

Great Falls CONNECTION

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

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Sexton Christmas Trees of the White Top Mountains in Southern Virginia set up shop in the Village Centre in Great Falls to sell their Christmas trees. Pictured are employees Steve Joiner, Joye Daugherty, and Robert Kendziorek.

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Federal Tax Reform, Bad for Fairfax?

Supervisors split on effects of eliminating state and local tax deductions.

BY KEN MOORE

Most often, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors appears unified. But last week, discussion about the pending tax reform measure in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives sparked discord.

"My primary concern on the federal package is that we are emphasizing on page one opposition to federal tax reform and that is a position that I simply do not agree with," said Braddock Supervisor John Cook.

The board adopted its updated and revised strategies and principles for the 115th Congress on Tuesday, Dec. 5, despite objections voiced by Cook and Springfield Supervisor Pat Herrity, the two Republicans on the 10-person board.

"The concept of reducing tax rates and eliminating deductions is one needed for the national economy and I am disappointed that despite my requests and Supervisor Herrity's requests, the board is only looking at one side of the tax reform issue and that is the elimination of deductions, and not looking at the other side which is the economic growth potential that come with the other aspects of it," Cook said.

MAJOR TAX REFORM packages have passed both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, and a reconciled bill is expected to affect almost every aspect of the economy. The measures differ, but both increase the standard deduction and eliminate or cap many itemized deductions, including the deduction for state and local taxes and the deduction for mortgage interest payments.

In Virginia, 1.5 million households claim \$16.5 billion in state and local tax deductions, according to U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11). Connolly said in a release that 280,000 households claim this deduction in Fairfax County, for an average deduction of \$16,535.

"As a matter of fact, that [federal tax] bill was structured in a way, in my opinion, to explicitly discriminate against more urban localities across the country which do have higher assessed values," said Lee Supervisor Jeff McKay, "and in a lot of cases higher tax rates because they believe morally that we must provide certain services for our population."

Page 1 of the Board of Supervisors Strategies and Principles for the 115th Congress expresses concern about changes in tax policy:

"Because revenue options for localities in Virginia are extremely limited, the County

"I'm failing to understand anyone who believes this tax bill was built and predicated on helping low income people."

— Lee Supervisor Jeff McKay



"We are emphasizing on page one opposition to federal tax reform and that is a position that I simply do not agree with."

— Braddock Supervisor John Cook

"Across the nation, local governments are going to suffer as a result of this tax package."

— Dranesville Supervisor John Foust



opposes actions that impact County revenue sources or programs, including eliminating or capping federal deductibility for state and local taxes, which are used to fund education, public safety, transportation, infrastructure and human services (current law allows taxpayers to deduct state and local taxes paid from their federally taxable income, preventing double taxation and allowing state and local governments to maintain authority over the tax structures supporting those services)."

JOHN FOUST, Dranesville District supervisor, found Cook's opinion hard to take.

"I just have to say, I just cannot accept that the tax package that is before the federal government is anything but destructive to local government which is where things are actually getting done these days," Foust said.

"To support elimination of the real estate tax deduction as a member of a Board of Supervisors, the local government, to me is just unbelievable," he said. "We absolutely are going to suffer, not just our local government, but, across the nation, local governments are going to suffer as a result of this tax package. We have to do everything we can to stop this."

Herrity countered, "You can't talk about that piece of it while ignoring the fact you're doubling the standard deduction and the value that brings especially to our low income residents."

"I'm failing to understand anyone who believes this tax bill was built and predicated on helping low income people," said McKay, chair of the Board's legislative committee. "I'm surprised I'm hearing it here today."

"Over 60 percent of our budget is built on revenue from real estate. To mess with or tinker with our largest source of revenue in any way that can have an effect on what people can sell their property for, what people can afford to buy and what their

bottom line is and how that bottom line affects the county's revenue — to ignore that would be absurd," McKay said. "It absolutely will have an effect and local governments across the country see that."

"I was going to be silent, but I think it is hard to do so," said Catherine Hudgins, Hunter Mill District supervisor. "The tax package really sounds like something that is going to be very destructive in the long term."

