

Great Falls CONNECTION

WELLBEING
PAGE 8

The not-so-scary Halloween wagon ride travels through the meadow at Riverbend Park in Great Falls where children could learn about the park's animal inhabitants on Saturday, Oct. 28, 2017.

Halloween Wagon Ride Through Riverbend Park

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Schools to Serve
'Real Food for Kids'

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Langley High Orchestra
Presents Irish Music

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Northam



Gillespie



Hyra



Fairfax



Vogel



Herring



Adams

On the Ballot

A look at what's on the ballot this Election Day.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

Voters across Virginia will be headed to the polls Tuesday Nov. 7. Here's a look at what's on the ballot:

Race for Governor

Democrat **Ralph Northam** is a pediatric neurologist who was elected lieutenant governor in 2013, when he beat Republican E.W. Jackson. Before being elected to the statewide office, he represented the Eastern Shore in the Virginia state Senate. He's also a veteran, serving as an Army doctor during Desert Storm.

On the campaign trail, Northam talks about a "G3 Program" for Virginia — a plan that would help people get a job, get skilled and give back. If elected, he says he would work to expand industry certification programs, community colleges and apprenticeship programs, an effort that would focus on high-school students who do not attend a four-year college or university. He says he would support a law to make salary information more transparent so women can fight discriminatory practices. And, he says, he would push to expand Medicaid.

Fundraising Total: \$22.8 million

- ❖ \$3 million from DGA Action
- ❖ \$705,000 from Virginia League of Conservation Voters
- ❖ \$566,000 from Michael Bills of Charlottesville, founder of Bluestem Asset Management
- ❖ \$450,000 from Everytown for Gun Safety
- ❖ \$400,000 from the Democratic Party of Virginia

Republican **Ed Gillespie** is a former chairman of the Republican National Committee who owns the firm Quinn Gillespie & Associates, a bipartisan lobbying firm he started with Jack Quinn.

On the campaign trail, Gillespie talks about cutting the individual tax rate by 10 percent — the first income tax rate since 1972. He wants to prohibit candidates from using money raised for one office to run for a different office, and he says he would extend the length of time administration officials must wait before they can lobby their prior office. If elected, he says he would

identify \$200 million in savings during the course of his administration by establishing a new Office of Innovation and Efficiency.

Fundraising Total: \$14.8 million

- ❖ \$4 million from A Stronger Virginia
- ❖ \$1.1 million from Let's Grow Virginia
- ❖ \$1 million from the Republican Governors Association
- ❖ \$200,000 from Dwight Schar of McLean, NVR Homes
- ❖ \$133,000 from Jay Faison of Charlotte, N.C., of ClearPath Foundation

Libertarian **Cliff Hyra** is a patent attorney who was unopposed as the Libertarian candidate for governor when party leaders met for their convention in May.

On the campaign trail, Hyra talks about ending the business, professional and occupational licenses tax known as the BPOL. He also wants to end state occupational licensing requirements for cosmetologists, interior decorators and nail technicians. He also wants to privatize the state-owned liquor monopoly and avoid increases to the minimum wage. If elected, he says he would work to exempt the first \$60,000 of household income from the state income tax.

Fundraising Total: \$63,000

- ❖ \$15,000 from Michael Chastain of Austin, Texas
- ❖ \$1,000 from John Berresford of Arlington, Federal Communications Commission
- ❖ \$1,000 from Don Bruckner of Albuquerque, N.M., Guebert Bruckner PC
- ❖ \$1,000 from Darryl Kerkeslager of Richmond, Virginia Department of Corrections
- ❖ \$1,000 from Carrie-Anne Mosley of Chantilly, Salesforce.com

Race for Lieutenant Governor

Democrat **Justin Fairfax** is a former federal prosecutor who also owns a dental practice with his wife. Earlier this year, he beat out two other Democrats were were also running in the Democratic primary: longtime Democratic operative Susan Platt and former federal prosecutor Gene Rossi.

On the campaign trail, Fairfax says he wants to increase the minimum wage and expand workforce training. He wants to implement a state-based loan restructuring

program, and increase access to pre-kindergarten education. If elected, he says, he would support expanding Medicaid and eliminate gaps in mental health coverage.

Fundraising Total: \$2.9 million

- ❖ \$50,000 from Rose McElrath-Slade of McLean, Strategic Resources Inc.
- ❖ \$35,000 from the National Education Association
- ❖ \$35,000 from stockbroker Edward Hart Rice of Vienna
- ❖ \$30,000 from Ivan Jecklin of Henrico, Weinstein Management Company
- ❖ \$25,000 from Michael Bills of Charlottesville, founder of Bluestem Asset Management

Republican **Jill Vogel** is a state senator representing Upperville who was first elected in 2007 after the retirement of longtime Republican state Sen. Russ Potts (R-27). Earlier this year, she beat out two other Republicans who were also running in the Republican primary for lieutenant governor: Sen. Bryce Reeves (R-17) and Del. Glenn Davis (R-84).

On the campaign trail, Vogel says she wants to reduce regulations and the tax burden. During the last General Assembly session, she introduced a bill that would have banned all gifts to lawmakers and prohibited candidates from using campaign funds on personal expenditures. She also introduced an effort she calls the "repeal amendment" that would allow states to repeal federal laws and regulations.

Fundraising Total: \$2.5 million

- ❖ \$825,000 from the Republican State Leadership Committee
- ❖ \$496,000 from William Holtzman of Holtzman Oil Corp
- ❖ \$96,000 from Jill Vogel for Senate
- ❖ \$35,000 from cigarette manufacture Altria
- ❖ \$29,000 from Michael Smith of Middleburg, Valley Proteins Inc.

Race for Attorney General

Democrat **Mark Herring** is a former state senator from Loudoun who was elected attorney general in 2013, when he won a 165-vote margin of victory against Republican Mark Obenshain that led to a statewide recount. He has a master of arts in foreign affairs from the University of Vir-

ginia as well as a bachelor's degree in foreign affairs and economics, also from UVA. He also received a law degree from the University of Richmond.

On the campaign trail, Herring says responding to the opioid crisis is one of his top priorities. As attorney general, he says he has prosecuted more than 75 cases against heroin dealers and traffickers involving more than 375 pounds of heroin and fentanyl. Herring says he is also leading a project to eliminate Virginia's backlog of more than 2,000 rape kits. Herring is also chairman of a task force to combat campus sexual violence, and he says he helped put hundreds of child predators behind bars through aggressive prosecutions and digital forensics work.

