

WELLBEING

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Astronaut Sandy Magnus was a special guest on the school's morning news show and helped sixth-grader Ethan Skowronek read off announcements. She also answered questions about extraterrestrials.

2016
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Astronaut Tells Elementary Students To Reach For The Stars

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Town Hall Debates \$57 Million Gap

Where to cut?

BY FALLON FORBUSH
THE CONNECTION

The Fairfax County Public Schools projected a \$57 million shortfall in its budget for next school year, which will impact the more than 188,000 students that are projected to be educated in the system next school year.

The Great Falls Citizens Association hosted a budget town hall at the Great Falls Library on Tuesday, Feb. 21, where approximately 20 people attended to ask questions and voice concerns.

The town hall was moderated by Matthew Haley, an executive board member of the GFCA and chair of the FCPS Budget Task Force.

Participants included:

- ❖ Joe Mondoro, CFO for Fairfax County;
- ❖ Kristen Michael, assistant superintendent of financial services for the Fairfax County Public Schools;
- ❖ Jane Strauss, vice chair and Dranesville District representative on the FCPS Board;
- ❖ Jeanette Hough, member-at-large on the FCPS Board; and
- ❖ Supervisor John Foust, Dranesville representative on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

THE \$2.8 BILLION fiscal year 2018 budget that the FCPS is presenting to the Board of Supervisors for the next school year is an increase of about 5 percent, or about \$135 million, from the fiscal year 2017 budget.

The FCPS budget relies primarily on the Fairfax County general fund. The other two primary sources come from state aid and sales tax revenues.



The town hall was moderated by Matthew Haley, a Great Falls Citizens Association executive board member and chair of the FCPS Budget Task Force. Participants included: Joe Mondoro, CFO for Fairfax County; Kristen Michael, assistant superintendent of financial services for the Fairfax County Public Schools; Jane Strauss, vice chair and Dranesville District representative on the FCPS Board; Jeanette Hough, member-at-large on the FCPS Board; and Supervisor John Foust, Dranesville representative on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

FCPS is asking the county to provide \$2 billion, or about 72 percent of the total revenue for its new budget. The request is nearly 6 percent more, or an additional \$112.5 million, than it requested from the county for its fiscal year 2017 budget.

"It's clearly, nearly all of our revenue," Michael said during the town hall.

FCPS is also asking for a \$14.4 million increase in state funding and a \$6.6 million increase in funding from sales taxes, compared to the last budget.

The problem is that FCPS's request to the county exceeds its available revenues by more than \$60 million.

When FCPS applies increased revenue from the state and federal funding, they are left with a gap of \$57.4 million, Michael said.

Because of this deficit, there are \$47.9 million in potential cuts or new revenue sources being considered by FCPS.

Of the more contentious ideas being considered to balance the budget are \$1.2 mil-

lion in cuts to programs for English for speakers of other languages.

Town hall participants had many questions about the FCPS's \$2.5 million World Languages Immersion program, including the Japanese program at Great Falls Elementary School.

"The Japanese immersion is not an expensive program," Strauss said. "It does have an additional expense, it also has huge support among the parents."

Both of Pete Kurzenhauser's children went through the Japanese immersion program at Great Falls Elementary School. He also chaperoned a school trip to Japan after his students finished the sixth grade.

"We got to Japan and none of them had any conversational capabilities in Japanese," he said. "We need to take a real hard look at the immersion programs and ask whether the value is worth the additional cost."

He also said that a lot of students that start out in this program often drop out,



PHOTOS BY FALLON FORBUSH

Pete Kurzenhauser of Great Falls criticized the FCPS World Languages Immersion program and suggested that it be looked at when making tough budget decisions.

which drives up the program's cost-per-student because the students are difficult or impossible to replace.

More proposed cost-savings measures include adding \$3.8 million in athletic fees and delaying the start of music programs from the fourth grade to fifth grade, which would save \$2.8 million.

Another would save \$22.8 million by increasing class sizes for all grade levels by one student.

WHAT THE BUDGET is not looking to reduce or hold flat is employee compensation. In fact, the highest expenditure of the budget is employee compensation at 89 percent.

"We started this current school year with approximately 180 vacancies," said Michael. This is unprecedented for the county, ac-

SEE TOWN HALL, PAGE 11

Equestrian Athletes Need Opportunities, Too

One nay doesn't stop a pasture of support for home riding lessons. Many in Oakton, Vienna and Great Falls testify.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Natalie Martinisko was the youngest speaker before the county's Board of Supervisors Tuesday, Feb. 14.

"I've tried a lot of other sports besides horseback riding and I have not liked them as much, so we decided to look for barns. The only ones we could find were about 30 to 45 minutes away," said Natalie.

She told the 10-member Board of Supervisors she wanted to ride with one of her friends whose family owns horses. "I think it would be great to let people train at their

houses," said Natalie.

But the county's zoning ordinances prohibited home occupation lessons and her friend's mother couldn't give Natalie lessons.

"There are many kids that don't fit into the traditional sports model of soccer, basketball, lacrosse, swimming or dance. I know because my daughter tried most of those sports and none really clicked for her," said Natalie's mother, Mary Martinisko.

"Being that she's always been animal oriented, I signed her up for summer camp at at Frying Pan Park," said Mary Martinisko. "Over time, she said horseback riding was all that she really enjoyed."

The Board of Supervisors passed a change to the zoning ordinance on Feb. 14 that will allow "small scale horseback riding lessons as a home occupation subject to specific limitations designed to minimize the impact of the lessons on surrounding properties."

Specifically, the proposed ordinance would allow residents to conduct riding lessons at home like piano lessons, tutoring, or other private instruction activities.

"My girls have taken tennis at other people's houses, they have taken soccer, they have taken swimming and basketball at other people's houses, but they haven't been able to take riding," said Kim Karanik, of Great Falls. "I hope this gets looked at and passed tonight."

Supervisor John Foust received 17 letters or emails in support of the proposed amendment, Sharon Bulova received 15, Pat Herrity received 11, "all in support," he said.

"Clearly, there's a shortage of opportunities," Herrity said.

The board passed the zoning amendment unanimously.

NOT ALL SPEAKERS spoke in favor of the zoning amendment.

"Well, I was the only person in opposition to these proposed changes at the Planning Commission hearing in January," said Anne Huffman, of Great Falls. "This set of proposed changes are too intense for people, environment, streams and the horses themselves."

(See Huffman's letter to the editor in the Feb. 22 issue of the Great Falls Connection.)

"Horses have a high impact on land," said Huffman.

Penny Gross acknowledged one of Huffman's objections, regarding manure and its impact on the health of local streams.

"Manure can be a significant issue," said Gross.

She remembered years ago, when two

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NEWS



Students were eager to get Principal Bob Fuqua's attention during the assembly so they could ask Astronaut Sandy Magnus about her experience in outer space.



Astronaut Sandy Magnus talked to third-, fourth-, fifth- and sixth-graders in the cafeteria about her experience working for NASA. She is now the executive director of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics in Reston.



Student Omar Hallab raises his hand to ask Astronaut Sandy Magnus a question during the assembly.

Astronaut Tells Elementary Students

"Find your dream."

BY FALLON FORBUSH
THE CONNECTION

Former NASA Astronaut Sandy Magnus visited Chesterbrook Elementary School in McLean for National Engineers Week on Thursday, Feb. 23.

EWeek was recognized by the National Society of Professional Engineers and its member organizations from Feb. 19-25.

Since 1951, EWeek has encouraged engineers to help increase awareness and interest in careers in engineering and technology. The

occasion was founded by the National Society of Professional Engineers.

Magnus knew early on that her dream was to be an astronaut, before she even knew what engineering was.