"Essentially this is taxing taxes, taxing tax revenues and doubling taxation," said Chairman Sharon Bulova.

Cook did not budge.

"I have to disagree vehemently with the statement that the tax bill takes away from our local tax revenue. It's absolutely false. It's absolutely false," said Cook.

Read Strategies and Principles for the 115th Congress here: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/government/legislation/2018/adopted-federal-legislative-strategy-and-principles.pdf

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM WITH A SIDE OF OPTIMISM?

During the same board meeting on Dec. 5, supervisors formally adopted the 2018 Legislative Program for the General Assembly, with a note of optimism based on changes in the makeup of the House of Delegates because of last month's elections.

Dan Storck, Mount Vernon District supervisor, said: "With recent elections we have the opportunity to change some of the dynamics, and some of the focus, and some of the results that we get from Richmond. That's essential for this county, essential for the wellbeing of residents here and I would say particularly for schools."

Jeff McKay, chair of the board's legislative committee and Lee District supervisor reiterated the importance of schools as the county's top priority, citing particular concerns about state failure to provide any funds for teacher raises in FY17, and very

limited funds in FY18.

"Our [state legislative] program features state support for education as its top priority, and urges the state to fully meet its responsibility to adequately fund K-12," said McKay.

Virginia ranks 11th nationwide in per capita personal income, but 48th in state and local revenue as a percentage of personal income. Virginia ranks 38th nationwide in state per pupil funding. State K-12 spending per FCPS pupil was \$3,267 in FY 2016, while Fairfax County provided \$10,526.

TRANSPORTATION IS another priority.

"In this year's program, we've also elevated our WMATA position into its own priority statement which encourages the General Assembly to support dedicated funding and governance reforms for Washington Metrorail."

The region will have to work together to address Metro's critical funding needs, McKay said.

On other transportation issues, McKay emphasized the importance of transportation funding that is fair to Northern Virginia.

The Human Services Issues paper, which accompanies the legislative program, includes three priorities, according to McKay. "The first is increased state resources for the Children's Services Act. The second relates to increasing waiver rates and slots for those with developmental disabilities. And the third is state support for diversion services for nonviolent offenders experiencing mental health crises; this is in line with the county's diversion first initiative."

Herrity, Springfield District supervisor, was the lone vote against the legislative program this year. The program was adopted, including the Human Services issue paper, on Tuesday, Dec. 5.

Read the legislative priorities here: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/government/legislation/2018/adopted-2018-legislative-program.pdf

Read the human services issue paper here: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/government/legislation/2018/adopted-2018-human-services-issue-paper.pdf

NEW BRIDGE OVER THE POTOMAC?

The Legislative Program asserts the importance of addressing capacity and congestion crossing the Potomac River.

"The American Legion Bridge, one of the most heavily used in the region, is also the most congested. Since the largest number of vehicles traversing the American Legion Bridge travel between Fairfax and Montgomery Counties, the chokepoint created by this bridge requires long-term solutions. ... The volume of commuters demonstrate that another crossing is essential to mobility in the area. ... It is vital that the capacity needs across the Potomac River be addressed, including at the American Legion Bridge and Rosslyn Tunnel, to alleviate the existing congestion."

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GIFT IDEAS



Misguided Angels offers an olive green faux suede jacket made by Level 99 with tank top and necklace for \$193.

PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION

Misguided Angels

Looking for some holiday gifts from local mom and pop shops in the community? Misguided Angels in the Great Falls Center Shopping Center has just the answer. This store located where Viva La Diva used to be is a unique women's boutique with affordable clothing for daytime or your next night out, according to owner Kim Hutchings.

Hutchings strives to find women's clothing, shoes, handbags, and accessories from up-and-coming designers such as Sam Edelman, Hale Bob, Veronica M, Dolce Vita, Steve Madden, and Level 99 that won't break the bank.

Misguided Angels is located at 9843 Georgetown Pike, in the Great Falls Center Shopping Center.



Misguided Angels offers these Freebird by Steve Madden boots in two colors: brown and taupe, with laces up the back for \$328.



