



McLean CONNECTION

SUMMER FUN

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Sparky the Fire Dog, a.k.a. Eric Yang, a firefighter with McLean Volunteer Fire Department, Station #1, with Levi Kerr of McLean and Wes Holland of Falls Church during McLean Day last Saturday, May 20, 2017 at Lewinsville Park in McLean.

McLean Day: What a Blast

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PHOTO BY MAGGIE GIORDANO/THE CONNECTION

Del. Kathleen Murphy (D-34), Garrett Detter, Ian Murphy, Neha Vutakuri, Helen Ganley, Mairin Fallon, and Jane Strauss.

Teen Character Awards Presented on McLean Day

The McLean Citizens Association honored five McLean High School students at McLean Day on Saturday, May 19. School Board member, Jane Strauss and Del. Kathleen Murphy (D-34), presented the Teen Character Awards on the main stage.

The award goes to students, who have gone above and beyond in the community by caring for others in need in their neighborhood or community.

One of the award winners, Neha Vutakuri, founder of the Breast Cancer Prevention with Herbs and Spices foundation, dedicates her time to informing women of the health benefits of spices. She has developed an app called MySpices to assist in breast cancer prevention through knowledge of seasonings.

"I created my organization after I saw how many women were suffering. As a re-

sult I saw how many families were suffering and that was why I decided to start this organization," said Vutakuri, a senior at McLean High School.

These students were recognized not only for their own works such as Garrett Detter for volunteering in the Special Olympics or Mairin Fallon, showing leadership as an equine volunteer, but also as examples to others. The award showed appreciation for those students who strived to reach out to their community such as Helen Ganley who volunteered to be a volleyball coach for middle school students and Ian Murphy who began organizing a food drive in 2008.

"We strive to provide our children with the very best education possible, but as important as reading, writing, and arithmetic it is as important to give back," said Strauss.

— MAGGIE GIORDANO

Great Falls Native Graduates From U.S. Coast Guard Academy

Sierra Rose Webb has graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy with a bachelor of science degree and a commission as an ensign. The Coast Guard Academy offers a four-year educational program designed to provide cadets the knowledge and experience essential to become leaders of character.



Sierra Webb

Cadets are required to devote themselves to an honor concept and after graduation go directly into positions of leadership in service to others. Webb is the daughter of Christopher and Maryjean Webb of Lovettsville, Va., and a gradu-

ate of Langley High School. On an average day, the U.S. Coast Guard conducts 45 search and rescue cases; saves 10 lives; saves more than \$1.2 million in property; conducts 57 waterborne patrols of critical maritime infrastructure; screens 360 merchant vessels for potential security threats prior to arrival in

U.S. ports; conducts 14 fisheries conservation boardings; investigates 35 pollution incidents; and facilitates movement of \$8.7 billion worth of goods and commodities through the Nation's Maritime Transportation System.

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People take a ride on the Himalaya during McLean Day.



People ride on the Full Tilt during McLean Day.

McLean Day Festival: What a Blast

The crowds came out for McLean's biggest annual event — the McLean Day 2017 Festival — on Saturday, May 20, 2017, at Lewinsville Park on Chain Bridge Road in McLean. Produced by the McLean Community Center, the free festival included Midway carnival rides, live entertainment, booth exhibitors, bubble ball, a rock climbing wall, laser tag and food trucks galore. Residents could vote for the MCC Governing Board members during the event.

— STEVE HIBBARD

PHOTOS BY
STEVE HIBBARD
THE CONNECTION



Chi Chi Felix of McLean plays in the Fun House during McLean Day on Saturday, May 20, 2017 at Lewinsville Park in McLean.



Ava Morabito, 9, and Addie Gevinson, 9, of McLean take a ride on the Merry Go Round during McLean Day at Lewinsville Park in McLean on Saturday, May 20, 2017.



Children play Bubble Ball during McLean Day last Saturday, May 20, 2017, at Lewinsville Park in McLean.



People line up during McLean Day for a ride on the Ferris Wheel.



Santiago Ecie, 5, and his father Jose of Falls Church ride the Bumper Cars during McLean Day.



McLean High School Resource Officer Scott Davis and Nick Corsi, systems of support advisor for the school, pitch their support for the campaign as the first speakers of the event.



McLean High School Sophomore Carenna Slotkoff, a peer leader for the school's Sources of Strength Program, tells the crowd about her attachment with her cellphone and how she disconnects when she gets behind the wheel, now that she just received her learner's permit.

PHOTOS BY FALLON FORBUSH/THE CONNECTION

'Phone Down' Campaign at McLean High

Washington Nationals first baseman promotes 'Phones Down. Home Run.' Safe Driving initiative.

BY FALLON FORBUSH
THE CONNECTION

Ryan Zimmerman, starting first baseman for the Washington Nationals Major League Baseball team, visited the McLean Highlanders baseball diamond on Wednesday, May 10, to pitch some warnings to his teenaged fans about the dangers of distracted driving.

Standing next to field in the sunshine helped him remember his time playing baseball in the spring at Kellam High School in Virginia Beach and the days he would drive to and from school for baseball practice.

"It was so exciting to drive," he said. "To be in the car and to have that independence, I guess you could say."

Unlike when he was a youth, teenagers today have more distractions to grapple with, he said.

Students who play baseball and softball and their coaches crowded into a tent on the grass to hear him speak and launch the "Phones Down. Home Run." effort. Teams from T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria and Stafford High School in Fredericksburg were also invited, along with Virginia Delegates Mark Keam, D-35; Mark Sickles, D-43; and Marcus Simon, D-53.

"The street that I live on in Great Falls, a lot of my neighbors have kids that are either in middle school, in high school starting to drive or in college, and I can't tell you how much when we're hanging out with our neighbors ... how much they talk about how scared they are of their kids going



"No text is worth risking your safety," said Ryan Zimmerman, first baseman for the Washington Nationals.

through that," he said.

He was honest with the crowd.

"I think we've all done it [looked at a cellphone while driving]," he said. "Nobody here has never done it."

Since his involvement with the campaign, he has realized how unsafe that can be.

THE AVERAGE major league home run travels 400 feet in just under five seconds, according to Transurban, which is sponsoring the campaign. That is the same distance a driver would travel blind if they were looking at a cellphone while driving 55 miles-per-hour.

This is a large window for grave errors to happen.

