

Great Falls CONNECTION



Elisabetta Cantatore, 19, of Great Falls is crowned Miss Teen Virginia.

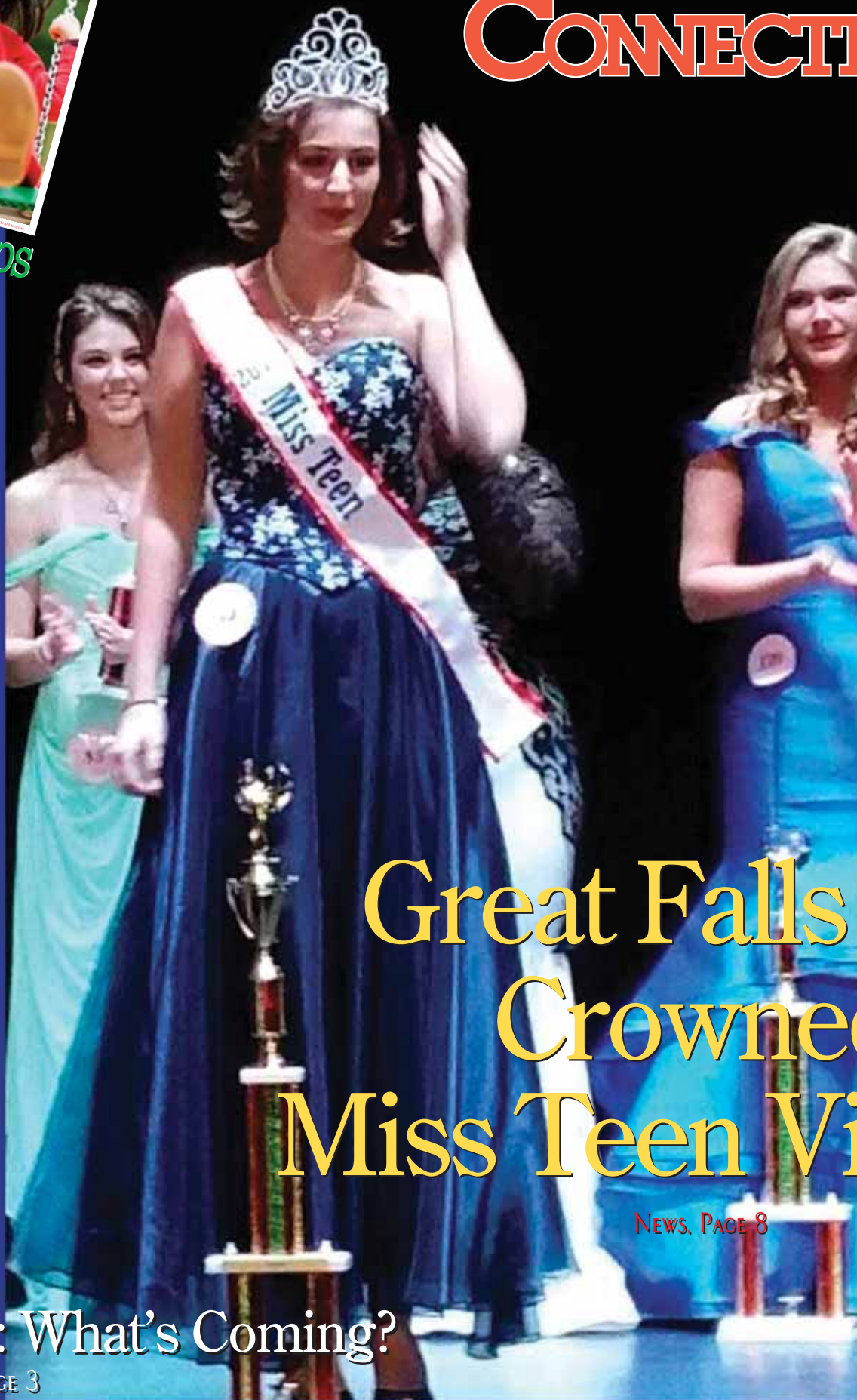
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for Scholarships**
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Great Falls Girl Crowned Miss Teen Virginia

NEWS, PAGE 8



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VOLUNTEER EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Fairfax County is offering free **Independent Living Project sessions, Mondays, May 2-June 27, 10 a.m.-noon**. Calvary Hill Baptist Church, 9301 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. Find out more and register at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Independent Living Project. Call 703-324-7721, TTY 711, (Preregistration required. There is no session on May 30.)

Fairfax County's free **Family Caregiver Telephone Support Group** meets by phone on **Tuesday, May 10, 7-8 p.m.** This will be an open discussion on caregiving. Register beforehand at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Caregiver Support/Telephone Caregiver Support Group. Call 703-324-5484, TTY 711.

Fairfax County is offering the following free Chronic Disease Self-Management programs:

❖ **Take Control of Your Health and Your Happiness. Tuesdays, May 3-June 7, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.** Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Chronic Disease Management Program or call 703-324-5489, TTY 711. (Preregistration required.)

❖ **Diabetes Self-Management Program. Fridays, May 6-June 10, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.** Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and

click on Chronic Disease Management Program or call 703-324-5489, TTY 711. (Preregistration required.)

Fairfax County is offering the following **Free Seminars for Family Caregivers of Older Adults**:

❖ **Legal Tools for Caregivers – WEBINAR, Wednesday, May 4, Noon-1 p.m.** Learn about legal tools that can help you ensure your loved one's wishes are carried out. Topics include durable power of attorney, trusts, guardianship, and advanced medical directives. Find out more at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Register Now: Spring 2016 Caregiver Seminars.

❖ **Understanding and Caring for a Person with Dementia, Thursday, May 5, 7-8:30 p.m.** This class will discuss the different types of dementia, common behaviors, the reasons for troubling behaviors, communication techniques, and services available for caregivers. Herndon Harbor Adult Day Health Care Center, 875 Grace St., Herndon. Find out more at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Register Now: Spring 2016 Caregiver Seminars.

❖ **Is it Normal Aging or Dementia – WEBINAR, Wednesday, May 11, Noon-1 p.m.** Learn what signs and symptoms are normal in the aging process, and which may indicate dementia. Find out more at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Register Now: Spring 2016 Caregiver Seminars.

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Great Falls: What's Coming?

In the pipeline for Great Falls ...

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Several times a year, the Connection will map coming land use issues; to let us know about projects we're missing, email kmoore@connectionnewspapers.com

(1) Brooks Farm, near Springvale Road/Parkerhouse Drive RZ 2014-DR-022

The Planning Commission listened to public input until 2:02 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 22 on the Basheer/Edgemore-Brooks proposal to rezone the 51.9 acre Brooks Farm property from the R-A zoning district to R-E Cluster (Residential Estate). The applicant proposes to build 20 single family detached homes. Great Falls Citizens Association has held numerous meetings on the proposal, touching on environmental questions including septic, well, stormwater and tree canopy. GFCA opposes the cluster redevelopment plan.

The Planning Commission is scheduled to reconvene on May 18 to make its decision and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors on the application.

See <http://ldsnet.fairfaxcounty.gov/ldsnet/ZAPSMMain.aspx?cde=RZ&seq=4194460>.

(2) Gulick Group

10500 Leesburg Pike

The Gulick Group submitted a pending application to rezone 10500 Leesburg Pike (portion of the Hills Nursery) to 10 lots on 11 acres that have been zoned R-A since 1991. The property is located in an area east of Springvale Road and at the terminus of Challedon Road. The property is surrounded by the Lexington Estates and contains a significant environmentally sensitive area.

The Fairfax County Planning Commission has scheduled a public hearing for May 25 at 8:15 p.m. Planning Commission staff is scheduled to complete its staff report and recommendation to the commission by May 10.

See ldsnet.fairfaxcounty.gov/ldsnet/ZAPSMMain.aspx?cde=RZ&seq

(3) TD Bank

9901 Georgetown Pike

TD Bank razed and cleared remnants of the former gas station at the corner of Georgetown Pike and Walker Road last month, even though construction on the bank isn't scheduled until August.

"I'm extremely grateful to them," said Supervisor John 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."

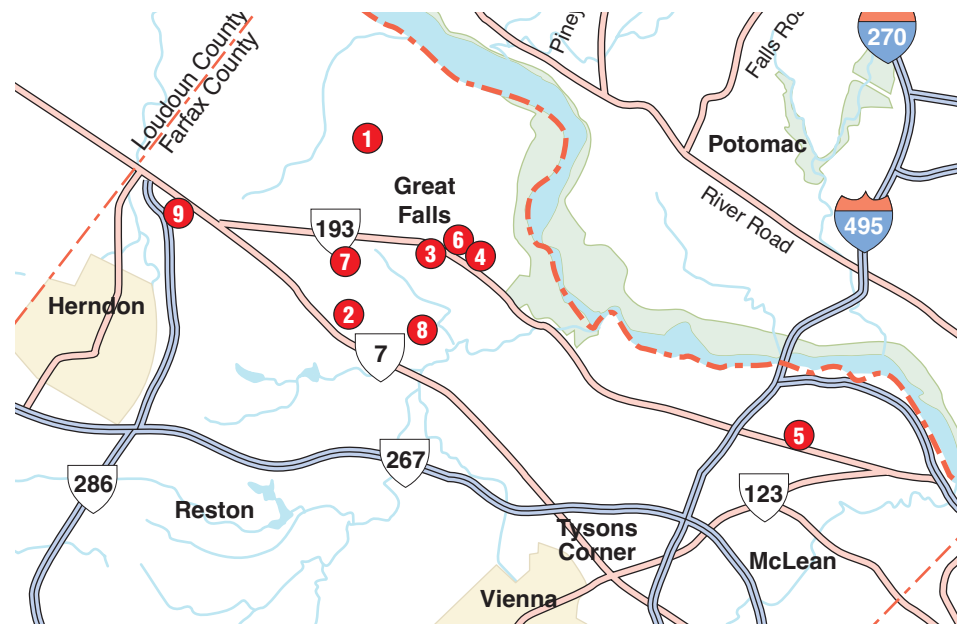


PHOTO BY KEN MOORE/THE CONNECTION

Great Falls Citizens Association wants to save the house on Turner Farm through the residential curatorship program. Turner Farm was saved from development by a public private partnership started in 1994 to "Save the Farm."