Luke Fowler and Armor Okeson, employees at Sexton Christmas Trees in the Village Centre in Great Falls, select a tree.

GIFT IDEAS



Adeler Jewelers offers these 18k white gold Australian opal and diamond stud earrings with vibrant colors to enhance any wardrobe at a cost of \$4,980.



Adeler Jewelers offers this signature 18k white gold and diamond crescent necklace which is ideal for wearing daily. It sits perfectly at the neck and is able to be worn at two different lengths for a cost of \$3,980.

Adeler Jewelers

Having been in business in Great Falls since 1980, Adeler Jewelers is a full-service family jeweler specializing in custom design and unique, one-of-a-kind jewelry, according to manager Wendy Adeler. Open seven

days a week, holiday sales are now in effect.

Adeler Jewelers is located at 772 Walker Road, in the Great Falls in the Village Centre. Visit www.adelerjewelers.com or call 703-759-4076.

PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION

Adeler Jewelers offers these 18k yellow gold and authentic ancient Alexander the Great coin cufflinks. They are ideal for the man who loves history and who has everything, for a cost of \$5,980.



FAITH NOTES

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

During Advent, Christ the King Lutheran Church, 10550 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, will present a series of three midweek Advent programs. The overarching theme of these evenings is "Peace for Our Time." Each evening's sub-theme will grow from a Reformation-era hymn. Each evening's program begins at 5:45 p.m. with supper followed by discussion, worship and the lighting of the Advent wreath. All are welcome. Visit www.gflutheran.org or call 703-759-6068.

❖ Thursday/Dec. 14 – Peace in politics, hymn: "Now to the Holy Spirit Let us Pray" (ELW 743)

❖ Thursday/Dec. 21 – Peace in ourselves,

hymn: "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come" (ELW 268)

Living Nativity and Christmas Concert. Friday, Dec. 15, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Redeemer Lutheran Church, 1545 Chain Bridge Road. Featuring the sounds of the season and the excitement of live animals in the creche. Call 703-909-3424 or email kbwenk@gmail.com for more.

Christmas Services at St. John's Episcopal Church, 6715 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Call 703-356-4902 or visit www.stjohnsmclean.org. Sunday, Dec. 17

❖ 9 and 11 a.m. – Festival of Lessons and Carols.

Christmas Eve, Sunday, Dec. 24
❖ 4 p.m. – Family Service of Holy Eucharist with Christmas Music at 3:30 pm

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OPINION

Save Healthcare for Children Right Now

If U.S. Senate fails to act soon, 69,000 children and pregnant women in Virginia, more than 8 million nationally, will lose health coverage.

The Children's Health Insurance Program, CHIP, provides health coverage to low-income, children with family incomes too high to qualify for Medicaid, up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level in Virginia, up to \$49,200 for a family of four. In Virginia, coverage under CHIP is called Family Access to Medical Insurance Security (FAMIS) and covers more than 69,000 children and pregnant women. More than 8.4 million children are covered nationally under CHIP.

Ironically, families with children covered under FAMIS (note that the S stands for "security") will receive letters this week letting them know that their medical insurance security ends in January unless the U.S. Senate acts to reauthorize (fund) CHIP by the end of the year. The House of Representatives passed a bill to reauthorize CHIP in November, funding it mostly through cuts to programs in the Affordable Care Act.

The letter to Virginia FAMIS participants reads:

"We are sending you this letter because these people in your family are enrolled in FAMIS or FAMIS MOMS:

"FAMIS and FAMIS MOMS are paid for by state and federal funds through the Children's Health Insurance Program known as CHIP. For

20 years CHIP has had the strong support of Congress and has been renewed many times. We are hopeful that Congress will once again provide the funding to continue this program. However, because Congress has not acted yet, we need to let you know that there is a chance the FAMIS programs may have to shut down.

"If Congress does not act soon, the FAMIS programs will end on Jan. 31, 2018."

Having tens of thousands of uninsured children is bad health policy for every Virginian. It's better for all children in school to have all children be able to access health care, both preventative care and care when they are sick.