"I was in middle school when it hit me like, 'Wow, I want to be an astronaut,'" she told students during an assembly. "I had no idea how I was going to do it, but I knew it was my dream so I knew I had to try it and go for it."

She hit the books.

Magnus studied physics in college. She then went on to earn a master's degree in electrical engineering in 1990 and then a PhD in 1996. Her dream then came true.

Magnus was selected to be in the NASA As-

tronaut Corps in April 1996. She then traveled into space on three different missions from 2002 to 2011, including an expedition to the International Space Station.

"I decided to try because it was my dream," she said. "I want you guys to find your dream, whatever it is ... I want you to go for it because you can do it. You can absolutely do it."

While Magnus was one of the last astronauts to travel in NASA's space shuttle program before it ended in 2011, she says "we live in a great era for space exploration" and sees it getting better and better because of the increase in "companies now interested in doing things in space," she said.

Residents Testify in Favor of Equestrian Opportunities

FROM PAGE 3

students wrote her, asking for special exception permission to allow their horses to be boarded underneath the decks at their houses.

"I wrote back and explained why that wouldn't be such a great idea. Their parents have thanked me ever since," said Gross.

Huffman spoke before the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

"This type of applicant needs to be given public scrutiny. There's a huge difference between indoor piano lessons and outdoor horseback riding instruction," said Huffman, asking who will monitor care of the horses and the amount of activity that takes place.

No special events will be permitted, she was told at the Planning Commission hearing.

"Good luck enforcing that," Huffman said.

CURRENTLY, A SPECIAL PERMIT to teach riding lessons requires a \$8,180 application fee, just to start the process.

"While evidence is anecdotal, the equestrian community has seen a long-term decline in the number of riding programs available in Fairfax County, as property owners and horse trainers are concerned about the consequences of potential zoning violations associated with the board of more than three horses or with offering any riding lessons," according to staff reports.

"This has garnered so much support from the

riding and equestrian community," said at-large Planning Commissioner Janyce Hedetniemi at its public hearing on Jan. 12. "It has been encouraging to those of us who love horses here in Fairfax County."

Beverly Dickerson, of Oakton, is president of Fairfax for Horses. "There is a large unmet demand for riding lessons in Fairfax County as you are hearing. Long waiting lists in the existing stables, few places to go, and as Natalie just said, 'Not every child is interested in team sports,'" Dickerson told the board.

"We need to provide good recreation for a wide range of children and adults," said Dickerson.

Equestrian sports need to be passed down from other riders, said Lisa Mulville, of Vienna. "I grew up here in the county and I have had a horse since I was 14 and the responsibility it taught me was incredible," she said.

"We're losing a lot of revenue in this county because as stables and horse folks leave so do the vets, so do the blacksmiths, so do the local tack shops," she said.

Sarah Kirk, owner of the Saddlery in Great Falls, moved to the county in 1981, and to Great Falls in 1998. "I had three ponies and nowhere to put them,"

"It is disappointing to see small operations moving, and the people that teach riding going to Loudoun County and Maryland," Kirk said. "We believe passionately in this sport."

"EVERY OTHER SPORT, you're allowed to do at your home," said Karanik.

According to Planning Commission documents, hours of operation would be limited from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. to minimize impact on surrounding neighbors; and all horses for riding must be kept on the property and can't be transported or ridden to the property for lessons. On lots sized between two and five acres, the maximum amount of instruction is eight students in one day and no more than two students can be given lessons at any given time. On lots five acres or more, a maximum of four students can be taught at any one time.

"The amendment would increase the maximum number of horses or ponies that can be boarded by right on a property from three horses on any lot, to up to five horses on lots containing a minimum of two acres and less than five acres, and up to eight horses on lots containing five or more acres. The maximum number of horses that may kept, boarded or maintained shall not include the horses owned by the resident of the property," according to planning documents.

Karanik gave credit to Foust for helping her navigate the zoning process that prevented home riding.

"What I am trying to fight for is continuing the equestrian sport in the community. We felt the importance of bringing the sport to children," said Karanik.



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Good, Bad and Missed Opportunities

Results of the 2017 session of the General Assembly.

GOOD THINGS

Progress in funding mental health and addressing the opioid epidemic on multiple levels were among the successes of the 2017 General Assembly session.

❖ In addressing the opioid crisis, the General Assembly passed important steps, including Del. Tim Hugo's bill to limit opioid prescriptions to a seven-day supply in most cases; increased access to naloxone, a drug that instantly reverses an overdose; needle exchange programs (to reduce the spread of HIV, viral hepatitis, and other blood-borne diseases); focus on infants born with opioid exposure.

❖ Increased funding for mental health included \$7.5 million to facilitate providing same-day access to mental health screening services by July 1, 2019. (The Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board began offering same day, in-person screening for mental health/and or substance use concerns to adults in July 2015 and extended same day access service to youth. The official launch date for youth walk-in service was Feb. 1, 2017.) Also supports for discharge planning and services for people with serious mental illness being released from jail.

❖ The budget included 3 percent raises state employees, increase for teachers and a larger increase for state police.

❖ The Virginia Board of Corrections was given added authority and resources to review deaths in local and regional jails.

❖ Negotiation and legislation will accelerate the City of Alexandria's massive undertaking to fix its sewer system that dumps raw sewage into the Potomac River whenever it rains.

Wendell Berry's version of the golden rule: "Do unto those downstream as you would have those upstream do unto you."

❖ Scott Surovell's bill requiring Dominion to provide better information on coal ash pollution, disaster preparedness, and recycling.

❖ Eileen Filler-Corn's bill requiring that insurance cover up to a 12-month supply of hormonal contraceptives when dispensed or furnished at one time.

❖ School boards are required to have anti-bullying policies that includes notifying parents that their student was involved in a bullying incident.

❖ Use of FaceBook Live allowed members to stream floor discussion, and report to constituents and answer questions directly.

BAD BILLS

Gov. Terry McAuliffe has already vetoed some of these, and is expected to veto some others.

❖ Expanded access to concealed weapons; vetoed by Governor. SB1362 would allow anyone with a military ID card to carry concealed weapon; HB2077 would allow guns in emergency shelters and prevents state police or others from prohibiting them for any reason

❖ End funding of Planned Parenthood, vetoed by Governor.

❖ Anti-Sanctuary City Law HB 2000 says no locality shall adopt any ordinance, procedure, or policy that restricts the enforcement of federal immigration laws.

❖ As a reality check on the Virginia General Assembly, HB2025 would allow discrimination against LGBT community under guise of religious freedom, and passed 21-19 in the Senate and 57-37 in the House of Delegates.

❖ HJ 545 would allow special committees of the General Assembly to overturn regulations, upsetting separation of powers. Constitutional amendment (first resolution): "Provides that the General Assembly may suspend

or nullify any or all portions of any administrative rule or regulation."

❖ Photo identification required for absentee ballots.

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

❖ The biggest missed opportunity of the 2017 General Assembly session was the failure to advance any redistricting legislation, which passed in the Senate and died in the House of Delegates. It's clear that Virginia voters want an end to gerrymandering, but hopes for reform before the next census in 2020 are diminished.

❖ Mental Health in Jails: \$4.5 million was removed from the Governor's proposed budget that would have paid for desperately needed mental health screening in jails.

❖ Legislation to raise Virginia's threshold between misdemeanors and felonies from \$200 to \$500 failed. Virginia's threshold has not changed since 1981, unnecessarily focusing "police and prosecutors on minor crimes instead of violent crime while tainting thousands of Virginia's suffering from depression or drug addiction with felony charges for life," says Surovell.

❖ Ken Plum's bill to increase and index the minimum wage never made it out of committee.

❖ Bills to address student debt also died during the session, as did bills aimed at reducing student suspensions and expulsions.