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.

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/>.

Great Falls Citizens Association continues to monitor clean-up of the site.

Leaks were detected from the vapor recovery units at former gas station in 2009. 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 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.

(4) Marmota Farm

Approximately 9800 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls

Next to the Great Falls Grange

This link shows where it is

<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/photos/2016/feb/01/87245/>

Betty Nalls Swartz rolls the windows down when she drives along Old

Georgetown Pike by the Grange, Old Schoolhouse and Lift Me Up therapeutic riding program. Marmota Farm, 22.78 acres and once a dairy farm, "still smells like a farm," she said.

Great Falls Citizens Association held a Town meeting Tuesday, Feb. 9, to address attempts by Save Marmota Farm. SMF is a group that formed to investigate a proposal that the farm be purchased with funds from a 2016 Park Bond referendum that will be voted on this November election.

The Souhail El-Farouki Trust purchased the land in 1991; Stephen Moriarty of Chadwick Washington is the trustee for the family.

"Somebody sooner or later is going to pick this up. If anybody wants to keep it open space, that's fine with [the owners]. If any of you have a check for \$16 million, the property is yours," said Moriarty.

"I'm a little short right now," said Robb Watters, president of the HOA for the adjacent homes, in February.

Although Watters believes developing the land will be difficult due to economics and storm water regulations, he and his neighbors are not opposed to new homes on the property. They are concerned about possible high-volume, active park uses, and are concerned about not having control on what ends up by their properties.

Moriarty said negotiations with a specific developer have been ongoing for a possible 11-house subdivision with entrance from Georgetown Pike that would be allowed by right, has preliminary approval from the county, according to Save Marmota Farm documents.

"A lot of us in Great Falls have interest in this property," said Jack Nutter, Great Falls historian and member of Save Marmota Farm. "There is no substitute for its natural beauty."

Bruce Winston of Fraser Forbes of McLean lists the property for sale at \$16.5 million. Fairfax County's assessment is \$3.48 million based on its present use, according to Save Marmota Farm documents.

(5) Langley High School Renovation

6520 Georgetown Pike, McLean

Langley High School renovation is near final completion. The theater department held its spring play in the new performing arts center.

The construction at Langley High School will completely modernize the McLean/Great Falls school that was originally built in the 1960s. Fairfax County voters approved the \$68 million project in a 2013 bond referendum.

(6) Grange Vision

9818 Georgetown Pike

Representatives from a dozen or so Great Falls organizations, coordinated by Jorge Adeler, have met since October to plan mak

SEE OUTLOOK, PAGE 4



Eric Knudsen, president of the Great Falls Citizens Association, reminded Planning Commissioners about Great Falls' role in protecting the health of the Potomac River as it decides an application on Brooks Farm.

Outlook for Great Falls

FROM PAGE 3

ing the Great Falls Grange the centerpiece of the community, as founding Great Falls farmers envisioned almost a century ago.

"The potential is extraordinary," said Adler. "The possible activities for community use, for youth, senior citizens, adults, artists, musicians, nonprofits and the entire community are endless."

The Great Falls Grange was the first grange hall built in Virginia and one of five granges built in Fairfax County, said Kathleen Murphy, president of the Great Falls Historical Society.

Last March, the community celebrated renovations to the 1929 Great Falls Grange Hall building that made it accessible to all.

"For far too long, it was not accessible to our residents with disabilities and to our senior citizens," said Supervisor John Foust, who helped secure \$350,000 for the \$503,000 project from County carry-over funds in 2013. The Fairfax County Park Authority funded the balance.

"A really impressive group of community organizations got together and signed a letter to me basically asking for more access to these facilities," Foust said. "The proposal was that I would get the Grange made ADA accessible and they would come forward with a proposal that community groups would take responsibility for these two buildings."

"If the community groups come together the way I think they might and the way it was initially proposed, I see something more grand here."

(7) Turner Farm

925 Springvale Road

Turner Farm was saved from development by a public private partnership started in 1994 to "Save the Farm." Great Falls Citizens Association hopes for the Turner Farm-

GFCA Seeks Directors

Great Falls Citizens Association seeks volunteers to serve as directors on the association's executive board starting July 1.

"No previous board experience is needed, just an interest in serving Great Falls," according to GFCA documents.

Board members and directors help influence how the association addresses concerns such as development, traffic, zoning, retail, schools, parks and the environment.

See www.gfca.org.

Candidates must be GFCA members and attend the Town Hall meeting on May 10, 7:30 p.m. GFCA elections will be held June 14, 7:30 p.m. Contact Ed Phillips, nominations chair, at Nominations@gfca.org.

house to be selected for the county's Residential Curator Program.

Turner Farm is one of four properties that could be offered an "Invitation for Expressions of Interest," in order to determine the level of interest and potential hurdles to overcome for the next properties to be considered for advertisement for possible curatorship. The Resident Curator Project Team was scheduled to meet on Monday, April 25, 2016.

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approved an ordinance that permits a Residential Curator Program for unused, publicly-owned historic properties to be leased to individuals or groups for little or no rent. This can provide the opportunity to preserve

Pen & Palette Illustrates Artistic Community Collaboration

BY CHRISTINA TYLER WENKS

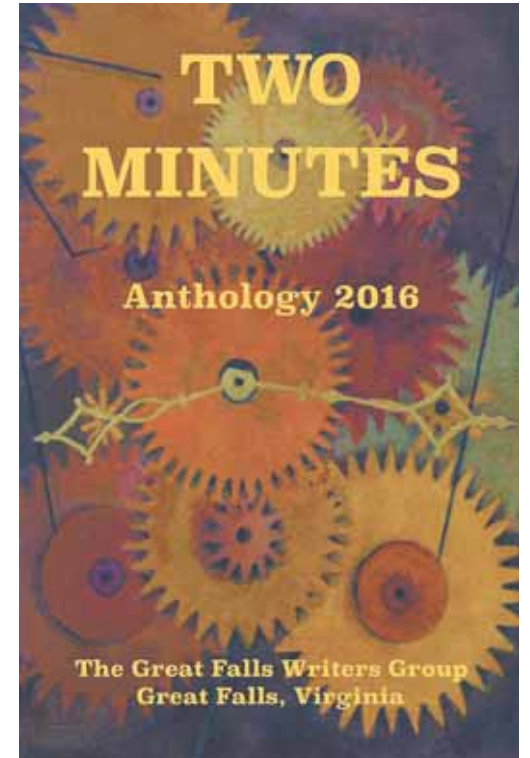
On Thursday, May 5, the Great Falls Writers Group (GFWG), along with artists from the Great Falls Studios, combine creative energy to host a public event at the Great Falls Library to recognize the community's volume of artistic talent. Part book launch, part art festival, the community celebration called "Pen & Palette" begins at 7 p.m.

At the event, GFWG unveils its 2016 anthology, called "Two Minutes," which features 36 local writers sharing words and wisdom about a single topic — the topic of two minutes — which means something different to each contributor.

"These individually unique and fascinating writings touch the emotional center of the reader," said the anthology's editor, Esther Eacho, who worked with writers and artists to compile the book's cover and contents.

More than 20 local artists submitted a total of 56 works, which were considered for the front and back cover of the book. The 96-page book's front- and back-cover artwork was chosen by juried selection. The project stretched artist Linda Jones beyond her usual subject of flowers, fruits and trees. Her piece — acrylic on canvas, and appropriately entitled "Wheels of Time" — depicts the inner workings of a clock, in keeping with the overall, time-related theme of the anthology itself.

Artist Will Tuthill's favorite medium for personally creating works is lithography, but his pen-and-ink piece entitled, "Time



The Great Falls Writers Group will unveil its 2016 anthology, called "Two Minutes," at the Great Falls Library on Thursday, May 5, beginning at 7 p.m.

Intact," was selected for the back cover display.

"We're excited about this event because it weaves together the literary and artistic communities of Great Falls into one, whole cloth," says Kristin Clark Taylor, founder of GFWG. "This might be the first time such an exciting combination of pen and palette has come together under one roof. The community at large needs to be a part of this collective celebration!"