According to a recent publication in the New England Journal of Medicine:

"The body of evidence summarized here indicates that coverage expansions significantly increase patients' access to care and use of preventive care, primary care, chronic illness treatment, medications, and surgery. These increases appear to produce significant, multifaceted, and nuanced benefits to health.

"Some benefits may manifest in earlier detection of disease, some in better medication adherence and management of chronic conditions, and some in the psychological well-being born of knowing one can afford care when one gets sick. ... Some of these changes will ultimately help tens of thousands of people live longer lives.

"Conversely, the data suggest that policies reducing coverage will produce significant harms to health, particularly among people with lower incomes and chronic conditions."

Also, having health coverage leads to greater financial security, and that helps the economy. "There is abundant evidence that having health insurance improves financial security," according to the same study.

Virginia's U.S. Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine have repeatedly called for a vote to reauthorize CHIP.

Yesterday, they said, "Today is a scary day for a lot of families in Virginia, and it was completely preventable. We asked Senator McConnell multiple times to help us support the 66,000 children and 1,100 pregnant women in Virginia who receive their health care through the CHIP program, but Republican leadership still hasn't brought it forward for a vote. There is a bipartisan bill on the table, and it's critical that we pass it before Congress leaves for the holidays so we can give some peace of mind to Virginia parents who are worried about whether their children will have health insurance in the new year."

We wish everyone peace of mind in the New Year.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

COMMENTARY

A Matter of Perspective

By JEAN JIANOS

In Washington, D.C. it is common to see a tourist posing for a photo, trying to create the illusion that they are holding one of the monuments in the palm of their hand. A similar kind of photo was prominently displayed as a party gag at a birthday party for a friend. The man celebrating his birthday was shown in the photo talking with his hands. In the background of the photo was a bikini-clad friend, creating the illusion that he was cupping her breast in his hand, in effect groping her. Hilarious, right?

The man being roasted by his friends acted sheepishly, but he was not really embarrassed. After all, he was depicted as being in control and the dominant figure in the photo.

The female friend who was also present at the party was mortified and left the room angry and close to tears. Overreacting, right? No sense of humor.

Perhaps another person would have

laughed it off in an attempt to regain equal footing with all the other party guests, but then none of us would have recognized this for what it was — one of "those situations."

She purposely had not been consulted about the use of the photo because it was suspected she would object to her body being used as the brunt of a sexist joke. Her friends, a group of men and women, thought she shouldn't mind too much because she looked good in her bikini, but that was not our decision to make.

In that moment when the photo was revealed she went from being a peer to a prop. We were using someone else's body for our own entertainment and satisfaction at the expense of their dignity. We had put that other person in a position where they couldn't object before the fact and would feel bullied into not objecting after the fact. There is a right and a wrong. The only matter of perspective is whether we see it.

Jean Jianos is a local freelance writer.

LETTERS

Armed as For a War Zone

To the Editor:

I have followed the gun control correspondence with dismay. I hope nobody is under the misapprehension that a few tweaks like better gun purchase checks, closing some loopholes and clamping down on some fast fire gadgetry — all in themselves desirable — will somehow make a significant difference to America's national disgrace. While every gun death reduced is good, we are still not even in the right ballpark in dealing with the scale of the problem.

The reason Britain has negligible gun deaths compared to America is that gun ownership is very low, about 7 percent of America's figure, and guns are heavily regulated. As a result, there is no arms race between potential attacker and attacked and no arms race between criminal and police.

Most of the recent gun control proposals have been, frankly, marginal fiddling and a sop to our consciences. If en-

acted, they would barely inconvenience the NRA.

Without drastic reduction in the number of guns — by say 80 percent — alongside very tight gun type and use restrictions, we will continue to live in a country where deer get far better protection than humans and where daily slaughter of children and adults is normal.

Wringing our hands and pretending, almost weekly, that we are still trying to understand the reasons for this global anomaly — gun deaths at 45 times the UK — may make us feel better but it falls way short of solving the problem. If the number of guns is not drastically reduced then we had better just hunker down and get used to another century of this madness.

But please, let's not wring our hands and ask why it happens. We know the answer to that. Per hundred people, we have twice the number of guns in Yemen! We are armed as for a war zone.