Fundraising Total: \$6.2 million

- ❖ \$1.5 million from the Democratic Attorneys General Association
- ❖ \$813,000 from One Commonwealth PAC
- ❖ \$300,000 from Everytown for Gun Safety
- ❖ \$150,000 from Michael Bills of Charlottesville, founder of Bluestem Asset Management
- ❖ \$116,000 from the Democratic Party of Virginia

Republican **John Adams** is a former Navy officer who served as an associate White House counsel under former President George W. Bush. He has a law degree from the University of Virginia, and an undergraduate degree from the Virginia Military Institute. He currently works as an attorney in private practice.

On the campaign trail, Adams says he would work as an advocate against spoofing — fighting phone scammers who impersonate the government, legitimate businesses or local telephone numbers. If elected, he says, he will leverage state resources to do "much, much more" than is currently being done to combat the opioid crisis. He says he would also support "tough but effective" law combatting drug dealing.

Fundraising Total: \$3.4 million

- ❖ \$2.9 million from Republican Attorneys General Association
- ❖ \$225,000 from Republican Party of Virginia
- ❖ \$100,000 from Bruce Gottwald of Richmond of Newmarket Corp
- ❖ \$35,000 from Floyd Gottwald of Henrico of Newmarket Corp
- ❖ \$27,500 of William Goodwin Jr. of Richmond of CCA Industry



The wagon ride travels through the meadow at Riverbend Park in Great Falls.

PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION



Volunteer Clare Condon reads from the book, "The Very Busy Spider," at the Corn Cob Crib stop during the wagon ride at Riverbend Park in Great Falls.

Halloween Wagon Ride through Riverbend Park

Not-so-scary trek through the meadow to learn about park's animal inhabitants.

Riverbend Park in Great Falls held a not-so-scary Halloween wagon ride through the meadow on Saturday, Oct. 28, 2017, where children could learn about the park's animal inhabitants. The one-hour trek stopped at the Corn Crib decorated with spiders and bats, and children were treated to a reading from the book, "The Very Busy Spider," by volunteer Clare Condon. Naturalist Heather Shockey-Barrett also gave a talk on animals that roam the park. Afterwards, they returned to the Riverbend Nature Center where they could pet a real black rat snake and bunny rabbit with a talk by Naturalist Chris Kopsick. Children also received Halloween treats.

— STEVE HIBBARD



Naturalist Heather Shockey-Barrett shows the skull of a white tailed deer at the Corn Cob Crib stop during the wagon ride at Riverbend Park in Great Falls.



Georgia Dougherty of McLean and Helena Backus of Great Falls enjoy the wagon ride at Riverbend Park in Great Falls.



Naturalist Chris Kopsick lectures on the black rat snake at Riverbend Park in Great Falls.



Naturalist Chris Kopsick lectures on the live bunny rabbit at Riverbend Park in Great Falls.

WEEK IN GREAT FALLS

Turner Park Observatory Wins State Honors

The roll-top observatory at Observatory Park at The Turner Farm has been honored by the Virginia Recreation and Parks Society (VRPS) as the Best New Facility (Bricks and Mortar) in a population area greater than 100,000. Officials from the Fairfax County Park Authority accepted the award from VRPS at the organization's annual meeting in Hampton Roads, Va., last week, according to a release from Fairfax County Newswire.

Opened in 2016, the observatory helps to expand the concept of what a park can offer, from the trees and land below to the skies above. It offers the public a chance to see the night sky through permanently mounted telescopes in one of Fairfax County's darkest spots. Visitors have the opportunity to combine indoor classroom instruction on such topics as the moon, constellations and meteors with an outdoor viewing experience — all in one building.

The roll-top building includes an Orientation Room that serves as an instructional space for educational programs and an Observation Room that includes three mounted telescopes, with room for a fourth telescope as private funding becomes available. The observatory features a retractable roof that rolls over the top of the fixed roof that covers the Orientation Room; it is the only active observatory in 100 miles.

With its low-profile design, the roll-top observatory also helps to preserve the natural park setting at Turner Farm, which serves double-duty as an equestrian park. The landscape design incorporates low maintenance plant material and meadow grasses indigenous to Virginia to create a natural, informal aesthetic.

The roll-top was funded through Park Bonds and donations from

the community including Jean and Ric Edelman and the Analemma Society.

Nominations Sought for Jean Tibbets History Award

The Jean Tibbets History Award honors outstanding contributions to the research, articulation, dis-

semination, and preservation of the history of life along the Potomac River corridor from McLean to west of Dranesville and south through Herndon.

Candidates for the Jean Tibbets History Award are selected from annual nominations to the Great Falls Historical Society, and the Award carries a stipend of \$200. The awardee's name is placed on the Great Falls Historians plaque, displayed in the Great Falls Library.

Nominations should include a brief resume of the nominee, a list-

ing of significant achievements, such as leading publications, noteworthy accomplishments, and a summary of the significance of the nominee's overall record of contributions. The deadline for submission for the 2017 Award is Dec. 15, 2017.

Mail nominations, with complete documentation, to GFHS Award Committee, Attention Karen Washburn, Chairman/PO Box 56/Great Falls, VA 22066 or by email to gfhsva220667@outlook.com

Jean Tibbets herself was a writer of Great Falls History, who recognized and displayed excellence in historical research. The Great Falls Historical Society commemorates her memory with this Award and appreciate the community's support, as they continue to celebrate the history of the community.

Donations from the public continue to help in this endeavor, and may be made to: Great Falls Historical Society/Attention: Treasurer/PO Box 56, Great Falls, VA 22066.



The HEART Of The Great Falls Community & Proud Location Of The Following Events:

**Easter Egg Hunt
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Photos by Walt Lawrence

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| Arts of Great Falls..... | 703-232-1575 |
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| Spectrum Property Management.... | 703-307-2965 |
| Village Centre Mgmt Office | 703-759-2485 |
| Village Retreat/Massage Therapy.... | 703-638-4852 |
| Wells Fargo Bank..... | 703-757-1040 |
| Wild Ginger Restaurant | 703-759-5040 |



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FAITH NOTES

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

Yoga Class with a Christian Focus is held Saturdays, 3-4 p.m., McGill Hall or the Library at the Church of the Holy Comforter, 543 Beulah Road, NE, Vienna. This group is suitable for those with beginner and/or intermediate yoga experience. Dress comfortably and bring a mat. Feel free to bring a towel, block(s) or strap. Contact the Church Office at 703-938-6521.

OPINION

Turn Out To Vote

Races at top of ticket likely to be very close; your vote counts.

When will you vote? Make a plan, there is less than one week left. You can vote absentee in person until Saturday, Nov. 4. If you haven't voted by then, you will need to vote on Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 7. Decide what time you'll go, make plans with a family member or a friend to meet at the polls. Don't let the day get away from you. Polls are open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Nov. 7.

