

2016
VIRGINIA
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Newspaper

Great Falls CONNECTION

Supervisors Debate Meal Tax in Great Falls

NEWS, PAGE 4

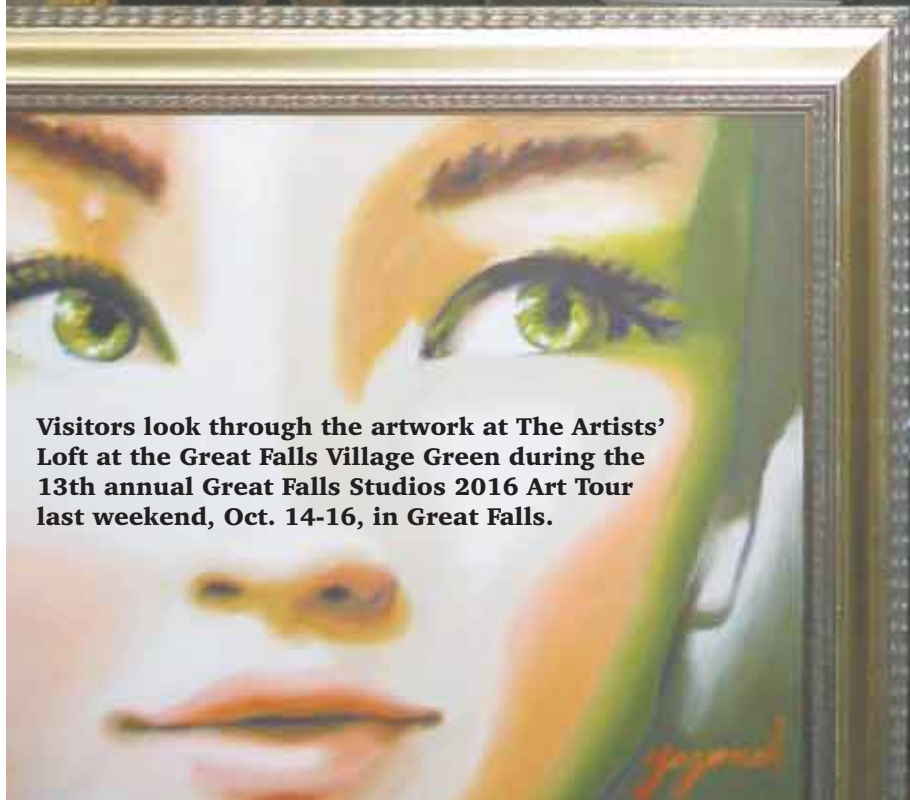
Horses Need No Cajoling to Stay on Land

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PHOTO BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION



Visitors look through the artwork at The Artists' Loft at the Great Falls Village Green during the 13th annual Great Falls Studios 2016 Art Tour last weekend, Oct. 14-16, in Great Falls.

Great Falls Studios Welcome Community

NEWS, PAGE 14

THE GREAT FALLS TEAM

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FX9754139 - \$775,000 - Great Falls
1088 Loran Ct: 3BR, 2.5 BA
Nicest House in Great Falls for the Price.
Perfect Entry Level Home to this Market or
For Downsizing. Renovated Kitchen, Baths &
Incredible Screened-In Porch. Air-Jet Tub in
MBA. Stone Siding & Recently Replaced Roof



For Sale

LO9573630 - \$850,000 - Potomac Falls
20269 Island View Ct: 5 BR, 3.5 BA
This Stunning Home with Approx 5,000 sqft has a
Soaring 2-Story Living Room w/ a Fully Updated
Kitchen including Granite Countertops,
Refrigerator, and Dishwasher.



Sold

FC9620280 - \$1,410,000 - Fairfax
3516 Schuerman House Dr: 5BR, 4.5BA
Most Spacious/Dramatic Home in Picketts.
Prime Location Backing to 15 Acre Park.
Chef's Kitchen, Covered Porch, 1200 Sqft
Deck, & 1000 Sqft Flagstone Patio.



Sold

FX7553818 - \$2,000,000 - Great Falls
938 Leigh Mill Rd: 6 BR, 5.5 BA
Beautiful Great Falls Custom Home on Over 4
Acres w/ Newly Installed Pool. Amenities Incl:
Hrdwd Flrs, Flagstone Patios, Marble & Granite
Counters. Carriage House w/ Kitchenette is
Perfect for In-Law Suite or Separate Office.



Sold

FX9539587 - \$1,225,000 - Great Falls
897 Falls Bridge Ln: 6 BR, 4.5 BA
Spectacular Brick Colonial on One Beautifully
Landscaped Acre. Hardwood on Main Level w/
Detailed Moulding, Palladium Windows, & Dual
Staircases. Gourmet Kitchen, Expansive Family
Room & FL Sunroom Leading to Large Deck.



Sold

LO9611115 - \$850,000 - Brambleton
22997 Olympia Dr: 5 BR, 4.5 BA
Semi-Custom Gulick Ashcroft w/ Viking Pro
Range, Quartz Counters, 2 Fireplaces, 2-Built-In
WineFridges, Custom Home Theater w/
Whole Home Audio. Exterior Landscaping w/
Lighting & Irrigation System. 3-Car Garage



Under Contract

LO9587027 - \$850,000 - Leesburg
41803 Canongate Dr: 4 BR, 4.5 BA
Beautiful Colonial on 3+ Acres with Pond,
Located in Shenstone Community. A Gourmet
Chef's Kitchen Includes GE Appliances and
everything you could possible want



Sold

LO9604949 - \$775,000 - Broadlands
42862 Glyndebourne Ct: 6BR, 5.5BA
6,000+ Sqft, Gourmet Kitchen w/ Granite &
Sunroom w/ Access to Deck & Custom Patio.
Master BR w/ Sitting Room, Library, Lower Level
Offers Rec Room, Media Room, & 6th BR w/ FB



Sold

FX9612600 - \$813,000 - Reston
12202 Dorrance Ct: 3 BR, 2.5 BA
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Views of Community Pond. Three Spacious
Upper Level Bedrooms are Highlighted by
an Incomparable Master Bedroom.

Join us Monday November 14th at our
Military Appreciation Monday (MAM)
Event at The Old Brogue in Great Falls.
We will be raising funds for
Stop Soldier Suicide

* The Old Brogue is located at the corner of Georgetown Pike and Walker Rd. in Great Falls.
Call (703) 759-3309 to reserve your table for either the 5:30 or 7:30 seatings.
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Fairfax County SAT Scores Above Virginia, National Levels

School system average hides achievement gap.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

On average, Fairfax County Public High Schools performed better on the SAT college placement exam in 2016 than the Commonwealth of Virginia overall average.

Virginia students also outscored the national numbers, according to data released last week by the Virginia Department of Education and the College Board, the organization that publishes the SAT.

The two groups reported 65 percent of Virginia public school graduates took the SAT. Of that number, they said 45.2 percent earned the College Board benchmark for college readiness.

By achieving a combined score of 1550 — including critical reading, math and writing scores — the College Board believes those students stand a 65 percent chance of holding a B-average during their first year in college.

Virginia's 65 percent beat the national average of 37.3 percent of SAT-takers reaching the benchmark.