❖ Republicans stripped language that would have brought \$6 million in federal funds to provide Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) to those at risk for unintended pregnancy at no cost to Virginia voters.

Thanks to Ken Plum, Scott Surovell, Marcus Simon, Jennifer Boysko, Adam Ebbin and others whose columns and responses helped inform this editorial. We welcome opinions and additions to this list.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

OBITUARY

Richard Dell Rosenbaum

Richard Dell Rosenbaum, retired ABC News executive, respected journalist and beloved husband and father, died at Georgetown Hospital, Washington, D.C., Saturday, Feb. 19, 2017, from complications following surgery. He was 76 years old.

Known to associates and close friends as both Dick and "Rosie," he embodied the best qualities of a broadcast journalist in his 40-plus year career.

Born July 26, 1940, in Kansas City, Mo., he was predeceased by parents Fred and Dorcie Rosenbaum.

Rosenbaum hosted his first weekly radio programs at KVGB in Great Bend, Kansas, while still in high school. He attended Kansas State University and was employed as a newsreader/announcer on the campus radio station, KSAC and at KSDB-FM as a sportscaster. From these beginnings, he went on to KVOE, Emporia Kan-

sas, KCKN Kansas City, Missouri, and KFEQ in St. Joseph, Missouri, where he was both a radio disc jockey and a television director

From 1962 to 1965, he was enlisted in the United States Army where he was an instructor in the Radio Television Department at the Department of Defense Information School and then assigned to the American Forces Network, Europe.

1965 began a storied career for Rosenbaum with ABC News, including assignments as Bureau Chief, Saigon, during the Vietnam War, Bureau Chief, Chicago, Illinois, West Coast Bureau Chief, Los Angeles, California, and Manager of News for the ABC News Information Radio Network. He won the Overseas Press Club Award in 1968 for coverage of the Tet Offensive in South Vietnam.

In 1983, he was named Senior Producer for World News Tonight with Peter Jennings in

Washington, D.C., and later Director of Special Events, Radio News. As such, he was radio pool producer for presidential trips to China, Europe and Asia and was the producer for radio coverage of the Democratic and Republican Conventions in 1984 and 1988, as well as Election Night coverage in 1986. In 1987, he was named General Manager, News Programming, overseeing all news and public affairs programming on all six full service ABC Radio Networks.

After seven years, Rosenbaum returned to Washington as Bureau Chief for ABC Radio and he retired from ABC in 2000, 35 years with the company, to enjoy volunteer opportunities serving as McLean Little League President and as PTA treasurer at both Haycock Elementary and Longfellow Middle Schools in McLean, Virginia.

SEE OBITUARY, PAGE 7



OBITUARY

Richard Dell Rosenbaum

FROM PAGE 6

Dick married Anne Eastman in 1987 and she survives him, along with four adored children: Peter Rosenbaum, Petra Rosenbaum Marino, Alex Rosenbaum and Chris Rosenbaum; and four grandchildren; Madison, Turner and Grant Rosenbaum and Ryan Marino. A brother and sister also survive him, Tom Rosenbaum and Nancy Rosenbaum Bonds, both of Arkansas.

Colleagues and friends described him as a first rate newsman, a "square shooter,"

and a first class gentleman devoted to his wife and children.

A service of remembrance was held on Friday, Feb. 24, at 3 o'clock at Washington National Cathedral in the Great Choir, with the Rev. Canon John Kitagawa officiating. The family requests that gifts in his memory be directed to the School of Communications, Elon University, Elon, North Carolina (elon.edu/makeagift), or to The Focus Foundation (thefocusfoundation.org/) in lieu of flowers.

FAITH NOTES

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

The S.P.O.T for Youth Wednesday's at 7 p.m. A place where youth can come together and pray, ask questions about the faith and receive mentorship. The spot is a ministry of First Baptist Church of Vienna located at 450 Orchard Street, NW Vienna.

First Baptist Church of Vienna located at 450 Orchard Street, NW Vienna. Sunday services are held at 7:45 and 10 a.m. weekly. Wednesday Night with the Family service is held at 6 p.m. followed by corporate singing at 7 p.m. Bible studies take place Tuesday's at noon.

Wesley United Methodist Church located at 711 Spring Street SE, Vienna, Virginia 22180, at the corner of Spring Street and Moore Avenue. 10:30 a.m. fellowship time in the fellowship hall;

11 a.m. traditional family worship in sanctuary. If you are seeking a church home which encourages: caring and supportive fellowship, an active and devoted prayer life and study of scripture, support for local and world missions, an open, responsive awareness to the presence and power of God's Holy Spirit.

Youth Activities at Wesley United Methodist Church Activities are open to all 6th-12th graders. Youth Sunday School meets every Sunday at 10 a.m. in the upper room.

Youth Bible Study will meet every Sunday at 4:30 p.m. off-site. Following bible study we will ride together over to the church for youth group. Email the Youth Ministry Staff for the address.

The Anchor meets every Sunday from 6-8 p.m. in the fellowship hall. Join us for dinner, games, worship, and diving deeper into the Word.

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Mild Winter Means Early Allergy Season

Experts offer suggestions to prevent and treat allergy symptoms.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION



PHOTO COURTESY OF
BARBARA MACKIE

Allergist Dr. Barbara Mackie, M.D. advises patients who normally have seasonal allergies to begin taking medication early.

Those experiencing Itchy, watery eyes and seemingly endless sneezing know that spring allergy season is getting an early start this year thanks to this season's mild winter weather.

"Everything is blooming early because of the warm weather," said Dr. Barbara Mackie, M.D., allergist, of Privia Medical Group in Vienna. "People are spending more time outside because the weather is lovely, but they're experiencing allergy symptoms."

One of the keys to surviving allergy season is staying ahead of it. When thermometers are rising above 60 degrees for more than three consecutive days, pollen from plants begins to move through the air. The tree pollen count has reached high concentration levels in the Washington, D.C. re-

gion, according to The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology's National Allergy Bureau Pollen and Mold Report.

"Most of the time seasonal allergies, whether it is spring or fall, are caused by pollens that are associated with grass, trees and weeds," said Dr. Victoria A Garrison, M.D. a Student Health Services physician and a professor in the School of Nursing at George Mason University in Fairfax, "In areas that are damp or humid, mold spores can also be a factor. When people have allergies to these substances, the immune system will react and cause symptoms like sneezing, watery, itchy eyes, runny nose, sore or itchy throat, congestion and fatigue."

"Mild winter temperatures cause plants

to pollinate early," added Maureen Moriarty, DNP, assistant professor of Nursing at Marymount University in Arlington. "This problem may be compounded by a rainy spring season, leading to increased mold levels that can drive allergy symptoms in sufferers through fall months."

Instead of waiting for full-blown symptoms, Mackie recommends beginning medications early. "What I usually tell patients who normally have seasonal allergies is to take their maintenance medications early so they're covered when allergy season hits," she said.

"Being prepared can often help slow down symptoms of allergies," added Kathy Grilliot, director of Clinical Education Respiratory Therapy Program at Northern Virginia Community College's Medical Education Campus in Springfield.

"Before the season starts, it is a good idea to start taking a nasal steroid. This medication takes a few weeks to gain full effect so starting before the allergens are everywhere can really help to control symptoms. Eyes can also have allergic reactions, so see a specialist to have a good eye drop for allergen control."

For those who might be perplexed by the distinction between allergies and a common cold: "If it's lasting more than three days

with no fever, it's probably not a cold," said Mackie.