EDITORIAL Consider the election four years ago of Attorney General Mark Herring (D), who is running again this year to keep his position. Herring defeated his Republican opponent by 165 votes, 1,103,777 votes to 1,103,612 - a difference of 165 votes out of more than 2.2 million cast, or less than one half of one percent difference. Herring promptly announced he would not defend Virginia's same-sex marriage ban. It's fair to say that a variety of other issues have been different because of that razor thin victory.

Absentee Voting in Person

Voting early if you qualify is a good choice. There are 19 valid reasons to vote absentee in Virginia, including the possibility that you will be working and commuting to and from home for 11 or more hours between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. on Election Day. Check the Virginia Department of Elections list to see if you are eligible: elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/absentee-voting/index.html

There are two ways to vote absentee: in-person and by mail. To vote by mail, you will need to apply for an absentee ballot; if you vote absentee in-person you will fill out the application when you arrive at the in-person absentee location.

See your locality's elections website for more.

Bring Photo ID, There Are Alternatives

Virginia has voter identification requirements; plan to bring photo identification with you to vote, whether absentee or on Election Day.

Any registered voter who does not have one of the required forms of identification can apply for a free Virginia Voter Photo Identification from any general registrar's office in the Commonwealth. Voters applying for the Virginia Voter Photo ID complete the Virginia Voter Photo Identification Card Application, have their picture taken, and sign the digital signature pad.

Among accepted ID: valid Virginia Driver's

License or Identification Card; valid Virginia DMV issued Veteran's ID card; valid U.S. Passport; other government-issued photo identification cards issued by the U.S. Government, the Commonwealth of Virginia, or a political subdivision of the Commonwealth; valid college or university student photo identification card from an institution of higher education located in Virginia; valid student ID issued by a public school or private school in Virginia displaying a photo; employee identification card containing a photograph of the voter and issued by an employer of the voter in the ordinary course of the employer's business.

A voter who does not bring an acceptable photo ID to the polls will be offered a provisional ballot.

To find a registration office where you can obtain photo ID, even on the day of an election, visit: vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation/PublicContactLookup.

Provisional Ballot Process for Voters Who Arrive Without Identification

On the Ballot

Governor

Ralph S. Northam (D)
Edward W. "Ed" Gillespie (R)
Clifford D. Hyra (L)

Lieutenant Governor

Justin E. Fairfax (D)
Jill H. Vogel (R)

Attorney General

Mark R. Herring (D)*
John D. Adams (R)

House of Delegates

34th District

Kathleen Murphy (D) incumbent
Cheryl Buford (R)

35th District

Mark Keam (D) incumbent, unopposed

36th District

Ken Plum (D) incumbent, unopposed

37th District

David Bulova (D) incumbent, unopposed

38th District

Kay Kory (D) incumbent
Paul Haring (R)

39th District

Vivian Watts (D) incumbent, unopposed

40th District

Donte Tanner (D)
Tim Hugo (R) incumbent

41st District

Eileen Filler-Corn (D) incumbent, unopposed

42nd District

Kathy Tran (D)
Lolita Mancheno-Smoak (R)

43rd District

Mark Sickles (D) incumbent, unopposed

If you arrive at your polling place on Election Day without an acceptable form of photo identification, don't panic or give up. You will be given the opportunity to vote a provisional ballot. After completing the provisional ballot, the individual voting will be given written instructions from the election officials on how to submit a copy of his/her identification so that his/her vote can be counted.

A voter will have until noon on the Friday following the election to deliver a copy of the identification to the local electoral board or to appear in person to apply for a Virginia Voter Photo ID Card. Also by noon on Friday following the election, the voter may appear in-person in the office of the general registrar, in the locality in which the provisional ballot was cast, and apply for a Virginia Voter Photo ID Card. At the completion of the application process, the voter may request a Temporary Identification Document. This document may be provided to the electoral board to suffice the identification requirement.

44th District

Paul Krizek (D) incumbent, unopposed

45th District

Mark Levine (D) incumbent, unopposed

53rd District

Marcus Simon (D) incumbent
Mike Casey (I)

67th District

Karrie Delaney (D)
Jim LeMunyon (R) incumbent

86th District

Jennifer Boysko (D) incumbent
Linda Schulz (R)

Fairfax County School Bonds

Voters will vote yes or no on a \$315 million public school bond referendum on the Nov. 7 general election ballot. If approved by voters, the Fairfax County Public Schools' current plans to use this bond money are to plan and/or construct two new elementary schools, one in Fairfax/Oakton area and another in the northwest county area; relocate one modular building; plan additions at three existing high schools to add capacity at Madison, Stuart and West Potomac; plan and/or construct renovations of 10 elementary schools, three middle schools and two high schools. See www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/facilities-planning-future/2017-school-bond-referendum.

Fairfax County Office of Elections

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections
Voter Registration: 703-222-0776, TTY 711
Absentee Fax: 703-324-3725
Email: voting@fairfaxcounty.gov
Election Officer Info: 703-324-4735, TTY 711

Correction

In the Connection's editorial last week, Mike Casey's name was misspelled in the list of candidates for the Virginia House of Delegates. Casey, an Independent, is running against Marcus Simon, incumbent Democrat, for the seat in the 53rd House District.

Great Falls
CONNECTION

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NEWS

It is the goal of the FCPS Food and Nutrition Services to install “Real Food For Kids” salad bars at every elementary school by 2019.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE
FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



‘Real Food For Kids’ Salad Bar Opens at Great Falls Elementary

BY FALLON FORBUSH
THE CONNECTION

The Fairfax County Public Schools has two more years before it hits its self-imposed expiration date to implement fresh “Real Food for Kids” salad bar programs in all 141 of its elementary schools. A new salad bar opened this week at the Great Falls Elementary School.

All students may select fruits and vegetables for lunch from the salad bar, and then they may complete their lunch by choosing either the salad bar protein and grains or the hot entrée listed on the menu for that day.

“We’re all excited,” said Sara Harper, the school’s principal. “This is absolutely something we’ve been wanting.”

Not only have Harper’s students asked about it, but their parents have been asking her about bringing a salad bar to the cafeteria ever since the first salad bar in the county public school system rolled out at Vienna Elementary School in May 2016.

“My hope is that providing a couple of different options and a salad bar ... will increase some of the revenue for some of the lunches,” Harper said.

Schools have been eager to get their salad bar as soon as possible.

“I just think that it’s a huge step forward,” Harper said. “We had to get our name in there and get on a wait list and I did it early enough to kind of be on the front end of it. We feel really fortunate.”

