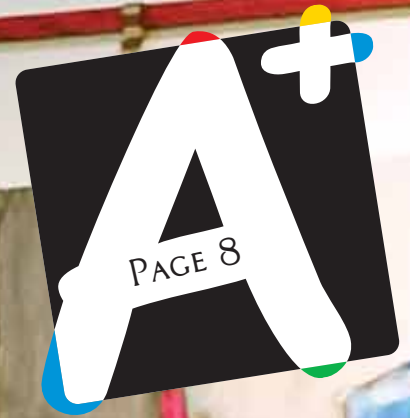


Great Falls CONNECTION



Women Juggle Work, Families, Education

NEWS, PAGE 3

Students Honored
At Poetry Luncheon

A+, PAGE 8

Eyesore Improves:
Bank Coming

NEWS, PAGE 13

Laura Bumpus announces a \$50,000 endowment to fund scholarships Great Falls Friends and Neighbors created for women studying at George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College.

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Laura Bumpus (second from left), Ricky Harvey, Annette Kerlin, Kristen Trimble and Anne McVey of the Great Falls Friends and Neighbors present Mary Bramley, left, and Libby Dissauer, right, with a \$50,000 endowment to be used for annual scholarships for adult women pursuing education at Northern Virginia Community College and George Mason University.



Laura Bumpus with Libby Dissauer and Mary Bramley to start the morning. "It means so much to us to be able to thank the community for giving back," said Dissauer, left.

Women Juggle Work, Families, Education

Great Falls Friends and Neighbors committed to assisting working women pursuing higher education.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

George Mason's Libby Dissauer understands students who juggle raising a family while pursuing an education, who have to decide whether to pay rent, buy food, get gas or pay tuition.

She remembers when she was 24, recently divorced and with a child.

"I had a rickety old Honda Accord, I wasn't always sure it was going to get me to class," said Dissauer, assistant director of Donor Relations at George Mason University's Office of Advancement and Alumni Relations.

"I worked full time. I've worked full time since I was 19," she said. "Some days, I'd figure, 'I have to make a tuition payment this month,' so, 'Maybe I don't buy groceries until Friday,'" she said.

"I believe now and I believed then that a college education is a key to success," Dissauer told the membership of Great Falls Friends and Neighbors. "My story is not unique."

GREAT FALLS FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS awarded George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College with a \$50,000 endowment (\$25,000 for each college) that will allow the Great Falls organization to award scholarships to working mothers who are pursuing degrees.

Great Falls Friends and Neighbors has made a commitment to assisting working women who want to continue pursuing their education. The endowment was announced at the monthly membership meeting at the Great Falls Library on Wednesday, April 12.



Mary F. Bramley, left, is assistant director of Northern Virginia Community College's Educational Foundation. Libby Dissauer is assistant director of donor relations at George Mason University's Office of Advancement and Alumni Relations.

"Scholarships make such a great impact," said Mary F. Bramley, assistant director of Northern Virginia Community College's Educational Foundation.

Bramley told the Great Falls Friends and Neighbors about one of her students who drove 54 miles each day to hit the Northern Virginia Community College campuses to pursue his education.

"He could have gone to any campus he wanted to right after high school. He couldn't afford it," said Bramley. "His family couldn't afford to not have him there, so he made that choice to stay at NOVA."

GFFN SCHOLARSHIP BOARD was created by the Great Falls Woman's Club in 1983 "to raise money and provide scholarships to post-college age women who are in need of a scholarship to finish their college education," said Laura Bumpus, GFFN's director of scholarship awards.

"Through the many years, our club members have supported this effort by generously donating many volunteer hours and literally thousands of dollars," said Bumpus. "These endowments are designed to ensure

many women will continue being supported through scholarships awarded indefinitely."

It's a common story at Northern Virginia Community College campuses and at George Mason University.

"Many of our students are still very attached to their families, making choices not necessarily based on what their wants are but based on what their parents want and what their parents need and what their families need," said Bramley.

After semesters at NOVA, her former student earned a Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship that pays \$40,000 a year for him to attend Columbia University and two years of graduate school.

She and Dissauer attended Great Falls Friends and Neighbors meeting to give members an understanding of the impact their fundraising and efforts have.

"The students are so grateful, that's what I have found time and time again," said Bramley.

"It means so much to us to be able to thank the community for giving back," said Dissauer.

"We really strive to improve the commu-

Why This Matters

Great Falls Friends and Neighbors has more than 200 active members.

Through the GFFN Scholarship Fund, the club provides scholarships to financially support up to six women ages 25 or older in Northern Virginia who are pursuing degrees in higher education and are attending George Mason University or Northern Virginia Community College. Each year, a scholarship is also given to a George Mason University dance student in the name of a club founder, Bette Carter.

See <http://gffnva.org>

nity around Mason and scholarship is critical to that," said Dissauer. "We are not able to through state support alone help our students achieve their goals and become workforce ready."

LAST YEAR, Great Falls Friends and Neighbors awarded scholarships to Martina Atabong, 35, of Alexandria, who is the first of her family to attend college and Lea Lines, originally from Springfield, who re-enrolled in academia after her youngest enrolled in elementary school.

"My family comes first," said Lines, who has a 4.0 grade point average at George Mason University, is a member of two honors societies and volunteers for her nursing major and in the community. She plans to become a nurse in neonatal intensive care, pediatric intensive care or labor and delivery.

On April 24, Great Falls Friends and Neighbors Scholarship Fund will host the 2016 Spring Fashion Show at the Tysons Corner Bloomingdales on Sunday, April 24, from 10 a.m. to noon. The money will also contribute to this year's scholarships.