Some precautions that allergy sufferers can take to decrease their exposure to allergens include wearing a face mask when outside during times when the pollen count is high and resisting the urge to open car and house windows when the weather is warm, especially if the wind is blowing. "Take off your shoes when you enter your house so that allergens don't get spread around the house," said Grilliot. "Be aware where you place clothing that has been outside when you enter your house to prevent allergens from entering your home."

"I advise patients to rinse their hair and take a shower to get the pollen off before going to bed at night," added Mackie. "Otherwise you're getting pollen on your pillowcase and sheets and breathing it in all night."

There are certain times of day when allergy sufferers should avoid being outside. "Mid-morning, afternoon and early evening are peak times for pollen," continued Mackie. "When it's windy, don't go out because of the pollen."

Pets can spread pollen as well. "Dogs get spring fever too and want to be outside, but they can bring pollen into the house," said Mackie. "Wipe off their coats and paws when they come inside."

Supervisor Herry and Connection Newspapers' 2017 Fairfax County Teen Job Fairs and Resume Building Workshops



- Full time employment
- After-school employment
- Seasonal positions

Chantilly High School
Saturday, March 18
10 am to 12 pm

Co-sponsored by Supervisor Kathy Smith, Chantilly HS STEM Academy, and Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce

Oakton High School
Saturday, March 18
1 pm to 3 pm

Co-sponsored by Supervisor Linda Smyth and Oakton HS Marketing Department

- Internship opportunities
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West Springfield High School
Saturday, April 1
12 pm to 2 pm

Co-sponsored by West Springfield HS Student Government and Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce

South County Secondary School
Saturday, April 29
11 am to 1 pm

Co-sponsored by Supervisor Dan Storck, South Fairfax Chamber of Commerce, South County Federation, and South County Secondary School

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Comstock Skips Constituent-Organized Town Hall

Representative uses tele-town halls to discuss issues with voters.

BY FALLON FORBUSH
THE CONNECTION

A microphone reserved for U.S. Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-10) remained silent during a town hall meeting on Friday, Feb. 24, where 150 of her constituents gathered to question her.

Members of the Indivisible Virginia District 10 group knew that Comstock declined their invitation, but they chose to set up a mic and a paper name plate for their Congressional lawmaker just in case she changed her mind. After all, the event was scheduled during Congress's week-long recess from Feb. 19 to Feb. 25 when federal lawmakers typically spend time meeting with constituents in their home districts.

Instead, the congresswoman chose to attend a Catholic Charities Ball for the Diocese of Arlington at the Ritz-Carlton in Tysons, leaving organizers to fact check her public record and attempt to answer questions on her behalf.

An official invitation was given to Comstock on Tuesday, Feb. 7, according to Jan Hyland, a member of the Lovettsville Indivisible group who helped organize the in-person town hall with other members of Indivisible groups throughout northern Virginia.

Indivisible groups have been forming across the country after the publication of an "Indivisible Guide" that was created in December to help people resist the Trump administration's agenda, according to the grassroots group's website.

Virginia Indivisible members living in the 10th Congressional District, like Hyland, were surprised to see that Comstock announced a telephone town hall the very same day they invited her to their in-person town hall.

Individuals subscribed to Comstock's email list received a last-minute invitation to register to participate in the call that would be taking place the following day, Wednesday, Feb. 8.

The short notice, indirect answers from Comstock and the participant's inability to ask follow-up questions left Hyland and her Indivisible peers determined that their in-person town hall was still necessary.

"People left that [telephone] town hall feeling all the more frustrated," said Hyland.

While the gymnasium met its small capacity that evening without Comstock, many more people saw her absence by tuning into the event over the Web. There have been more than 1,000 views of the town hall's live and archived Facebook Live feeds that streamed the event.

"The congresswoman hosts telephone town halls where she can talk to thousands of her constituents in a civil and conversational manner," said Jeffrey Marschner, Comstock's spokesperson, told the Connection in an email. "She has been doing telephone town halls since she was a delegate in 2010."

PHOTOS BY FALLON FORBUSH/THE CONNECTION



Alane Dashner of Great Falls asked how the Republican administration planned to pay for the replacement of the Affordable Care Act.



Lindsey Davis Stover of McLean voiced concern over the demise of the Affordable Care Act and how U.S. Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-10) would keep birth control accessible and affordable if the law was repealed.

Marschner said Comstock's constituents appreciate the opportunity to call in from home or wherever they are and listen in at their convenience.

"There is a lot of hunger for engagement with representatives," said Nathan Williams, one of the primary organizers of the Town Hall Project.

His new grassroots project has sprung up to help satisfy the demand for lawmaker's attention and is attempting to publicize all congressional town hall and constituent events.

"This resource should exist, in fact we were surprised it didn't exist, that nobody had a single source of every member of Congress' public events," he said.

Since the project is a "labor of passion," Williams relies on small donations and volunteer researchers from across the country who contribute to and update calendars, which can be a difficult task.

"You can't find all of these events by going to their website or going to their Facebook page," he said. "Some members of Congress seem to be going to great lengths to avoid making the events known."

ACCORDING TO MARSCHNER, Comstock spent time in the district on Wednesday, Feb. 22, speaking at a rotary club in Manassas, visiting a rehab health care facility in Gainesville and stopping into



Sue Reilly and her husband Steve Duggas of Ashburn stand and show their support when someone said U.S. Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-10) should support a pathway to citizenship for people living in the country without legal permission instead of deporting them.



The seat at the table for U.S. Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-10) at the Sterling Community Center remained empty during the town hall.

a local pharmacy to discuss health care issues. She finished the day in Great Falls by attending a law enforcement fundraiser at the Brix American Bistro.

Two telephone town halls that Comstock held this month were publicized in two emails that were only sent to subscribers on her opt-in email list. There was no information about the events on her website or social media channels prior to the event.

"It was emailed to the congresswoman's e-newsletter list, put on her website and Facebook page," Marschner said. "It was taken down from the Facebook page when registration closed."

This behavior isn't unusual, especially for reluctant Republicans who have noticed other rowdy town halls by colleagues across the country.

"We don't have years and years of data, but we do get a sense that there are members of Congress that in the past have held in-person town halls who are now holding tele-town halls or Facebook Live events where frankly questions are typically screened," said Williams.

While Williams cannot confirm whether Comstock screened her questions, he said that it is a typical process for members of Congress, which is why his group does not think virtual events are sufficient substitutes for in-person town halls.

"There are cases to be made to having a

tele-town hall in addition to having an in-person town hall," he said. "Unless they can demonstrate that they are taking all questions [in a] totally open format, there is no reason to believe as a constituent that they have the same level of openness and accountability that an in-person town hall has where someone raises their hand and takes the microphone to ask their question."

Comstock's office emailed a second invitation for another telephone town hall on Feb. 18. This time, constituents were given more advanced notice, as the tele-town hall was scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 21.

Last week, in-person meetings were also given to constituents who had pressed staff members for face time with Comstock, according to Hyland. However, these meetings were brief and limited to one or two at a time. The meetings were also at her office on Capitol Hill and the invitations were given out with very short notice, according to Hyland.

"Basically, people have a day's notice or less to take off time from work and they're being asked to travel into Washington to her office in D.C., not here in the actual district," Hyland said. "There's no reason that people who live as far away as Winchester, Clarke County or those of us out here in Lovettsville, etcetera, to have to drive out of district on a week where she's being paid to be out here with us."

While there was a noticeable effort to quell in-person meetings last week, her constituents have been complaining about it all month.

"A friend just came back from a Comstock event in Oakton — Barbara was supposed to meet constituents there to talk about the repeal of Obamacare and she never showed up," wrote Fairfax resident James McCeney on the public Facebook page of Our Revolution Northern Virginia, a liberal activist group.

Comstock sent staff members to the event instead.