Harper said she has been stopped in the halls by enthusiastic parents who expressed their excitement that their kids who have food allergies or celiac disease will have a better selection and be able to purchase lunch in the cafeteria without worrying about ingredients.

“It’s just an amazing opportunity to provide food that is nutritionally sound and meets a lot of different nutritional needs,” she said.

THE MAN EMPOWERING the opportunity was brought out of retirement to lead the charge.

“I am known as starting the first of its kind salad bar in the country back in 1997,” said Rodney Taylor, director of food and nutrition services for FCPS. “It was called the Farmers’ Market Salad Bar.”

Taylor retired after more than 20 years of directing nutrition programs for public school districts in his home state of California before coming to work for FCPS in September 2015.

His mission is to make the meals healthier and rolling out a salad bar program for all elementary schools in the county is one of the ways he is accomplishing his goal.

“In my years, I have not seen any other program as successful in getting kids to consume more fresh fruits and vegetables,” Taylor said.

This idea has been challenged by those in his position at other school districts.

“Most directors will tell you that they don’t want [a salad bar] because it’s unsanitary and kids can’t make their own choices,” he said.

But Taylor will tell you that he “hasn’t lost a kid yet” after the many years of rolling them out to young students. And there are steps in place to ensure safety for students who aren’t used to communal eating.

“The kids will meet to better understand, like: Don’t lick the spoons and stuff,” Harper said.

Before the salad bar opened on Wednesday, Nov. 1, students of all grade levels attended an etiquette training on Monday, Oct. 30.

The children learn about the importance of the sneeze shield running along the salad bar and learn how to use the hand sanitizer station before going in to grab the communal utensils. Cafeteria staff also received training on proper maintenance of the new salad bar.

“Our cafeteria manager has [been trained] to better understand the upkeep and what they need to keep the food fresh and the vegetables clean and safe,” Harper said.

School cafeterias have served apples, oranges, bananas and pre-made salads for years, but it is the self-selection and control that is the catalyst for changing the way the students eat, according to Taylor.

“If kids are allowed to make their own choices, they will consume it instead of throwing it in the trash,” Taylor said.

The salad bars also have to be user friendly.

“A third grader doesn’t have teeth; they’re going to throw the apple in the trash,” he said. “A kindergartener can’t peel an orange.”

In the salad bar, apples are cored and sliced and oranges are peeled and sliced, according to Taylor. Rather than giving children just one fruit or vegetable option, a variety is also provided.

“They make their own choices,” he said.

THE FIRST SALAD BAR was piloted at Vienna Elementary School in 2016 and have been rolling out steadily ever since.

Taylor was also committed to adding the salad bars in a way that didn’t cause his department to run up debt for the school system.

“I believe that a program can serve healthy food and have a healthy bottom line as well,” he said.

Grant funding for the new salad bars was provided by the “Salad Bars to Schools” campaign, according to Taylor. The campaign is supported by the Chef Ann Foundation, the National Fruit and Vegetable Alliance, the United Fresh Start Foundation and Whole Foods Market as part of former First Lady

SEE SCHOOLS, PAGE 11

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Creating Balance

Advanced planning is one key to holiday harmony.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

The stretch of time between Halloween and the New Year can be a source of merriment and joy, but it can also be a cause of stress, say mental health professionals. According to a study by the American Psychological Association more than 60 percent of Americans found the holiday season a frequent source of stress and fatigue. While joy is still the primary emotion, finding a way to create balance and manage the additional demands brought on by the holiday season can make holidays merry.

"Part of managing stress is identifying the causes of stress and being aware of what is going on with you and what is going to trigger you," said Maria Mangione, Psy.D., clinical psychologist at Washington Center for Weight Loss Management. "Look back at past holiday seasons and ask, 'What got you sad? What made you nervous? What made you angry? While we're outside of the holiday season, if you can look back at past seasons and think about the times that you were stressed, you can come up with a toolbox of things that could be helpful to you.'"

From shopping and budgeting to overeating and dealing with emotional issues,

Mangione says crafting a plan in advance of the holiday season is a key to maintaining balance. "When someone is dealing with people or situations, it's hard to figure out how to deal with it in the moment," she said. "If people prepare and have a plan in place, they can go on autopilot."

"The holidays are a time in which we are potentially confronted with a lot added responsibilities outside of our day-to-day," added Monica Brand, Ed.D., assistant professor, Department of Counseling,

"The holiday cycle starts with Halloween and ... can snowball as people get more and more stressed."

— Rachel Trope, clinical exercise physiologist at Washington Center for Weight Management

Marymount University. "As a result, we can be thrown off and stressed simply because we are not on our usual routine."

UNRESOLVED FAMILY ISSUES often resurface during the holidays and lead to tension. "Overall, our change in routine, increased interaction with family and the expectations we place on ourselves can all have some impact on our stress levels dur-

ing the holidays," said Brand. As a result, people tend to brace themselves for whatever may come their way. A more basic method of avoiding stress is both mentally and physically preparing before company, travel, or hosting duties. Many people do this by creating to do lists, getting organized, and planning before the beginning of their holiday."

Be mindful of limitations and boundaries and limit the expectations we place on ourselves and others, advises Brand. "If you are one who is so caught up in festivities or is easily overwhelmed, setting reminders on your phone, smartwatch, or having someone hold you accountable in taking breaks from the festivities may recharge your batteries," she said.

Financial imbalance is a common plight during the holiday season, especially when a desire to give generously outweighs one's budget. "I cannot stress enough how important it is to set a spending limit for each person you will be shopping for ahead of time, before you go shopping," said Brian Neely, professor of Accounting & Finance at Northern Virginia Community College. "It is very easy to get caught up in the festive moment and spend far more than you really need to before you

even realize what you have done. This will always result in buyer's remorse and can strip away the true joy that should go hand-in-hand with the customary giving of gifts."

Neely says that during the holidays most Americans have been programmed to spend the vast majority of their discretionary income all at once. "The worst aspect of this annual spending spree is that it generally goes on a credit card or two or three and it stays on there for a very long time," he said. "Once a purchase goes on a credit card, you are still paying for those purchased items for many months afterwards with accrued interest. So now, those presents under the tree on Christmas morning are still increasing in total actual cost until you pay that debt off from your credit cards."

Avoiding store-issued credit cards is a key aspect of maintaining a sane budget, advises Emily Knarr, visiting faculty member in Marymount's Department of Accounting, Economics & Finance at Marymount University. "They offer so many promotions during the holidays that it is tempting to take advantage of them, especially if your other cards are maxed out and you still need to buy presents," she said. "However, even if the terms of the cards and promotions are good, it still affects your credit rating

SEE BALANCE, PAGE 15



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PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

Public Safety Headquarters Unites Departments

Police and Fire are out of the Massey Building.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

The Fairfax County Government Center took another step towards maximum efficiency on Thursday, Oct. 26 as officials cut the ribbon on a \$142 million building to hold the fire and police headquarters under one roof, co-locating the departments to improve connectivity.