Ridley Nelson
Great Falls

Great Falls
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OPINION

Exploring Your Heritage

The Great Falls Historical Society to host Elaine McRey, the Senior Genealogy Librarian on Jan. 10.

BY GLEN SJOBLOM
PRESIDENT, GREAT FALLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Who are we? Who were our parents and grandparents, great-grandparents, etc. and which “Old Country” were they from? How, when and why did they come to America? In this time of year, we also yearn for those historic ethnic foods and activities of our past. Our genealogy is a large part of our heritage, and we need to know who we came from to have a more complete sense of self.

Today, everything seems to move so fast. In this age of computers we can research our family heritage by use of scientific tools and the internet. I had my DNA tested by Ancestry.com, and received a report that said I had a 97 percent correlation with ancestors from Norway and Sweden. I already knew that but what is really remarkable is that my report also named a possible second cousin I was not aware of, whose grandmother was from the same town in Norway as my grandmother. I have also recently discovered my grandfather's ancestors back to 1590, nine generations ago, who all lived in a small farming area near Gjovik, Norway. For a kid who grew up in northern Minnesota to finally be able to connect the dots to my past is truly amazing. You can prob-

ably do the same.

The Great Falls Historical Society has invited Elaine McRey, the Senior Genealogy Librarian at the Virginia Room of the Fairfax Regional Library for our next public meeting. McRey has been interested in genealogy since her grandmother told her that when the Mayflower landed, her ancestors were waiting on shore to welcome them. But now she knows the first rule of genealogy – don't believe everything you hear about your own family history, even if your grandmother tells you it's true.

McRey has been working in public libraries since 1990 and earned her library degree in 1999. After a short stint working near Colonial Williamsburg and watching a certain Thomas Jefferson come in every day to use the Internet, she joined the staff at the City of Fairfax Regional Library. She's been a librarian in the Virginia Room since 2008. She spends more time helping others with their genealogy than working on her own, but luckily, she's not the only genealogist in the family. It must be hereditary.

McRey will be at the Great Falls Library meeting room from 7-9 p.m. on Jan. 10, 2018 to teach members and visitors how to use the tools available on the internet to research their family trees. This is open to the public and all are welcome. Come early because of the interest, to be assured of a seat.

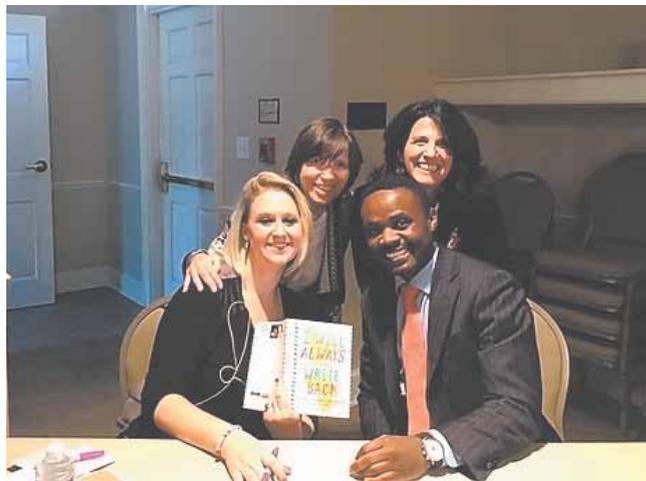
Authors Caitlin Alifirenka and Martin Ganda Visit Cooper Middle School

On Dec. 1, Cooper Middle School students had an opportunity to meet the authors of the book “I Will Always Write Back,” the New York Times bestselling true story of an all-American girl and a boy from Zimbabwe and the letter that changed both of their lives forever. Authors Caitlin Alifirenka and Martin Ganda talked to Cooper students about their journey.

The letter was the beginning of a correspondence that spanned six years and changed two lives. The authors talked about their story in detail and how it all came together. They explained how one school project completely changed their lives. Martin and Caitlin spoke about how Martin's life in Zimbabwe was completely different from Caitlin's in America and how becoming pen pals showed them that. They also showed students a video of them finally meeting and how hard but exciting it was to finally get Martin here to America.