"While the overall performance of Virginia students compares favorably with that of their nationwide peers, the wide achievement gaps visible when we dig deeper into the data remind us that outcomes are not improving for far too many students of color," Virginia Board of Education President Billy K. Cannaday Jr. said in a statement. "Narrowing and ultimately closing these gaps is the state board's top priority."

2016 SAT

School	Test Takers	Critical Reading (Mean)	Math (Mean)	Writing (Mean)	Combined Score (Mean)
Annandale High School	319	506	524	490	1520
Bryant Alternative High School	3	-	-	-	-
Centreville High School	437	546	570	537	1653
Chantilly High School	506	558	585	542	1685
Edison High School	291	504	510	484	1498
Fairfax High School	475	535	550	518	1603
Falls Church High School	218	508	521	481	1510
Hayfield Secondary School	367	515	516	499	1530
Herndon High School	324	540	556	525	1621
Lake Braddock Secondary School	536	561	573	539	1673
Langley High School	369	614	633	604	1851
Lee High School	234	491	505	480	1476
Madison High School	377	596	608	585	1789
Marshall High School	340	564	578	557	1699
McLean High School	420	601	623	597	1821
Mount Vernon High School	238	471	468	448	1387
Mountain View Alternative High School	4	-	-	-	-
Oakton High School	471	581	600	569	1750
Quander Road School	1	-	-	-	-
Robinson Secondary School	522	564	577	544	1685
South County High School	412	532	550	516	1598
South Lakes High School	358	558	571	542	1671
Stuart High School	243	498	506	485	1489
Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology	442	720	761	717	2198
West Potomac High School	312	525	534	512	1571
West Springfield High School	445	564	560	535	1659
Westfield High School	465	539	552	518	1609
Woodson High School	487	587	600	568	1755
FCPS AVG		551.12	565.24	535.68	1652
Virginia Public Schools		516	513	493	1522
United States		487	494	472	1453

ALL DATA FROM VDOE AND THE COLLEGE BOARD

THE FAIRFAX COUNTY AVERAGES top Virginia in each category, aided by uncommonly high scores from the magnet Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, which requires its own test and application process for admission.

Jefferson comprised more than 63 percent Asian students for the 2015-2106 school year, 1.5 percent African American, 2.23 percent Hispanic, 25.43 percent Caucasian and 7.4 percent other, according to Fairfax County Public Schools.

Langley High School also posted averages

of above 600 in each SAT category.

The majority of Langley's student body in 2015-2016 was white, with just over 65 percent. Asians were second with 23.47 percent, next Hispanic and other each with about 5 percent, and black with less than a percent.

JEB Stuart High School is an example where in each category it was above the national average but below the Virginia and FCPS averages. Stuart also had about 100 fewer test-takers (243) than the FCPS average (343).

Stuart was half Hispanic in 2015-2016, followed by 22.97 percent white, 13.8 percent Asian, 10.26 percent African American and 2.29 percent other.

Mount Vernon was the only FCPS school with average scores consistently below the FCPS, Virginia and national averages.

In 2015-2016, Mount Vernon's student body was made up of 41.68 percent Hispanic students, 27.6 percent African American, 19.59 percent white, 6.28 percent Asian and 4.85 percent other.

Karen Corbett Sanders, Mount Vernon representative to the Fairfax County school board, said West Potomac has seen a gradual increase in scores thanks to a PTSA-sponsored SAT prep program.

Students have the opportunity to take a mock exam for \$20, get an assessment based on their results of which areas they need help in, and then enroll in a prep course through the PTSA.

THIS YEAR is the first cohort at West Potomac that will have had that opportunity.

"You have so many test prep organizations today that are really working with kids to get those scores up but a lot are expensive," Corbett Sanders said.

The program has expanded and allowed students from Mount Vernon High School to come over and take part as well.

"It's one of those eye-opening things," she said. "It's just not fair for kids who can't afford it, but the schools and parents together are taking ownership, to make sure our kids get this opportunity too."

Corbett Sanders noted Fairfax County Public Schools offers online SAT prep as part of the Adult and Community Education program. That information is available here at: <https://aceclasses.fcps.edu>.



Langley Marching Saxons Win US Bands Marine Corps Invitational

Langley Marching Saxons won first place at the US Bands Marine Corps Invitational in Annapolis, Md. on Oct. 1. The band had a great performance in only its third competition in the history of the Langley High marching band.

Supervisors Debate Meal Tax in Great Falls

Foust, Herrity present pro & cons of the proposed tax; Great Falls residents join debate.

BY PEYTON JACOBS
THE CONNECTION



PHOTO BY PEYTON JACOBS/THE CONNECTION

Supervisors Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) and John Foust (D-Dranesville) debate meals tax at the Great Falls Citizens Association meeting on Oct. 11.

On Tuesday, Oct. 11, the Great Falls Citizens Association hosted debates on two major ballot issues: the proposed Virginia Constitutional Amendment on “Right to Work” and the Fairfax County Meals Tax, a referendum which will be on the November 8 election ballot. The Meals Tax is a tax imposed on the purchase of all prepared or ready-to-eat foods and beverages. It would require all restaurants, grocery stores, coffee shops, movie theater concessions, and any other food service businesses selling prepared food to collect the tax, at a proposed 4 percent rate of the amount charged for the food.

The debate featured Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) in opposition to the Meals Tax, and Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville) supporting it.

IN HIS OPENING STATEMENT, Foust said that the tax at a 4 percent rate would

raise an estimated \$99 million by 2018, which would reduce the County’s dependency on real estate taxes and would diversify their revenue base. The Board would dedicate the net revenues to two purposes: 70 percent would be allocated to Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), and the remaining 30 percent would be devoted to County services, capital improvements, and property tax relief.

“You all see that the parks, libraries, policemen, and our firemen – well they all cost money,” he said. “But where we really have the challenges right now is in our schools.” The school system has a growing student population of 186,000 students in grades K-12, the tenth largest school division in the country and the third largest employer in Virginia. “Our teachers work dramatically

below market, and they are leaving,” Foust noted. A recent report from the Washington Area Boards of Education confirms these disparities in pay, showing a \$10,000 difference between the average salary of teachers in Arlington County and those in FCPS, and an \$8,000 difference in Falls Church and Montgomery Counties.

Herrity had a different take on the tax. “In the last five years, taxes have increased by 27 percent,” he said. “This regressive tax is not just about white tablecloth restaurants – it’s your morning coffee, your rotisserie chicken, and any prepared meal you may buy.” It is a 4 percent tax on top of the 6 percent sales tax, making it a 10 percent tax on food. “We do have a spending problem, in my opinion,” Herrity says of the Board. “This \$100 million raised takes care

of this year’s problem but it won’t take care of next year’s – when will it stop?” He addressed some of these spending problems in detail, such as rent controlled condos in Tysons and a \$5 million reserve.

LAST YEAR, Herrity noted, the Board gave \$89 million to Fairfax County Schools, and only a small fraction of it went toward teachers’ salaries. “The school board needs to focus this toward the classrooms more so than the administration,” Herrity noted. He continued on, stressing that the tax would be unfair to local businesses, and could affect local economies. “This is a tax attacking a single industry, the restaurant industry, without any basis of knowledge of how it will affect these businesses and their employees.”