"There's a difference between listening to someone on the phone or reading a Facebook text question versus having a person look you in the eye and say, 'I'm very concerned about losing my health insurance and I'm a real person, I'm standing here in front of you, I'm not a paid protester, I'm not a made-up Internet troll, I'm real and my concerns are real and you represent me, so what are you going to do about it,'" said Williams. "Regardless of where they are in the political spectrum, I think every member of Congress needs that face-to-face interaction with their constituents," Williams said.

Comstock's office is currently polling constituents over email about their stances on issues. On Feb. 15, subscribers to her email list received a short online "Issues Survey."

"I would like to know which issues are most important to you and what issues you feel should be addressed?" her email read.

She asked recipients to react to policy statements by checking one of three options by each statement: "Agree," "Disagree" or "No Opinion."

Prayer Vigil at ICE Office

Rising Hope pastor speaks about arrests outside church.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

On the morning of Feb. 8, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers showed up across the street from Rising Hope Mission Church on Russell Road in the Mount Vernon area of Alexandria. According to several witnesses, men who had just left the church's hypothermia shelter for the day were set upon and questioned.

Some were asked if they'd seen any number of illegal immigrant criminals for which the officers were searching. Others, Latinos in the group, were singled out, fingerprinted, and some even restrained, forced into vans and driven away, witnesses said.

An ICE official would only confirm that two arrests were made at that location on that day.

"Every day, as part of routine targeted enforcement operations, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrests criminal aliens and other individuals who are in violation of our nation's immigration laws," the official said in a statement.

But on Feb. 17, Kincannon and other religious leaders decided to pay a return visit to ICE, specifically at the field office on Prosperity Avenue in Fairfax. He said they have been trying to find out the names of the men who were allegedly picked up in the vans but haven't been successful yet.

After reports of ICE officers conducting large surges of searches, "targeted enforcement actions," for undocumented immigrant criminals that followed executive order from President Donald Trump, this action in Mount Vernon has sparked fear in the community and calls for answers from leaders, according to the religious leaders.

Gov. Terry McAuliffe released a letter Feb. 16 directed to John Kelly, secretary of Homeland Security, requesting an immediate briefing regarding the events outside Rising Hope, as chronicled by NBC Washington.

"These reports are anecdotal and I recognize that previous administrations have conducted immigration enforcement actions," McAuliffe writes. "However, the NBC report raises a concern that, unlike previous actions, ICE agents are detaining Virginia residents without cause or specific allegations of criminal activity."

"This is something we will not stand for," Kincannon said at the vigil. "That's our legal cause in why we are opposing what is happening. But there's a moral cause as well, that goes to the heart of our faith."

Kincannon said that Jesus Christ taught "how we treat the least of these" is how we treat him.

"So when we detain people without cause, any allegation of criminal activity," he continued, "it's the same as detaining Jesus Christ, without cause, any allegation of criminal activity."

Oscar Ramirez, one of the green card-carrying men who said he was detained and questioned by ICE on Feb. 8 before eventually being released, said fear in the immigrant and Latino community has caused people to stay inside, away from public and government buildings.

"We've come too far building relationships with the immigrant population [to] sever ties like this."

— Supervisor Jeff McKay (D-Lee)

Supervisor Jeff McKay (D-Lee) said this is a major blow to the public's relationship with law enforcement — one that Fairfax County Police have been working to repair and bolster.

McKay said many people don't differentiate among law enforcement — all are "police." And if residents, undocumented or not, refuse to open the door or run the other way when FCPD comes around looking for help solving crimes, that's a concern.

"We've come too far building relationships with the immigrant population," McKay said, to "sever ties like this."

McKay cited the recent murder case of 15-year-old Damaris Reyes Rivas, for which FCPD has arrested 10 suspects and issued murder charges against five of them.

"Without that cooperation, we wouldn't have people under arrest," McKay said.

FCPD Chief of Police Edwin Roessler said community involvement was definitely part of the case that helped them solve it.

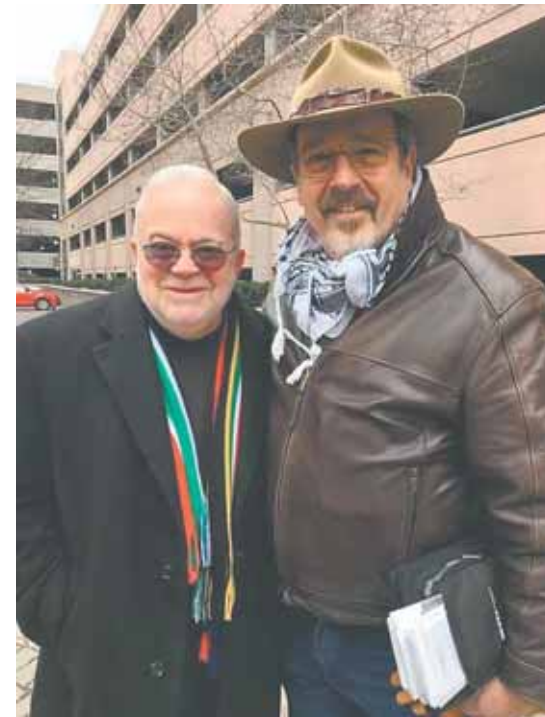
Regarding the ICE activity as a threat to public trust of police, Roessler said "I absolutely have concern."

He said he's been hearing the same questions from numerous sources, "challenging me with what boils down to the perception, that we're out there as immigration police."

ICE is out there, Roessler said, but the myth that's developed about FCPD "doing immigration raids in certain parts of the county, it's not true."

FCPD does not participate in ICE's enforcement activity, the chief said. "I need the community to understand the FCPD primary mission is to prevent and fight crime. We're not going to assist ICE in the service of an administrative matter."

Two memos from the Department of



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Rising Hope pastor Keary Kincannon (right) poses with Jim Wallis of the Sojourners (left), trying to get information from ICE about the enforcement activity that took place across the street from Kincannon's church on Feb. 8.

Homeland Security were recently published giving more detail to the executive orders on immigration and deportation enforcement.

"To maximize participation by state and local jurisdictions in the enforcement of federal immigration law near the southern border," director Kelly wrote, "I am directing the director of ICE and the commissioner of CBP to engage immediately with all willing and qualified law enforcement jurisdictions that meet all program requirements for the purpose of entering into agreements under 287(g) of the INA."

An ICE spokesperson said that "ICE will approach local jurisdictions to tell them about the 287g program," but that ultimately those jurisdictions need to go through an application process to participate.

When asked about the memo, Roessler said first that any change in FCPD operation would need to go through the Board of Supervisors. He also said he had not been contacted by anyone from ICE or DHS regarding the memos.

Then he added: "Regardless of their status, we want people to have great confidence in their police department and trust. We protect and serve you, prevent crime. That's the role we've been doing, and what we intend to do in the future."

More information about the two memos is available online here: <https://www.dhs.gov/executive-orders-protecting-homeland>.

The full text of Gov. McAuliffe's letter is available here: <https://governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/newsarticle?articleId=19347>.



On Feb. 17, Rising Hope pastor Keary Kincannon and other religious leaders held a prayer vigil and demonstration at the ICE field office on Prosperity Avenue in Fairfax.

Town Hall Debates Gap

FROM PAGE 3

cording to Michael.

"While they're decreasing, we're still concerned about the number and level of vacancies," she said.

This includes schools in Great Falls and McLean.

"Difficulty in hiring teachers includes our schools here in Great Falls, the Langley pyramid and McLean pyramid," Strauss said during the town hall. "Some people think, 'Oh it must only be in schools that have challenging curriculum or issues where students come with many challenges.' But even in this community, we have had difficulty hiring teachers."

FCPS started a compensation study last year and found that teacher pay is "significantly below the market average" in the region, according to Michael.