"During the game, fortunately though, if you mess up, you usually get another chance," he said.

But the stakes are greater on the road.

"If you're behind the wheel and you make a bad decision, whether it's a text or Instagram ... whatever the social media is, it'll be there when you get there ... you don't need to see it right now."

Having two young daughters was a primary reason he agreed to be the face of the initiative.

"I can't imagine having to go through anything that some of these parents would have to go through, especially with something that could be easily avoided, so just being able to help out a little bit is kind of why I wanted to be a part," he said.

McLean High School recently had a "What Helps Me Day," where students were asked to discuss methods to relieve stress, according to Nick Corsi, the systems of support advisor for the school. He advises a new Sources of Strength program at the school, which is a national student-led program designed to change unhealthy norms and culture in schools. He was alarmed at a popular response he received when he surveyed students about what helps them cope with anxiety.

"An overwhelming amount of our students wrote down, 'Going for a drive,'" Corsi said during the event. "So I ask you, should a full-blown teenager student — dealing with stress, dealing with anxiety — should they be behind the wheel? It's just another form of distracted driving."

McLean students in grade 12 reported more texting (51.1 percent) or drinking alcohol (13 percent) while driving during the past 30 days compared to Fairfax County Public School students in grade 12 overall (48.8 percent; 9.4 percent), according to the latest Fairfax County Youth Survey, an annual survey that anonymously collects data about students' knowledge, attitudes and behaviors on health, health risks, substance use, eating disorders, obesity and sexual behavior.

"At 6-foot-four and I'm 200 pounds, they text and bump into me when they are just walking," said School Resource Officer Scott Davis, a police officer for the Fairfax County Police Department who works at the high school.

Representatives from Partners for Safe Teen Driving, Inova Trauma Services and the Virginia Department of Transportation also spoke at the event.

MCLEAN HIGH School Sophomore Carenna Slotkoff, a peer leader for the school's Sources of Strength Program, took to the microphone to tell the audience about an incident that she experienced a couple weeks ago.

"My phone ended up taking a dive into the bathtub," she said "It's funny that it was so ridiculous that my phone was such a priority that it caused me to drop it into a bathtub, but what's not funny is when your phone becomes a distraction that can cost you a life."

She told everyone that looking at her phone behind the wheel is a temptation.

"I recently just got my permit and I've only practiced driving for a few hours but I already know it requires all of my attention and that my phone will have to be silent, out of sight and out of mind," she said.

Jennifer Aument, group general manager of Transurban, said, "Every day, tragically, 11 teenagers die because they are using a cellphone while driving."

She set her talking points aside and went off script for a moment to tell the crowd about her experience in the control room that her company and the Virginia Department of Transportation uses to monitor the 495 and 95 Express Lanes in Northern Virginia.

"What we see ... will scare the heck out of you," she said. "We see teenagers and all drivers of all ages who are distracted on our roadways."

She then described footage she saw of a distracted teenage driver who sped into a barrier wall, killing her and her friend.

"I really hope that you will heed this advice and that all of us will join together in taking the pledge to put our phones down on our region's highways," she said.

Washington Redskins starting quarterback Kirk Cousins kicked off the "Phones Down.

Touchdown." safe driving campaign in McLean on Nov. 29, 2016.

Drivers can sign the safe-driving pledge by visiting PhonesDownHomeRun.com or PhoneDownTouchDown.com.

Military Officers Association Names U.S. Rep. Comstock National Legislator of the Year

U.S. Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-10) was named National Legislator of the Year by the Virginia Council of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA).

"I am honored to receive the National Legislator of the Year Award from the Virginia Council of MOAA. It has been a top priority of mine to fight for those who have served and defended our nation with honor. One of the first bills I cosponsored this Congress was the WINGMAN Act, legislation that will give congressional district office staff easier, direct access to their constituents' records in the Veterans Benefit Administration system so our veterans can have their cases resolved in a more expedient manner to get the benefits they deserve.

To help preserve the financial stability and security of military spouses, I have cosponsored H.R. 846, the Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act, important legislation that will help ensure the surviving spouses of military members are taken care of in the tragic event their husband or wife does not return from battle. I thank my



U.S. Rep. Barbara Comstock receiving the National Legislator of the Year by the Virginia Council of the Military Officers Association of America.

friend and 10th District constituent Lt. Col. Oliver Carter (USAF, retired) and the members of the MOAA for their service in protecting our nation and look forward to continuing to work with them on even more legislation that will help our veterans and their families who deserve our loyalty," said Comstock in a statement.

"We were most impressed by Rep. Comstock's role in advancing cyber security through her Chairwoman position and she got high

marks for her ability and willingness to work across the aisle," said Virginia Council President Col. Steve Turner (USAF, retired).

In announcing the award, Turner noted Comstock's strong support for veterans employment opportunities in last year's National Defense Authorization Act, her participation in numerous military and veterans caucus' and her Chairwoman role on the Subcommittee for Research and Technology.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



PHOTO BY SARAH WALTER

Churchill Road student Collin Walter helps a representative from SHARE, Inc. load the truck with some of the items donated by Churchill Road families for the food bank.

School Community Supports SHARE

On Monday, May 15, representatives from SHARE, Inc., a McLean-area food bank, picked up more than 20 boxes of food and household items donated by Churchill Road Elementary

School families to help replenish the SHARE, Inc. shelves. The drive was organized by Churchill Road PTA's Community Service Committee co-chairs Robin Hoeymans and Sarah Walter.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Phillips Programs for Children and Families' Great Gatsby Gala at the Hilton McLean.

Phillips Hosts Great Gatsby Gala at the Hilton McLean



Hilton McLean, that supports Phillips career training program for local youth with special challenges.

Megan Malone, Visa; Debi Alexander with Phillips Programs; and Jim Burley, Venable, enjoy the Great Gatsby theme during Phillips Programs for Children and Families annual gala, held at the

Potomac School Girls Athletics Director Inducted Into the Hall of Fame

Dr. Cas Blanchard, director of girls athletics at The Potomac School, has been honored as one of seven members of the Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association's (VISAA) inaugural Hall of Fame class. She was inducted into the Hall of Fame at a ceremony held in Richmond on May 8. Blanchard was recognized for her outstanding accomplishments as an educator and her extensive work with the VISAA. She helped to establish the organization's structure as a member of the initial VISAA committee from 1997 through 1998, then served as the northern region representative on the VISAA Executive Committee from 2001 to 2014. Beginning in 2002, Blanchard concurrently served as VISAA secretary. Since 2006, she has chaired Virginia's statewide sports committees for girls tennis and lacrosse, having founded the girls lacrosse committee.