Great Falls business owner of The Old Brogue, Mike Kearney, agreed with this point. “Of all the different hats I have worn in this community, the one I do not want to wear is that of a tax collector,” he said. “It is unfair. People find affordability, fellowship, and good quality at my restaurant. This 10 percent makes a difference when you’re on a fixed income or a senior citizen, which 30 percent of my customers are.” Tim Thompson, president of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Association, disagreed. “I would rather pay this small installment tax than have additional homeowner and real estate taxes to deal with,” he explained. “We need to not cut taxes, but control them.” In the end, it is up to the Fairfax County voters to decide.

Horses Need No Cajoling to Stay on Land

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

About 58 acres of scenic vista just north of the Great Falls Village Center will be preserved for the next eight years at 9809 Arnon Chapel Road.

“It represents one of the last large intact portions of former farmland that once characterized the area and is home to a well-loved horse boarding and riding facility, Stone Ridge Farm,” said Dranesville District Planning Commissioner John Ulfelder.

The Planning Commission voted unanimously Thursday, Sept. 29 to recommend approval of the eight-year request made by the Cajoll Company and the John W. Hanes III Settler Trust.

“The continuation of this A&F District will help preserve the rural agrarian character of this area of Fairfax County,” said Ulfelder.

The Board of Supervisors is scheduled to hold a public hearing and make its ruling on Oct. 18, 2016.

“Beyond its physical attributes,

the farm itself makes an incontestable contribution to the well being of the Great Falls Community. The combined properties provide scenic views of fields with horses, broken by hedgerows filled with natural wildlife that help to define the character of the community,” according to the application filed by Lucy Masemer.

“Great blue herons, red shouldered hawks, mallards, orioles, and many other birds and wildlife can be found raising their young around the ponds and pastures within the properties,” she wrote.

THE COUNTY offers reduced real estate tax assessments in exchange for a commitment to preserve “significant tracts of agricultural and forested land a commitment to preserve the land for the length of the term.”

Since 1972 Stoneridge Farm has operated a horse boarding and riding facility on a 32-acre parcel, according to Planning Commission staff documents. Stoneridge farm received a special permit that was approved in August 1992, accord-

The Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing and possibly affirm the decision to preserve the land on Tuesday, Oct. 18.

KEN MOORE/
THE CONNECTION



ing to the documents, that limits the number of horses maintained on the site to 80. Currently, there are approximately 40 horses on the site.

Stoneridge Farm “plans to continue operating well into the future,” according to Zoning Evaluation Division documents.

The agricultural and forestal district was originally established in 1983 on 66.82 acres of land.

GUNNEL’S RUN FARM, a family-owned residence/horse farm, also utilizes the land for equestrian activities and currently boards 15 horses on the property.

“The majority of the farm’s land is primarily used as a pasture for the horses, except for a small portion of land allocated for a farmhouse and various fenced areas allocated for conservation purposes,” according to Planning and Zoning documents. “Both Stoneridge Farm and Gunnell’s Run Farm have continued to invest in significant improvements, providing firm evidence of their continued commitment for maintaining and furthering the agricultural uses of the properties.”

The 58-acre property consists of four parcels located on the south side of Arnon Chapel Road; all



Arnon Chapel Road

surrounding properties are zoned Residential Estate and are developed with large-lot residential uses.

The land is located at the headwaters of a tributary of Mine Run Branch and is located within the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area.

The subject property “may contain the slave cemetery associated with Gunnell’s Run. Further investigation of this area by the Cultural Resource Management and Protection Branch of the Park Authority should be requested before ground disturbing activity takes place.”

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Barbara understands the sacrifices and commitments made by educators in Virginia's 10th District and across the nation. She supports policies which empower parents and give states and localities more control over their local schools to ensure the best education for our children.



- › The House passed Congresswoman Comstock's *Inspiring the Next Space Pioneers, Innovators, Researchers, and Explorers (INSPIRE) Women Act*, which will help young women in the STEM fields through programs at NASA.
- › Congresswoman Comstock has authored the *Student Loan Relief Act*, which would offer students the ability to refinance their education loans to take advantage of lower interest rates. It would also allow employers to use pre-tax dollars to assist qualified employees in paying off student loan debt.

- › Congresswoman Comstock is the **Co-Chair** of the *STARBASE Caucus*, which offers hands-on STEM education to students in elementary school. She has worked in a bipartisan manner to increase resources for this important program.
- › Congresswoman Comstock voted for the bipartisan *Every Student Succeeds Act*. This bill, signed into law, represented a significant step toward improving our education system and empowers educators and parents to do what is best for each individual student.

"I come from a family of educators – my mom was a school teacher and librarian and my husband Chip is a retired Fairfax County assistant principal and teacher. My sister is a guidance counselor at a Fairfax County Public School. The education of our children and grandchildren has always been a top priority of mine. It's a privilege to represent you in Virginia's 10th Congressional District. Together, we can make sure our children receive a world class education."

Barbara Comstock

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WEEK IN GREAT FALLS

Halloween Spooktacular in Great Falls

The Halloween Spooktacular will be held at Great Falls Village Green and Great Falls Center on Monday, Oct. 31, 5-7 p.m., with Pet Parade at 4 p.m. (all dogs must vacate the green by 4:50 p.m.)

The Spooktacular was launched more than 25 years ago to provide younger children (12 and under) with a central, convenient place in Great Falls to have fun trick or treating.

- ❖ Boy Scout Troop 55 will create some spooky fun for everyone in the Haunted House;
- ❖ The Langley Marching Band joins us in the Wells Fargo parking lot;
- ❖ Linda Waitkus of Great Dogs of Great Falls is leading the Pet Parade starting at the Gazebo;
- ❖ Look out for the Great Falls Volunteer Firefighters in the Safeway parking lot.

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Great Falls, VA

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Annandale, VA

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Fairfax, VA

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Vienna, VA

\$610,000.00



Centreville, VA

\$365,000.00



Falls Church, VA

\$425,000.00



Fairfax, VA

\$299,500.00

Proud Sponsor of Celebrate Great Falls
Come Trick or Treat with us at the Annual **Halloween Spooktacular**

Great Falls Village Centre Green & Great Falls Shopping Center
Monday, October 31st, 2016
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm



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Visit Our Information Center at 1212 W Broad St Community Opening Early 2017

The Kensington Falls Church Presents the Parkinson's Communications Club

Announcing an Introductory Orientation with Codrin Lungu, MD and Susan Wranik, MS, MA, CCC-SLP Saturday, October 22, 2016 + 1:30-3:30pm

Hilton McLean Tyson's Corner, 7920 Jones Branch Drive, McLean VA 22102

Light refreshments served • RSVP to Karen Akers at 703-570-8671 or to kakers@kensingtonsl.com

The Kensington Falls Church is pleased to announce its collaboration with the Parkinson Foundation of The National Capital Area (PFNCA) to offer the Parkinson's Communications Club. The Club establishes a wellness and prevention program for individuals with Parkinson's disease and their care partners, with a focus on maintenance of communication skills. It stresses the importance of speaking louder to be heard in social settings.