That's why the budget includes \$33.2 million to increase teacher salaries. It also allocates \$44 million for an increase in pay of 2.5 percent for all eligible FCPS employees.

Another factor that is increasing the budget is \$45.9 million for anticipated increases in health insurance and contributions to retirement systems.

"The [pensions systems] is a great benefit for our employees and certainly rare in terms of looking at surrounding school dis-

tricts," Michael said.

On Jan. 19, the GFCA emailed a letter to Foust and Strauss voicing its concern over the county's pension systems.

The group said the "high-benefit" pensions have been counterintuitive and argued they have not helped attract employees. Instead, their costs have eaten away at salaries.

"We strongly advocate that the county develop a full understanding of the pension changes that will be needed, adopt a strategy to implement those changes and take action in 2017 to begin that process," the letter says. "Delaying the hard choices should no longer be an option. This statement was discussed and unanimously approved by the GFCA Executive Board."

AMONG THE POTENTIAL reductions under consideration by the FCPS is implementing \$4.7 million in reductions to its Educational Employees' Supplementary Retirement System of Fairfax County (ERFC) pension system by June.

Recommendations include lowering the interest crediting rate on all ERFC member accounts from 5 percent to 4 percent.

More changes were recommended for new or non-vested ERFC members, including instituting a minimum retirement age of 55; increasing the period for calculating



PHOTO BY FALLON FORBUSH/THE CONNECTION

Jane Strauss, vice chair and Dranesville District representative on the Fairfax County Public School Board; Jeanette Hough, member-at-large on the FCPS Board; and Supervisor John Foust, Dranesville representative on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors; listen to a constituent during the meeting.

the final average salary from three years to five years; and changing the cost-of-living adjustment to equal 100 percent of the Consumer Price Index with a cap of 4 percent.

Others in the crowd criticized the FCPS board members on the panel for not advocating strongly enough for the meals tax referendum, which failed in the November election.

Most of the new revenue that the meals tax would have generated would have been

used to fund the FCPS and could have prevented the budget shortfall that the system is facing.

"I was a big supporter of the meals tax," Foust said at the town hall. He told the audience that this was because continuing to depend on real estate tax is not sustainable.

"We can't keep going to [property owners'] pockets," he said.

The Board of Supervisors has not proposed any increases in real estate taxes, unlike last year where the residential property tax rate was raised 4 cents to \$1.13 per \$100 of assessed value.

However, with the slight increase in the county's average real estate assessment, the average tax bill will increase by \$40.69.

The FCPS adopted its advertised budget on Feb. 9 and will present it to the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, April 4.

Prior to the adoption of the budget, which is planned for May 25, FCPS will have budget work sessions on Monday, March 13; Monday, April 24; Monday, May 1; and Thursday, May 18.

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ENTERTAINMENT

'Into the Woods' at The Madeira School

BY AUBREY WINGER
LOUDOUN VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

You never know what to expect when journeying into the woods. Perhaps you will cross paths with a wily wolf, or an innocent boy with his cow. However, you would never expect to find the sublime vocals and enticing performances of The Madeira School's cast of "Into the Woods."

A classic musical by Stephen Sondheim, "Into the Woods" epitomizes the fractured fairy tale. Treasured characters from children's stories are brought together in one giant spectacle. As the show progresses, their happy endings are forever altered by a maniacal witch and a few old beans.

CAPPIES REVIEW

In a show known for its subplots and distinctive characters, the Madeira cast made sure every story was heard. Cinderella (Keenan Parker) won hearts with her spectacular range and melancholy expressions. She was juxtaposed with her stepfamily, all deliciously evil and remarkably fun to despise. Jack (Zoe Crawley) and Little Red Riding Hood (Katie King) captured youth and playfulness in their characters. They also showed growth as Little Red learned "many valuable things" and Jack found his confidence at the top of the beanstalk. Jack's faithful companion, Milky White (Alex Raposo), was effortlessly funny without "uddering" a sound.

The Baker's Wife (Claire Pitzer) was a breath of reality. As Cinderella spoke of her glamorous nights at the ball, Pitzer was stunned by the idea of even encountering royalty. Later, when she had her very own royal fling, Pitzer grounded herself with stern reasoning, reassuring herself that it was only a "moment in the woods." Vei Vei Thomas, playing Cinderella's Prince, brought her fantasies to life. Thomas and Prabha Girish (Rapunzel's Prince) embraced their roles with outlandish masculinity and flirting.

"BOOM! CRASH! A lightning flash!" Every moment of Magana Ngaiza as the witch was electrifying. Ngaiza's disfigured form and chilling, wild-eyed takes to the audience accentuated her stunning vocal performance. This diabolical persona contrasted perfectly with the elegant post-transformation witch. Although Ngaiza maintained her insidious personality and questionable motives in the second act, she developed an entirely new physique as she relished her newfound beauty.

Every member of this cast was female, yet the personas of male characters and the chemistry between



PHOTO BY TERESA WOOD

From left are Alex Raposo, Zoe Crawley, and Callie Jacks.

couples were consistently believable. Ensemble numbers were full of haunting harmonies, maintaining the integrity of Sondheim's intricate score.

One of the most impressive technical elements was the set. Naturally, a show built from storybooks should have a set built from them too. The trees in the woods rose upon trunks formed from book spines and extended into branches made of pages suspended from the ceiling. The curved trunks made the forest perfect for hiding, providing a vehicle for a certain mysterious man to disappear. The use of a cyclorama was also commendable. At the beginning of each act, before the characters journeyed into the woods, this piece was used with three fireplaces to represent the homes of characters. Each fireplace was beautifully designed to show the characters' personality and status. The narrator sat in a library nook off to the side, separating himself from the story at hand.

The breathtaking sets and stellar performances in The Madeira School's production of "Into The Woods" were a fairy tale come true.

CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

Sculpture Now. Through March 4 at McLean Project For The Arts at Chain Bridge, 1446 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Presented by Washington Sculptors Group & McLean Project for the Arts and juried by Nancy Sauser, Exhibitions Director of the McLean Project for the Arts. Visit www.mpaart.org for more.

Trevor on Stage. Various times through March 5 at 1st Stage in Tysons, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. \$30, seniors (65+) \$27, students and military \$15.

Purchase online at www.1ststage Tysonsons.org or 703-854-1856.

"Around the World" Arts. Through March 6, various time at Vienna Arts Center, 115 Pleasant St., NW, Vienna. Members paintings. Free. Visit www.ViennaArtsSociety.org or call 703-319-3971.

Stuff-a-Bus Food Drive. Through April 15, various times at Christ the King Lutheran Church, 10550 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. A food drive for non-perishable items to support Arlington Food Assistance Center. There will be drop off boxes for donations of non-perishable food throughout the church. Then, on April 1, look for the school bus parked in front of the church. Call 703-759-6068.

The Golden Girls of Northern Virginia, a senior women's softball league, is looking for players. Any woman over the age of 40 is encouraged to join. All skill levels are welcome. Play on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings in Vienna. Visit www.goldengirls.org.

First Sunday Jazz Brunch 11-2 p.m. Recurring monthly on the 1st Sunday at Bazin's on Church 111 Church St N.W., Vienna. Enjoy brunch accompanied by the soft jazz sounds of Virginia Music Adventure. Visit www.fxva.com/listing/bazins-on-church/1686/

The Freeman Store & Museum Wednesday through Sunday noon-4 p.m. 131 Church St. NE, Vienna. The Freeman Store & Museum is

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 13

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ENTERTAINMENT

'The Children's Hour' at McLean

By CECILY WOLFE
FLINT HILL SCHOOL

Haunting xylophones ring and sharp shafts of light illuminate a school house. Though the classroom appears normal, with a bookshelf, chalkboard, and chairs, this is not a typical children's story. A young girl kneels holding flowers, and as a disturbing smile contorts her face, an alarming sense of foreboding descends on McLean High School's production of "The Children's Hour."