"It makes absolute sense to have both departments together," said Sharon Bulova, chairman of the Board of Supervisors. "It's a much, much improved work environment," she added.

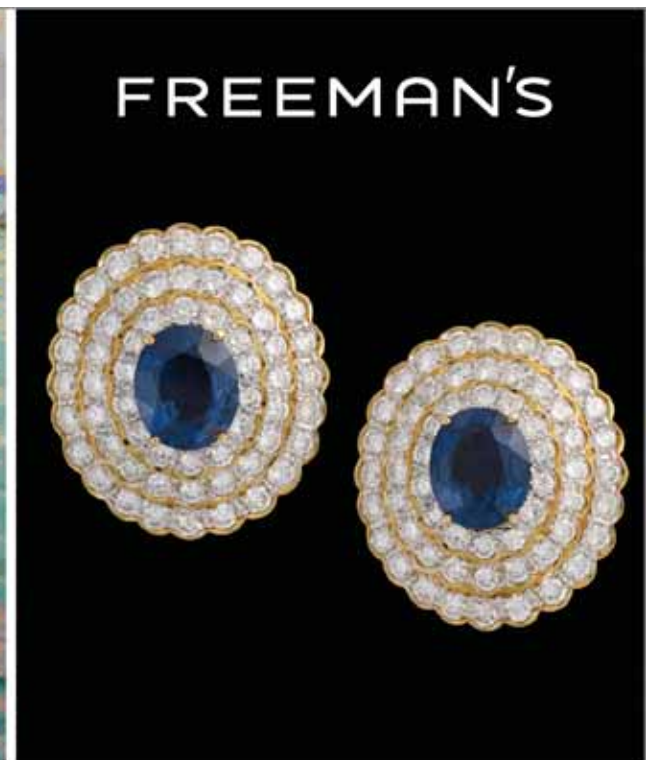
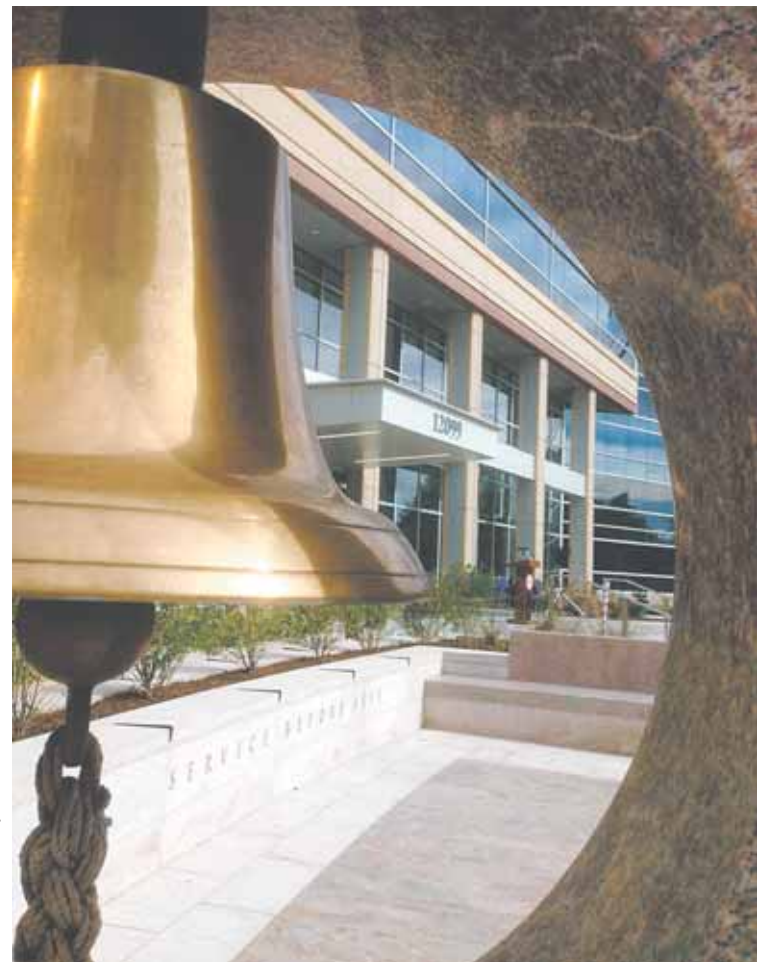
Bulova was on ribbon-cutting duty with the other supervisors from various districts, Fairfax County Fire Chief Richard R. Bowers, Police Chief Col. Edwin C. Roessler Jr., past chairman Kate Hanley and James Patteson, the county director of Public Works and Environmental Services. The new building is LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) certified at the silver level, and is a major improvement over the Massey Building, as many in the group re

SEE HEADQUARTERS, PAGE 13

All hands on the golden scissors to open the new Public Safety Headquarters.

PHOTOS BY
MIKE SALMON

Out front, a bell is part of the memorial to fallen police and firefighters.



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SCHOOLS



The 2016 National Scottish Fiddle Champion, Sean Heely, plays Tunes from the Scottish Highlands and Northern Ireland.

Langley High School Orchestra Presents Irish Music to Community

Langley High School orchestra performed Irish music in its auditorium on Tuesday, Oct. 23, accompanied by last year's National Scottish fiddle champion, Celtic harpist, and Irish music dancers.

Dancers from the O'Neill James School of Irish Dance performed on stage along with Langley High School Orchestra's playing of Irish music.

PHOTOS BY
MICHELLE MEEYOUNG CHO



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News

Schools to Serve 'Real Food for Kids'

FROM PAGE 7

Michelle Obama's "Let's Move!" initiative.

"Though she is no longer in the White House, the organizations that provided salad bars committed to providing us with all 141 salad bars, and that's like a value of about \$494,000," Taylor said.

The decision to hire Taylor and let him run his mission was spurred by parents.

Real Food For Kids, a nonprofit parent advocacy group working to improve food served in schools, lobbied FCPS for healthier options before Taylor was hired. The organization's Northern Virginia chapter works with the public school systems in Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun counties, as well as the Alexandria City schools.

"Things like taking of the 26-ingredient hamburger and 72-ingredient quesadilla were initial missions of ours; to look toward cleaner foods so that we wouldn't have so many preservatives or additives ... and move toward more

fresh foods," said Mary Porter, director of programs for Real Food For Kids.