The Parkinson's Communications Club is led by a licensed speech-language therapist, Susan Wranik, who has been trained in LSVT LOUD therapy (Lee Silverman Voice Treatment,

which improves vocal loudness by stimulating muscles of the voice box and speech mechanism through systematic exercises). The Club, however, is not therapy. Rather, it is a group approach to applying the exercises and skills of LOUD and/or other therapies. The first of weekly sessions begins in November 2016 in Falls Church. The program is available at no cost.*

Please join us for an orientation with Dr. Codrin Lungu, Chief of the Parkinson's Disease Clinic at the National Institutes of Health, and Susan Wranik, MS, MA, CCC-SLP, Speech-Language Pathologist and President of Susan I. Wranik Associates, LLC. RSVP requested.



Codrin Lungu, MD is a board-certified neurologist who specializes in movement disorders. He is a member of the Parkinson Foundation of The National Capital Area Medical Advisory Board. He is currently involved in collaborative research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in several areas related to movement disorders.



Susan Wranik, MS, MA, CCC-SLP is a Speech-Language Pathologist and President of Susan I. Wranik Associates, LLC. She provides comprehensive assessment and treatment of speech, swallowing, memory and cognitive issues related to stroke, traumatic brain injury, Parkinson's, dementia and other neurogenic diseases. Home visits. Licensed in DC, MD, VA.



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*Annual PFNCA program registration required. There is a \$15 annual administrative fee, which can be waived for financial hardship.



OPINION

No to the Meals Tax

A food tax is not a silver bullet.

BY PAT HERRITY
SPRINGFIELD DISTRICT SUPERVISOR

I have been opposed to the meals tax from the start, but what has concerned me most over the last several months has been the tactics used to try to convince our residents to vote for it and the county's failure to deal with its spending problems. I would like to offer some clarity on these points and why I am against the meals tax.

The proponents of the meals tax insist the tax is for teachers' salaries and tax relief. In fact, the ballot language referencing schools and tax relief was selected because it was the language that passed in other counties in Virginia and according to one supervisor "we need to use the language that will get it passed." In reality, the Board of Supervisors will decide in April during the budget process how much funding goes to schools and then the School Board will decide how much funding goes to teacher raises and class size reductions. Despite the Board of Supervisors fully funding the School Board's funding request last year, the funds were not focused on fixing our teacher salary issues.

If it passes, the meals tax will just be an additional \$100 million tax on top of the \$100M in taxes the board passed earlier this year (over my opposition). In the last five years, real estate taxes alone have increased 25 percent and skyrocketed by \$565 million. As I have debated proponents of the meals tax over the last several months, there has been almost universal acknowledgement that Fairfax County has a spending problem. For example, Fairfax County offers its 35,000-plus county and school employees and administrators' unparalleled and unsustainable pensions and pre-secular security benefits that even surrounding jurisdictions do not

pay. Despite my efforts to address this and other spending problems, there is no plan in place to address these unsustainable costs and benefits. The meals tax is a bad way to kick the can of addressing our spending problems down the road.

The meals tax is also bad way to address a spending problem because it is a regressive tax that targets a single industry and disproportionately hits those who can least afford it — the elderly, single working parents, young students, and people without other options. It is not a white tablecloth restaurant tax; it is a food tax. The meals tax would be on top of the current sales tax resulting in a 10 percent total tax on any prepared food, including the rotisserie chicken from the grocery store, the fountain drink from the convenience store, your morning coffee, and your food truck purchases. It is also a tax on a single industry — one that only has a 3 percent profit margin on average. This means the meals tax will result in the government making more money off of a restaurant than the restaurant itself makes in profit. This is fundamentally wrong. Restaurants not only provide thousands of young adults with their first job, they also give back to the community through sponsorships and donations.

Fairfax County voters have a decision to make. Do we settle for budget deficits and tax increases year after year, or do we send a message that enough is enough and it is time to address spending issues? I sympathize for those who support the tax; the Board of Supervisors and School Board have led them to believe that the meals tax is some sort of silver bullet to their budget and teacher salaries woes. Simply put, it is not.

Pat Herrity represents the Springfield District on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness Supports Meals Tax

After careful consideration, the Fairfax – Falls Church Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness has decided to fully support the proposed 4 percent Fairfax County Meals Tax.

Seventy percent of the funds raised by the tax will go to our Fairfax County Schools. Our schools have an integral role in

identifying and assisting our homeless and at risk youth as part of our homeless service system. Providing additional funding for the schools only makes sense.

Thirty percent of the funds raised by the tax will go to the county's general fund to be used for priorities as identified by the Board of Supervisors. One of

Yes to the Meals Tax

Reduces dependence on property tax.

BY PHILLIP A. NIEDZIELSKI-
EICHNER

As a businessman here in Fairfax and a former member of the Fairfax County School Board, I write on behalf of a coalition of thousands of homeowners, parents, teachers, firefighters, police, friends and users of our libraries and our parks and recreation facilities, and those who belong to churches and non-profit organizations working to ensure that Fairfax County also protects those in need [www.yesmealstax.org].

Here since 1988, I have always valued Fairfax's pragmatic approach to local government services; i.e., we will pay for the cost of an excellent education system and high-quality services as long as the cost is reasonable and affordable.

Hit with the double whammy of the great recession and the federal budget sequestration fiasco, the Board of Supervisors and School Board did what they had to do under the circumstances — they cut costs and reduced services.

The county reduced annual expenditures by \$300 million and eliminated 700 jobs; for the school system, \$500 million and 2,100 jobs.

The maintenance backlog has grown to over \$150 million in recreation and park facilities alone.

We are spending less in real dollars per pupil this year than in 2008. We are losing our best teachers to surrounding jurisdictions, because salaries are no longer competitive in the region. Class sizes are larger.

Economic recovery has been slow. While home values have grown modestly, vacancies in office buildings are at a 25-year high and revenue from commercial property tax is at historic lows.

Compounding our challenge, state funding — particularly for schools — continues to decline, with a funding shortfall for K 12 education climbing to more than \$1 billion annually since 2009.

With 65 percent of county revenue now being generated by residential property tax, homeowners are carrying a substantial and growing share of the cost of services.

Without a more diverse revenue base, we risk school system excellence and we risk the caliber of county services that underpin our quality of life. In an article earlier this year, the Washington Post characterized this reality as Fairfax "fraying around the edges."

This is the setting for the meals tax referendum before us on Nov. 8.

Five great things will happen by approving the meals tax:

1. \$100 million will be generated. Almost a third of this revenue — \$28 million — will be paid by tourists and visitors to Fairfax.

2. Seventy percent of the revenues will be directed to the school system to help stem the loss of our best teachers and reduce class size.

3. Our quality of life will be strengthened by addressing unmet police and firefighter needs and those of our libraries and parks.

4. The backlog in county and school facility and infrastructure maintenance needs can be reduced, while also preserving our AAA bond rating.

5. Our tax base will be more diverse, relieving property tax pressure on homeowners.

Incredibly, Fairfax can do these great things by paying pennies-on-the-dollar when we eat out. Few of us ever notice paying Arlington County, Fairfax City, Falls Church and Vienna when we eat in their restaurants, yet we do.

If you agree that it is important to keep the best teachers in our classrooms, reduce class size, continue to protect our safety and maintain our quality of life; and finally — if you believe we need to be less dependent on homeowners to pay for all of the above — it is clear that we should vote yes for the meals tax. It's literally a pennies-on-the-dollar solution.

We fully expect a portion of the funds raised by the meals tax will be used for this important priority.