"We will continue to raise money," said Bumpus.

"We thank the many women before us and our current GFFN club and board members who have a great passion for women's education because of the impact these graduates will have on their families and their communities," said Bumpus.

The current scholarship board includes: Jan Lane, treasurer; Allison Granstedt, secretary; Sally-Anne Andrew-Pyne, director of fundraising; Annette Kerlin, director of publicity; Kristen Trimble, vice president and Ricki Harvey, president.

See www.GFFNSF.org.

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News

Students listen intently to rules and the prompt — shoes — before writing stories for the Great Fall Writers Group 2016 Youth Creative Writing Contest.



PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA TYLER WENKS



Students from Great Falls Elementary, Forestville Elementary, Colvin Run Elementary and the Potomac School participated in Great Falls Writers Group 2016 Youth Creative Writing Contest. Winners will be announced on April 30 at the Youth Writing Awards Gala hosted by the Friends of the Great Falls Library.

Celebrating Reading, Writing and Winning

Award-winning author/illustrator Henry Cole to be guest speaker at Youth Writers Gala.

BY CHRISTINA TYLER WENKS

Reading is imperative for becoming a good writer, so community groups are collaborating to celebrate reading, writing and winners. The first ever Youth Writing Awards Gala will be Saturday, April 30, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Great Falls Library.

The Friends of the Great Falls Library (FGFL) is underwriting the costs of the event that features award-winning children's author and illustrator Henry Cole as guest speaker. Winners of the second annual Youth Creative Writing Contest, hosted by the Great Falls Writers Group (GFWG), will be announced and read their winning works.

"Our group missions differ, but our goals align," says Michelle Miller, FGFL president, about the partnership to present the gala.

"Many library programs target preschoolers learning to read. Pre-teens and young independent readers are often missed, and we want to keep them engaged in libraries." In the age of technology and e-readers, the event reminds readers and researchers of all ages about the joys, opportunities, and uses of local libraries.

GFWG invited sixth-graders from Great Falls to write a story

or essay about a prompt. This year's subject is shoes. Sneakers, a toddler's scuffed leather shoes, ballet slippers, military boots caked with dried Afghanistan mud, heels, wedding shoes, and others representing people, events, and stages of life — provided participating students a springboard for their stories. Students from Great Falls Elementary, Forestville Elementary, Colvin Run Elementary and the Potomac School participated.

Judges, including educators and a best-selling author, spent weeks poring through student works. Ten finalists have been named from which first-, second-, and third-place winners will be awarded cash prizes at the event. Honorable-mention winners receive prizes, too.

"By recognizing and celebrating the talent of these young writers, we're sending them the strong signal that their words add value and vision to the world they inhabit. Young people need to know that," says Kristin Clark Taylor, GFWG founder. "We need to keep encouraging them to write, write, write — not just as a pleasant pastime, but to survive, and thrive in a world that seems to be placing less and less emphasis on the written word. Today's youth can reverse this trend. They must."

Youth Writing Award Finalists

Julia Toloczko, Great Falls Elementary School
Riley Luce, Forestville Elementary School
Karma Kassem, Forestville Elementary School
Elisabeth Anderson, Colvin Run Elementary School
Luke Tibbs, Forestville Elementary School
Erin Kearns, Forestville Elementary School
Cecelia O'Sullivan, Great Falls Elementary School
Katherine Stockton, Forestville Elementary School
Julia Fremberg, Forestville Elementary School
Miky Kassem, Forestville Elementary School

SCHOOL NOTES

Send school notes to vienna@connectionnewspapers.com by noon on Friday.

Dean's List for the 2015 fall semester at The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa.

Elisabetta Cantatore, of Great Falls, a psychology major, has been named to the dean's list for the 2015 fall semester at George Mason University.

Vitale Alexander Christy, of Great Falls, graduated from the University of Tampa in Florida on Jan. 19 with a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre and a minor in Writing.

John Poyner of Great Falls, a Management Information Systems/Finance major, has been named to the

Maria Kehrli, of Great Falls, qualified for the Dean's List at High Point University in North Carolina for the Fall 2015 semester.

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PEOPLE

Great Falls Sailor Assumes Command of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 75

BY LT. J.G. RYLEE J. STREFF
COMMANDER, NAVAL AIR FORCES
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 75 "Wolf Pack" held its change of command ceremony March 18, at Naval Air Station North Island in San Diego in front of distinguished guests and family members.

Cmdr. John C. Kiefaber relieved Cmdr. Jeffrey A. Melody, and assumed command of the Wolf Pack.

Melody, a native of Youngstown, Ohio, and a 1996 graduate of the United

States Naval Academy, set the standard of excellence during his 15 months as commanding officer of the Wolf Pack. Under his leadership, HSM-75 successfully flew 2,215 sorties.

Amassing 5,095 mishap-free flight hours, Melody departs the Wolf Pack for Washington, D.C., to work in the Joint Staff, Policy and Plans Directorate at the Pentagon.

"It has been an honor to command the most accomplished helicopter squadron in San Diego," said Melody. "I started my flying career at the Wolf Pack, and I could not have imagined a better tour. The hard work and dedication of each

and every Sailor made HSM-75 the outstanding squadron it is today."

Kiefaber, of Great Falls, assumed command after serving 15 months as the squadron's executive officer. He is a 1997 graduate of the United States Naval Academy, and was selected as the HSM-41 Instructor Pilot of the Year in 2005.

"It is a privilege to lead the exceptional officers and Sailors of HSM-75," stated Kiefaber "Commander Melody created a winning culture here, and I intend to build off of his remarkable leadership."