When asked what had inspired them to start telling children their story, Caitlin and Martin replied, “We wanted to let other kids know that they can make huge differences. Also that they are very fortunate to have technology at their fingertips so that they can make big positive changes and kind words all over the world.”

— NIKHITA RASTOGI

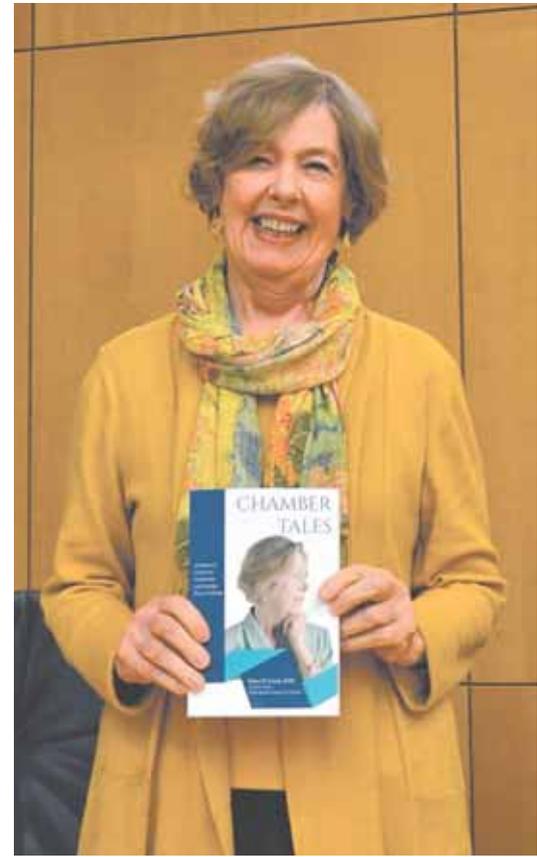


PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Principal Arlene Randall and Assistant Principal Cherith Pierson (back) meet with the authors Caitlin Alifirenka and Martin Ganda.



The authors discuss their book with the students.



Eileen Curtis with her new book “Chamber Tales: A Memoir of Commerce, Community and Stunning Forces of Change.”

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Eileen Curtis Launches ‘Chamber Tales’

Local author Eileen Curtis debuts her new book “Chamber Tales: A Memoir of Commerce, Community and Stunning Forces of Change.” Curtis was one of the longest-serving chamber execs in the country, holding the position of president of the Dulles Regional Chamber for 23 years. Her book chronicles the transformation of our region from agricultural light-weight to two of the wealthiest counties in the country. It takes readers through paradigm-shifting changes, starting with the commercial internet that began in Herndon. It also shares the stories of an amazing cast of leaders from the business and community sectors who transformed those changes into regional success.

The book compiles more than 40 tales of the people, events and crises experienced by the business community and the region over the last quarter century. Here you find headliner tales such as Virginia's 9/11, the Great Recession, the almost-didn't happen saga of the Metro's Silver Line and her chamber's pivotal role in that unfolding. The chamber was again on the front lines with immigration, helping to realign a flipped community where immigrants were the new majority, as well as shopping a proposal in the halls of Congress for new immigration laws.

The book also helps educate a public that often has only a passing acquaintance with the

concept of a chamber. Besides keeping its pulse on commerce, her stories relate tales of leadership, newsworthy networking events, advocacy efforts to promote legislation in Richmond, and community engagements such as the Alzheimer's Walk and the chamber's much lauded Friday Night Live concerts.

“A chamber is some kind of crazy brew of all of these thrusts and its success is due to its volunteers,” says Curtis. People figure large in these tales, which often pull at the heartstrings. One story drawn from partner high schools involved the case of a young Somali girl who, having fled to America, finds through her high school experience that she wants to return to her homeland and contribute to its resuscitation through teaching. Another relives a gala honoring heroes from the battlefields of Bataan, Vietnam, and Iraq One. These are real-life dramas that passed through a chamber's doors and are the backbone of these chamber tales.