The salad bars were something the group advocated for from its formation years ago and has partnered with Taylor to implement the program. With a like-minded individual running the nutrition program for the schools, Real Food For Kids primarily engages the school communities to support Taylor's work and to educate them about healthy eating.

"We are the support network for them," Porter said. "One of our jobs when these salad bars get rolled out is to work with the school community to recruit parent volunteers to help us for the first few days of the salad bars."

The program to get salad bars in all elementary schools will take two more years, which is about one a week from here on out, Taylor said.

"I came with an expiration date; I'm going home in five years," he said. "I've got a home in California and I'm going back."

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ENTERTAINMENT

Submit entertainment announcements at www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

ONGOING

Broadway Exhibit. Through Nov. 18, various times at Broadway Galleries, 1025-J Seneca Road, Great Falls. Local photographer, Silvia Gonzalez Roman with a variety of work. Visit www.broadwaygallery.net.

Great Falls Farmers Market. Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 778 Walker Road, Great Falls. Music, vendors, fresh produce, fresh prepared food, delightful bakery, spices from around the world, wild-caught fish, grass-fed, free-range meats, organic-fed poultry and eggs. Email kathleen@greatfallsfarmersmarket.org.

McLean Farmers Market, Fridays, through Nov. 17, 2017; 8 a.m. to noon, 1659 Chain Bridge Road, McLean, Master Gardener Plant Clinic on site to answer questions about plants in your landscape

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

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.

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. 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.

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



Great Falls History

On Wednesday, Nov. 8 at 7 p.m., Joan Wehner will speak about the purchase, restoration and transfer of the Schoolhouse to the Fairfax County Park Authority. \$5. Visit gfhs.org for more.



of still life, landscapes, and portrait/clothed figure from a live model. Visit www.greatfallsart.org.

WEDNESDAY/NOV. 1

Nottoway Park Fitness Stations Renovation Project. 7 a.m.-5 p.m. at Nottoway Park, 9537 Courthouse Road, Vienna. A month-long construction project is starting with the installation of 10 new fitness stations to make a total of 16 new pieces of fitness equipment along the existing trail. Contact Kelly Davis, Project Manager, at 703-324-8609.

NOV. 1-DEC. 31

Vienna-Wide Food Drive. Bring food contributions to Vienna Town Hall - 127 Center St. S; Vienna Arts Society-115 Pleasant St. NW; Bikes@Vienna-128-A Church St. NW; Caffé Amouri-107 Church St., NE; Evolution Fitness- 216 Dominion Road, NE; Rexall Drug Store-150 Maple Ave. W; Drs. Covell, Stack and Henon- 120 Beulah Road, NE; Patrick Henry Library (co-sponsored by Supervisor Cathy Hudgins) and the Vienna Community Center. Girl Scout Troop 2684 will be helping NEVCA by picking up the food. Sponsored by Committee for Helping Others. Call 703-281-7614.

FRIDAY/NOV. 3

Starving Artists Reception. 5-8 p.m. at Idylwood Presbyterian Church, 7617 Idylwood Road, Falls Church. The McLean Art Society is sponsoring the art sale with local artists. The sale will continue on Saturday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and on Sunday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Call 703 532-5357.

Scott Miller Concert. 8 p.m. at Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. Rock singer/songwriter highlights his first full album in four years, "Ladies Auxiliary." Visit www.jamminjava.com.



Magic Show

Amazing Max does magic on Sunday, Nov. 5 from 11 a.m.-noon at the Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Shows for 8-11 year olds at 1:30 and 4 p.m. \$45/\$35 McLean district residents. Call 703-790-0123 or visit www.mcleancenter.org.

Art Exhibit

Stonehedge is part of the "Textures" Art Exhibit. Various times from Nov. 7-Dec. 31 at the Vienna Arts Society, 115 Pleasant St., NW, Vienna. Carl Landow's work on exhibit. Call 703-319-3971 or visit www.ViennaArtsSociety.org.

NW. Call 703-319-3971 or visit www.ViennaArtsSociety.org.

TUESDAY/NOV. 7

iFly and Movie. 8 a.m.-6 p.m. at the The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. iFly is an indoor skydiving, adrenaline rush activity for floating in mid-air, then on to watching one of the newest movie releases at a nearby movie theater. Admission to iFly, lunch and movie tickets are included in the fee. \$110/\$100 McLean Community Center members. Call 703-790-0123, or visit www.mcleancenter.org.

WEDNESDAY/NOV. 8

Great Falls Historian. 7 p.m. at the Great Falls Grange, 9818 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Joan Wehner will speak about the purchase, restoration and transfer of the Schoolhouse to the Fairfax County Park Authority. \$5. Visit gfhs.org.

Astronomy Lecture. 7:30-9 p.m. at Turner Farm, 925 Springvale Road, Great Falls. Topics may include planets, open clusters, double stars, stellar color spectrum, globular clusters and galaxies. After class, view the objects that were discussed through the observatory's telescopes, if weather allows. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/turnerfarm/.

THURSDAY/NOV. 9

Meet the Artists. 7-9 p.m. at the McLean Project for the Arts, 1446 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. "Nature as Prototype" exhibition by Yoko K, Adam Nelson and Gretthe Whittrock. "Nature as Prototype" runs through Dec. 23. Visit mpaart.org.

FRIDAY/NOV. 10

On Eagles' Wings Veterans Day 10K race. 10 a.m. at Grace

Christian Academy, 3233 Annandale Road, Falls Church. Proceeds benefit Grace Christian Academy Scholarship Fund and Decorate a Vet. \$40. Visit gracechristianacademy.org/10K.

SATURDAY/NOV. 11

Fall Bazaar. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Vienna Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary, 400 Center St., South. The Vienna Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary is sponsoring this event with crafts, bake sale, holiday items. Email dancers1023@aol.com or call 703-309-3468.

Great Falls Veteran's Day Ceremony. 11 a.m. at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial behind the Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike. The event will include a Marine Corps color guard, patriotic songs by the Langley Madrigals, and remarks by Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Timothy F. Ghormley. Call 703-248-0390 or email bruce@newdream.net.

TUESDAY/NOV. 14

Meet the Author. 7:30 p.m. at the Balls Hill Government Center 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean. Author and historian William Connelly will address "Mosby's Raids on Civil War Northern Virginia." 703-356-8223.

NOV. 16-18

Christmas Craft Show. Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Oakton Church of the Brethren, 10025 Courthouse Road, Vienna. Oakton Church of the Brethren's 24th Annual Christmas Craft Show is a three-day event featuring a wide variety of handmade creations and craft supplies for purchase, plus a soup and sandwich lunch and bake sale. Visit www.oaktonbrethren.org.