HSM-75 is based on Naval Air Station North Island in San Diego. The squadron flies the MH-60R Seahawk helicopter for

its primary missions, which include surface and anti-submarine warfare. The MH-60R's operational capabilities allow the squadron to conduct all-weather sea operations in open-ocean and littoral environments as an integral part of Carrier Air Wing 11, in support of the USS Nimitz Carrier Strike Group. The squadron's secondary missions include: vertical replenishment, search and rescue, medical evacuation, and command and control warfare.

"Thanks to the dedication of the Sailors of HSM-75, the Wolf Pack will maintain its reputation of excellence and answer the call of the nation," said Kiefaber.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Cmdr. John C. Kiefaber, of Great Falls.

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OPINION

On the Guilty Plea of Adam Torres

Geer's death exposed "obfuscation ... and a lack of public accountability."

Adam Torres, charged with murder in the death of Springfield resident John Geer, was the first Fairfax County Police officer in the history of the department to be charged in such a death. Monday, Torres entered a guilty plea to involuntary manslaughter, with a likely sentence of 12 months, most of that already served. He has been in jail for eight months.

Geer was a Springfield resident, a remodeling contractor and an involved father, always on the sidelines of his daughters' sports games. He was unarmed, standing in the doorway of his own home with his hands raised at the time he was killed.

The police and Fairfax County refused to release any information on the case for more than a year, and only then after repeated court orders. Public outrage over Geer's death was compounded by obfuscation and silence, the failure to communicate, and a lack of public accountability. Change is in the works, but there is much work to do.

There is still much to say about the death of John Geer and its aftermath.

But today, the wisdom of his two teenage daughters is well worth reading and sharing:

APRIL 18, 2016 STATEMENT BY THE DAUGHTERS OF JOHN GEER

"Justice is rarely a simple matter, and it would be easy to vent our anger, our outrage, our sorrow, and voice opposition to the plea bargain struck between Adam Torres and the Commonwealth. Nobody would question the rawness of our emotions and our response to it; we have lost a father, and there can be no substitute, no future moment of affection, no further opportunities to be close the man who should be present

as our greatest supporter. Torres took that away from us, the Fairfax Board of Supervisors and Fairfax County Police Department hid the truth of what happened to our dad for over a year, and there is no going back. ...

"Much like Dad's murder has repercussions for his family and the community, locking Torres in a cell will have an effect on others. Whatever his faults, Torres' wife and children did not murder our father, and it would be wrong to hurt them just to allay our own anger and pain. Robbing other children of time with their father would only make us complicit in another wrong. ...

"Where Torres failed to show prudence and mercy, we will show him and his family both.

"As for the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the Fairfax County Police Department, we remain appalled by their actions in cover-

ing up the truth and putting Torres in the position to decide life and death given what they knew about his background. Until such time that the ad hoc committee's recommendations are adopted and the policies of the FCPD are changed, we fear that these tragic events can occur again with different victims and different officers. We call upon the Board to immediately adopt and implement the Committee's recommendations without delay for the good of the FCPD and the citizens of Fairfax County.

"No family should have to suffer the loss of a mother, a father, or a loved one under circumstances like ours."

Send in Mother's Day Photos

Mother's Day is May 8 this year and every year at this time this newspaper calls for submissions to our Mother's Day photo gallery.

Send photos of mothers, grandmothers, great-grandmothers, with children or without children in the photos. Please name everyone in the photo, ages of children, the approximate date, describe what is happening in the photo and include your name, address, email address and phone number. (We will not print your contact information, just names and town of residence.) You can upload photos and information directly to www.connectionnewspapers.com/mothersday/ or email to north@connectionnewspapers.com.

EDITORIAL

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Stormwater Management Engages Community

To the Editor:

The Great Falls Citizens Association would like to thank all those that came to the Stormwater Management meeting held on April 12 at the library. Over 60 people were in attendance, showing the strong interest in this issue. The GFCA Stormwater Task Force held this meeting to start the process of educating the community on all aspects of stormwater management. The fact that most people stayed past our usual ending time of 9:30 p.m. shows that those attending realized that protecting the valuable resource is a concern that is not just local, but county, regional and national.

The recent proposals to rezone and develop Brooks Farm and Hill's Nursery have raised the awareness how lack of stormwater management and deer overpopulation are undermining our forests and fields, leading to flash flooding. Too much stormwater runoff shows up when we lose bridges and when ponds silt up or over-

run their dams. Too much stormwater shows that our environment is losing its ability to reduce runoff and water absorption. Managing these water resources is important for communities like Great Falls that depend on water from wells for our drinking water.

GFCA's Stormwater Task Force meetings are open to all. GFCA has realized that there is much to learn to be able to manage and protect our community's valuable resource. Join us if you share these goals and visit the GFCA website, www.gfca.org for more information.

M.Eric Knudsen, President
Great Falls Citizens Association

Dealing with Stormwater: Personal Experience

To the Editor:

I recently participated in a Great Falls Citizen Association (GFCA) Town Hall Meeting and spoke, as a panel participant, to my personal experience living in Great Falls and dealing with Stormwater. I spent 19 years working with Fairfax

County trying to alleviate and repair damage from water runoff through my property. This was a long process with many lessons learned. Small changes within the neighborhood made visible changes to the erosion problem but our neighborhood woodlands began to deteriorate when a new subdivision was constructed up the hill from our property, with no thought to controlling water runoff. Six houses with lawns and driveways and roofs and the road supporting them, all sloping downhill, added a hundred years like flood every spring/fall. The water runs from this development, across the pipeline which is kept mowed, and continues downhill through the woods to my property.