Michael L. O'Reilly

Chairman, Board of the Fairfax Falls Church Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness

MORE LETTERS, PAGE 9

Great Falls CONNECTION

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An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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LETTERS

Time to Make Hard Choices

To the Editor:

I grew up in Los Angeles, lived in Chicago and also New York. In each of these cities, there were always a myriad of new taxes and fees proposed with the promise of the resultant funds going to good causes - mostly schools. In these Democratic strongholds the taxes almost always passed. Unfortunately, the schools and other programs for which the funds were to be used never got better. In fact, over time the money got waylaid into other programs and activities for which it was not originally intended. It's safe to say that in these cities, many who can afford it, send their children to private schools - not a roaring endorsement of their public education. Now we want to do the same thing in Fairfax County. Based on my experience, here is what will

happen: At first everything will work as advertised but within a few years additional programs will be added to the schools based on these new funds. At the same time, politicians eyeing a windfall will start to divert those funds to other programs deemed important. We

will then be informed that the meals tax will need to be raised because the schools don't have enough money. And over time property taxes will keep rising. The result will be higher taxes, a higher cost of living, and schools that we will be told are still desperately underfunded. Don't

take my word for it, check out these high tax cities that still have underperforming schools. Or just look at Maryland where taxes to date are higher than in Virginia but they are still constantly seeking new monies for schools and other programs.

The answer is not new taxes which will set a precedent for taxes on other goods or services, but rather politicians and heads of schools actually taking the responsibility to manage the funds that are available. This means having to make hard decisions. Do we need translation services into 20 some odd languages. Are expensive sports programs, language immersion programs, art programs, music programs, fancy technology, psychological programs, etc. all as important as teaching children english, math, science and history and paying teachers a decent wage? All of these programs are terrific but in

a world in which we have finite funds we have to get back to prioritizing. Instead we expect government and schools to be all things to all people. An impossible task. Please vote "no" to the new meals tax and ask your school and government to better manage our existing revenue.

Christine Gabor
Great Falls

Taking Us for Granted

To the Editor:

Now that Barbara Comstock has belatedly Dumped Trump it is time to move on to another important issue. In reading her most recent newsletter, I noted that Comstock did not seem to have an office in Fairfax County. Thinking that this must be typo, I checked her congressional website and confirmed that Comstock has congressional offices in Sterling and Winchester and on the Hill but nothing in Fairfax County. With all due respect to Loudon and Prince Williams counties, what is Fairfax County chopped liver? A cynic

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 11

G. STEPHEN DULANEY

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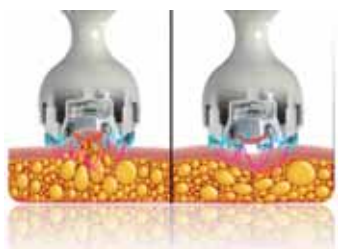


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NEWS



Seminar for Aspiring Eagle Scouts

On Saturday, Oct. 8, the Powhatan Scout District held its Fall "Life to Eagle" Seminar for aspiring Eagle scouts. The two-hour briefing detailed the requirements for mounting an Eagle Scout service project and for the application that scouts must file afterwards to reach Eagle rank. Pictured: Eagle Scout Greg Gersony, Troop 673 (Great Falls) fields a question on his 2015 Eagle project, a safety and recreation trail in Riverbend Park, together with Herndon Eagle Scouts Michael George (Troop 1570) and Matthew Lawley (Troop 157).

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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 9

might say that Comstock is using taxpayer dollars to shore up support in counties more in tune with her Tea Party predilections. For those who might feel that this is a non-issue, I would contend that this is simply one of the more visible ways of telling that Comstock is not right for Fairfax County and is taking residents here for granted.

Arthur Kingdom III
Great Falls

Comstock's Record of Accomplishments

To the Editor:

Other than sending a massive amount of attack mailers, I haven't heard anything from LuAnn Bennett about her accomplishments or what she might do or why she's even running for the 10th Congressional seat against our proven incumbent, Barbara Comstock. Perhaps the absence of relevant information is the result of Ms. Bennett living outside the 10th District for the majority of the past decade. I don't want to vote for someone whose primary goal is to pursue and support Nancy Pelosi's personal agenda rather than the specific interests of the people of the 10th District of Virginia.

LuAnn Bennett has done nothing to earn our votes. Barbara Comstock has.

Barbara has tirelessly and honorably served in many ways dating back to her time in the Virginia House of Delegates. She has worked extensively to increase our National Defense spending and protect national security.

She's also assisted in creating major legislation to help cut down human trafficking, to fight the heroin epidemic with landmark legislation, and has worked to pass \$600 billion in tax relief for America's families and small businesses. All of her efforts have benefited constituents – Democrats, Republicans and Independents – in her district.

Barbara also co-sponsored and voted for the 21st Century Cures Act to advance better detection, management and, ultimately, cures of chronic diseases such as diabetes, Alzheimer's and cancer. That sounds like a really great start to me! Barbara works with people across the District on a non-partisan basis, and is constantly in touch with her constituents.

Renee S. Potter
McLean

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Photos by Walt Lawrence

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Discussing the Election with Children

Local educators offer suggestions for navigating a complicated political climate.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

While Colleen K. Vesely has watched televised debates and political events with her children throughout this election season, an event during which the American Civil Rights movement was discussed stands out. It was a concept her 3-year-old daughter didn't grasp, of course. But Vesely used the moment as opportunity to start guiding her children through this year's election season.

"I asked her to think about what she might do if someone at school was being mean to one of her friends, to which, she promptly replied, 'I'd tell them to stop being mean and that I don't like it,'" said Vesely, an assistant professor of early childhood education and human development and family science at George Mason University. "Elections offer opportunities to consider the importance of service and standing up for democratic principles. ... However, the tone of this general election season is different."

Still, Vesely and other educators say that while election cycles typically offer fami-



PHOTO COURTESY OF BASIS INDEPENDENT

The election season offers students such as those at BASIS Independent School in McLean an opportunity to learn about the political process.

lies a multitude of opportunities for conversations about civics and discussions of democracy, navigating the current political climate requires added dexterity.

Use the election season to facilitate conversations in a way that is relatable to children based on their age and experiences, advises Vesely. "By ... discussing the different issues ... parents with school-age and

older children can use the election season as an opportunity to expand their children's thinking in relation to current social issues and history," she said. "Parents can use the election as fodder to hone their children's critical thinking skills with real-life issues by helping them critique candidates' opinions" as well as "understand different points of view on a variety of issues and develop

"Parents can use the election as fodder to hone their children's critical thinking skills ..."

— Colleen K. Vesely, Ph.D.,
George Mason University.

their persuasive arguments." This is an exercise Vesely has used with her own children.

"During primary season, my 6-year-old and I watched a number of the candidates' speeches," she said. "We talked about the issues and each person as a human being. ... I offered reasons as to why I admired (some of) the candidates."

Focusing on citizenship and character is a strategy Vesely advises parents to use with children who are preschool-age and younger: "Parents might discuss what it means to be a good citizen in their home," she said. "For example, helping put away their toys when they are done playing, being nice to their classmates, helping their friends and teacher."