FRIDAY/NOV. 17

Movie Double Feature. 3:30-10 p.m. at the The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road. Trip to AMC Tysons for two movies and dinner at the food court. \$35/\$25 McLean Community Center members. Call 703-790-0123, or visit www.mcleancenter.org.
Smart Driver Class. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Oakton United Methodist Church, 2951 Chain Bridge Road. The Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna is sponsoring a refresher two-day driver course geared for drivers age 50 and older. \$15 for AARP members (bring AARP membership card) \$20 for AARP non-members. Call 703-281-0538.

NOV. 17-19

Big Sale, Small Works. Various times at the Vienna Arts Center, 115 Pleasant St., NW. A variety of art available. Call 703-319-3971 or visit www.ViennaArtsSociety.org.

SATURDAY/NOV. 18

Peggy the Pint-Sized Pirate. 2 p.m. at the The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Live production with a pirate named Peggy. Free. Call 703-790-0123, or visit www.mcleancenter.org.

SUNDAY/NOV. 19

Peggy the Pint-Sized Pirate. 2 p.m. at the The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Live production with a pirate named Peggy. Free. Call 703-790-0123, or visit www.mcleancenter.org.

Emerging Artist Concert. 4 p.m. at Saint Francis Episcopal Church, 9220 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Oscar Paz-Suaznabar, age 12, on the piano, and Julia Angelov, from Alexandria, play orchestra favorites. Visit www.amadeusconcerts.com.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

NEWS

Headquarters

FROM PAGE 9

minded the crowd.

"The Massey Building, in the City of Fairfax, needed to come down, its time has passed," said Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield).

"We had to get it done before the Massey building collapsed," joked Supervisor John C. Cook (R-Braddock).

"The Massey Building once had its heyday," added Bulova.

It will be the third headquarters for David M. Rohrer, the deputy county executive who's been with the county for 37 years. "It has been worth the wait," he said.

The Massey Building was built in 1970, when asbestos was a common fireproof building material used, and it had outdated electrical and cooling systems that were hard to repair, according to the Fairfax County website.

The new nine-story building is dominated by glass and green features such as low-flow plumbing, permeable paving, rainwater harvesting equipment and LED (light emitting diode) lighting throughout. The architect that designed it was HOK, Inc. and the builder was Manhattan Construction. The building was "below budget and almost on time," said Patteson.

Out front, there are memorials erected to commemorate police officers and firefighters who died on the job through the years. They were put in front because "we want everyone to pass by and see the sacrifice," said Bowers. In years past, there was a softball field on the spot where the new building is, noted Bowers, but the new office "really is a field of dreams," he said.

There is also a tree out front that they managed to hold on to, despite the cranes and equipment coming and going through the two-year project. "We saved the tree as we promised," said Patteson.

With a new building, advanced technology and two public safety departments co-located for further efficiency, will the residents of the county feel safer? "The protection is always there no matter what building they're in," said Ellen Rohrer, who was at the ceremony.

The new Public Safety Headquarters is next to the Herrity Building, named after Herrity's father John Herrity who was a past chairman, he pointed out with a smile.

FEATURES OF THE NEW PUBLIC SAFETY HEADQUARTERS:

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- ❖ Maximized daylight into work spaces



PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

The national anthem was sung by a vocalist with the police department's honor guard.



Supervisor John Cook (R-Braddock District) talks about the technological advantage the new building will bring.



Andrea Dorlester looks at the public safety artifacts on the second floor of the new building.



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Friday Night Trips Double Feature

Friday, Nov. 17, 3:30-10 p.m.

\$35/\$25 MCC district residents

The Old Firehouse

1440 Chain Bridge Rd.



The Alden Fall Production "Peggy the Pint-Sized Pirate" by D. M. Larson (Freedrama.net)

Sat. & Sun., Nov. 18 & 19, at 2 p.m.

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LETTER

To End Epidemic of Violence

To the Editor:

Once again, Americans are faced with the news of another horrific mass shooting, this time in Las Vegas. A lone gunman killed at least 58 people and injured more than 400 others, many critically.

The League of Women Voters of Virginia expresses our heartfelt concern and hopes for the loved ones of the victims and the survivors. We will continue to work to end the epidemic of violence. But the calls to wait and gather the facts before taking substantive steps on gun violence is a familiar

ruse. There are facts we know today. Every day, 93 Americans die from a gunshot. Americans are 25 times more likely to die from gun violence compared to people from other industrialized countries.

Like every other public health epidemic, we need to look at what is most effective to prevent gun violence overall. There are proven solutions that work like expanding background checks to all private gun sales sold online and at gun shows, prohibiting dangerous people, like domestic abusers, terrorists and those with mental ill-

ness, from accessing guns – that will make our communities safer and save lives.

We cannot continue with the status quo. The League will honor the lives lost and those shattered and scarred, with our unwavering commitment to work to change laws and attitudes to end gun violence in our communities.

Sue Lewis

President

League of Women

Voters of Virginia

president@lwv-va.org

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

THURSDAY/NOV. 9

Lecture: Saving, Investing and Avoiding Fraud. 7:30-9 p.m. at the Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave., E., Vienna. Experts from the US Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) will teach how to be an informed investor, avoid scams and save effectively for retirement. Free. Email dsm11@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-938-0405 for more.

SATURDAY/NOV. 11

SALT Fall Advocacy Training Conference. 9-11 a.m. at the Virginia International University, Conference Room (VD-301), 4401 Village Drive, Fairfax. Sister Simone Campbell, will be the keynote speaker on "21st Century Poverty: Needed Action." Del. Ken Plum will address "Advocacy is moving to the state levels, Are you moving with it?" and Gay Gardner, with Interfaith Action for Human Rights will speak to "Making Solitary Confinement Truly a Last Resort." Free. Visit the SALT web site at www.S-A-L-T.org.

MONDAY/NOV. 13

Community Meeting. 6-8:30 p.m. at

the Oakton High School Cafeteria, 2900 Sutton Road, Vienna. Design Public Hearings on the Transform 66 Outside the Beltway Project regarding plans for the 22.5 mile corridor from I-495 to University Boulevard in Gainesville. Visit transform66.org for more.

THURSDAY/NOV. 16

Vietnam Veterans Chapter 227

Meeting. 7 p.m. at Neighbor's Restaurant, 262D Cedar Lane, Cedar Lane Shopping Center, Vienna. Gregory D. Foster, West Point graduate and Vietnam War veteran, will discuss senior U.S. military constitutional command responsibility. Visit www.vva227.org for more.

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**THE CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS**

WELLBEING Balance

FROM PAGE 8

when you take on more debt. It can also be difficult to close the cards once started.”