The destruction was very detrimental. It cut my property down to bedrock and this began to widen. I was very worried about losing our big old shade trees. I continued to work with the county but they could barely keep up with the changes. From my kitchen window in the winter time I would see the banks breaking off in chunks just like a glacier, with the chunks falling into the bottom of the stream bed. And this was without any rain. Our bridge was washed away. The county continued to work to find and develop state of

the art methods to remediate and restore the damage and that would be in keeping with and maintain the rural/woods and beautiful nature we have. At long last, they did a beautiful restoration and saved our shade trees. It now looks like an extension of Great Falls Park with strategically placed boulders and stone and catch ponds to slow down the flow of water and stop the erosion.

However, given my experience I am very concerned about the continued development in our community. New houses, more roofs, driveways, lawns, clearing of beautiful trees, denuded woods from the deer and development will add an enormous amount of runoff and continued destruction of our woods and properties including bridges, roads and trails, schools, broken dams and drained ponds, exposure of geothermal pipes, and more.

So here's my take from all of this: Educate yourself. Talk to your neighbors and work with them. Go online and look at the county plans and new ordinances. Work through issues, work together with your neighbors. If you have erosion on your property, get in queue with the county. It is very helpful

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 7

Great Falls CONNECTION

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:
greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com

Kemal Kurspahic
Editor ♦ 703-778-9414
kemal@connectionnewspapers.com

Abigail Constantino
Editorial Assistant
703-778-9410 ext.427
aconstantino@connectionnewspapers.com

Ken Moore
Community Reporter
240-393-2448
kmoore@connectionnewspapers.com

Jon Roetman
Sports Editor ♦ 703-752-4013
jroetman@connectionnewspapers.com
[@jonroetman](https://twitter.com/jonroetman)

ADVERTISING:
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Andrea Smith
Classified Advertising
703-778-9411
classified@connectionnewspapers.com

Debbie Funk
National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunc@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin
Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor & Publisher
Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
[@MaryKimm](https://twitter.com/MaryKimm)

Executive Vice President
Jerry Vernon
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor in Chief
Steven Mauren
Managing Editor
Kemal Kurspahic
Photography:
Deb Cobb, Craig Sterbutzel
Art/Design:
Laurence Foong, John Heinly
Production Manager:
Geovani Flores

Special Assistant to the Publisher
Jeanne Theismann
jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com
[@TheismannMedia](https://twitter.com/TheismannMedia)

CIRCULATION: 703-778-9426
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com



LETTERS

FROM PAGE 6

to take pictures and video and send and show them to the county. If you can, put together your own neighbor stormwater group, give yourself a name and present your own issue or project to the county. Take field trips if you can to neighboring counties and see what they have done. The more up to speed and organized you are the better. These are community issues. Work with and support the Great Falls Citizens Association and contact the Storm Water Task Force at SWTF_Help@GFCA.org. Get involved and help yourself and our community.

Beverly Geserick
Great Falls

Inappropriate Use of FEMA Relief Funds

To the Editor

Your recent article "Fairfax County Schools to Apply for FEMA Relief Funds" is another example of attempting to exploit the American taxpayers.

I visualize the typical American taxpayer as a middle class couple living in the heartland of our country. They have two children. They go to church every week. They don't smoke, don't use illegal drugs, and use alcohol in moderation. Their children go to school each school day. They vote in every election. They must struggle financially even when the economy is strong, but they pay their bills, and they pay their taxes. They pay for their children's education, and they save for their retirement.

I don't feel that it is appropriate for the Federal government, which consists of millions of such middle class families, to pay for the removal of snow at Fairfax County Public Schools.

Dave Elmore
Great Falls

BULLETIN BOARD

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

SATURDAY/APRIL 30

Bike Collection. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Chesterbrook Elementary, 1753 Kirby Road, McLean. The class is partnering with Bikes for the World to collect all size bikes to refurbish to donate to the needy in third world countries and here in the US. \$10 donation. htanpaa6@gmail.com.

Cooper Middle Presents Spring Musical

This April, Cooper Middle School will be holding their annual Spring Musical: "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying." The play will be held on April 27 and 28 at 2:30-4:30 p.m. and April 29 and 30 at 7-9 p.m. Tickets can be bought at the door. They are \$5 for students and \$10 for adults. This quirky musical will keep you on your toes; so if you love the arts, come see the play at Cooper Middle School's cafeteria this April.

The Cooper Middle School Students preparing for their play "How To Succeed in Business Without Really Trying."



PHOTO BY ANNA BARKER



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Students Honored at Poetry Luncheon

GFFN recognizes Great Falls Elementary students in 34th annual contest.

By STEVE HIBBARD
THE CONNECTION

The 2016 Poetry Luncheon honoring the winners of the 34th annual Great Falls Elementary School Poetry Contest was held Thursday, April 14 at River Bend Golf and Country Club in Great Falls. The event was sponsored by the Great Falls Friends and Neighbors Club, a group of 220 women who provide community events and social activities for its members.

Nine student winners in grades 4-6 were honored with cash prizes (\$50, \$30, and \$25 for first, second and third place winners) and an awards luncheon, along with their parents, teachers and school administrators. After a lunch that included a trio of egg salad, chicken and tuna salad, students recited their poetry to the audience. A booklet containing all of their winners' poems for first, second, and third place in grades 4-6 was also printed.

"We're just proud to be able to recognize the young poets, the teachers and welcome the parents to enjoy the fruits of their accomplishments," said Claire Abbott, Poetry Contest chair, on behalf of the Great Falls Friends and Neighbors.