Authors and artists alike will discuss, display and sell their work. The event is free and open to the public.

historic properties at a minimum cost to taxpayers and can put the property to practical use as residential, office or commercial space. Curators would be required to rehabilitate and maintain the properties at their own expense.

(8) Walker Road Bridge

Coordinates where Piney Branch crosses Walker Road

38.978988, -77.294583

VDOT proposes a \$4.85 million project to replace Walker Road Bridge over Piney Run.

Walker Road Bridge was constructed in 1932, is 19 feet in length and 22 feet wide. It can accommodate alternating one-way traffic.

The new bridge will consist of a 50-foot-long single-span structure with a total width of 40 feet and will accommodate constant two-way traffic without the use of existing yield signs. The new bridge will include an attached 6-foot sidewalk on the west side of the road to accommodate future trails

planned by the county.

Construction, at the same location as the existing bridge, is scheduled to begin and end in the summer of 2018, according to VDOT.

http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/walker_road_bridge.asp

(9) Trinity Land, SE 2014-DR-052 Woody's Golf

11801 Leesburg Pike, Herndon

In June 2015, The Board of Supervisors approved Trinity Land's application for a special exception to build 30 single family units using a cluster development configuration on the 28.9 acre property formerly known as Woody's Golf range. The site is zoned R-1 (one dwelling unit per acre) and is located in the Dranesville Tavern Historic Overlay District.

See <http://ldsnet.fairfaxcounty.gov/ldsnet/ldsdwf/4498561.PDF> for details.

NEWS

Great Falls Methodist Church to Host Yard Sale

BY COTY DICKSON

Looking for a great place to shop for bargains? Need a place to sell your treasures? Get ready for the Great Falls Methodist Church Annual Yard Sale. A long-standing tradition continues on Saturday, May 7 when the Great Falls Methodist Church — 10100 Georgetown Pike — hosts its Annual Yard Sale and Flea Market. The sale hours are 7 a.m.–2 p.m., rain or shine. Bargain hunters know amazing bargains can be found on children's clothing and toys, sturdy used furniture or other treasures. One avid yard sale participant indicated, "I once found two Waterford crystal sherry glasses at the yard sale. It's incredible how many great items I've found. I scored a toaster, an iron and an almost-new bicycle for my college-bound daughter to take to campus. A couple of the items only cost \$1 each."

You can rent space for \$25 to sell your own items. Spaces are 10' x 10.' Tables can be rented at an additional charge. Downsizing? You can also donate items to the church. There is a pick up service for large items.

This year, the church will be offering craft supplies as well as children's clothing and



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

On Saturday, May 7, the Great Falls Methodist Church — 10100 Georgetown Pike — hosts its Annual Yard Sale and Flea Market.

toys; ceramics, china and crystal; pots and pans; gently used clothing and a large array of used furniture. Don't miss the freshly baked homemade cookies, cakes and desserts as well as the ever-popular hot dog lunch.

Come shop, donate and/or sell your own treasures. Call 703-582-1640 for pick-up service information.

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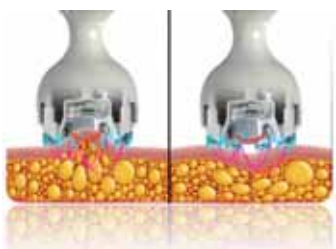
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OPINION

More Voters Might Not Mean Much More Voting

Governor's action brings Virginia in line with 39 other states.

Last week, Gov. Terry McAuliffe (D) restored the voting and civil rights of more than 200,000 Virginians who were convicted of felonies, served their time and completed any supervised release, parole or probation requirements.

This moves Virginia into the mainstream; only 10 states have more restrictive policies about voting for people who have been convicted of felonies. Previously, Virginia had been one of the most restrictive states in terms of restoring voting rights. Fourteen states automatically restore voting rights once the individual's term of incarceration is over, and two states allow absentee voting from prison.

While some claim partisan motivation, with most of those affected presumed to be Democrats, getting these men and women registered to vote and to the polls is unlikely to result in 100,000 new voters in November. Studies show that people who were previously convicted of felonies who are eligible to vote register and vote at lower levels than the general population, according to the New York Times <http://nyti.ms/26kNrS2>, with a registration rate of around 30 percent and about 20 percent actually voting, although some suggest voting rates of between 10-15 percent. If, as the studies suggest, 55 percent of those would vote Democratic, then likely new Democratic voters would be around 22,000.

EDITORIAL

While that's a lot less than 200,000, it's also more than the margin of victory in quite a few statewide races. Consider that Attorney General Mark Herring (D) won his race by about 900 votes out of more than 2 million cast. These new voters could have an impact on statewide races. Districts for members of Virginia's General Assembly are so gerrymandered, it's hard to imagine that the impact of these new voters will be huge in terms of local representation.

In a Democracy, it's better when more people vote. McAuliffe said: "If we are going to build a stronger and more equal Virginia, we must break down barriers to participation in civic life for people who return to society seeking a second chance. We must welcome them back and offer the opportunity to build a better life by taking an active role in our democracy."

Again, this action brings Virginia into line with 39 other states, with more than 20 states having less restrictive policies. For example, on Feb. 9, 2016, the Maryland General Assem-

bly overrode the Governor's veto and restored the vote to all convicted felons immediately upon their release from prison. Previously, people convicted felonies in Maryland had to complete all parole and probation before they were able to vote. In Virginia, such individuals have to complete their term of incarceration and their term of probation or parole before voting rights are restored.

— MARY KIMM

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.



The Award Banquet was held at the Great Falls Grange Hall on April 21.



Betty Nalls Swartz cuts the cake with Mike Kearney's help.

PHOTOS BY MARA SZABOVA

Betty Nalls Swartz Honored at Tibbetts Award Banquet

BY KATHLEEN MURPHY,
PRESIDENT
GREAT FALLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Former award winners, Great Falls Historical Society (GFHS) board and members and many friends of Betty Swartz gathered last Thursday to participate in celebrating Betty's many contributions. Greg Haymans, Chair of the Tibbetts Award Selection Committee conveyed the Award. Karen Washburn, member of the committee, provided the history of the award.

The Great Falls Historical Society recognized Betty for her many years of work in the fields of education and historic preservation.



Celebrating local history.

Betty's accomplishments include: An outstanding outreach program for local school children that conveys local dairy farming history through stories and artifacts; ad-

vocacy for the preservation of former dairy farm properties as open spaces; and the dissemination of local history through her coordination of Great Falls Days

and Old School Days. For many years, Betty Nalls Swartz has educated and entertained countless people with demonstrations and stories of former times, preserving a valuation part of our local history that will surely live on in our collective village memory for generations to come.

The Old Brogue catered the event with elegant recipes fitting of a banquet.

The Stewart Sisters played country music. In addition to TR Cook, Mara Szabova photographed, while Badri Glonti videotaped the event. Effie Shaw baked the cake which featured the famous cow that Betty brought to many events to show children how to milk a cow.

Great Falls CONNECTION

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OPINION

Bear-ing Witness on What Makes Great Falls Great

Lions and tigers, maybe not. But bears we got. I just had a close encounter with one in the backyard. And it has made all the difference.

BY DOUG HARBRECHT

Yes, Virginia, there are bears in Great Falls. Behold the black bear that spent almost 40 minutes in our backyard at dusk on a warm April evening recently, shaking the bird feeder for seeds, sniffing around for food, at one point lying down and burying his snout in his paws as if he were getting ready to take a nap.

Our paths crossed purely by happenstance. I had arrived home from work and as I exited the car and went to unlock the side house door, there he was, on all fours no more than 20 feet away, with a sideways glance “what’s up with you?” look on his face.

This was no “oh, look it’s a dark, furry dog who must have gotten loose” moment. This bear had to be at least 7 feet long. I rushed into the house yelling for my wife to come see. The bear subsequently agreed to an extended iPhone 6 photoshoot, him outside striking poses, us clicking from the back windows.

Here is why this moment is so special to me and I hope it is to you, too:

We have lived in Great Falls for 34 years. Yes, there are occasional bear sightings, especially in the spring. That’s when young black bears wander down the Potomac River from the Shenandoah Mountains and make their way up the creeks and tributaries into our wooded enclave looking for food and a mate. But photographs are rare (there’s an iconic shot of one bolting across Georgetown Pike from the 1980s, but it’s a little blurry.) Think about it. Great Falls is a suburb only 20 miles from the White House, Capitol, and Supreme Court. The bears in our midst are a vivid reminder to me that it doesn’t take much to conserve wildlife if we give animals the habitat they need to survive.

Do you realize how lucky we are to live in a place with so much wildlife? Let’s not argue about the deer. You may not like the deer. It doesn’t concern me in the least that deer think hosta and azaleas are a salad bar. We just plant landscaping that deer don’t like to eat. Here’s what’s amazing: Over three decades, we have been living a National Geographic Channel reality TV show—sharing our woods not just with Bambi, but with hawks, kestrels, owls, turkeys, migrating warblers and song birds, red and gray fox, bobcats, beavers, skunks, raccoons, chipmunks, snakes, turtles, even heard the howl of coyotes. Most people have to go to national parks to enjoy the diversity of wildlife many of us seem to regard as a nuisance.