Based on a true story, Lillian Hellman's "The Children's Hour" is the troubling tale of a girls' boarding school in the 1930s in which one student, Mary Tilford, accuses the heads of school, Karen Wright and Martha Dobie, of inappropriate relations. Mary then deviously spins an elaborate scheme in which to ensnare the two headmistresses, until the rumor ruins their reputations, friendships, and the lives of their loved ones. Premiering at the Maxine Eliot Theatre in New York City on Nov. 20, 1934, "The Children's Hour" received both critical acclaim and disdain because of its controversial material, yet today is a staple in the American drama repertoire.

McLean High School's production of this disquieting incident treated such an upsetting tragedy with maturity. Jordan Prather (Martha Dobie) personified the sensible headmistress. Her controlled voice and poised posture contrasted beautifully with her subtle hesitations when discussing her amorous feelings. Stutters and wringing of her hands belied her jealousy over Karen's relationship with her fiancé, Dr. Joseph Cardin, while the desperate, hysterical edge bordering on a sob and agitated pacing adeptly conveyed the inner turmoil over her sexuality.

Anna Kate Womack's (Karen Wright) presence accentuated the intensity of the play, comfortable

whether she engaged in a heartbreaking exchange with Joey Barth (Dr. Joseph Cardin), who helped ground the show through his rational tone and methodical movements, or a stark moment of silence and penetrating stare that left the audience breathless.

Others, such as Emily Lachow (Mrs. Amelia Tilford, Mary's grandmother) and Julia Luigs (Mrs. Lily Mortar, Martha's aunt) accordingly portrayed the alleged wisdom of age through Lachow's self-righteous bearing and Luigs's dramatic, all-knowing air. In contrast, Rachel Kulp (Mary Tilford) fostered a charged atmosphere through her chilling intensity. Her sulking face fluidly transitioned to low, menacing tones and overbearing stance, and just as easily to the false innocence of a confused child barely able to keep her body and voice from trembling in fear. Amanda Flores (Rosalie Wells) complemented Kulp's eerie character through her purposefully nervous shuffling and shuddering, while Carena Slotkoff (Peggy Rogers) and Ariana Colder (Evelyn Munn) captured the demeanor of young girls whose enthusiasm turns to horror as their supposed friend backs them into corners and pulls their hair. In fact, the school girls as a whole appeared quite natural as they chattered comfortably and murmured anxiously about upcoming exams and social events.

Furthermore, technical aspects were impressive, including dresses of rich fuchsia and a gentle blue juxtaposed with drab brown; crowded bookshelves and neat office space easily changed into an immaculate living room, and then to a barren, jumbled classroom; appropriately period props, from the telephone to the black-and-white portraits; and amber lighting that was both clean and natural.

Jarring and distressing, the painful memory of grim expressions and bodies rigid with regret seared into one's mind by McLean High School's "The Children's Hour" should serve as a lesson that since words alone can destroy, one should use them wisely.

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 12

dedicated to Preserving and promoting Vienna's heritage through the identification, preservation, and interpretation of history significant places, events, and persons. Historicviennainc.org

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

Bingo Night. Sundays. 4 p.m. Flame Room, Vienna Volunteer Fire Department, 400 Center St. S., Vienna. \$10. www.vvfd.org/bingo.html.

Gentle Yoga. Thursdays, 6:30 p.m. Emmaus United Church of Christ, 900 E Maple Ave. E., Vienna. Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Gentle Kundalini Yoga, one free introductory session, senior discounts. Increase flexibility, improve breathing and health, reduce stress. Ravi Kaur has 15 years experience teaching yoga. \$15 per session. www.edimprovement.org. 571-213-3192.

Tai Chi Beginners' Practice. Saturdays, 8-9 a.m. St. Luke's Catholic School Gymnasium, 7005 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Weekly Tai Chi practice. Group has met for over 20 years. Free. FreeTaiChi.org. 703-759-9141.

Fishing Rod Rentals 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Rentals available during visitor center hours.

Fishing tackle and live bait are available for purchase. Reservations required for group rentals. \$6/rental (2 hour max). Valid driver's license required. Rod/reel combinations are perfect for beginners and children. A Virginia or Maryland freshwater fishing license is required for those 16 years or older. The park does not sell fishing licenses. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend-park/

Colvin Run Mill open 11 - 4 p.m. daily, closed Tuesday. 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Fairfax County's operational 19th century water powered gristmill, offers recreational and educational activities for all ages through daily tours, school programs and special events. Fees: \$7/adult, \$6 students 16+ with ID, \$5 children & seniors. January and February hours: 11 a.m.-4 p.m., last tour 3 p.m. Admission to park is free except for some special events. South County Government Center, 7-9 p.m. 8350 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Thursday, February 16, 2017 (Room 220) & Thursday, May 18, 2017 (Room 220) Chantilly High School 7-9 p.m. 4201 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly. Thursday, March 16, 2017 (Room 253) & Thursday, June 15, 2017 (Room 253). For All Sessions, RSVP to: Carole Rogers at crogers@britepaths.org or 703-273-8829.

FRIDAY/MARCH 3

Friday Fun Storytime. 11:30 a.m. at the Dolley Madison Library, 1244

Oak Ridge Ave., McLean. Stories and activities about Dr. Seuss's Birthday. Age 2-5 with adult. Free. Call 703-356-0770 for more.

SATURDAY/MARCH 4

Wine Tasting River Bend Country Club 7 - 10 p.m. There will be a delicious selection of Hors d'oeuvres, cheeses and fine wines and mingling with long-time and new Great Falls neighbors.

TUESDAY/MARCH 7

Lecture and Book Signing. Noon at Trinity United Methodist Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean. Sandra Grimes, former CIA officer who helped unmask Aldrich Ames and co-wrote 2012 book "Circle of Treason" on the subject. Free. Visit www.mcleanwomensclub.org. or call 703-556-0197.

Mobile Tech Tuesday. 2 p.m. at the Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave. McLean. Bring a smart phone or tablet and learn about basic mobile device functions, or move beyond the basics.

THURSDAY/MARCH 9

LEGO Club (S.T.E.A.M.). 4:30 p.m. at Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Have fun, use the imagination and keep the engineering and problem-solving skills flowing with lots of LEGO®

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 15



McLean
Community
Center
The Center of It All



Here's What's Happening at MCC

The Old Firehouse Family Movie Night "The Secret Life of Pets"



Friday, March 3, 7-9 p.m.

\$3 per person; pre-registration recommended.

The Old Firehouse Friday Night Trip Dinner & A Movie

Friday, March 10, 3:30-10:30 p.m.

\$35/\$25 MCC district residents



An Alden Production "The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales"

Saturday & Sunday, March 11-12 & 18-19, 3 p.m.

\$15/\$10 MCC district residents

McLean Traveler Day Trip 2017 Philadelphia Flower Show



Wednesday, March 15
6:45 a.m.-8 p.m.

\$136 per person/\$131 MCC district residents

MCC Governing Board Elections Candidate Petitions Are Due



Friday, March 17, by 5 p.m.

Questions? Call the Center at
703-790-0123, TTY: 711

The Old Firehouse 5th & 6th Grader Party St. Paddy's Party



Friday, March 17, 7-9 p.m.

\$35/\$25 MCC district residents
pre-registration recommended.

MCC Governing Board



Public Hearing on
FY 2019 Programs

Wednesday, March 22, 7:30 p.m.

All board meetings are open to the public.