Anne McVey, president of the Great Falls Friends and Neighbors, said there were 210 student entries this year. "The depth of the content was so varied as compared to what came out in years past when many students wrote about the seasons of the year or their family pet," said McVey. "The judges really had to look at each of these poems from the point of content, continuity, and the beautiful creativity before making their decisions."

SARA HARPER, principal of Great Falls Elementary, added: "I think that the partnership between the Friends and Neighbors Club and Great Falls Elementary provides students with the perfect opportunity to publish their exceptional poetry. We appreciate all of the support we've received from the club and are excited to continue the longstanding partnership."

Joanne Schilling, reading specialist at Great Falls Elementary, added: "I think the quality of the work is always outstanding. I don't know how the judges can come



Nine student winners from Great Falls Elementary School at the Poetry Luncheon sponsored by the Great Falls Friends and Neighbors. (Pictured are): Fourth Grade Division — Peyton Walcott, 1st; Preston Brown, 2nd; and Claire Kim, 3rd. Fifth Grade Division — Emma Wolff, 1st; Vanessa Jade Duchauffour, 2nd; and Julia Moore, 3rd. Sixth Grade Division — Ava Reilly, 1st; Lexie Perez, 2nd; and Erin Kalinsky, 3rd.

down with only one selection."

Fourth-grade teacher Lindsay Compton added: "I think it's great that the students have an opportunity to showcase what they've learned in the classroom and to be recognized for their efforts. I'm very proud of them."

Fourth-grader Peyton Walcott, 9, of Great Falls wrote the poem, "Beach Race," for which he won first place. "I love to run so I was inspired by running on the beach in the Rock and Roll Half Marathon and 5K in Virginia Beach. I was trying to think of how to make other people feel what I felt, so I used basic words to describe that feeling, like 'good' and went to a The-saurus and found unique and fancy words," he said. After working on it for one to two months, he will have the poem published in East Beach Peninsula Magazine in Virginia Beach where his grandmother lives.

Fourth-grader Claire Kim, 9, of Great Falls, wrote the poem, "Ocean Flowers," for which she won third place. "I wanted to put two things together that don't go together — those were the ocean and flowers. It took me a day and a half," she said.

Sixth-grader Ava Reilly, 12, of Great Falls, wrote the poem, "Gone," for which she won first place. She said she was inspired by reading the book, "The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane," about death and a rabbit.

Fifth-grader Emma Wolff, 10, of Great Falls, wrote the poem, "Friends," for which she won first place. "I started doing the poem about other things, and then I decided on three of them, then decided on 'Friends.' It took me 30 minutes to write it and then 15 minutes to edit," she said. "It's how (friends) treat me and how I feel about them and how I feel when they're with me."

FIFTH-GRADER Vanessa Duchauffour, 10, of Great Falls, wrote the poem, "Spring Time," for which she won second place. "I just felt that spring was starting and I looked outside and saw flowers," she said. "When I saw bees buzzing around, it inspired me to write the poem." It took her about two or three weeks to write.

Fifth-grader Julia Moore, 10, of Great Falls, wrote the poem, "If I Was the Sun," for which she won third place. "I was on the bus and it was really noisy one day, so I looked out the window and thought, if I was the sun," she said. It took her only five or 10 minutes to write.

Sixth-grader Lexie Perez, 12, of Great Falls, wrote the poem, "Into the Woods," for which she won second place. "It was a dream that I had before. It's kind of walking through the woods; I heard a step behind me and kept running, then I started to fall," she said. It took about a half hour to write.



Great Falls Elementary School fourth-grader Peyton Walcott reads his poem, "Beach Race," during the Poetry Luncheon sponsored by the Great Falls Friends and Neighbors.

PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD / THE CONNECTION

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Nine adult candidates, three
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School boundary area, and
four teens from the Langley
High School boundary area.

Format:
Informal Reception

Nine adults are vying for adult votes to fill three seats on the Governing Board. Three teens from the McLean High School boundary area and four teens from the Langley High School boundary area are vying for teen votes to fill one board seat from each high school boundary area.

Refreshments will be served. For planning purposes, please let us know if you will attend by emailing elections@mcleancenter.org. **See you there!**

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Sunday, noon to 6 p.m.

OR

Old Firehouse Teen Center (OFTC)
1440 Chain Bridge Road
McLean, VA 22101
(703) 448-8336/TTY 711
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.
(closed on weekends)

Requesting Absentee Ballots:

You can pick up absentee ballot packages and vote at MCC or OFTC. You can also request absentee ballot packages by e-mail at elections@mcleancenter.org or by telephone at 703-790-0123.

Returning Completed Applications and Ballots:

You can return your application and ballot to the front desk at either MCC or OFTC. Or, you can mail your application and ballot using the pre-addressed envelope enclosed in the absentee ballot package.

Absentee voting ends promptly at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, May 18.

Hand-delivered applications and ballots must be received at either MCC or OFTC by that time. Absentee applications and ballots returned by mail must be received at MCC on May 18.

If you have questions:

Please call 703-790-0123 or e-mail elections@mcleancenter.org



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FOOD & ENTERTAINMENT

Love for Cooking Brought to Great Falls

Profile: Mookie's BBQ new on restaurant scene.

BY ALEXANDRA GREELEY
THE CONNECTION

When Mookie's BBQ opened in Great Falls recently, barbecue fans must have gone wild. Really wild, for Northern Virginia does not boast many smoky, barbecue restaurants. Now, thanks to the devotion of Brian Varani and his family and friends, what started out as a food truck/catering company has burst onto the restaurant scene.

Oddly enough, said Varani, cooking was not his primary life's passion, although he loved to cook with his family, which boasts great home cooks. And at the age of 13, he did start working in a small breakfast/lunch eatery until he went to college. Even in college, he worked at other restaurants to earn his way. But he majored in accounting, not cooking, and upon graduation, he worked in the corporate world for several years.