Sadly, I don’t think some people in Great Falls appreciate what we have. I cringe whenever I pass a 2- or 5-acre lot that has been clear-cut, every tree bulldozed and carted away, for another tract mansion. Now I’ll be thinking: Fat Chance they’ll ever see a bear in their backyard.

Harbrecht is a career journalist who has written for



PHOTOS BY DOUG HARBRECHT

The bear subsequently agreed to an extended iPhone 6 photoshoot, him outside striking poses, us clicking from the back windows.

Business Week and National Wildlife Magazine, among other publications. He is a former President of the National Press Club.

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STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION
Elisabetta Cantatore at the Starbucks at Great Falls Center Shopping Center on Georgetown Pike.



Elisabetta Cantatore of Great Falls with her dog Hero.



Elisabetta Cantatore of Great Falls with her friend's mom, Daphne Kessler, who helped her prepare for the pageant.



Elisabetta Cantatore of Great Falls with one of her sponsors, the owner of Dante's Ristorante in Great Falls.



Women look over the silent auction items at the fashion show at Bloomingdale's.



GFFN members Bootsie Humensky, Sally Andrew Pyne and Roz Drayer.

Great Falls Girl Wins Miss Teen Virginia

Elisabetta Cantatore, 19, beats out 700 applicants; will compete in nationals.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE CONNECTION

Elisabetta Cantatore, 19, of Great Falls was named Miss Teen Virginia on Sunday, April 3 in Richmond, beating out 700 teen applicants from across the Commonwealth of Virginia, and 122 girls at the pageant itself.

What sets her apart — besides her fresh looks, strong personality, and tall 5-foot-11 stature — is her confidence. “In the interview, they said, ‘Where does that confidence come from?’ I did theater, I’m used to being on a stage, so when I answered both my formal wear and finalist question, I had good tone; I didn’t stutter. And during the casual routine, I blew a kiss to the audience,” she said.

She added: “I’m good at pretending that I have a lot of confidence; I can make it look like I’m very confident.”

Elisabetta speaks three languages and is the only child of Corrado Cantatore, a former Italian diplomat who is now running an international security agency, and Luigia Garzia a stay-at-home mom from Great Falls.

Although Elisabetta had never participated in beauty pageants before, she decided to attend the preliminary section on a whim, just to see what it was all about.

She got a letter saying she was invited to the preliminary in Reston; originally her dad was against it, but her mom was in favor. So she attended the information session with a short interview where they asked her to describe herself and her hobbies. After receiving a letter of acceptance, she prepared by calling her ex-boyfriend’s mom,

Miss Teen Virginia contestants congratulate Elisabetta Cantatore on her winning the title.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

who was a former Miss Kentucky, who gave her some valuable tips.

“We went through her closet and I tried on her evening gowns,” she said. She ended up wearing her blue dress, which actually fit her, in the formal wear portion of the competition. The next step was getting sponsorships from local businesses, including the Old Brogue in Great Falls. She also went to a training session where she was briefed on the interview and taught the modeling routine.

ON SATURDAY was the personal interview with the judges where each girl had two minutes to best show off their personalities. “They said I was a confident person and I told them about theater and what I did in school,” she said. She then went back to the hotel and the next day they had a walk-through in the morning and she received her formal wear question.

Everyone did their casual-wear routine and then their formal-wear routine. Her question was: “What is your most important goal and why?”

She said she met a lot of really cool girls and bonded with some. They called the top 20 finalists and

then the top 10. “My question was, ‘What is the hardest part of being a teenager,’ she said.

“They started calling the runner ups and I thought I wasn’t going to win. Finally, they called number 54, Elisabetta Cantatore, then I was shocked. I think I was in too much shock to cry. It was a spur-of-the-moment thing; I didn’t expect to get as far as I got. They put the crown on my head, gave me the sash, and gave me a very big trophy.”

“I feel really honored,” she said of the win. “Since it’s Miss Teen, it was also on personality and charm, so I really feel honored that the judges thought I was qualified to take the title. It’s a whole new experience; it was very eye-opening to see how the whole process worked and to be a part of it and to win; that was really awesome.”

After the competition, her mother Luigia said she was very proud watching the video the next week and was very emotional. But she said Elisabetta came back from Richmond that night and immediately started studying. “I felt very strange because she doesn’t care maybe too much,” she said. “I left the crown, trophy and sash on the

table and she didn’t look at them. I was very surprised.”

For winning the Miss Teen Virginia pageant, Elisabetta receives an all-expense paid trip to Orlando, Fla., for the national Miss Teen USA pageant, which includes the cost of airfare, hotel and food for the whole trip. The winner of the national pageant will receive a \$30,000 scholarship.

During the competition, her pageant “platform” was on teen mental health. “I talked about how high school was difficult for me and how I went through some things,” she said. “I want to make sure I can help people to make sure they don’t feel as alone as I did, young or old.”

When she moved to this country at age 6 from Italy, she didn’t speak a word of English. “People made fun of my Italian accent, so I tried really hard to lose the accent,” she said. While a student at Langley High School, she said it was difficult for her to find her stability. “My mom had me see a therapist who put me on anti-depressants.” She was hospitalized three times between her sophomore and senior years.

But things are much better for her these days. Elisabetta is currently a sophomore at George Mason University studying psychology with a minor in criminology; she’s also on the dean’s list. She hopes to attend graduate school in forensic psychology and later become a therapist for troubled adolescents or a forensics psychologist.

HER HOBBIES include theater, acting, directing and makeup. She also enjoys crafting, experimenting in cosmetic makeup, outdoor adventures, swimming, walks and hikes in nature. “I’m really an outdoor person when the weather’s nice,” she said.

Spring Fashion Show for Scholarships

Event is fundraiser for Great Falls Friends and Neighbors Club.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE CONNECTION

More than 200 people attended the 2016 Spring Fashion Show on Sunday, April 24 at Bloomingdale’s Tysons Corner Center in McLean as a fundraiser for the Great Falls Friends and Neighbors Scholarship Fund. The event featured a champagne brunch, raffle, silent auction and shopping opportunity at Bloomingdale’s. Andrea Roane, anchor of Channel 9 News, was the Master of Ceremonies.

Eighteen models participated in the fashion show, including Bloomingdale’s professional models and members of GFFN. Four grandchildren of GFFN members, ranging in age from 3 to 14 years, also walked the runway in Bloomingdale’s fashions.

The fashion show featured the work of Bloomingdale’s team of Store Manager Bill Ruhrkraut, PR Manager Heather Guay and Personal Shopping Manager Effie Elkorek. Dior Makeup and Toka Hair donated their cosmetic and hair styling services to the cause.

Great Falls Friends and Neighbors (GFFN) was formed in 2011 as a result of a merger between the Great Falls Woman’s Club and the Newcomers of Great Falls. These two organizations had been active in the Great Falls area for over 30 years at the time of the merger.

Each year GFFN’s Scholarship Fund awards up to six scholarships to Virginia women over the age of 25 who are trying to complete their college educations. A scholarship is also presented to a dance student at George Mason University in the name of a club founder, Bette Carter.

“We primarily are a nonprofit that supports women over 25 that want to get a college degree,” said Ricki Harvey, president of the GFFN Scholarship Fund. “We feel that educating women impacts families, communities and societies as a whole. We’re hoping today to add to the endowments that we have. We’re so appreciative of Bloomingdale’s and our donors and corporate sponsors who made today possible.”

GFFNSF has established two endowments, one at George Mason University and one at Northern Virginia Community College, which are maintained through donations and fundraising activities.



The fashion show at Bloomingdale’s in Tysons Corner included models from the Great Falls Friends & Neighbors Club.

Martina Atabong, a single mother from Arlington and the first in her family to graduate from col-

lege, received her scholarship last fall and this spring, and will be graduating with a degree in nursing. “It was beneficial and helped me buy my textbooks,” she said of the scholarship. “They are very good people in trying to help minorities like us, which is really good.”

Hela Baer, a GMU student from Fairfax, received her scholarship to help her study conflict analysis and resolution at GMU. “Having the extra support of the scholarship helped me to focus on my studies so I wouldn’t have to worry about how I would support myself. It gave me a piece of mind and the ability to focus on my education,” she said.

The fashion show raised \$25,000 for the scholarship fund. To learn more about the GFFNSF program, become a sponsor or donate money, see GFFNSF.org.

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SPECIAL CONNECTIONS CALENDAR

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday unless noted.

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PHOTO BY NIKKI CHESHIRE/THE CONNECTION

CONNECTION FILE PHOTO

Come out on Sundays and listen to some live music at the Great Falls Village Green, Sundays, 6-8 p.m., June 5-Sept. 4.

Lewinsville Park transforms into a huge community playground during the McLean Day celebrations. This year McLean Day is on Saturday, May 21 at Lewinsville Park.

Spring Fun Abounds in Area

ONGOING

Concerts on the Green. Sundays in June, July, August. Great Falls Village Centre Green. A Great Falls summer tradition. Check the website for updated information on performers. <http://www.greatfallsvillagecentre.com/events/>.

Summer on the Green Concert Series. 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays,

Fridays, Sundays. Vienna Town Green, 144 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. A series of free performances presented by the Town of Vienna and its sponsors. Please bring chairs and/or blankets. No alcoholic beverages are permitted. They recommend leaving pets at home. 703-255-7842. viennava.gov.