Blanchard has been The Potomac School's director of girls athletics since 2001. She also coaches in Potomac's Intermediate School girls basketball and soccer programs. Asked what she most enjoys about her job, she said, "It's a privilege to work with our student-athletes, coaches, and parents. There is a terrific spirit at Potomac that makes every day enjoyable." She added, "I always like to see a team improving over the course of time. And every once in awhile, you have a special team that has a special season, and that's really rewarding."

Head of School John Kowalik said, "For the past 16 years, Cas Blanchard has set a high standard, encouraging our student-athletes to give their best in terms of effort, perseverance, sportsmanship, and



Dr. Cas Blanchard and John Kowalik.

teamwork. At Potomac and across the state, she is recognized as someone who genuinely cares about students and has helped to make athletics an integral aspect of independent-school education. We are delighted that she has received this honor from the VISAA."

OPINION

Keep Virginia Green

BY KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM
STATE DELEGATE (D-36)

For more than a half century signs along the roadsides and ads in local newspapers featured Smokey the Bear with a message "Keep Virginia Green." His reference was to forest fire prevention, of which he said 9 out of 10 could be prevented. Forest fires were a big concern because wood products were big business in Virginia.

A campaign continues today with a "Keep Virginia Green" theme as part of the "Keep Virginia Beautiful" effort. It has a broader meaning as it now includes stopping littering and other actions consumers can take as part of caring for the environment in the Commonwealth.

Maybe the most meaningful effort ever taken to protect Virginia's environment was announced last week by Gov. Terry McAuliffe — that he had signed an Executive Directive ordering the Department of Environmental Quality to begin the process of establishing regulations in Virginia that will reduce carbon emission from power plants. As the Governor explained, "As the federal government abdicates its role on this important issue, it is critical for



states to fill the void...Virginia will lead the way to cut carbon and lean in on the clean energy future." The current federal administration has moved to rescind actions of the Environmental Protection Agency to reduce carbon in the atmosphere and to act on climate change.

While proponents of states' rights may applaud the shift from the federal to the state governments, wind currents from power plants and airborne pollutants do not recognize state boundaries. It is critically important that other states follow the actions of Gov. McAuliffe.

According to the press release announcing the Governor's Executive Directive, the Commonwealth has seen an increase from just 17 megawatts of solar installed to more than 1,800 megawatts in service or under development. Revenues in the rapidly growing clean energy sector have risen from \$300 million to \$1.5 billion between 2014 and 2016. In the last year alone, solar installations have risen

nearly 1,200 percent. The number of Virginians employed by the solar industry rose 65 percent to 3,236 — twice the number of jobs supported by coal. An analysis by The Solar Foundation quoted in the release said that Virginia is now second in the Southeast and ninth in the nation for year-over-year solar growth. As of 2017, Virginia is first in the Southeast for corporate clean energy procurement.

Dominion Energy, the Commonwealth's largest electricity producer, announced earlier that it intends to follow the federal Clean Power Plant regulations even if they are rescinded by the current administration. Older coal-powered plants are being converted to natural gas or closed. The company will be subject to any additional regulations that result from the Governor's Executive Directive.

It is heartening to see the number of citizens who have expressed a greater interest in environmental matters as they realize the threat to current protections under the new administration. We need to thank and applaud the Governor for his action and at the same time keep the pressure on federal and state elected officials to see that our air is kept clean and safe. I am pleased that both the Sierra Club and the League of Conservation Voters have recognized my efforts in this regard.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Virginia Needs to Adopt California Fuel Economy Goals

To the Editor:

In response to Governor McAuliffe's directive to Virginia's DEQ to cut carbon pollution, Virginia should adopt Obama's and California's fuel economy goals: 54.5 mpg by 2025. Do climate-change dismissives — especially those who drive gas-guzzlers — ever go outside? Do they ever run, walk, or ride a bike beside a road so that they have to breathe in car exhaust?

I loathe walking beside roads, and when I've gone on long bike rides, I've noticed that "yahoos" in pickup trucks — especially the diesel models, like to "floor it" when they pass a group of bike riders, so that we are forced to get a lungful of carbon monoxide, methane, sulfur and nitrous oxides, polyaromatic hydrocarbons, and heavy metals. I'd like to see if they could get out of their three-ton "exhaust sprayers" and pedal up a two-mile grade.

Have they ever hiked in the mountains, away from traffic noise (which I despise), and breathed in pure, oxygen-rich air? My grandfather, a doctor from Marion, N.C., used to take a bicycle inner tube filled with mountain air when he went to the city, so that he could breathe the air from that tube with his car windows rolled up. To him (even with the rubber smell), that air was better than the exhaust-filled city air.

To Trump, those bike-riders and hikers are losers, especially compared to selfish status-

seekers who can afford a Cadillac Escalade, Lexus LX 570, Dodge Viper, or other ridiculously heavy and/or powerful gas hog. And who cares about wildlife, the hapless victims of our pollution? I do, for one! Shouldn't everyone be outraged to learn that:

- ❖ 25 percent of cars are causing 90 percent of the air pollution we breathe;
- ❖ in 2016, about 76 different models of vehicles weighed at least 6,000 lbs. (which are exempt from annual depreciation caps);
- ❖ eight of the most expensive luxury cars get the worst gas mileage (e.g., 14 miles per gallon or less overall).

With the strong evidence correlating dementia, Alzheimer's, and cancer with breathing car exhaust, Trump and the GOP plan to roll back national car emission standards. (My very health-conscious wife was just diagnosed with cancer, and with all the walking we do, breathing exhaust likely contributed to its onset.) Why doesn't Virginia join California to adopt the 54.5 mpg-by-2025 goal? It's the very least we should do!

John H. Fringer, III, P.E.
Reston

Heart-Breaking Responses on Homelessness

To the Editor:

Homelessness is a word that can conjure up a variety of emotions. For some it might be

sympathy or contempt for those affected by it. For others it might be a fear of it possibly happening to them. The desire to find out how people felt on this subject served as the catalyst for my project team in a George Mason University communications class.

