110-107.

West Springfield's Lewis Djonkam earned team MVP honors for Fairfax South. The 6-foot-9 post player scored 19 points and grabbed 13 rebounds.

Deng Nhial (Wakefield) and Jordan Jones (T.C. Williams) each had 16 points for Fairfax South, Tavaris James (T.C. Williams) finished with 14 and Spencer Askew (West Springfield) added 11.

"It was great," Djonkam said about competing in the event. "Every kid on the court I love. I grew up with half the kids on the court. ... [It was] my last time playing with the kids. It was great. I loved it."

McLEAN CRIME REPORTS

Notable incidents from the Fairfax County Police blotter from April 6-10

Burglary - 9100 block of Lee Highway, April 8, around 9:45 p.m. Someone forced entry into a business and stole money. The suspect was described as white, in his 30s, with some facial hair. He wore a black jacket, dark-colored hoodie, blue jeans and white shoes.

Burglary - 9400 block of Lee Highway, 03/27/16, between and 2 and 7 a.m. Residents reported on April 9 that someone stole a television from the residence. There were no signs of forced entry.

Burglary - 9100 block of Lee Highway, between 8 p.m. on April 8 and 6:26 a.m. on April 9. Someone forced entry into a business and stole money.

Unlawful Entry/Destruction of Property - 900 block of Chinguapin Road, between March 24 and April 7. Someone broke several windows of an empty home then forced entry and unlawfully entered the home.

Fraud / Resisting Arrest - 1900 block of Chain Bridge Road, April 6, 6:23 p.m. A subject purchased two items using false iden-

tification. The Tyson's Urban Team (TUT) attempted to apprehend the suspect but he resisted and fled on foot. A K-9 team assisted the officers with the apprehension. The suspect was treated for a dog bite. The suspect was a juvenile and was taken to the Juvenile Detention Center where petitions were obtained.

Larcenies

1400 block of Balls Hill Road, electronic device from residence

1900 block of Chain Bridge Road, credit card from residence

6900 block of Chestnut Avenue, wallet from business

8000 block of Tysons Corner Center, merchandise from business

1500 block of Laurel Hill Road, bag and wallet from residence

8200 block of Crestwood Heights Drive, tires from vehicle

8100 block of Tysons Corner Center, items from vehicles

1900 block of Chain Bridge Road, merchandise stolen from business

8100 block of Leesburg Pike, alcohol stolen from business

2200 block of International Drive, jewelry stolen from business

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Historic Garden Week in Virginia

Elegant homes and gardens in Old Town, Arlington and Falls Church will be open to the public.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Some of the most spectacular gardens will be in bloom and on display during the 83rd annual Historic Garden Week in Virginia. The statewide event will include 30 different tours of more than 200 homes and gardens. Old Town Alexandria and Arlington, Falls Church and Fairfax County are participating in the Northern Virginia tours.

"These houses are historic and they all reflect the homeowners' personalities and interests," said Catherine Thompson of the Hunting Creek Garden Club in Alexandria. "Some are owned by young families. Some have small gardens and some have large gardens."

The Hunting Creek Garden Club teamed up with The Garden Club

of Alexandria to organize the Old Town tour, a walking tour which includes five row houses with courtyard gardens. In addition to the private homes, which were all built during the 1700s and 1800s and still retain many original architectural features, tour goers will have access to the Carlyle House Historic Park, Lee-Fendall House Museum and Garden, George Mason's Gunston Hall and George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens.

From large oak trees planted shortly after the Civil War and gardens bursting with colorful blooms from hydrangeas, camellias, rhododendron, crepe myrtles and wisteria to homes with views of the Potomac River and clematis flowing over a pergola, visitors will be treated to vivid spring displays as five Old Town residents open both their homes and gardens.



PHOTO BY DONNA MOULTON

This Greek Revival property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a Virginia Historic Landmark. It is considered the fourth oldest house in Falls Church.

"People don't expect to have these amazing gardens behind these homes that can appear tiny from outside," said Amy Bertles of the Hunting Creek Garden Club.

Falls Church-Arlington

Tuesday, April 26, 2016
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Hosted by the Garden Club of Fairfax
<http://gardencluboffairfax.blogspot.com/>

"One home has two gardens with amazing sculptures that were done by the home owner who is an artist. She decorated her garden with a few of her sculptures."

In Arlington and Falls Church, Gothic Revival, Greek Revival, Arts and Crafts and Victorian architecture await visitors who take the tour hosted by the Garden club of Fairfax. The gardens include four 100-year old holly trees, an herb garden and a garden of Victorian-era plants. Two of the homes are on the National Register of Historic Places and are Virginia Historic Landmarks. The tour also includes visits to Mason Neck State Park, Gulf Branch Nature Center and The Falls Church.