FRIDAY/APRIL 29

Tree Planting. 4:30 p.m. Glyndon Park, 300 Glyndon St., NE, Vienna. Join the town in celebrating the newest tree in Vienna in honor of Arbor Day. 703-255-6300.

SATURDAY/APRIL 30

Taste of Vienna. 11 a.m.-8 p.m. 400 Center St., South, Vienna. Showcases the many restaurants of Vienna. Rain or shine. Admission is free.

tasteofvienna.org.

SUNDAY/MAY 1

Sunrise Garden Opening. 6-10 a.m. Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. Photographers, birders, strollers, and anyone who enjoys a peaceful morning walk are invited to visit during special hours. \$2.50-\$5. Novaparks.com.

NDWC Spring Fling Fashion Show.

Noon. Flemings Restaurant, 1960-A Chain Bridge Road, McLean. New Dominion Women's Club event features fashions from Bloomingdale's. Tickets at www.ndwc.org.

SATURDAY/MAY 21

McLean Day. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Enjoy live entertainment, great food, a petting zoo, exhibitor booths, balloon animals, games, tennis clinic, a magician, parking at free shuttle sites and more. Large and small carnival rides—tickets sold on-site. Free. mcleancenter.org.

SATURDAY-MONDAY/MAY 28-30

Viva! Vienna! Saturday-Sunday, 10 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. 245 Maple Ave., W, Vienna. Family and community oriented celebration of Memorial Day and the greater Vienna Community spirit. <http://vivavienna.org/>.

SUNDAY/JUNE 5

Israel Fest. Noon-4 p.m. Lerner Town Square at Tysons II, 8025 Galleria Drive, Tysons. Engaging events and interactive activities will run throughout the day. Celebrate Israel and her people. Free. jccnv.org.

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PHOTO BY DONNA MANZ/THE CONNECTION

Celebrate Memorial Day and the Vienna spirit at ViVa! Vienna! from May 28-30 at the heart of Historic Vienna.

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CALENDAR

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

THURSDAY/APRIL 28

Spring Cocktail Dinner. 7-9 p.m.
Ruth's Chris Steak House Tysons
Corner, 8521 Leesburg Pike, Vienna.
Five-course meals. \$95. 703-848-4290.

THURSDAY-SATURDAY/APRIL 28-30

"Loserville." 7:30 p.m. George C. Marshall High School, 7731 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. It's the 1970's. Misfit computer geek Michael Dork and his friends are about to change the world. It's just that no one knows it yet! \$15/\$10. Statesmentheatre.org. 703-714-5450.

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.

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



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

"Spring Tapestry" by Christine Lashley will be on display from May 2-28 at the Broadway Gallery and Fine Art in Great Falls.

donate to the needy in third world countries and here in the US. \$10 donation. htanpaa6@gmail.com.

Gospel Concert. 3 p.m. Historic Pleasant Grove, 8641 Lewinsville Road, McLean. This free community event features Voices of Worship community choir singing traditional gospel music and uplifting spirituals in a quaint 1895 church setting, now an historic site. For information, see www.HistoricPleasantGrove.org.

THROUGH APRIL 30

Light It Up Blue. Kiln Co., 132 Church St. NW, Vienna. Art Show celebrating Autism Awareness Month. 703-674-

7607.

SUNDAY/MAY 1

Sunrise Garden Opening. 6-10 a.m. Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. Photographers, birders, strollers, and anyone who enjoys a peaceful morning walk are invited to visit during special hours. \$2.50-\$5. novaparks.com.

NDWC Spring Fling Fashion Show. Noon. Flemings Restaurant, 1960-A Chain Bridge Road, McLean. New Dominion Women's Club event features fashions from Bloomingdale's. Tickets at

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 13



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When:
Sunday, May 1, 2-4 p.m.

Where:
Community Hall
McLean Community Center
1234 Ingleside Avenue,
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Who:
Nine adult candidates, three teens from the McLean High 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 e-mailing paulkohlenberger@mcleancenter.org

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Can't Vote at McLean Day or Just Want a Head Start on Voting?

Vote by Absentee Ballot through May 18 at either:

McLean Community Center (MCC)
1234 Ingleside Avenue
McLean, VA 22101
(703) 790-0123/TTY 711
Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m. – 11 p.m.
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



The McLean Community Center
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www.mcleancenter.org

SPORTS

Madison Baseball Extends Win Streak to Nine

The Madison baseball team extended its win streak to nine games with a 16-5 victory over Fairfax on April 21.

The Warhawks improved to 14-2 overall, 10-0 in Conference 6 and remained unbeaten since returning from a spring break tournament in Florida.

Madison faced Washington-Lee on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. The Warhawks have regular season games remaining against South Lakes (Friday), Langley (May 3) and McLean (May 6) before competing in the conference tournament, which is scheduled to begin May 12.

McLean Softball Wins Fourth Straight

The McLean softball team defeated South Lakes 5-0 on April 21, giving the Highlanders four straight wins. McLean's win streak included a 1-0 victory over private school Bishop O'Connell on April 16.

With the win over South Lakes, McLean improved to 13-3 overall and 7-3 in Conference 13.

The Highlanders faced Langley on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. McLean will host Yorktown at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, April 29.

Marshall Boys' Lax Improves to 9-1

The Marshall boys' lacrosse team defeated Wakefield 17-2 on April 19, improving its record to 9-1, including 4-0 in Conference 13.

The Statesmen suffered their first loss of the season on April 2 — a 7-6 defeat against Langley. In the three games since, Marshall outscored Falls Church, Mount Vernon and Wakefield by a combined 54-9.

The Statesmen faced Stuart on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. Marshall will travel to face Potomac Falls at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 3 before closing the regular season on the road against Lee on May 9.

Marshall Baseball Blanks Falls Church

The Marshall baseball team improved to 12-1 overall and 8-0 in Conference 13 with a 4-0 win over Falls Church on April 21.

The Statesmen win streak extended to nine games.

Marshall faced Stuart on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. The Statesmen will travel to face Edison at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, April 29.

Marshall Girls' Lax a Scoring Machine

The Marshall girls' lacrosse team defeated Wakefield 22-0 on April 19, improving its record to 9-2.

Through 11 games, the Statesmen averaged just under 20 goals per game. Marshall has outscored its opponents 218-37 and scored at least 20 goals in eight of 11 contests.

Marshall faced Stuart on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. The Statesmen will host Potomac Falls at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 3.



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION
Carlo Alfano, seen earlier this season, and the Madison baseball team improved to 14-2 with a win over Fairfax on April 21.

Oakton Boys' Soccer Remains Undefeated

The Oakton boys' soccer team shut out Briar Woods 3-0 on April 20 to improve to 8-0-1.

The Cougars will wrap up Conference 5 play with a home match against Westfield Thursday, April 28, at 7:15 p.m.

South Lakes Baseball Snaps 5-Game Skid

The South Lakes baseball team defeated Fairfax 1-0 on April 19, ending a five-game losing streak that started when the Seahawks were no-hit by Herndon on April 2.

The win improved South Lakes' record to 8-7 overall and 3-6 in Conference 6.

The Seahawks faced Yorktown on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. South Lakes will host Madison at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, April 29.

South Lakes Boys' Lax Improves to 6-1

The South Lakes boys' lacrosse team improved to 6-1 and extended its win streak to five games with a 16-1 road win over West Potomac on April 19.

After dropping to 1-1 with a loss to Stone Bridge on March 31, the Seahawks defeated Yorktown, Madison, McLean and Langley before thumping the Wolverines.

South Lakes faced Hayfield on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. The Seahawks will host rival Herndon at 7:15 p.m. on Wednesday, April 27.

Herndon Girls' Lax Earns First Wins

After dropping six straight to start the season, the Herndon girls' lacrosse team earned back-to-back wins against Chantilly and Falls Church.

The Hornets captured their first win by beating Conference 5 foe Chantilly 14-13 at home on April 19. Two days later, Herndon beat Falls Church 22-4.

The Hornets faced Robinson on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. Herndon will host Broad Run at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 28.

GREAT FALLS CONNECTION SPORTS EDITOR JON ROETMAN
703-752-4031 OR JROETMAN@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Langley goalkeeper Megan O'Hara and the Langley girls' lacrosse program started 12-0 this season.

Team as a Family

Goalie O'Hara helps Langley girls' lax start 12-0.

The Langley girls' lacrosse team seems to be best known as a prolific goal-scoring group. At 12-0, the team has won 11 games by a margin of at least five goals, and seven of their wins came by double digits. What is not being discussed as much is the how the differential is being held on the defensive side.

Junior goalie Megan O'Hara has quietly been leading a defensive unit that has only allowed 75 goals in 12 games. Senior Mackenzie Regen, junior Allie Leto, sophomore Lilly Byrne and freshman Charlotte Smith anchor a ferocious defensive line. Lauren Bell, Samantha Lee, Marina Carlucci and Stephanie Long round out the strong group.

O'Hara began playing in the first grade for Great Falls Lacrosse coach Michelle Buller.

"I started out playing for Great Falls Lacrosse because my older cousins played and I was sick of soccer," O'Hara said. "Coach Buller gave me an old stick bag after a practice and I was hooked."