But finally, he said, his love for cooking was reignited big time when he purchased his first smoker. "I loved it," he said, adding that his wife observed that there were all kinds of barbecue competitions going on. "So I got together a team," he said, "and in 2010, we did our first competition. It was mostly just my family and friends working together 6 to 8 times a year." He admitted that his barbecue technique is self-taught, learned from watching videos and reading articles online.

All that led him to a side business because Varani was asked by numerous friends to cater events. "I founded the business in 2010," he said, "but it was just a side business that I did for three to four years."

But as often happens to people, life took a big turn. "I left my day job in 2014 in search of good restaurant locations," he said. He had spotted the empty space from the former Serbian Crown, but someone else had put a bid on the property. So in the meantime, he along with his brother and cousin built a customized barbecue vending rig—featured even on television for its unique design—that they used for catering. "We use it for events," he said. "It has a giant smoker, a hog roaster, deep fryer and sinks. It is one of a kind. It took us one year to build."

But the group kept looking for the proper restaurant space, some place that would be family friendly in keeping with their vision. Then Varani found that



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Brian Varani of Mookie's BBQ: Everything is made from scratch, nothing is frozen or canned.

his first-choice space was still available, so family, friends, and Varani pulled together a deal and settled on the location. "We had to transform the space back into a restaurant, putting in all brand new equipment and furnishings," he said. With the work done, Mookie's BBQ had a quiet opening at the end of September 2015.

Since then the business has grown enough so that the restaurant now opens for lunch, dinner and Sunday brunch, and has a bar setting that often attracts folks who sit and chat. "We have a ton of families who are regulars," he said, which underscores his family-friendly approach.

Of course, the biggest draw is the quality of the food—everything is made from scratch, he said, nothing is frozen or canned. And the most popular dish? Well, the smoky, succulent, meaty baby back ribs. Second place? The brisket burnt ends.

Mookie's BBQ, 1141 Walker Road, Great Falls. Phone: 703-759-2386. Hours: Lunch and dinner, Tuesday-Sunday; Brunch, Sunday.

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Scratch Made Banana Pudding

Serves 12

9 large eggs
6 cups whole milk
2 cups sugar
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon butter
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
6 bananas, peeled and sliced
1 box vanilla wafers
Whipped cream for serving

Combine the eggs and milk in a large bowl, and beat together lightly. Stir in the sugar and flour, mixing well, and pour into a medium saucepan. Heat over low heat, whisking constantly until thickened. Remove from the heat, and whisk in the butter and vanilla. Continue whisking until the mixture cools slightly. Place the pudding in a

container, and refrigerate it to cool and set.

In a 9-x-13-inch pan, layer the wafers, bananas, and pudding. Repeat with a second layer in the same order. Garnish the top with more vanilla wafers. Refrigerate for one hour to firm, and serve with whipped cream.

CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

Small Gems Exhibit. Through May 10. Wednesday, noon-4 p.m. Saturday, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Village Green Center, 756 Walker Road, Great Falls. Contributed work no larger than 12 inches square. Sparkling jewelry, bronze sculpture, fiber arts, painting, print and mixed media. The exhibit hangs on the walls and is displayed in cubbies and glass cabinets. Free. greatfallsstudios.com.

"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.

"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.

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/APRIL 21

Opening Exhibition Reception. 7 p.m. McLean Project for the Arts, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Teacher's exhibition. Free. mpaart.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 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.



Colonial Beach by Jan Heginbotham

Great Falls Library Showcases the Work of Local Artist

Area residents and visitors can find more than books at the local library when Painter/Sculptor Jan Heginbotham's work is exhibited at Great Falls Library from April through June. Her paintings will be on view for the first time at the library's small conference room from March 30 through June. A selection of sculpture will also be at the library for the month of April in the hall cabinet.

Heginbotham is known in the area as a sculptor, having exhibited bronze sculptures locally and nationally for more than three decades. Her sculptures are in public and private collections, and have won awards in National competitions.

Painting is a newer endeavor, one she has been exploring for three years. "Painting lets me see the world in new ways," Heginbotham said. "There is more color in the world than I realized."

She is a Great Falls resident and a native of the Washington metro area. To see Heginbotham's sculpture and painting, visit Great Falls Library from April through June. www.JanHeginbotham.com

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. Ages 4+. \$15/\$10. mcleancenter.org.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/APRIL 23-24

Community Art Show. Saturday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday, noon-4 p.m. Vinson Hall Retirement Community, 6251 Old Dominion Drive, McLean. Community residents show off their works. Free. 703-970-3694.

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.tysonscharity5k.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 scholarships to post-college aged Virginia women. Channel 9 news anchor Andrea Roane emcees. www.GFFNSF.org.

TUESDAY/APRIL 26

Author Event. 7:30 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Brooke C. Stoddard discusses his book "Steel: From Mine to Mill, The Metal that Made America." fairfaxcounty.gov/library. 703-757-8560.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/APRIL 29-MAY 1

"Kaleidoscope" Vale Arts Spring Art Show. Friday, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Vale Schoolhouse, 3124 Fox Mill Road, Oakton. Nine local artists exhibit more than 150 fine art paintings and collages. info@valearts.com. 703-860-1888.

SATURDAY/APRIL 30

"Jazz Masters with John Eaton: The Music of Hoagy Carmichael." McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Jazz pianist, musicologist and humorist, John Eaton brings his popular continuing education program. \$12/\$5. mcleancenter.org.family5kandfunrun.com.