Similarly, local schools are developing creative ways to fit the Nov. 8 election into their lesson plans. For example, "since students are only in middle school for one presidential election, Norwood School takes advantage of this opportunity to help students begin to understand how to go about comparing candidates' positions on basic

SEE ELECTION, PAGE 13

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Talking About Election

FROM PAGE 12

issues, and also to help them understand how the presidential election process works,” said Michele Claeys, associate head of school and head of middle school, Norwood School in Potomac, Md.

To help students learn to understand issues and evaluate and compare candidates, teachers work together to create age-appropriate mini-lessons about candidates’ positions on a small number of issues. “Students will explore and discuss — not debate — the issues, and learn how to find additional information on their own if they are interested,” said Claeys.

On Election Day, middle school students will participate in a mock election designed to help them understand how the electoral process works. They will be divided into groups of different sizes with different numbers of electoral votes, representing each of the 50 states. “After both the real and mock elections, teachers will use the results to illustrate how the process works,” said Claeys. “Throughout these lessons, our emphasis will be on respectful dialogue and consideration of multiple perspectives and experiences.”

Educators at BASIS Independent School in McLean are teaching students about the political process by linking it to the selection of the school’s mascot. By allowing students to choose a symbol to represent the school, teachers hope to initiate a broad conversation about awareness, empathy and other values.

“Especially for our younger students, conversations about how a mascot represents the qualities and values of our school serves as a good metaphor for the more serious representation in political contexts,” said Sean Aiken, head of school. “Some students prefer traditional mascots to give our school a sense of familiarity and camaraderie. Some want less common mascots to set us apart from other schools and celebrate our individuality.”

The lesson will involve the entire student body. “We ask our older students to generate ideas that take even our youngest 3-year-olds into account so we can unite as a whole school and not just play to specific ‘special interests,’” said Aiken.

“The exercise serves as an impetus for posing thought-provoking questions to the students,” says Aiken. “Should we identify our-


selves as humorous, serious, fierce?” he asks. “What will happen if the greater numbers of students in the middle school prefer a mascot that the much smaller number of sophomores do not prefer? Should we use some sort of delegate system or stick with popular vote? How will we feel if our top choice for mascot ultimately is not selected, and what is the appropriate response to that feeling? Does our choice of mascot represent not just our current community but those who will join us in the future?”

The activities, says Aiken, open the door for conversations about fairness and frustration in ways that are meaningful and age appropriate, and that can be put into the context of the current election season. “While our situation as a brand-new school is somewhat unique, the idea of mascot representation weaves through our whole society and could certainly be used to frame a conversation between students and their families about tone, identity and cooperation,” he said.

Parents should also be aware of the ways the election is affecting their own emotional states and thus their families. “As I watch the presidential debates and continue to read the media coverage of the election, I find myself in an agitated and anxious emotional state,” said Vesely. “This heightened emotional state with feelings of stress and agitation can spill over into family relationships, leaving us less present and sensitive in our interactions with our children and partners.”


Choose the information children are exposed to thoughtfully and be prepared for questions, say experts. “The 2016 general election season [has been] described by some as dark and more negative than any of the recent past elections,” Vesely said. “We want to encourage our children’s participation in the political process, but ... it can sometimes be ugly and hurtful.”


Shielding children, says Vesely, doesn’t mean ignoring negativity entirely, however. “Parents should be prepared to talk through what children might hear from other children on the playground or at school,” she said. “Parents ought to pay attention to ... their children’s emotional states ... especially after viewing or discussing election-related media. As parents, we can look for teachable moments in which we might express notions of treating others how [we] want to be treated.”



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—John Wooden



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NEWS

Jill Banks of Fairfax with her piece, Hudson River Morn at The Artists' Atelier in the Village Green.



Judith St. Ledger-Roty with her painting called Through the Mist at The Artists' Atelier in the Village Green.

PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION

Great Falls Studios Welcome Community

Some 59 artists open their homes and studios to 500 visitors over weekend.

About 500 visitors and 59 artists took part in the 13th annual Great Falls Studios 2016 Art Tour last weekend, Friday through Sunday, Oct. 14-16, in Great Falls. Working artists opened their homes and studios to visitors all over the back roads of Great Falls, and the three group art studios at the Village Green — The Artists' Atelier, Artists on the Green, and The Artists' Loft — participated as well. It was a chance to see artists at work in historic outbuildings, remote sheds, converted garages and other unusual places.

"The really fun thing about this annual event is seeing people from all over the region enjoy the variety of art that the artists of Great Falls share. It's a great community event," said Julie Casso, Executive Director of The Arts of Great Falls. "It's fun to drive down the winding roads of Great Falls and come across a hidden studio."

"Visitors can visit artists in their own creative spaces; they can see art being made on site, talk to artists about

their process and inspiration, and purchase an original piece of art," said Cindy Grisdela, a fiber artist at The Artists' Atelier.

"I think this is a great opportunity to bring the community to see the art that's being produced in Great Falls," said painter Judith St. Ledger-Roty. "It's very diverse; we have oil painters, mixed media, acrylic painters, photographers, and a diversity that has sprung up in the last several years. It's great because it's three days and people can come and meet their friends, have a cup of coffee and enjoy seeing the art that's here."

— STEVE HIBBARD



Roberta Beasley with her acrylic mixed media called Aspen Grove at The Artists' Atelier in the Village Green.



Yeganeh Hejazi with her work, On a Stage, at The Artists' Loft at the Village Green.



Cindy Grisdela demonstrates free-motion quilting at The Artists' Atelier in the Village Green.



Donna Robinson with her work, Mums and Freesia, at The Artists' Loft at the Village Green.



Watercolor artist Betty Ganley specializes in nautical scenes and florals.



Potter Robin Smith holds up a Chili Bowl.



Layered paper artist Ronni Jolles with some of her Paintings with Paper.

CALENDAR



Fully Explore Historic Colvin Run Mill
 Saturday October 22, 2016 at 1:30 p.m.
 Reservations must be made by Tuesday Oct. 4
 Call: 703-759-2771

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY FCPA

Fully Explore the Historic Colvin Run Mill Saturday Oct. 22 at 1:30 p.m. at 10017 Colvin Run Road in Great Falls. Reservations must be made by Tuesday, October 4 by calling 703-759-2771. Come see the entire historic mill, including areas that are rarely open to the public. The suggested donation for the tour is \$10 per person.

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

ONGOING

Meadow Farms Fall Festival Great Falls Oct. 3 - Oct. 31 Monday through Friday 8 - 7 p.m. Saturday 8 - 6 p.m. Sunday 9 - 6 p.m. 10618 Leesburg Pike, Vienna. There will be pumpkins, gourds, cornstalks, mums, pansies, and star bales. We will also have moon bounces, giant scarecrows, haunted buses, pipes for kids to go through, and weekend concessions. meadowfarms.com

The Pumpkin Patch beginning Monday Oct. 10 4 - 7 p.m. then open daily Sunday - Friday 11 - 7 p.m. and 10 - 6 p.m. on Saturdays through Oct. 31. at St. Thomas' Episcopal Church 8991 Brook Rd McLean. All of the money raised by our pumpkin patch is donated to support local

charities. 703-442-0330.
Great Falls Farmers Market. Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 778 Walker Road Great Falls. greatfallsfarmersmarket.org

National Parks Photography Oct. 3 through Oct. 31 During Great Falls Library Hours 9830 Georgetown Pike. "Shapes and Colors of our Southwest National Parks" Photography exhibit by Dee Leggett capturing gorgeous shapes and colors of the beautiful scenes in many of our National Parks and Monuments. Cost: Free. DeeLeggettPhotography.vpweb.com

Fishing Rod Rentals 8700 Potomac Hills Street, Great Falls. Rentals available during visitor center hours. Fishing tackle and live bait are available for purchase. Reservations required for group rentals. \$6/rental (2hr max). Valid driver's license required. Our rod/reel combinations are perfect for beginners and children. A Virginia or Maryland freshwater fishing license is required

for persons 16 years or older. The park does not sell fishing licenses. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend-park/

Great Falls Studios Virtual Gallery Open online 24/7 at <http://www.greatfallsstudios.com/copy-of-virtual-gallery> for the month of October. The gallery features the member artists participating in the Great Falls Studios 2016 Art Tour. During the month of October, in the Large Meeting room at the Great Falls Community Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, GF, member artists participating in the Art Tour are on display. The exhibit will be open during regular library hours.