O'Hara credits the coaching staff with creating a team-first mentality.

"Coach Maggie (Kovacs) and Annie (Swanson) have brought

so much to the team this year, well beyond their lacrosse experience," she said. "They are creative, keeping the practices challenging but also fun and they build confidence in all the players. Coach Bucky (Morris) has personally been a huge help to me. He does goalie specific drills with me and just brings such a great spirit to the team."

Her greatest memory in her three starting varsity years at Langley occurred just this year

during the Fairfax game on April 19.

"We won [20-2] and even though it was not particularly close, it was the closest I've come to a shutout," O'Hara said. "After the final horn, the team stormed the field and tackled me in a huge group hug that practically brought me to the ground. They

were all screaming and yelling about how well we all played as a team. It's moments like that that I play for, when we aren't 25 different girls but a single family."

In her spare time, O'Hara loves to bake — especially rhubarb pie. The next time she makes her favorite pie, she says she'll be making at least two, so she can share the good food with the best family she knows: her team.

"It's moments like that that I play for, when we aren't 25 different girls but a single family."

—Langley goalkeeper Megan O'Hara

Farmers Market Returns Saturday

Great Falls Farmers Market to celebrate 10th anniversary with “farmers market basket.”

BY KATHLEEN MURPHY
MARKET MANAGER

The years have passed in quiet foot steps of vendors and local neighbors coming and going, loving and appreciating, doing finest work and choosing only the finest for our loving families' nourishment and refinement.

The story of the farmers market began with participants in our local 2020 Vision focus group discussion, followed by inclusion in the 2020 Vision Survey: What do you want Great Falls to be like in the year 2020? (No, not an eye test!) Robb Watters launched the market the last Saturday in April, 2007 at St. Francis Episcopal on Georgetown Pike. That market began to lose its heartbeat when everyone left for summer vacation in early June. Mike Kearney, owner of The Old Brogue, rescued the market, bringing it to the parking lot on Walker Road and taking responsibility for the management. After three years, the parking lot owner became concerned about risk and the market was moved to the Village Green Day School down the road. The shortage of parking led to its contraction. After the fifth year, Mike looked for someone to take over the market. That's when I accepted this responsibility for which I had no experience or background – just a willingness to give it a try and a hope to keep one aspect of our community vision – to have a vibrant village center where friends and family can meet and greet – alive.

Jorge Kfory, owner of the parking lot is



Local little ladies step lively to Irish music played by Capital Celtics, enjoying a fun morning at the Great Falls Farmers Market.

to be commended for his community spirit and generosity in allowing the market to return to the parking lot next to the Wells Fargo Bank. He even configured the parking stops to achieve maximum safety for the farmers market visitors.

As we open the summer market for the 10th time, we think back on all of the vendors who have come and gone, and the messages they have conveyed about how we choose to eat and how important our health is – realizing “let food be thy medicine, and let medicine be thy food.” We are pleased that several organic produce vendors are joining our market during the next few weeks, and we have fresh and fresh prepared foods that satisfy every dietary requirement, whether traditional, paleo, vegetarian, or vegan. We offer a rich bouquet of choices of the finest ingredients, expressing the most creative talents. Meats are grass-fed, free-range, organically supplemented; vegan burgers and fresh pre-

pared are offered weekly; there are lots of healthy snacks to enjoy on the run.

This Saturday, we begin our 10th Anniversary all-summer-celebration with our famous “farmers market basket.” Get to know all our new and old vendors. Receive a free raffle ticket at each vendor you shop out. The winner receives a market basket full of a contribution from every vendor.

As soon as the summer harvest begins, look forward to a “taste of Great Falls” celebration of local cuisine – coming soon...just waiting for the summer veggies to arrive. Whether Mother's Day, Father's Day...all the important family celebrations...look to us for gift-giving and feast-making. We are here for you, rain or shine. Thank you, Great Falls neighbors and friends, for your enduring support. You are always welcome to drop by, greet your neighbors, listen to music. No need to purchase anything. Just enjoy our vibrant village center where friends and family meet.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Photo Exhibit Celebrates National Parks, Great Falls

“So Many Parks – So Little Time - Celebrating our National Parks' Centennial” an exhibit of photography capturing iconic as well as unusual scenes from our National Parks throughout the US. This year is the centennial year for the National Park Service (NPS). Great Falls photographer and author Dee Leggett takes the viewer from Gates of the Arctic National Park in Alaska, through Olympic and Mount Rainier national parks in Washington to Yosemite National Park in California. From there she travels to the very first national park, Yellowstone in Wyoming and south to the border to Big Bend in Texas. She comes east to Acadia in Maine and heads back home to D.C. and Great Falls National Park. All this in one compact exhibit. Great Falls Park is celebrating its 50 year anniversary as a part of the National Park System.

Dee and her husband Bob have been visiting our national Parks for over 40 years, enjoying, learning about, and photographing the protected natural areas as well as the historical and cultural areas. They have hiked, biked, rafted, canoed and camped. They have been in parks from above the Arctic Circle to south of Key West and from coast to coast.

Dee and Bob are both members of the Advisory Board for the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA). She is an advocate for the national parks and encourages people to go visit, es-



“Olympic Sunset” captures a sunset near Olympic National Park in Washington. This photo will be on display at Katie's Coffee through May 31, 2016.

PHOTOS BY DEE LEGGETT

pecially during this centennial year.

Dee portrays the magnificent diversity of our national parks at Katie's Coffee House at 760 Walker Road in Great Falls, from May 2–31, 2016. Dee is a member of Great Falls Studios and has been exhibiting her photography for more than 10 years. Visit DeeLeggettPhotography.vpweb.com or email her at DeeLeggett@aol.com.

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 11

www.ndwc.org.

TUESDAY/MAY 3

Small Standard Flower Show. 1-2:30 p.m. Vinson Hall Retirement Community, 6251 Old Dominion Drive, McLean. Presented by The Gardeners of the Junior League of Washington. Free. 703-970-3712. fredj@vinsonhall.org.

SATURDAY/MAY 7

Document Shredding. 9 a.m.-noon. Long and Foster, 1355 Beverly Road, McLean. Free, secure paper shredding for the community. Here's your opportunity to clear your home or office of paper clutter! Spring clean your office and shred outdated documents. 703-903-8643.

Yard Sale/Flea Market. 7 a.m.-2 p.m. Great Falls United Methodist Church, 10100 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. To reserve a space to sell or for more information call 703-582-1640.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/MAY 13-14

Annie, Jr. Great Falls Elementary School, 701 Walker Road, Great Falls. 571-512-2760. Wall, run, strollers welcome. Music, raffles, cake and food. \$30 adults; \$15 for 12 and under till April 7. wolfrappta.org.

SATURDAY/MAY 14

Plant and Yard Sale. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Hundreds of healthy, beautiful, well-priced plants donated by Club members will be offered for sale. There will also be Club member “Plant Experts.” gfgardenclub.org.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/MAY 14-15

Pull-Ups for Life. Noon. Cooper Middle School Tennis Court, 977 Balls Hill Road, McLean. Andrew Shapiro will be attempting the world records for most pull ups in six hours, 12 hours, and 24 hours. The record attempts will be videotaped and verified by the judges at Guinness World Records. \$5 donation, \$200 corporate sponsor. Search for the event at relayforlife.org.

FRIDAY/MAY 20

Preschool Nature Nuts. 10:30-11:15 a.m. Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. Learn about spring flowers. \$5. Register at NOVAparks.com.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/MAY 20-21

Enlightened Living - The Path of Inner Yoga. 6-8 p.m. Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Led by Swami Nirivisheshananda Tirtha, the focus of the talk and Q&A will be how to walk the path of Inner Yoga (samatva) and transform lives spiritually. Program followed by dinner. Free. http://cirdna.org/EL2016. 703-861-4230.

SATURDAY/MAY 21

Beneficial Insects. 10:30-11:30 a.m. Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. Find out how to keep pest from eating your plants, while still caring for the environment. Preregistration required. \$5. NOVAparks.com.

SUNDAY/MAY 22

Specimen Plant Walk. 4-5:15 p.m. Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. One-mile walk through Meadowlark introducing participants to plants that can add interest to home gardens. \$2.50-\$5. Register at NOVAparks.com.

Weight For It, Wait...



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

"MRI looked good. CT stable. Smiley face." Words and personality from my oncologist with which I can most definitely live. And arriving via e-mail, six days prior no less, to my next regularly scheduled, post-scan appointment – when typically such results are discussed, in person, per the doctor's preference. But I can take good news electronically, especially before the weekend, when further communication is not likely. So the sound you may have heard at six pm-ish last Friday was me exhaling, and the follow-up thud was the weight of the world falling off my shoulders and hitting the floor. Not shattering, unfortunately, only repositioning until a few months hence when once again it will return to its figurative perch as I await the results of my next quarterly scan.

Such is life, and I'm happy to live it. Moreover, given my original prognosis from February, 2009: "13 months to two years," there's very little that I deem complaint-worthy SEVEN YEARS LATER. Nevertheless, there are realities that cancer patients and/or other patients similarly characterized as "terminal," as I was, must endure. And given my projected life expectancy then, I am "pleased as punch" now – to invoke a long-ago Vice President/Democratic nominee for President, Hubert H. Humphrey – to be enduring anything.