As part of the class project we had the opportunity to partner with the Fairfax County Office of Public Affairs and the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness. When we were informed about the current situation involving homelessness in the county, I was shocked. We were told that back in 2008, approximately 1,800 people were found to be homeless in the county. Although there has been an almost 50 percent reduction in homelessness since then, it had never occurred to me that a significant number of people in the area were going through this problem.

We wanted to know more about what others thought about homelessness in the county. We decided to do a survey of county residents about their thoughts on homelessness and report on what we found out. We sent the survey out on March 23 and promoted it through social media and email. After two weeks, we got the results and I think what we learned surprised all of us.

Almost 1,600 people filled out the survey. One of the responses revealed that 65 percent of those who responded believe homelessness affects them personally. Some people said they often saw people who were homeless, while others said they have never seen a person who is homeless in the county. Yet, what broke my heart were the comments that read "They are

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McLean
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SCHOOLS



Cooper Fundraiser to Support Cancer Research

History teacher Daniel Smith is being taped to a wall. Cooper Middle School raised more than \$1,300 for cancer research through a fundraiser through Pennies for Patients. Students bought tickets in order to pie a teacher in the face, or tape a teacher to the wall.



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PHOTO GALLERY!

“Me and My Dad”

To honor dad on Father’s Day, send us your favorite snapshots of you with your dad and The Connection will publish them in our Father’s Day issue. Be sure to include some information about what’s going on in the photo, plus your name and phone number and town of residence. To e-mail photos, send to:

editors@connectionnewspapers.com

SUMMER FUN, FOOD & ENTERTAINMENT

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

ONGOING

Artists Show. Various times through May 31 at the Broadway Gallery, 1025-J Seneca Road, Great Falls. “Levels of Abstraction,” show featuring the works of Hiromi Ashlin, Genna Gurvich, Sandi Ritchie Miller, and Buck Nelligan. Visit www.broadwaygallery.net or call 703-450-8005 for more.

Artists Show. Various times through May 31 at Katie’s Coffee House, Village Center, 760 Walker Road, Great Falls. Artist Joyce Lee. Call 703-759-2759 for more.

Youth Chorus Auditions. Through June 6 at Vienna Baptist Church, 541 Marshall Road, SW. The Fairfax Choral Society encourages children between the ages of 5-13 to audition for one of three choirs that meet at the Vienna campus. Email dlamberth@fairfaxchoralsociety.org or call 703-642-3277 for more.

Free Tai Chi. Every Saturday, from 7:55-9 a.m., Introduction and Beginners’ Practice, meet on the outdoor basketball court located directly behind the Dolley Madison Public Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave. in McLean Central Park, McLean. Call 703-759-9141 or visit www.FreeTaiChi.org

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

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, a 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.

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.



PHOTO BY MCGONNIE STUDIO

Live Music

Griffin House is playing on June 8 at 7:30 p.m. at Jammin’ Java, 227 Maple Ave., Vienna. \$20 or \$25 door. Call 877-987-6487 or visit www.jamminjava.com.



Hiromi Ashlin



Genna Gurvich



Sandi Ritchie Miller



Buck Nelligan

Levels of Abstract

Through May 31, Levels of Abstraction Art, various times at Broadway Gallery, 5641-B General Washington Drive. Featuring the works of Hiromi Ashlin, Genna Gurvich, Sandi Ritchie Miller, and Buck Nelligan. Visit www.broadwaygallery.net or call 703-450-8005.

\$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. Admission to park is free except for some special events.

Fundamentals of Watercolors. Mondays 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at The Arts of Great Falls, 756 Walker Road, Great Falls. Artist Lorrie Herman will help students get comfortable working with watercolors and understanding this medium. Visit www.greatfallsart.org for more.

Still Life Painting. Tuesdays 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at The Arts of Great Falls, 756 Walker Road, Great Falls. Still life provides a great tool to hone skills. Recommended for students of all levels. Visit www.greatfallsart.org for more.

Evening Painting. Tuesdays 6:30 -9:30 p.m. at The Arts of Great Falls, 756 Walker Road, Great Falls. Jill Banks focuses on oil painting fundamentals with two sessions each of still life, landscapes, and portrait/ clothed figure from a live model. Visit www.greatfallsart.org.

Intro to Jewelry Design. Tuesdays 9 a.m.-noon at The Arts of Great Falls, 756 Walker Road, Great Falls. JJ Singh teaches a class for anyone interested in exploring the world of metal clay and its design possibilities. Visit www.greatfallsart.org.

THURSDAY/MAY 25

The Original Pancake House Benefit. 7-

3 p.m. at The Original Pancake House, 7395 Lee Highway, Falls Church. The Original Pancake House will donate 15 percent of its sales from breakfast and lunch to the Shepherd’s Center. Call 703-734-8353.

SUNDAY/MAY 28

Weekend Brunch and Cookie Class. 9-11 a.m. at Wildfire, Tysons Galleria, McLean. Breakfast buffet, cookie decorating class and face painting. \$20. Call 703-442-9110.

SATURDAY/JUNE 3

Riverbend Park Benefit. 6-9 p.m. at the Riverbend Park Visitors’ Center, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Fundraiser for the benefit of Riverbend Park sponsored by the Friends of Riverbend Park. \$50 for adults, \$25 for children, \$125 for families. Register at www.forb.wildapricot.org.

SUNDAY/JUNE 4

Vienna Lions Club 75th Anniversary. 2-4 p.m. at the Vienna Town Green, 144 Maple Ave. E. Featuring Nighthawks Swing Band, food, beverages, and a sight and hearing van offering checks for all ages. Go to www.viennava.gov for more.

Blessing of the Animals. 2-4 p.m. at the Antioch Christian Church, 1860 Beulah Road. Bring dogs, cats, or other companion, to the Blessing of the Animals. Visit www.antiochecienna.org for more.

McLean Symphony. 7 p.m. at the Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. International Treasures, with Spotlight on the Organ, including local organist David Lang. Visit <https://web.ovationtix.com> for more.

TUESDAY/JUNE 6

Mini-Golf for Chari-TEE. 1 p.m. at Oakmarr Recreation Center, 3200 Jermantown Road, Oakton. \$8. Proceeds to benefit the

VIEWPOINTS

What do you like to do for fun in and around McLean during the summer?



Greer and Dean Armandroff and son Gabriel, new residents of McLean

Greer: “We’re really looking forward to the neighborhood pool, and playing in the park.”