Bad Bugs! 10:30-11:30 a.m. Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. Discover how to find and destroy bugs that are bad news for your plants. Preregistration required. \$2.50-\$5. Register at NOVAparks.com.

Bike Collection. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Chesterbrook Elementary, 1753 Kirby Road, McLean. The class is partnering with Bikes for the World to collect all size bikes to refurbish to donate to the needy in third world countries and here in the US. \$10 donation. htanpaa6@gmail.com.



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Double Feature at AMC Tysons Corner

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Insider Knowledge Series

"Jazz Masters with John Eaton"

The Music of Hoagy Carmichael

Saturday, Apr. 30, 1 p.m.

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Wednesday May 11, 12:30 p.m.

5th and 6th Grader Party

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Spring Fling

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Onstage @ The Alden
ArtsPower's

"Chicken Dance"

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Langley senior Halle Duenkel scored three goals during a 17-3 win over South Lakes on April 14.



Langley junior Emma Crooks finished with four goals against South Lakes on April 14.

PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Langley Girls' Lax Team Starts 11-0

Nine different Saxons score at least one goal against South Lakes.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

The Langley girls' lacrosse team has a new head coach, one of its top players is in her first season back after suffering a major knee injury and its leading goal-scorer in a recent game against South Lakes is in her first season with the program.

Through 11 games, however, the Saxons have squashed any potential growing pains in impeccable fashion.

Langley defeated South Lakes 17-3 on April 14. Two days later, the Saxons beat Battlefield, 15-10, and Chantilly, 17-6, to improve their record to 11-0. Ten of Langley's victories came by a margin of at least five goals, and six of their wins came by double digits.

Entering Tuesday's action, Langley and Robinson were the only undefeated teams in the 6A North region.

"I don't think we've even thought about [being undefeated]," Langley assistant coach Bucky Morris said. "I think we just focus on the next game."

Junior midfielder Emma Crooks, a William & Mary commit, said the Saxons are a confident group capable of regaining their focus prior to a game.

"I think we're really progressing and I think ... sometimes we come in maybe a little too head strong," Crooks said, "so we always have a talk before each game kind of like, 'All right guys, let's remember who we are, let's remember that we're playing for Langley and not for ourselves,' so we usually settle ourselves down."

Crooks, in her first season with Langley after transferring from Connelly School of the Holy Child in Potomac, Md., led the



Anna Hofgard and the Langley girls' lacrosse team started the season with 11 straight wins.

Saxons with four goals during their win over South Lakes on April 14.

"I think we have such amazing talent on this team and it's all spread out," Crooks said. "I just think we have so much potential, too. No matter what team we play, I think we can come in and just do what we want to do and what we know how to do and I think we can succeed."

Maggie Kovacs, a 2009 Langley High School graduate, is in her first season as head coach of the Saxons. Kovacs was a two-time first-team all-region selection for the Langley girls' lacrosse team before playing at the University of Oregon.

"She's awesome," senior Halle Duenkel said. "She's developed our game in so many ways. There are things we didn't even know we were capable of as a unit. ... She just makes every single person feel comfortable to be on the field at any given time."

Kovacs said the Saxons haven't focused on being undefeated.

"We focus on ourselves, making sure that each individual as well as the team as a unit

gets better each and every practice," Kovacs wrote in an email. "We pick one to two skills or concepts to focus on each practice. If they continue working as hard as they have been and absorbing everything we throw at them the wins will take care of themselves."

One of Kovacs' top weapons is senior attacker/midfielder Duenkel, a James Madison University signee who scored three goals during the Saxons' win over South Lakes. Duenkel entered the season with 112 goals and 53 assists in her high school career, including a junior season that was cut short when she suffered a torn ACL in her right knee in May of 2015.

Duenkel said she has a different outlook for her senior season.

"It's really a big difference," she said. "Last year I had a lot of different goals. This year, it's very, very different. I take every game as a blessing to be back on the field and be able to walk and do the things I love and glorify God on the field. ... Last year, I was worried about a lot of other things like scoring records ... and this year — I don't even

"I think we have such amazing talent on this team and it's all spread out. I just think we have so much potential, too. No matter what team we play, I think we can come in and just do what we want to do and what we know how to do and I think we can succeed."

— Langley junior Emma Crooks

know what the records are — I'm just looking for the team to win a state championship."

Kovacs praised Duenkel.

"I first coached Halle when she was in fifth grade playing for GFLA," Kovacs wrote. "While she's still one of the most gifted and determined players I have ever coached, I couldn't be more proud of her development this spring. ... She's elevated her entire game by becoming a much more strategic player."

Nine different Saxons scored at least one goal against South Lakes.

Anna Hofgard finished with three goals and Sareena Dhillon had two. Rebecca Bair, Marina Smith, Sam Suib, Morgan Kuligowski and Avarie Rembert each had one.

Langley finished state runner-up in 2012 and 2013 but has yet to win a state championship.

Langley faced Fairfax on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. The Saxons will travel to face Madison at 7:30 p.m. on April 26.

NEWS

Eyesore Improves: Bank Coming

Construction on TD Bank scheduled for Fall; opening of two-lane drive-thru bank anticipated for February.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

The community called the site of the old Exxon Station, with environmental cleanup underway, an “eyesore.”

Supervisor John W. Foust agreed.

The site is set to become a new TD Bank, and recently, TD Bank razed and cleared remnants of the former gas station at the corner of Georgetown Pike and Walker Road, even though construction on the bank isn’t scheduled until the fall.

“I’m extremely grateful to them,” said Foust. “The site’s been cleared. It’s a significant aesthetic improvement. It’s still not what I call attractive, but it’s so much better than it was.”