And "endure" isn't really the right word, but it's most assuredly in the running. Still, if I don't find a way to lighten the emotional load (other than receiving amazingly good scan results and equally positive e-mails from my oncologist, all of which is not exactly in my control), I will likely crack under the weight of it. I'm not exactly Atlas condemned to hold up "The Heavens," but I am holding something; maybe just my sanity. And just as "Hawkeye" Pierce joked about war in a M*A*S*H episode back in the day: "If truth is the first casualty of war, I guess sobriety is second," a cancer patient might joke (if he or she had a sense of humor): "If one's hopes and dreams are the first loss from cancer, your sanity is second." As Mark Twain "self-effaced" later in his life: "Out of all the things I have lost, I miss my mind the most."

A "terminal" cancer patient loses lots of things. Control of one's emotions has to be the first to go. Certainly you still know right from wrong, but the figurative re-wiring of your brain – which begins immediately upon hearing your cancer diagnosis/prognosis, is difficult to stop. It's as if it has a mind of its own, and it sort of does: yours. It's not as if you can't maintain any self-control or not joke at inappropriate times, you can. After all, you're still human. You're just a bit more flawed than you were before. And who's to say, maybe the change will do you good? You don't always have to say what you mean unless you're the Dowager Countess from "Downton Abbey."

Nevertheless, you are forever changed by your cancer diagnosis, whether you like it or not. The trick is, actually there is no trick, it's a mindset; somehow, you must not take yourself or your circumstances too seriously. (I know, how do you not take cancer seriously?). Either you learn to laugh or there won't be anything funny about it. You know the expression: "Funny as a heart attack," well, you can add another: "Uplifting as a cancer diagnosis." As challenging as it is (and has been), you need to find a way to navigate the slings and arrows of the outrageous misfortune you have encountered. The pressure; conscious, subconscious or even unconscious (for all I know?) has to be released really, or in your imagination. There's no doubt a cancer diagnosis and life living with cancer is less than ideal, but since those are the cards you were dealt, you better learn to play the hand.

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

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BULLETIN BOARD

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

donation. htanpaa6@gmail.com.

SATURDAY/MAY 7

Estate Planning Basics. 10-11:30 a.m.
Teqcorner Building, Third Floor Conference Room, 1616 Anderson Road, McLean. Protect your wealth and your retirement. Free. miorinilaw.com. 703-448-6121.

ONGOING

Computer Classes for Seniors. 11 a.m.-noon. Wednesdays. April 6-May 4. Tysons Corner Microsoft Store, 1961 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Free. Register by calling Shepherds Center of Oakton/Vienna at 703-281-0538.

The **Northern Virginia Long Term Care Ombudsman Program** needs volunteer advocates for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Contact Lisa Callahan at 703-324-5861, TTY 711 or email Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov. Also visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/ltombudsman/.

Fairfax County needs volunteers to **drive older adults to medical appointments and wellness programs**. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

Respite Care volunteers give family caregivers of a frail older adult a well-deserved break so they can go shopping, attend a doctor's appointment or just have coffee with a friend. Volunteers visit and oversee the safety of the older adult for a few hours each month. Support and training are provided. Contact 703-324-7577, TTY 711, or Kristin.Martin@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Fairfax County needs a volunteer **Senior Center Marketing Coordinator** to assist the Friends of Fairfax County Senior Centers with marketing. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

The **Lewinsville Senior Center** in McLean needs instructors for the following classes: Line Dance, Zumba Gold, Certified Arthritis Exercise, Square Dance, Basic Guitar, Art and Basic Spanish. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

THURSDAY/APRIL 28

International ADHD Professionals Conference. 6-8:30 p.m. Hyatt Regency Hotel, Reston, 1800 Presidents St., Reston. Coaches who serve children, adults, teens, seniors, entrepreneurs and other groups of individuals with ADHD will be in attendance. Exhibitors from companies that serve ADHD clients will also be present during the event. Plus more. \$25/\$75. Purchase tickets at <http://www.adhdprofessionalsconference.com/events/open-house-event/>.

FRIDAY/APRIL 29

Annual Spring Event: Luncheon & Silent Auction. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. International Country Club, 13200 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, Fairfax. Hosted by Assistance League of Northern Virginia to benefit its Operation School Bell programs. Event will feature a presentation on Identity Theft and Personal Safety. \$65, \$30 is tax deductible. lindamshilts@gmail.com or 703-424-6652.

www.northernvirginia.assistanceleague.org.
Understanding Mood Dysregulation in Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. 10 a.m.-noon. Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services, Entrance 1, Room 100, 2334 Gallows Road, Dunn Loring. Dr. Sajjad Khan, an experienced clinician and researcher at NeuroScience Inc., will cover assessment, and treatment of mood dysregulation in students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Register at 703-204-3941 or <http://www.fcps.edu/dss/osp/prc/resources/events/documents/UnderstandingMoodDysregulationinASD.pdf>.
Tree Planting. 4:30 p.m. Glyndon Park, 300 Glyndon St., NE, Vienna. Join the town in celebrating the newest tree in Vienna in honor of Arbor Day. 703-255-6300.

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

FAITH NOTES

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

Healing Eucharist, Sunday, May 1 at 5 p.m. — Holy Comforter offers a monthly Healing Eucharist with the Laying on of Hands and Anointing for Healing. The service occurs on the first Sunday of each month at 5 p.m. in St. Mary's Chapel. The Healing Ministry is being led by the Rev. Valerie Hayes and Ms. Alexandra MacCracken and includes a team of lay healers who have gone through intentional training and formation. For more information, please contact the Rev. Valerie Hayes at atvhayes@holyscomforter.com. Church of the Holy Comforter is located at 543 Beulah Road NE, Vienna, 703-938-6521.

The **Church of the Holy Comforter in Vienna**, 543 Beulah Road, is offering the course "Your Faith, Your Life: An Invitation to the Episcopal Church." Classes will be April 17; May 1, 15, 22; June 5 from 12:30-1:30 p.m. Light lunch and childcare provided. Visit <https://tsu.me/1tg> to sign up for a book and

Great Falls United Methodist Church, 10100 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, will host annual yard sale/flea market on Saturday, May 7, 2016 from 7 a.m.-2 p.m. You can now reserve a 10x10' space (\$25) to sell your own treasures or donate items to the church (they would pick up).
Come shop, donate and/or sell your own things. 703-582-1640.

St. Francis Episcopal Church, 9220 Georgetown Pike in Great Falls, offers musical, educational, outreach and fellowship ministries in addition to worship services, including a 7:45 a.m.

worship service without music; 9 a.m. worship service, children's chapel and children's choirs; 10 a.m. Sunday school and adult forum; and 11 a.m. worship service with adult choir. 703-759-2082.

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

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

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

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

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

Vienna Christian Healing Rooms are open, every Saturday, 1-5 p.m., at 8200 Bell Lane. A team of Christians is available to anyone requesting prayer. Free and open to the public. 703-698-9779 or www.viennachristianhealingrooms.com.

21 Announcements

ABC NOTICE
BallKap, LLC trading as Kapnos Taverna, 4000 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA 22203. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer On and Off Premises/Keg Permit/Delivery Permit license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages.

Michael Isabella Jr, Managing Member
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.

21 Announcements

ABC NOTICE
Sunoco Retail, LLC trading as Sunoco 7659, 4601 Washington Blvd, Arlington, VA 22201. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Beer off Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages.

Sheryl L. Hess, officer
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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28 Yard Sales

HUGE McLean Village Multi-family Garage Sale:
Sat. 5/14, 8:30-noon
Entrance on Park Ave, West of Old Dominion Dr.
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Summer 2016 Camps

Education & Activities



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Academic Camps Combine Education and Fun

Local camps help students maintain school skills in a relaxed environment.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

One summer Ana Lado created a summer camp activity for students at her neighborhood pool. The Marymount professor set up a picnic area, and included activities and books. Her plan was to engage the students and give them the opportunity to read and build reading skills while still enjoying fun activities traditionally associated with summer.

"I got six kids who were older to read to six kindergartners. I chose kids who had potential, but who were at risk," said Ana Lado, Ph.D., professor of Education at Marymount University in Arlington. "Reading with a kindergartner or first grader for 15 minutes got the students reading and built their confidence."

This summer Lado and her colleagues at Marymount are offering "3E: Explore, Enrich, Enjoy," one of several area camps with an academic component. Their goal is to enable students to brush up on, gain or maintain academic skills in a relaxed environment.

Marymount's 3E camp enables campers to choose what they focus on at camp. In addition to traditional camp activities, the camp will include academic projects like exploring science through nature and electronic gadgets, studying math by making boats, language arts by writing their own stories and fine arts by creating plays and cartoons.

For those who want an in-depth review of a school subject and the chance to participate in hands-on summer camp activities, academic camps fill both needs.

"[Academic camps] supplement what students are getting during the school year and allow them to experience subjects and topics that they're not getting in public school," said Dan Stalcup, Associate Director for Fairfax Collegiate, a Herndon-based organization that offers summer programs for students entering third through ninth grade.