Dean: “And playing tennis. I’m going to revive my tennis playing.”



Pat Davis, Great Falls and daughter Anna

“I like to sit at the café at the outside tables and have coffee. I like to go walking in Great Falls Park, and I like to go to Meadowlark, which is an amazing place in Vienna.”



Mary Jenkins and daughter Annemarie, McLean

“She does the It’s Elementary summer camp, she really likes that. Playing outside, there’s Clemjontri park, which she really likes. She likes the water parks, the rec centers, King’s Dominion. There’s a movie theater she goes to with stadium seating. She did a camp at Kent Gardens, a science camp.”



Emily Alesantrino, McLean

“The Old Firehouse in McLean does a great summer camp and teen program with amazing trips. Other than that, we like to go hiking in Great Falls.”

ANSWERS COMPILED AND
PHOTOS TAKEN BY
ELLEN BARKER
THE CONNECTION

Shepherd’s Center of Oakton-Vienna. Call 703-281-0538 for more.

required by June 6. Call 703-281-0538.

THURSDAY/JUNE 8

Griffin House Concert. 7:30 p.m. at Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave., Vienna. \$20 or \$25 door. Call 877-987-6487 or visit www.jamminjava.com for more.

MONDAY/JUNE 12

Musician Alex Hassan. noon-3 p.m. at Emmanuel Lutheran Church 2589 Chain Bridge Road, Vienna. Hassan will be playing melodies from the era between World War I and World War II. \$10

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Benjamin Hunt and Josh Leong hold the award for best film in the Young Filmmakers Category at the Christian Worldview Film Festival in San Antonio, Texas.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Teen Filmmakers Win Awards in Film Festivals

McLean residents Benjamin Hunt's and Josh Leong's film accepted into nine film festivals.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE CONNECTION

Since two teenage filmmakers from McLean produced the film, "When Waters Rise" last year, it has been accepted to nine film festivals across six countries and won a couple of awards in the process.

Josh Leong, 17, a junior at McLean High School, and Benjamin Hunt, 17, a junior at Langley High School, began making the film during their sophomore year. The duo raised \$2,750 on Kickstarter and social media and spent nine months making the 17-minute film.

They did everything from raising the money, maintaining a budget, writing the script, casting the roles, filming it according to a production schedule, and editing the film to produce the final product. The film is a Biblical parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders story from the Gospel of St. Matthew.

In one year, they've entered it into nine film festivals, including: MoveMe Film Festival (Antwerp, Belgium); Next Generation of Filmmakers Film Festival (Los Angeles, California); CMS International Children's Festival (Dhaka, Bangladesh); Christian Worldview Film Festival (San Antonio, Texas); Berlin Student Film Festival (Berlin, Germany); International Christian Film Festival (Orlando, Florida); Short to the Point Film Festival (Bucharest, Romania); Scout Film Festival (Stowe, Vermont); and, Voices from the Waters International Traveling Film Festival (Bangalore, India).

The film won the Best Student Filmmakers Award at the Christian Worldview Film Festival in San Antonio; and the Audience Choice for Best Student Film at the International Christian Film Festival in Orlando.

"It is an amazing honor to participate in these festivals and meet other young filmmakers with similar



Benjamin Hunt walks the red carpet at the International Christian Film Festival in Orlando, Fla.

interests who want to get into the film industry," said Hunt. "It truly is a once in a lifetime experience to walk the red carpet and to go up on stage and accept an award on behalf of the cast and crew of 'When Waters Rise.' I loved the ability to develop friendships and network with professionals in the industry."

He added: "Throughout the course of producing the film Josh and I have had to work extremely closely and it has truly shown me how important communication is, especially when working on a project like this."

This fall, Hunt will begin to apply for colleges. He hopes to attend film school for four years and then jump into the action in either New York or Los Angeles. "There are so many opportunities for new filmmakers now, especially with the use of online streaming. There are so many directions to choose from. I am going to see where school and God takes me but my dream is to work on a big budget film or develop my own TV show one day," said Hunt.

Leong, who has been busy for the past six months making new films, added, "I've been able to apply lessons I'd learned in making 'When Waters Rise' in my newer films, and it's definitely empowered me with confidence and belief. Despite our own struggles and the storms I faced throughout the production of the film, I've been renewed with new maturity and perspective. It's an experience that's been invaluable to my passion and my pursuit of the craft I love."



USA Rugby Olympian Alev Kelter spoke to students at Oakcrest School as part of the all-girls school's leadership workshop series. Kelter shared her inspirational story of triumph over adversity and how her faith drives her athletic career.

USA Rugby Olympian Visits Oakcrest School in McLean

On Monday, May 8, USA Women's Rugby Olympian Alev Kelter visited Oakcrest School in McLean as part of the school's leadership workshop series.

Alev shared her inspiring story of how she dealt with disappointing setbacks in her sports career and realized her dream of becoming an Olympic athlete.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Oakcrest School 10th grade students in a picture with the USA Rugby Olympian Alev Kelter. Bottom row, from left: Cora Haefner, Herndon; Emelia Mohler, Great Falls; Julie Kilmer, Rockville, Md.; Lily James, Great Falls and Patricia Cvenca, Reston. Standing: Elizabeth Wells, Fairfax; Mary Grace Nugent, Herndon; Mary Wall, McLean; Teresa Alvarez Najera, McLean; Alev Kelter, USA Olympian; Isabella Wilson, Washington, D.C.; Edith Barvick, Manassas; and Caroline Dauchess, Reston.



PHOTO BY KIM MORAN

Churchill Road kindergarteners presented their hand-made Mother's Day cards during their "Muffins for Mom" celebration. From left: Blake Davis (and mom Amy Davis), Connor Satkus (and mom Jennifer Miller), Jordan Jackson (and mom Keira Buggs) and Lukas Muend (and mom Moni).

'Muffins for Mom' at Churchill Road

Churchill Road Elementary students celebrated Mother's Day on Friday, May 12 by hosting "Muffins for Mom." Students in each of the three kindergarten classes (with teachers Barbara Lewis, Erin Thurston and Laura Zielinski)

worked with the arts teachers Julie Brodzik and Katie Gong to create hand-stitched squares and cards for their moms.

First graders all prepared cards and hand-decorated gift bags to present to their moms on Mother's Day.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



PHOTOS BY TOM MANNING/THE CONNECTION

A group of McLean High School students pose upon their arrival to the 2017 Day Prom.