Colvin Run Mill open 11 - 4 p.m. daily, closed Tuesday. 10017 Colvin Run Rd, Great Falls. Fairfax County's operational 19th century water powered gristmill, offers recreational and educational activities for all ages through daily tours, school programs

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 16



McLean Community Center
 The Center of It All



Here's What's Happening at MCC

Old Firehouse Friday Trip
Bennett's Curse Haunted House



Friday, Oct. 21, 3:30-10 p.m.
 \$50/\$40 Old Firehouse members

The Alden, Speakers & Education



"Jazz Masters with John Eaton: Frank Loesser"

Saturday, Oct. 22, 1 p.m.
 \$12/\$5 MCC district residents

Children's Flea Market
 Saturday, Nov. 5, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
 Patron admission is free.

Onstage @ The Alden

The Okee Dokee Brothers



Sunday, Nov. 6,
 1 and 4 p.m.

\$15/\$10 MCC district residents

McLean Antiques Show & Sale

Saturday, Nov. 12, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 13, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

Admission: \$10, Admission price is good for both days



Silent Movie with Live Music

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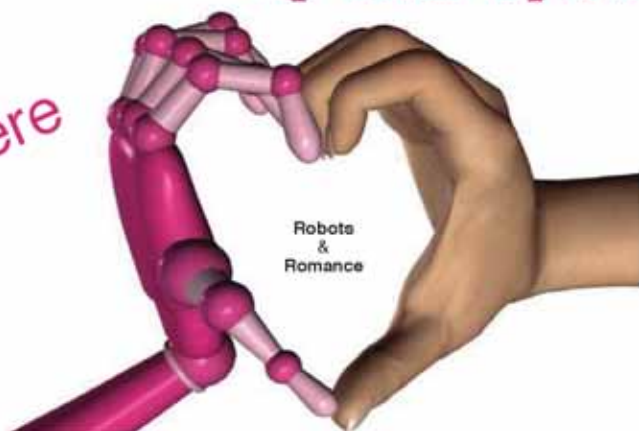
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 CHURCH SCHOOL 9:30AM-10:30AM
 MIDWEEK SERVICES, WED. 7:00 PM

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 15

and special events. Fees: \$7/adult, \$6 students 16+ with ID, \$5 children & seniors. Winter Hours: January & February, 11am-4pm, last tour 3pm. Admission to park is FREE except for some special events.

Art Walk in the Village: First Fridays beginning Sept. 9, 6 - 9 p.m. through Dec.31 at 756 Walker Road, Great Falls. Admission free and open to the public. greatfallsart.org/artwalk/

One-To-One English Conversation Oct. 1 through Oct. 31 101 Patrick Henry Library 101 Maple Ave E, Vienna. Call to Register. 703- 938-0405

THURSDAY/OCT. 20

Great Falls Teen Writer's Group 6 - 7 p.m. 9830 Georgetown Pike Great Falls, VA 22066. Great Falls Meeting Room. Celebrate the spookiest time of the year by sharing an original scary story or practice your storytelling by reading a classic. Ages 8 to 18. 703-438-4503

SATURDAY/OCT. 22

Fully Explore Historic Colvin Run Mill 1:30 p.m. 10017 Colvin Run Road in Great Falls. Reservations must be made by Tuesday, October 4 by calling 703-759-2771. See the entire historic mill, including areas that are rarely open to the public. The suggested donation for the tour is \$10 per person. fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/colvinrunmill/.

SUNDAY/ OCT. 23

New Dominion Chorale 4 p.m. St. Luke Catholic Church, 7001 Georgetown Pike, McLean. The chorale will be joined by Paul Skevington, and some of Washington's finest professional singers, the soloists from The District Eight vocal ensemble. Cost: \$15-30. www.newdominion.org

WEDNESDAY/OCT. 26, 2016

The Cinderella Dream Celebration at Karin's Florist begins at 3:30 p.m. located at 527 Maple Avenue East in Vienna. 70th annual Vienna Halloween Parade in a horse-drawn Cinderella carriage adorned in thousands of fresh flowers. A special guest will also be joining the royal couple. A lucky little girl will be chosen via social media contest to ride in the Cinderella carriage with the Royal Couple and live the life of a princess for one night. Sixty tickets will be available on a first-come first-serve basis until all the tickets are given out. At 4:00pm, there will be an introduction of the Royal Couple and the Little Princess winner. Guests

with tickets will have the opportunity to take photos and talk with Cinderella and Prince Charming on the red carpet. The Vienna Halloween Parade starts at 7:00pm and ends at 9:00pm.

70th Annual Vienna Halloween Parade 7 p.m. Maple Avenue, Vienna. "Celebrating 125 Years of the Town of Vienna" come in costume to celebrate Halloween. Viennava.gov

THURSDAY, OCT. 27

Great Falls Writers Group meets for writing fun and an energetic discussion of the writing process. No membership required. Writers of all levels are welcome. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

FRIDAY/OCT.28

Meeting of the McLean Art Society 10 a.m. - noon hosted by McLean Art Society at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave. Mr. Spollen will be using pastels to demonstrate drawing with spontaneity and pastel painting. Guests are welcome and refreshments are served. 703 790-0123

SATURDAY/ OCT. 29

Concert: The David Trio 4 - 6 p.m. Saint Francis Episcopal Church 9220 Georgetown Pike Great Falls. This Italian ensemble brings the sound of violin, cello, and piano to St. Francis chancel. The sardonic Shostakovich Op. 67 Trio is balanced by a gentle Schubert Notturmo and the spirited energy of Haydn's A-flat major Trio. Cost: Season pass \$150 or \$30 at the door. Amadeusconcerts.com

Oktoberfest Rotary Inaugural Fundraiser 5 p.m. Two German bands, Bavarian dancers, roving accordionist, German food, beer and wine. Cost: \$100 www.rotarygreatfalls.org



PHOTO COURTESY OF MEADOW FARMS

Meadow Farms Fall Festival in Great Falls is a great place to find pumpkins and fall decorations. The Festival runs through Oct. 31 and features a variety of Fall themed activities including moon bounces, giant scarecrows, haunted buses. Meadow Farms Great Falls is open Monday through Friday, 8 - 7 p.m., Saturday 8 - 6 p.m. and Sunday 9 - 6 p.m. at 10618 Leesburg Pike, Vienna.