TD Bank is planned to open at 9901 Georgetown Pike in February 2017. The 2,616 square-foot bank with two drive-thru lanes will replace the 1,781 square-foot service station.

GREAT FALLS CITIZENS ASSOCIATION continues to monitor clean-up of the site.

“The demolition of the old Exxon station ... promis[es] the correction of a multi-year eyesore as the site is cleared for the eventual construction of a TD bank location,” according to the GFCA documents.

The Board of Supervisors approved TD Bank’s special exception (SE 2013-DR-001) on Feb. 25, 2014. The Planning Commission recommended its approval on the 27,426 square feet of property the month before, according to county documents.

See <http://ldsnet.fairfaxcounty.gov/>.

“They anticipate starting construction in August and finishing in January,” said Foust.

A major part of the special exception including ensuring that the special exception did not interfere with the clean-up of the MTBE spill at the former Exxon station.

“This project can not interfere with the clean-up effort, we made that a condition of the approval of the project,” said Foust.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GREAT FALLS CITIZENS ASSOCIATION
DEMOLITION ONE: TD Bank, National Association and the landowner razed remnants of the former Exxon Station on March 31, according to Great Falls Citizens Association.

“The old Exxon station site has been the focus of groundwater contamination clean-up efforts for the past few years. Those efforts will continue at this site, as well as across Walker Road underneath the shopping center parking lot to which the contamination has spread,” according to GFCA documents.

A SPECIAL COMMITTEE of the Citizens Association reviewed the groundwater monitoring report issued for second quarter 2015 by Fairfax Petroleum and its environmental engineering contractor, Kleinfelder East. The report was received from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.

At the time, GFCA and Glen Sjoblom, chair of the GFCA special committee, predicted that pumping will need to continue for another four quarters.

“We will keep being vigilant until the problem goes away,” said Sjoblom.

Approximately 256 pounds of Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether (MTBE) have been removed since pumping and treatment began in August 2014, according to the Great Falls Citizens Association.

Concentrations of the chemical were more than 10 times the target level in at least one spot.

Even low levels of MTBE can make groundwater undrinkable due to its offensive taste and odor, according to U.S. EPA documents.

Leaks were detected from the vapor recovery units at the gas station in 2009, said Sjoblom.

MTBE was the gasoline additive used under direction of the EPA prior to 2006, and a leak released the chemical from the former Exxon Service station into groundwater.

The groundwater has been treated by pumping it out for air stripping and by charcoal filtration in a special treatment trailer, and the treated water is released below discharge limits to the storm drain.

Pumping and treatment of groundwater from wells on the original site began in August 2014 in accordance with the Department of Environmental Quality Corrective Action Plan.

“It doesn’t take a very big leak to cause a very big problem if you have an area that has private wells,” said Sjoblom.

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The future comes one day at a time.
-Dean Acheson

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Comparatively Speaking, It's All Relative



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Not quite admitting to being any more of a drag than I already am, but having had cancer now for seven years and nearly two months, has been hard to ignore (believe me, I've tried), but easy to embrace. What I mean by that is: There seems to be a sub-conscious "governor" (have you ever rented a U-Haul? A "governor" is a device that keeps the engine under control, thereby preventing miles-per-hour from exceeding a certain speed) that keeps my emotions from bursting any seams. As much as I try to attempt it, I just don't/can't/won't get as excited and/or as passionate about things as I used to, pre-cancer. Oh, I still want the Red Sox to win and for Duke to lose, but I don't suffer as much when neither scenario plays out.

And while I'm admitting things, it's not only my subconscious that is acting out/controlling my behavior, it's also my conscious mind, as in when I'm in touch/aware of my emotions/actions (or lack thereof). As my oncologist once said to me about cancer, in reply to a question I asked him about blaming it for my hair turning prematurely gray: "You can blame the cancer for anything," he said, and so I shall. Nevertheless, having an extraordinarily convenient excuse: cancer, might explain most (but not all) of my behavior, and it doesn't bring me much comfort. And so I rationalize some of that unexplained behavior as self-preservation. It doesn't make me particularly proud, however. Still, having survived cancer for as long as I have certainly does, but it's not enough to put a bounce in my step. (Or maybe that's merely the neuropathy in my feet flattening my gait?)

But it's probably not my actual steps that matter. It's more likely my attitude while I'm stepping. And though I'd much rather my feet not hurt, my reality is: I'm alive, quite unexpectedly (based on my original prognosis), so damn the neuropathy and full speed (more like half speed) ahead. And though I may not move as fast as I used to (who among us actually can?), I am still moving and breathing. I'm just not the man I used to be, and I can live with that because I'm still living. I just wish I could exercise a bit more control. But if I've learned anything during this cancer experience, it's that ceding control and accepting certain realities – within reason, and without giving in or giving up too much – is a prudent course of reaction to an incredibly difficult set of circumstances: diagnosed with a "terminal" form of cancer at age 54 and a half; and one for which there is no right or wrong pursuit. Any port in a storm I say, and stage IV non-small cell lung cancer certainly qualifies as a storm, as challenging as any Mother Nature could muster. The difference being, this storm never ends, it only changes in severity and frequency. Right now, the storm is constant. Either I learn to live with it or I die trying. And minimizing the bad and maximizing the good is part of that process.

If only there was a way to find some place (like "the vault" from "Seinfeld") where I could store my cancer diagnosis and only acknowledge it when absolutely necessary. Wishful thinking, but hardly rational. But what choice does one have, really? Unless you think outside the box, it may very well be a box (more like a rectangle, actually) where you'll soon find yourself not thinking at all.

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



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