Neely has developed a foolproof way of managing holiday finances. “I always write out a list showing each item I have purchased for each person and track the amounts I have spent on each person separately each night after I have finished shopping for the day,” said Neely. “Seeing it all written down on paper can really help you curb your enthusiasm when it comes to frantic holiday spending.”

MAINTAINING AN EXERCISE REGIMEN is an important part of maintaining balance during the holidays says Rachel Trope, clinical exercise physiologist at Washington Center for Weight Management. “Physical activity is going to increase mood and decrease anxiety,” she said.

Advanced planning is a key to making sure it doesn’t fall by the wayside, advises Trope. “For example, if you’re traveling, take your exercise clothes and shoes,” she said. “If you schedule exercise, you’re less likely to push it off and it’s more likely to be successful. Get a friend that you can meet and exercise with.”

Roll exercise into family traditions. “If you can’t get to a gym, try walking and try integrating your holiday traditions into something active,” said Trope. “Try to establish new traditions that are active that you can enjoy with your family and not take away from family time or create the stress of having to choose.”

Put pen to paper when you develop a plan. “When you come up with a plan, write it down and put it someplace where you can see it and remind yourself of it,” said Trope. “Write down what kind of reward you’re going to give yourself.”

Stress can lead to overeating during the holidays, and although holiday meals are often associated with decadence, not all those dishes are fat and sugar-laden, advises Sara Ducey, professor of Nutrition and Food at Montgomery College in Rockville. “Our holiday dinners feature many nutritious food choices [such as] poultry and fish, sweet potatoes and squash, peas and other green vegetables and salads and fruits,” she said. “But there are also starchy, fatty and sugary foods [such as] mashed potatoes, rice dishes, cakes and pies and ice cream, whipped cream and marshmallows.”

Ducey recommends variety. “The more types of food you have, the more you and your guests will eat,” she said. “This is called the buffet effect. So offer many [colorful] vegetable dishes to make your buffet look beautiful and inviting ... [But] if you see the food, you will eat it. Keep the food away from the table, so guests have to get up to refill their plates.”

It is easy to get caught in the chaos of the holidays, but it’s important to remember the traditions, values and beliefs that are unique to each family, suggests Brand. “[The holidays] should be a reminder to us that not everyone has the resources, access, or privileged to spend time with the people they love on the holidays,” she said.

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L'Arc de Triomphe



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Though I studied French for five years, grades seven through 11 and became quite proficient, this column has nothing to do with French or this most famous of monuments. This column finishes the three-column arc concerning the before, during and after of my bulb installation. Having safely landed on my feet, figuratively and literally, it's time to complete the arc, especially considering my triumph.

The bulbs are all in. No breakage to me or the fixtures, the sconces or to the house. Just a relatively simple and straightforward (for me anyway) installation: on the refrigerator door (the night light), in the living room (in the sconces) and back in the kitchen (the flush-mounted light fixtures in the ceiling). I don't want to over exaggerate my success, but when you have had as many failures – in this context, as I have, one tends to find great joy in having avoided great complications.

I wouldn't say or even admit to beating my chest with great pride because I do understand the level of difficulty here but, previously I have given myself a nickname when a similar task at hand has met with similar success: Taras Bulba, who had nothing to do with bulbs other than part of his name included b-u-l-b. For some reason, I also had the knowledge that Yul Brynner played the title role in a 1962 film of the same name, but had no other information of substance other than I remember him being bald – which I'm not.

As to what I remember about what I was thinking when we purchased a 250-year-old farmhouse on two acres in Montgomery County back in 1992: the price was reasonable/we could afford it, it was two acres of land in an extremely desirable county/location, it was close to I-95; and it was about time in our lives that we bought our first home. As to what I was supposed to do next; soon after we moved in, we had a two-day party (to accommodate people's availability); for those two days I held a clipboard and took notes as many of our friends made casual observations/suggestions about what work needed to be done, inside the house and out.

We needed tile in both bathrooms – since there was none. We needed plumbing fixtures in one shower/tub – since there were none. We needed a “one-fixture rough-in” for a washing machine – since there was none. We needed central air conditioning and ducts – since there was none. We needed phone jacks/telephone wiring since there was only one phone outlet for the entire house. We needed a new oil boiler since the unit in the basement was from “the year one” (to use one of my late mother's expressions). We needed chimney repairs and liners. We needed an upgraded electrical panel.

As for the property/grounds; do you think a lifelong renter with zero interest, aptitude or experience had any of the tools necessary to maintain two acres? That's a rhetorical question if there ever was one. In over my head doesn't begin to scratch the surface of the depths of my immersion.

But my wife, Dina, loved the house. It reminded her of Chester County in Pennsylvania where she grew up. And the price offered good value. Within one minute of our initial visit to the house, after walking through the living room across the old-fashioned wide pine floor boards pass the cooking fireplace and stepping up into a formal dining room with another fireplace, I knew Dina was sold. Fifteen minutes later we exited the house; didn't flush a toilet, didn't turn on a faucet, didn't flick a light switch, did nothing except walk around. We made an offer the next day, and the rest is basically this column.

As much as I thought I knew, little did I know what I was actually getting myself into. It's been 25 years and I'm still way better in French than I am in homeowner. I don't call myself Taras Bulba for nothing. I call myself Taras Bulba for something: bulb replacement. It's not much I realize, but it's the best this man can do.

C'est la vie.

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

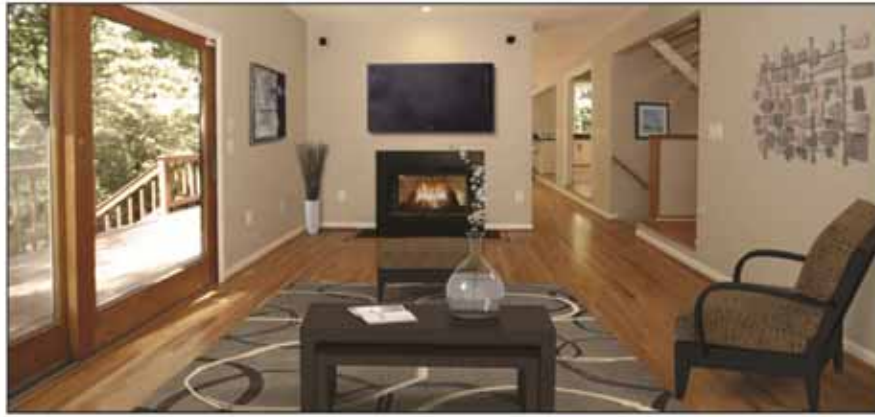


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