SUNDAY/OCT. 30

Voce Chamber Singers "Autumn Nocturne" Concert 4 - 5:30 p.m. Church of the Holy Comforter 543 Beulah Rd NE Vienna. Celebrate autumn and its imagery with Voce Chamber Singers. The program includes works of Brahms, Schubert, and Lauridsen, and features Brahms's Alto Rhapsody. Purchase tickets through the website, www.voce.org, or at the door. Admission: Adult: \$25; Senior (62+): \$20; Student: \$10 under 18 free.

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Plan Ahead Great Falls

TUESDAY/NOV. 1

College Savings Information Sessions 7 - 8 p.m. Dolley Madison Library 1244 Oak Ridge Ave McLean. Join this information session to hear about the four college savings programs offered by Virginia529. In one hour, you'll learn how to: Prepay tuition, Save for other costs, such as housing, meal plans and textbooks, Take advantage of the Virginia college savings state income tax deduction, Meet your savings goals. Visit Virginia529.com.

SATURDAY/NOV. 5

Stop Hunger Now Meal Packaging Event 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Redeemer Lutheran Church 1545 Chain Bridge Rd McLean. To donate to Stop Hunger Now McLean or to register to volunteer for the November 5th Meal Packaging Event go to <http://events.stophungernow.org/McLeanRotary2016>

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Christmas Trees Cut Only for Taxes

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Dranesville Planning Commissioner John Ulfelder described the enjoyment a 22.13-acre contiguous parcel of land at 910 Utterback Store Road gives Great Falls.

“For many years, Great Falls residents have found just the right tree for Christmas, fresh vegetables and eggs for their table, and pumpkins for Halloween at Krop’s Farm,” said Ulfelder.

When he said, “It’s fun for everyone, along with the fresh produce and the reminder of a slower-paced time in Fairfax County,” Ulfelder drew a smile from Lee District Planning Commissioner James Migliaccio.

Fairfax County offers reduced real estate tax assessments in exchange for “a commitment to preserve significant tracts of agricultural and forested land a commitment to preserve the land for the length of the term.”

Lawrence Krop applied for the Krop Local Agricultural and Forestal District to renew its A&F District status for another eight years. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the application with an unanimous vote on Thursday, Sept. 29.

“The property owner is to be commended for the dedication to the ongoing stewardship of this prop-

erty,” said Michael Lynskey, with the Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning.

The property is located in Great Falls at the intersection of Georgetown Pike and Utterback Store Road, not far from Route 7.

The property, comprising five contiguous parcels, was established in 1999. The Krops grow Christmas trees, corn, tomatoes, potatoes, squash, beans, peppers, cucumbers and pumpkins, according to planning commission documents.

Part of the property was used as a large dairy farm until 1977 when the applicant acquired the property and began growing Christmas trees for its seasonal “cut-your-own Christmas tree” operation. “Fields of Canaan Fir, Douglas Fir and Blue Spruce are maintained, harvested and replanted,” according to the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District.

The Krops also sell produce and eggs from the property at a roadside farm stand.

As promised, Krop has not substantially altered the property since the creation of the district in July 1999; Lawrence Krop renewed his status in 2008.

Five acres of the site are in agricultural use, 15 acres remain forested or in Christmas tree production and two acres are devoted to the owner’s residence.

The Board of Supervisors is scheduled to hear the request on Oct. 18, at 3:30 p.m.



KEN MOORE/THE CONNECTION

Great Falls residents pick pumpkins, Christmas trees, fresh vegetables and eggs, and even go for hay-rides at Krop’s Farm off Utterback Store Road. Here, youth enjoy a hay-ride around the Krop property Sunday, Oct. 16.

Planning Ahead

OCT. 19, 2016, 8:15 P.M.

Decision only: The Gulick Group has applied to rezone the 11-acre property at the “terminus of Challedon Road” from R-A to R-1 in order to permit development of a 10-lot cluster single family subdivision at a density of 0.91 dwelling units per acre. The 11-acre parcel is currently undeveloped, forested, and composed of moderate slopes that steepen towards the Piney Run floodplain.

The property is part of Lexington Estates.

Fairfax County Planning staff have recommended approval of the redevelopment. Planning Commissioner John Ulfelder deferred a decision only hearing on the application from September to Oct. 19, 2016.

Brightview Great Falls, Madeira School Partner for Off-Campus Internships

Brightview Great Falls, a popular senior living community in Great Falls, is partnering with The Madeira School, an all-girls day and boarding school in McLean.

Volunteers from the tenth grade will experience a variety of roles and job responsibilities at the community during the fall and spring semesters in what is known at Madeira as Sophomore Co-Curriculum.

The off-campus internship experience connects students to their local community and to the concepts of social responsibility and civic engagement.

“A pillar of Madeira’s founding was the notion of Service,” said Kerin Hamel, Director of Co-Curriculum. “We find that students acquire valuable knowledge about and empathy for underserved populations/issues when immersed in that social situation. As a device for learning, it is of the utmost importance. Young women in particular have innate empathy that makes them good stewards of the community.”

“The benefit of having partners such as Brightview is that they help supplement the natural willingness with context [and] real-life experiences for understanding and growth.”

In groups of 5 to 14, the students volunteer at area schools, various nonprofits, and local government organizations. The Co-Curriculum Fall semester runs each day from Oct. 11 – Nov. 10.

Brightview Senior Living’s President Marilyn Duker will host a meet and greet



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Student interns dance at Dancing Queens Group.

for the six Brightview interns on Oct. 25. The community will also host other guest speakers including Buckley Fricker, local author and owner of Buckley’s for Seniors.

“This program allowed me to experience a professional environment apart from my family and friends,” noted Carolyn Pennington, Community Sales Director and Madeira Alumna. “Learning something en-

tirely new was intimidating but realizing I could develop ideas and strengths through participating was empowering.”

“I am thrilled that Brightview can offer these girls the same opportunity.”

Other sites for Co-Curriculum include Special Olympics, Garfield Elementary School, The Kilmer Center, Calleva Farms, NOVA Family Service (a Head Start Center)



The off-campus internship experience connects students to their local community and to the concepts of social responsibility and civic engagement.

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Brightview Senior Living and its parent company, The Shelter Group, successfully create and manage innovative, award-winning senior living communities in the mid-Atlantic to New England region. For more information on Brightview Senior Living, visit www.brightviewseniorliving.com

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28 Yard Sales

201 Import Auto

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Huge Yard Sale to benefit the Feline Foundation of Greater Washington, 10/22, 8-1 p.m., 2355 Bedfordshire Cir. Reston. Sports equipment, video, pet items, housewares, art, jewelry, much more. Special guest appearance by author Ingrid King signing her feline-related books 10 - noon.

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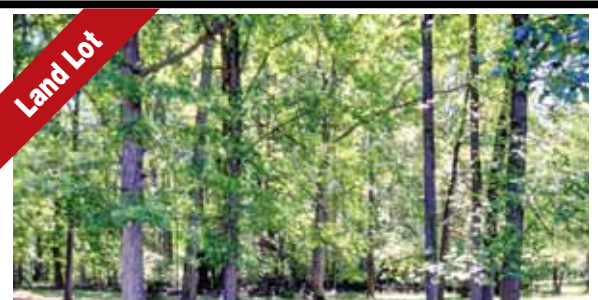
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