Properties are chosen for the tour by local garden clubs. "They're looking for properties that they know the public will enjoy," said Karen Miller Ellsworth of the Garden Club of Virginia and director of Historic Garden Week. "They're looking for beautiful in-

teriors, an interesting history and a really nice garden."

In addition to its aesthetic appeal, Historic Garden Week, which 3,300 Garden Club of Virginia members spend more than a year planning, has a significant economic impact. "[Visitors] travel from 30 states and foreign countries and 25 percent ... spend the night and average \$1,207 on their [Historic Garden Week] trip," said Miller Ellsworth. "As a group, they spend \$2 million in Virginia each spring. The cumulative economic impact over the last 45 years is an impressive \$425 million."

Historic Garden Week began in 1927 when the Garden Club of Virginia organized a flower show and raised \$7,000 to save trees planted by Thomas Jefferson at Monticello. Money raised from the Historic Garden Week tours fund the restoration and preservation of nearly 50 of the Commonwealth's significant historic public gardens as well as a new initiative with Virginia's state parks.

Arlington-Falls Church tickets can be purchased online by credit card until April 24 by visiting <http://gardencluboffairfax.blogspot.com/> or www.vagardenweek.org/main/tickets.

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21 Announcements

21 Announcements

21 Announcements

ABC LICENSE

Eugenia, LLC trading as Our Mom Eugenia, 1025 Seneca Rd, Ste H, Great Falls, VA 22066. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer on Premises & Mixed Beverage Restaurant on Premises License to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Philip Hobson, President NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200

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AMA, LLC trading as Cafe Monaco, 1800 Old Meadow Rd, McLean, VA 22102. 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. Agustin Sanchez, owner

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Wading is the Hardest Part



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

And so it begins, the storm after the calm. Ten weeks or so of relative peace – and some quiet, since my last diagnostic scan. But now, five days ahead of my next scan, scheduled for April 13, I am emotionally behind. Why (aside from the obvious)? Because even though the scan will occur this Wednesday, I/we won't know the results until the following Thursday, April 21, eight days later, when we see the oncologist for a face-to-face appointment. Eight days of waiting, eight days of talking yourself in and out scenarios both good and bad, eight days of dealing with the devil – and hopefully not coming to any agreement; and finally, eight days of rationalizing your prior behavior, justifying your current behavior and wondering whether any future behavior will reflect the past, present or territory as yet uncharted.

And of course, it's the "territory as yet uncharted" (I don't have to explain what I mean, do I?) that worries and scares me the most. Not having been down this road before makes anticipating one's behavior-to-be/ reaction challenging. Oh, I suppose if I thought about it long enough I could develop some sort of action plan. But it's thinking about such a negative eventuality that seems and feels counterproductive. It's almost as if my thinking about such realities can somehow contribute to their actual occurrence, so, if I don't think about it, it won't happen. How's that for intelligent thinking? If I don't then it won't. If only it were that simple.

As the old saying goes: "Denial is more than just a river in Egypt." For a person originally characterized as "terminal" – in February, 2009, with stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer, now living into my eighth year post-diagnosis, life is a bit of a double-edged sword – that cuts both ways: it's a miracle that I'm still alive and given the amazing set of totally unexpected circumstances, it's equally perplexing why I've survived this long. Moreover, how is it possible that I've beaten my original life-expectancy odds so soundly? I mean: am I further from the beginning or closer to the end? Presumably, I was given a "13-month to two-year" prognosis for a reason. Do I simply ignore the underlying facts which led my oncologist to make that statement/prediction? I can't, and that's always my problem during the final few weeks leading up to my quarterly scan and the subsequent follow-up appointment with my oncologist. This can't go on forever, can it?

As much as I'd like to blur my reality, my nature prevents me from doing so. And though I may not dwell on it or allow it to dominate my conversation or become depressed or morose about any of it, I do acknowledge its affect; mostly with humor and off-putting redirection. Figuratively speaking, how does one live with both the weight of the world on your shoulders and the sword of Damocles hanging over your head without ignoring certain facts and figures and making light somehow of an extremely heavy burden?

Generally, I can manage, as you regular readers know. And as friends and family will attest, when there are fissures in my emotional underpinnings, it is during this two-week period – which occurs every 13 weeks, leading up to and then waiting for scan results when I am the most uncomfortable. And though it is all very familiar to me – after seven-plus years, it still doesn't totally minimize my reaction. Let's be honest: my life is at stake here, so how can I possibly act normally? Soon I'll know, but not soon enough. Unfortunately, there's nothing I can do about it in the interim. I just have to wait. Hopefully, the results will be worth the wait.

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



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