Day Prom Combines Dancing, Food and Fun

The 2017 Day Prom for special education students from Kilmer, South Lakes, Fairfax, Falls Church, McLean, Centreville, Marshall, and West Springfield was held on May 17 at the Waterford at Fair Oaks in Fairfax. The event has grown so much over the years that it has expanded into two day proms. The second for Robinson, Woodson, Oakton, Lake Braddock, Herndon, Westfield, Chantilly, Lee, and Stuart was scheduled for May 24 also at the Waterford



From left: McLean sophomore Juan Ramirez, senior Sammy Ferris, and senior Adonis Friend.



Best Buddies
McLean senior Kate Osborne and
McLean freshman Jack Dennis.

Transform 66 Outside the Beltway Fairfax County and Prince William County Public Information Meetings

All meeting times are 6-8:30 p.m. A brief presentation at each meeting will begin at 7 p.m.

Monday, June 12, 2017

Oakton High School Cafeteria
2900 Sutton Road, Vienna, VA 22181

Wednesday, June 14, 2017

Stone Middle School Cafeteria
5500 Sully Park Drive, Centreville, VA 20120

Thursday, June 15, 2017

Piney Branch Elementary School Cafeteria/Gym
8301 Linton Hall Road, Bristow, VA 20136

Find out about plans to transform 22.5 miles of I-66 from I-495/ Capital Beltway to University Boulevard in Gainesville to provide congestion relief and enhanced safety, as well as new travel choices and reliability.

Stop by between 6 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. to view the preliminary concept plans submitted by I-66 Express Mobility Partners, VDOT's selected partner for the project, and learn more about the proposed improvements. Attend the formal presentation at 7 p.m. VDOT and I-66 Express Mobility Partners staff will be available to answer your questions.

Review project information at www.Transform66.org, at the meetings, or at VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office at 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. Please call 800-FOR-ROAD (800-367-7623) or TTY/TDD 711 to ensure the availability of appropriate personnel to answer your questions. Preliminary concept plans and project schedule will be available at the meetings for review and public comment. Staff will also be available to answer questions regarding environmental, right of way and civil rights information.

Give your oral or written comments at the meetings. You may also email comments to Transform66@VDOT.Virginia.gov or mail them to Susan Shaw, P.E., Megaprojects Director, at the VDOT Northern Virginia District Office address above. Please reference "Transform 66 Outside the Beltway" in the subject line. A summary of comments submitted by **June 30, 2017** will be posted on the project website.

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT's Civil Rights at 703-259-1775 or TTY/TDD 711.

State Project: 0066-96A-497 UPC: 110741

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County Launches Innovation Challenge

Challenge brings together several hundred attendees who “might normally not cross paths.”

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

The Fairfax County Human Services Council thinks it's time to shake things up, to build a new strategy for identifying, addressing and funding solutions for human service needs in the community, and they've taken the first step in that direction by hosting the Innovation Challenge on May 18.

Evidence from the recent Fiscal Year 2018 Budget process and the data collected in the “Human Services Needs Assessment” published last year, show a trend where more of the county's residents require some type of assistance. In the words of Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova, “Demand is outstripping resources.”

During the budget proceedings, some programs and initiatives were left unfunded, or given less than requested, and other initiatives and needs were rolled forward for future consideration.

Seven months ago, Human Services Council members Dr. Patrice Winter (Braddock District) and Thomas Goodwin (Providence District) “hatched an idea,” Winter told the attendees at the Innovation event. She said that the two convinced each other that a broader network of people from a greater variety of disciplines and experiences was needed to bring a fresh perspective to the various problems. With the support of their council colleagues and from county personnel, Winter and Goodwin directed their idea into the Challenge that brought several hundred attendees together who, as Winter put it “might normally not cross paths.”

In her letter to the Innovation Challenge participants, Bulova called the

community-driven program “unprecedented in that it brings together leaders of all elements of the emerging 21st century human services community: businesses, established and startup; financiers in social impact investment; social entrepreneurs; philanthropists and foundations; nonprofits, and outstanding thought leaders in academia. Fairfax County employees,” wrote Bulova, “are here primarily to listen.”

THE PRESENTERS and the attendees covered a range of varying interests and experiences. In her opening remarks, Winter acknowledged that everyone present — speakers, panelists and audience members — came to the table with their own underlying agendas, causes or points of view. She asked that those agendas be “left in the parking lot. Models, strategy and process,



PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

A diverse audience gathered for Fairfax County Human Services Council's Innovation Challenge, an event seeking greater community engagement to address the county's challenges.

not issues, are our directions this morning.”

Speaking to the attendees, Goodwin applauded the audience's presence at the event, telling them that by being there, they were participating in an experiment in community engagement. Working together produces significant results, he affirmed.

“We know that,” said Goodwin, using the example of the county's Diversion First program that seeks to direct persons with intellectual disabilities and mental health issues away from imprisonment to treatment when they come into contact with law enforcement for nonviolent offenses. “Five agencies work together across turf” to make Diversion First work, said Goodwin.

The Innovation Challenge, intended to be the launch for a series of events, set forth three main objectives:

- ❖ Exchange information about state-of-the-art innovations that can address health and human service challenges.

- ❖ Elicit new ideas from public and private partners to enhance services and maximize resources.

- ❖ Set the stage for specific recommendations about service enhancements and resources required to present to relevant stakeholders in the future.

The first section of the program offered presentations from persons working directly in Human Services in neighboring Montgomery County, Md. When questioned on seeking funds from the business community or other non-governmental sources, Sharon Friedman, project director of Montgomery Moving Forward, advised that the key is to develop partnerships early.

“We don't show up afterwards and ask for money,” said Friedman. Instead, possible collaborators are asked to be at the table from the start, “when the needs and the challenges are explained and discussed.”



Fairfax County Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon) discusses some of the issues with Human Services Council Member Thomas Goodwin (Providence District). Along with Council member Dr. Patrice Winter, Goodwin “hatched the idea” for the Challenge. Supervisors Cathy Hudgins (D-Hunter Mill) and John Foust (D-Dranesville) also attended the event.