Programs at Fairfax Collegiate run the gamut from filmmaking and robotics to engineering and classic children's literature. For example, third and fourth grade students can learn to craft their own short stories during a Story Writing course in Alexandria, Chantilly and Ashburn.

Campers who enjoy reading and want to delve into award-winning novels by authors such as Madeleine L'Engle or Rebecca Stead can take "Reading Newbury Winners" with sessions in Chantilly, Ashburn, Fairfax, McLean and Reston. Students can spend two weeks reading books that have been



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

Kara Dedon, a Marymount University graduate student, will be the director of the school's camp.

awarded the Newbery Medal for excellence in literature for children.

Fifth and sixth graders who love math and want to hone their analytical and logical thinking skills can spend their time engaging in chess, Stratego and

other mind-bending activities in the "Brain Games" camp, which will be offered in Chantilly, Reston, Herndon, McLean, Alexandria and Oakton.

Future detectives might enjoy taking a forensic science class in Alexandria, Chantilly, Herndon, Ashburn, Falls Church and McLean. "Students learn about the science in criminal justice, like blood-typing and fingerprinting by actually doing the experiments and seeing them in action," said Stalcup.

"Students get a lot of personal attention because the classes are small, and the instructors either have or are pursuing a degree in the topic they're teaching," said Stalcup. "They're all very passionate about the subject they're teaching."

Academic camps might be a good fit for students who are curious about a particular area of study. "Many parents want something that is both fun and educational, meaning it will help their child keep [busy] and develop skills needed during the school year," said Tina M. Morris, Child Development Programs Consultant at George Mason University. "I think both parents and



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COLLEGIATE

A fifth grade student learns about the structure of the human heart during a Human Biology and Anatomy at Fairfax Collegiate.

educators realize that summer vacation does not have to be a break from learning."

The decision to send a child to a camp that focuses on reading, science, math or another school subject instead of a purely recreational camp is a personal one, says Lado. "There are some kids who can visit their grandparents in Maine all summer and they come back to school in the fall and pick up where they left off," she said. "Then there are other kids who can't pick up easily. Those are the kids who would benefit from an academic program."

Students appreciate the ability to focus on one subject in a relaxed atmosphere in an academic camp. "If kids are taking a subject at a fast-clip pace, but they don't do well, they miss key skills. The next year they

"I think both parents and educators realize that summer vacation does not have to be a break from learning."

— Tina M. Morris, Child Development Programs Consultant at George Mason University.

move to a higher level class, but the same problem still exists," said Lado. "When they take a week or two during the summer and immerse themselves in a subject, they go stronger into the next school year. In camp, it's the only thing they're doing academically and they can concentrate on it."

For example, The Madeira School in McLean is offering summer programs in Trigonometry and Geometry. "These courses are intended for advancement into higher level math classes, and based on our classes taught during the academic year," said Ashley Smith, Associate Director of Communications

at Madeira. "A student who is interested in math and wishes to advance to higher levels will benefit, as well as students who need a refresher or a better understanding before moving ahead."

When choosing an academic camp, parents should look for camps that are not all work and no play. "I want to make sure it has a healthy balance of recreational and educational enrichment activities," said Morris. "If the campers are enjoying the activities and the counselors are skilled, the program should, as a natural effect, promote the building of positive relationships with their peers and their counselors."

Summer●Camps Education&Activities

Preparing for Summer Camp Away

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

A child's first residential summer camp experience can be fraught with emotions that run the gamut from excitement to terror. While glee at the thought of a summer filled with sports, swimming, crafts and new-found friendships can be the dominant feeling, the thought of an extended period of time away from home can cause sadness and anxiety for both parents and their children.

An American Camp Association study showed that 96 percent of children who attend sleep away camps experience homesickness at some point during their stay. While these emotions are normal, parents can help children tame the pre-camp jitters. The life-long lessons gained from such camps make it worth the effort.

"Becoming comfortable with your child being away at summer camp, perhaps the first extended separation you have had, is a matter of trust," said David Kaplan, Ph.D. of the American Counseling Association in Alexandria, Va.

"Trusting your child that they can handle themselves without your supervision. Trusting that they can handle relationships with other children. Trusting that they can get up in the morning, take a shower, wash their clothes, and change their sheets without your prodding."

ACKNOWLEDGING THAT HOMESICKNESS is normal and many campers experience it, can help children accept and cope with their emotions.

"Expecting to miss home and feel somewhat anxious helps children feel less surprised and overwhelmed when it occurs," said Barbara Meehan, Ph.D. executive

director, Counseling and Psychological Services, George Mason University in Fairfax, Va.

A child's apprehension can be eased when parents share their own camp experiences, particularly positive memories.

"Don't let your child get caught up in your own anxiety about leaving for camp," said Linda McKenna Gulyn, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Marymount University in Arlington, Va. "Kids sometimes worry about the parents they left behind. Be positive, but not sad that your child is leaving."

Meehan says that developing a few self-soothing activities like playing outdoors or reading is one strategy for helping children deal with feelings of missing home. Identifying people with whom young campers can share their emotions is another means for dealing with homesickness.

"Talking to a camp counselor and even peers can help ease the difficult feelings and often they will learn they are not alone," said Meehan. Encouraging a child to make friends and become involved

Many emotions arise when a child goes to camp.

in camp activities will put the focus on the positive aspects of camp. Packing letters and stamped envelopes and developing a plan for letter exchange can help a child feel connected to their families.

"Isolating and avoiding what feels hard can often worsen anxiety and homesickness," said Meehan. "Remind your child they are stronger than they feel in the moment and that engaging in camp activities can be helpful."

There are times however when a child might not be ready for residential camps. The American Camp Association reports that while most cases of homesickness subside, there are cases — if a child is not eating or sleeping, for example — when it could be time to seek help. "Consult with camp professionals about resources if your child's anxiety worsens or persists," said Meehan.



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From Colonial History to Future Entrepreneurs

Campers can explore diverse interests in specialty summer camps.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

This summer dozens of elementary school-aged children will travel back in time to the Colonial Era where, among other things, they'll learn to spin cotton into cloth for garments.

Learning how to run a lemonade stand like a Fortune 500 company and use the profits to invest in the stock market will be on the agenda for other local children. Both activities are offered by local specialty camps aimed at giving children opportunities to explore their interests in a way that they cannot during the school year.



PHOTO COURTESY OF VISIT FAIRFAX

Camp Washington at Mount Vernon gives campers a glimpse of early American life.



“During the school year, there is so much emphasis on testing that the creative and collaborative nature of children gets lost.”

— Carolyn Lorente, Ph.D.

“I think summer camps are a great way to promote thriving if it is done right,” said Carolyn Lorente, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology at Northern Virginia Community College in Alexandria and a camp consultant. “During the school year, there is so much emphasis on testing that the creative and collaborative nature of children gets lost. A great camp can create space for our children to flourish.”

SPECIALTY CAMPS offer young campers a chance to focus on a specific area of interest such as cooking, financial literacy and even gaming.

For example, Spark Business Academy, a Northern Virginia based organization that teaches financial literacy to young students, is offering its Future Millionaires Camp in Arlington. Students learn about money concepts that range from setting up a lemonade stand that makes a profit to understanding the stock market.

“The name is definitely tongue in cheek,” said Chuchi Arevalo, the organization’s founder. “We teach personal finance, leadership and innova-

tion. We give them life skills that they aren’t learning in school and promote financial literacy that is fun even for students in first and second grade.”

RIISING FIFTH- and sixth-grade students will get a chance to take a trip back in time this summer at Mount Vernon’s Camp Washington. During each of the three one-week sessions, campers explore the history of George Washington’s estate and learn about his legacy.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MASON GAME & TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY

Students in the Mason Game & Technology Academy Summer Camp will be offered classes in Game Design, Creation and Entrepreneurship, Minecraft and Cyber Defense.

From farming and spinning fibers into cloth to making ice cream and meeting the estate’s heritage breed animals, hands-on activities will give campers a glimpse of many aspects of early American life at Mount Vernon.

“The summer camp is designed to help engage students while having fun,” said Melissa Wood, spokeswoman for Mount Vernon. “[It] gives kids the opportunity to go behind the scenes and experience history in their own backyard.”

For More Information

Game and Technology Summer Camps

potomacacademy.gmu.edu/mgta/summer/

Future Millionaires Bootcamp/ Stock Market Acres

moneynewsforkids.com/

Camp Washington and more at Mount Vernon

www.mountvernon.org/plan-your-visit/calendar/events/camp-washington-summer-day-camp-at-mount-vernon/

YOUNG GAME DESIGN aficionados can spend the summer with Mason Game & Technology Academy’s (MGTA) camps. Students take classes such as Game Design, Creation and Entrepreneurship, Minecraft and Cyber Defense.

“We run our classes at Mason in Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William,” said Vera Lichtenberg, Director of the Mason Game & Technology Academy at George Mason University.

“We also do a great deal of community outreach to train teachers, engage underserved students, and generally, help students realize that Game Design is a STEM field that not only engages those who love technology, but also those on the artistic side: writers, music composers [and] designers.”

MGTA is part of the Mason Computer Game Design Program and the Community Outreach Youth Program for the Virginia Serious Game Institute.