The McLean Community Center
www.mcleancenter.org
Home of the Alden Theatre
www.aldentheatre.org



1234 Ingleside Avenue
McLean, VA 22101
703-790-0123, TTY: 711



Still "Dating"

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



It's not as if I haven't written about this date: 2/27, before (try last week, Ken), but as I sit at my desk and stare at the calendar hanging on the wall to my front right, the date jumps out at me. Not that I approach it with any fear or trepidation, but I do approach it for days, weeks and even months, calculating my past and contemplating my future. Cancer has a way of marking time, and leaving marks — figuratively and literally.

Mostly I have weathered the cancer storm, eight years and counting/hoping. And as much as I don't want to define myself as a cancer patient/survivor and live my life waiting for the other shoe to drop, it's difficult not to when your feet are so swollen from years of chemotherapy that you're now forced to wear your sneakers without laces. What I lose in support, I gain in comfort. Shoes I can't wear any more. The leather soles don't cushion my feet enough to not fatigue my legs. The shoe can't drop if I'm not wearing it, right? Hardly. It can drop at any time. Certainly it can drop after my quarterly scans, hearing that tumor and/or fluid growth has recurred or anytime in between when new symptoms appear and persist (for two to three weeks, my oncologist has advised). The trick is; heck, there is no trick.

And as much as I'd like to live this date as any other, the date on which one is diagnosed with non-small cell lung cancer, stage IV and given a "13-month to two-year" prognosis by an oncologist, is a date that cannot be lived normally. February 27, 2009 is a date, to invoke Franklin Delano Roosevelt, that will live in my infamy. February 27, 2009 was a Friday. We had scheduled a mid-morning appointment. My brother, Richard (my one surviving immediate family member), met my wife, Dina and I (Team Lourie as I've become accustomed to calling us) in the lobby of the HMO and together we took the elevator up to the third floor (can you say somber?) where we were to meet an oncologist — a man whom I had never met or heard of before, to learn exactly what the previous week's biopsy being malignant, meant.

After the awkward introductions, the oncologist spent the next 10 minutes or so examining me in an adjacent room. Upon completing the examination, we all reassembled in the doctor's office where he proceeded to review/read the results/assessments from the previous seven weeks of tests/examinations from the pulmonologist, the radiologist, the thoracic surgeon and the associated diagnostic procedures completed: X-Rays, CT Scan, P.E.T. Scan, and of course, the biopsy. The medical opinions started off bad and got worse: stage IV, non small cell lung cancer, a "terminal" disease. In listening to the reports, there seemed to be little doubt as to the diagnosis. And so it was clear to my oncologist how to proceed: chemotherapy infusions to begin as soon as possible; to occur every three weeks for six cycles with face-to-face appointments and CT Scans to follow. And though it wasn't, and it hasn't been pretty, generally it has — presumably, kept me alive and in reasonably good spirits, all things considered, and some of those things considered have included some non-Western alternatives.

So here I am, nearly eight years to the date when my old life (pre-diagnosis) ended and my new life — as a cancer patient, began. I wouldn't call it a metamorphosis, more like an upheaval. Somehow though, as the time, treatment and routine passed, I began to assimilate and integrate my new reality into my age 54 and a half head and figure a way forward. I can't say it's been fun, but the more I can laugh and find humor in my less-than-ideal circumstances, the more positive I can be about the negative. A negative which has already done enough damage on its own.

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

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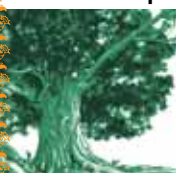
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21 Announcements

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Notice is hereby given that TD Bank, N.A., 2035 Limestone Road, Wilmington, DE 19808, has applied to the Office of Comptroller of the Currency on or about February 23 2017, as specified in 12 C.F.R. §5 for permission to establish a new branch to be located at 6260 Old Dominion Drive, McLean, County of Fairfax, State of Virginia, 22101. Any person wishing to comment on this application may file comments in writing to

Ms. Marva Cummings, Director
OCC Northeastern District,
340 Madison Avenue, 5th Floor,
New York, NY 10173
within 30 days of this publication.

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FROM PAGE 13

bricks. Age 5-12. Free. Call 703-757-8560 for more.
River Cruise Night. 7-9 p.m. at Paddy Barry's Irish Pub, 8150 Leesburg Pike, Vienna. Learn about hosted group wine sailings as well as individual reservations for 2017 and 2018 on Europe's waterways. Free. Contact Niall@CaddieToursOnline.com or by phone at 703-938-1300.

SATURDAY/MARCH 11

Spring Bazaar. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Vienna Volunteer Fire Department, 400 Center St., South, Vienna. The Auxiliary to the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department will hold their Spring Bazaar and Craft Show. Free. Call 703-309-3468 or email Dancers1023@aol.com for more.

Essential Oils for Spring. 1 p.m. at the Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave., McLean. Learn about the benefits of essential oils and the many reasons to use them. Adults. Call 703-356-0770 for more.

Effective Communication Workshop. 1-3 p.m. at Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. Tom Pfeifer, the author of "Write it, Speak it: Writing a Speech They'll APPLAUD!" presents tools for a more effective communicator and leader. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library or call 703-938-0405 for more.

Japanese Teas. 1-3 p.m. at Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Taste a varied selection of teas and take home a Cherry Blossom Blend tea sampler. \$35. Call 703-759-2771 for more.

Gospel Concert. 3 p.m. at Historic Pleasant Grove, 8641 Lewinsville Road, McLean. Free. This 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. Visit www.HistoricPleasantGrove.org for more.

SUNDAY/MARCH 12

McLean Newcomers Luncheon. 11:30 a.m. at Nostos, 8100 Boone Blvd., Vienna. Cecilia Glembocki, Executive Director of the Virginia Egg Council will speak about her 35 years of organizing the White House Egg Roll. To R.S.V.P. for the luncheon, e-mail Gloria Cohan, gloriacohan@gmail.com by March 10. Visit www.McLeanNewcomers.org for more.

Winter Traditional Celtic Concerts. Shows at 4 and 6 p.m. at The Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760-C Walker Road, Great Falls. Celtic musicians performing in a listening room by the fireside. \$18/\$12 children. Visit oldbrogue.com or call 703-759-3309 for more.

MONDAY/MARCH 13

Lunch N' Life. Noon at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 2589 Chain Bridge Road. Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna's first Lunch N' Life event of the year, with "Scandals in the City" Alice Roosevelt Longworth as portrayed by entertainer, Elaine Flynn. \$10, prepayment required by Wednesday, March 8. No refunds. Visit www.scov.org or call call 703-281-0538.

TUESDAY/MARCH 14

39th Annual Valor Awards. 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at Hilton McLean Tysons Corner, 7920 Jones Branch Drive, McLean. To honor public safety heroes from the Fairfax County Police Department, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department, Fairfax County Office of the Sheriff, Town of Vienna Police Department, and Town of Herndon Police Department who have put their personal safety at risk to keep our community and businesses safe. Chris Lawrence, News Anchor with News4 at 4, NBC4, will act as emcee. Registration is available online. Entry is \$125 for a single ticket, or \$1,250 for a table of 10. Email athompson@novachamber.org.

Lecture on Italy. 5 p.m. at Dante's Ristorante, 1148 Walker Road, Great Falls. A discussion on experiences in Italy. Dinner plus \$5 per person or \$10 per couple to cover Dr. Cicali's transportation. Call 703-759-4605 for more.

Civil War Historian. 7:30 p.m. at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The program will feature noted Civil War historian Jim Lewis who will discuss "The Evolution of the Fairfax/Loudoun County Boundary Line and J.E.B. Stuart's Most Difficult Achievement During the American Civil War." The program is free and open to the public. Contact Carole Herrick at 703-356-8223.

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