Speaker Dr. Sallie Keller, professor of Statistics and director of the Social and Decision Analytics Laboratory of the Biocomplexity Institute of Virginia Tech (“Yes, what a mouthful!” agreed Keller) offered insights on “designed data collection” in the Human Services arena and work being done to better measure outcomes. “The goal is to democratize data ... and to provide new language for communication ... that can become a unifying thing around different disciplines.”

After a section devoted to “Progressive Funding Opportunities,” the organizers set the “social experiment” in motion with a series of “Reverse Pitches” to drive home

the collaborative approach that Winter, Goodwin and colleagues hope to see develop from this first Innovation Challenge.

THE IDEA is to “pitch” community issues and have businesses consider them and offer their suggestions and potential solutions, instead of the traditional “company pitches a product model.” For the Innovation Challenge, real problems were shared, and real companies, who had been paired with the problem-presenters in advance for the sake of demonstration, came back with possible innovations, services, technologies, or skills sets that might be applied to solving the problem.

The topics chosen were familiar challenges for many in the audience. Heads nodded in acknowledgement when “Caregiver Support Services,” “Transportation Options for Older Adults and Individuals with Disabilities,” and “Skills Training for Today's Employment” were presented to the partnered businesses.

Fairfax County, like many jurisdictions across the country, is facing the challenge of widening gaps between the human services needs of its residents and the county's ability to deliver those needs within its budget constraints. With the kick-off of the Innovation Challenge, the Fairfax County Human Services Council is seeking to perform what they call a “much needed facelift” on the traditional methods of addressing those challenges. The public is encouraged to learn about the council at www.fairfaxcounty.gov, search Human Services Council and to review the “Human Services Needs Assessment” which is also available on the county's website.

For details on area parks, services, and communities, see www.fairfaxcounty.gov. Search for tax bills, property transfers, and employment opportunities.

Jones Branch Extension will Reach Across I-495

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

When the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and Fairfax County are done, McLean residents will have another way across I-495 at Jones Branch Drive and a link from inside the beltway to the I-495 express lanes.

But getting there, like all other road construction projects, will have its share of headaches.

"It's going to be inconvenient, that's reality," said VDOT District Engineer Bill Cutler at their "Pardon Our Dust," meeting on May 18 in Tysons Corner. "When we complete this project, you'll be able to access the express lanes from both sides," he added.

In all, the \$58 million project will lengthen the Jones Branch extension from the I-495 express lanes eastward over the inner loop to a point on Route 123 near the Silver Line metro station. This will provide traffic another option to getting across the beltway and relieve the congestion that currently clogs up Route 123 at Tysons Corner. The project will create a continuous median for future transit, on-road bike lanes, and a few more traffic lights.

The project is a joint effort of VDOT and Fairfax County and will be completed by



VDOT's District Engineer Bill Cutler explains the new access road at the Pardon Our Dust meeting in Tysons.

November 2019, according to the VDOT plan. A schedule "I consider to be very aggressive," said Cutler. The \$58 million is a combination of state, county and federal money, he added. The project is a five-phased project where most of the actual

construction is taking place during phase II which is scheduled for spring 2018.

The Gates of McLean condominiums are right in the path and have already been impacted by the construction of the extension and a new Capital One building that is

going up in that area. With both projects, it will be seven years of construction. Residents are complaining of long waits at the lights and construction that begins at sunup. "They put the Gates of McLean in a huge inconvenience," one audience member said. The property manager Maria Hatcher noted the holes in the road from all the trucks. "It's a pretty rough ride," she said.

The traveling public will feel the pain too. With construction now around I-495, there are slow downs due to narrow lanes in that area, but when the beams for the new bridges are hung, there will be total overnight lane closures, but the express lanes will remain open, and traffic will be re-routed up the exit ramp and down the other side.

This project was eyed to be part of the I-495 express lanes work, which started in 2008, but was shelved due to the expense at that time.

The intersection at Scotts Crossing Road and Route 123 has been causing delays, and frequent travelers have complained to VDOT about a possible turn on red being implemented, so a traffic study was performed, said Abi Lerner, VDOT senior project manager.

"Our traffic analysis looked at the sight distance, it's not safe," Lerner said. Hatcher called this intersection is a "hot button issue."

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SUMMER FUN



The Reston Chorale will hold A Star-Spangled Salute on Saturday, May 27, at the Reston Town Center.

PHOTO
CONTRIBUTED

A Star-Spangled Salute, Care Package Drive at Reston Town Center

The Reston Chorale and Brass of the Potomac will mark the beginning of Memorial Day Weekend with A Star-Spangled Salute, including a concert of patriotic music, entertainment by Al and Ellen Torzilli of the band Natural Selection, family activities and a care package drive for troops serving overseas. Slated for Saturday, May 27, 7-8:30 p.m., at the Reston Town Center's Pavilion, this free, family-friendly event will salute the men and women serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, and honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

"This is one of the highlights of our season," notes Ruth Overton, president of The Reston Chorale. "There are moments when we sing the Armed Forces Salute — when a veteran, service member or their family hears 'their song' and gets to their feet or waves a flag — that bring home what this event is all about. It's a time and a way for us to say 'thank you for your service and sacrifice'—and to remember and honor those who gave their lives for our country." Thanks to support from Northrop Grumman, this year the Chorale will share the stage with Brass of the Potomac — a British-style brass band. Together, members of The Reston Chorale and Brass of the Potomac will present a concert of patriotic music and songs that celebrate America.

The event also offers ways to directly thank ser-

vice personnel: a creative station where children and adults can make thank you cards for troops, and a Care Packages for the Troops drive.

The Reston Chorale and Reston Town Center have teamed up to collect donations of care package items — from snack foods and sports equipment to supplies for a Fourth of July celebration — that will be sent to a platoon serving overseas.

Suggested donations include protein bars, powdered drink mixes and water flavorings; non-aerosol, unscented toiletries; small electronics, such as hand-held games, fans, misters and non-lithium batteries; playing cards, puzzle books and lightweight sports equipment. Donations can be dropped off during the event on May 27, or on weekdays through Friday, June 2, in the lobby of 11951 Freedom Drive, Reston, as well as other Reston Town Center office buildings. "This event is about honoring and giving back to the men and women who serve our nation," notes Overton. "Thanks to the heartwarming response to the Chorale's care package drive, in just two years we have shipped 650 pounds of donations for troops serving far from home."

For more information about A Star-Spangled Salute and The Reston Chorale's care package drive, please visit www.restonchorale.org or call 703-834-0079.



Sticking to United States Postal Service tradition, antique mail truck braves the weather for the main parade for Great Falls' July 4 celebration last year.

Concert on the Green, July 4 Highlight Summer in Great Falls

Celebrate summer in Great Falls, visit www.celebrategreatfalls.org for more July 4



Last year, Great Falls singer-songwriter Mary Ann Redmond performed a mix of classic covers and her own music at the Concert on the Green. The lawn was full of people from all over the area.

events, the Concerts on the Green schedule and Movies on the Green selections.

PHOTOS BY NIKKI CHESHIRE/THE CONNECTION

BULLETIN

To have community events listed in the Connection, visit connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline for submissions is noon on Friday.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Contact Volunteer Solutions at 703-324-5406, VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov or www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/volunteer-solutions.htm.

❖ **The Lewinsville Senior Center** in McLean needs instructors for the following classes: Art, Self-Defense, Chair Exercise, Indoor Gardening, Basic Spanish, Basic French, Ballroom Dance and Basic Guitar.

THROUGH SUMMER

Vienna Street-sweeping Program. The Town of Vienna began its annual street-sweeping program beginning March 20. The Town is divided into eight sections for purposes of the sweeping program. During the first pass through Town, the Public Works Department asks that residents not park on the street. Find the "sweeping" sections at viennava.gov/sweeping. Additionally, signs will be placed on streets marking a window of 7-10 days during which the truck will come through. Contact public works at 703-255-6380.

THURSDAY/MAY 25

Public Meeting. 7 p.m. at the Great Falls Grange, located at 9818 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. The Fairfax County Park Authority will hold a project information meeting regarding the upcoming installation of synthetic turf and athletic field lighting on rectangular field #7 at Great Falls Nike Park. This is the field closest to the corner of Leesburg Pike and Utterback Store Road in the park. Call 703-324-8662, email parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/press/html/ir077-17.htm.

THURSDAYS/MAY 25-JUNE 29

Chronic Disease Self-Management. 9-11:30 a.m. at Kaiser Permanente - Tysons Corner, 8008 Westpark Drive, McLean. Fairfax County is offering a free Chronic Disease Self-Management program. Register at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/chronic-disease.htm or call 703-324-5489, TTY 711.

SATURDAY/JUNE 3

Flea Market. 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Oakton Church of the Brethren, 10025 Courthouse Road, Vienna. Vendors needed. Call 703-281-4411, email office@oaktonbrethren.org or visit www.oaktonbrethren.org.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean has an urgent need for volunteers to help area senior citizens. To find out more about the Shepherd's Center and how you can volunteer to provide transportation and other services, call the Center at 703-506-2199 or email info@scmafc.org, visit www.scmafc.org.

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 6

like pigeons, you feed one with money and more will flock in" and "You don't want homeless people in your neighborhood because they create trash." It seemed that many people were more hung up on the negative image they feel homeless individuals create for the county instead of their plight. Some of the comments were difficult for us to read, while others were heart-felt and inspiring.

My classmates and I learned a lot through our project on homelessness, but mostly I think it is that we (even college students) all have the ability to assist those in need.

Giovonny Bland
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Woe Is Not Me



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

When I think about being diagnosed with lung cancer, I don't think, why me. I might think, why not me, but I definitely think, now what. The idea/strategy being: moving forward, not recriminating or regretting backward. As Popeye the Sailor man so often said: "I y'am what I y'am." Although I doubt he was talking about having lung cancer. How could he? He ate all that spinach, canned though it was. Besides, he's a cartoon character.

And as much and as often as he ate it — and it always helped him overcome whatever predicament Brutus had put him in, is as little and infrequent as I ate it. Perhaps that was because my mother cooked vegetables in a pressure cooker so by the time I saw them on my plate, they no longer resembled a vegetable nor were they the least bit appetizing. To say the vegetables were limp and lifeless does a disservice to all things characterized as 'limp and lifeless.' In fact, I can still remember the first time I ate a vegetable that was not d.o.a. It was at my mother-in-law's house; she was a wonderful cook. She made asparagus for this memorable meal and served it in a beautiful antique china serving dish. When the dish came my way, I stuck my fork in the asparagus to serve myself and heard a sound, a poof. I was taken aback, sort of. It was a sound I had never heard before — from a vegetable. As I learned that night, it was the sound of a vegetable that had not been cooked beyond its edible life.

That's not to imply that avoiding vegetables contributed to my diagnosis. Hardly. It simply says that vegetables were not a part of my childhood. Meat and potatoes were, as was my standard go-to meal: cream cheese and American cheese on bread. It was the sandwich of my youth and it has remained very much a part of my adulthood as well. It may not sound appetizing to you; to me, it represents all the comforts of home — heaven on Earth between two slices of bread or open-faced on a bagel or English muffin. Simple but oh so effective — and delicious.

Not to be totally oblivious to my underlying medical condition, I do realize that modifying my eating habits is a prudent and sensible consideration. However, I rationalize that need-to-feed with the explanation that, as a cancer patient (and anyone else, really), if I am to continue to attempt to thrive while I survive, I need to be happy, positive and relatively stress free. After all, this cancer business: characterized as "terminal" by my oncologist; chemotherapy (and its well-known side effects) every five weeks, C.T. Scans quarterly, M.R.I.s every six months, P.E.T. and Bone scans every so often, face-to-face quarterly appointments with my oncologist and all the associated fears and anxiety surrounding this rather unpleasant experience, and you can imagine, even agree perhaps, that living in the trenches as us cancer patients do, we need help — in any number of ways; personal and professional.

And though I am mindful of what I eat, I don't want to abuse the privilege of survival I've been given. I never want to take it for granted, especially considering my original "13-month to two-year" prognosis. By the same token, life is for living. As Andy Dufresne (Tim Robbins) said to "Red" (Morgan Freeman) in the movie "Shawshank Redemption:" "Get busy living or get busy dying." Since I'm in no hurry to die, I need to find a balance in how I live. Being miserable because of what I can't eat won't work for me. I'm just not flexible/mature enough in my eating choices; never have been. I still eat like a child, but now I have a man-sized problem.

I imagine the longer I live with cancer, the more vigilant I have to be. Then again, if it ain't broke, is there any reason to fix it? Do I leave well enough alone or do I try to grow up and eat my age, not my shoe size? I mean, I am eligible for Social Security.

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



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