Curtis, a published author and resident of Great Falls, has a long list of professional credits, including being named as Virginia's Chamber Executive of the Year. Her book has already inspired comments from Virginia Gov. McAuliffe, DC Board of Trade President Jim Dinegar, and Dr. Gerald Gordon, President of Fairfax County Economic Development Authority.

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HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS



PHOTOS BY GREG HADLEY

After years of searching unsuccessfully for a suitably-sized home on Lake Barcroft, the owners hired Sun Design's Roger Lataille to help them find property that could be adapted to their needs. Among other problems with the existing house, walls separating the kitchen, dining room and living room made the first-level seem boxy, dark and dated.

Long-Anticipated Home Remodel

Proves perfect for
 holiday entertaining.

BY JOHN BYRD

There's something quite satisfying about finally getting exactly what you want after years of anticipation, especially as the holidays roll around.

"I really saw this past Thanksgiving how well our re-designed home fulfills a whole host of plans," according to the couple, speaking of the completely refurbished mid-century modern house on Lake Barcroft they recently occupied after extensive remodeling.

Looking back, the owners' far-reaching "wish list" was never assured. The couple had been looking for a lakeside house for years, but couldn't find anything suitable for a young family with two children just starting school.

Then last year the couple hired design consultant Roger Lataille of Sun Design Remodeling. The task: assess the rehabilitation possibilities of a circa 1950's mid-century modern actually situated on the lake.

Sun Design Remodeling had come with a considerable resume, having renovated some 30 Lake Barcroft residences. Still, at just over 2,000 square feet, the house under consideration seemed too small for the decades of occupancy that may lay ahead.

On the other hand, the waterside view was exceptional, and Sun Design Remodeling offered both an attractive design/build approach and a versatile creative team.

"They wanted a house that would work for them long into the future," Lataille recalls. "We saw our goal as not only adding usable new space, but enhancing a classic style."

The house "begged for a bold visual continuum,"



By removing unneeded walls, the remodeler introduced an "open" floor plan that emphasizes visual continuum and lake-side sightlines. Large format structural beams wrapped in walnut-stained pine present a vivid contrast to the white tongue-and-groove ceiling. The center island surface is waterfall Silestone. The modular track pendant lights over the dining table can be moved as needed.

the designer said. For instance, the existing interior was formed around a "boxy" floor plan with an enclosed kitchen visually sequestered from the beautiful view, and a wall between the living room and dining room.

The contrast between the old plan and the emerging vision was a textbook case of how "space-use expectations have changed in the American home in the past 25 years" the designer said.

Perhaps not coincidentally, the couple had also gradually concluded that the traditional floorplans such as the one in the Arlington home the couple

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HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Long-Anticipated Home Remodel

had previously owned wasted too much space. The front-facing living room was seldom used; ditto the formal dining room.

TO ACCOMMODATE master suite requirements, Lataille proposed adding a top level addition with a large master bath and walk-in closet. Truss joists calibrated to meet new load-bearing requirements reconcile the challenges of building on a beveled roof.

With the location of the master suite now resolved, the second floor gains re-deployable floor space, gaining a washer/dryer closet off the hallway.

Meanwhile, the most compelling feature in the primary living area is a steel moment frame which replaces the old window wall, and provides the tensile strength needed to support the new master suite.

By highlighting the elemental drama of woodland and lake, expansive wall-to-wall glazing invites an interior design treatment that explores textural surfaces, period furniture design and contrasting lights and darks.

Overhead, large-format structural beams wrapped in walnut-stained pine present a vivid contrast to the white tongue-and-groove ceiling. Waterfall Silestone counter surfaces and hardwood flooring neutralize, while the mid-century accents of the stools, chairs and even a bright turquoise sectional in the living room present eye-catching intimations of a resurgent American style.

Morgan Hutchinson, Sun Design's specialty designer, said, "Finding a balance that respects a classic style and [the couple's] personal tastes was the real nature of the assignment. The design explores unique rustic elements along with a new generation of kitchen innovations. The goal was



PHOTOS BY GREG HADLEY

Sun Design Remodeling added a top-level master suite to a lakeside home designed in a classic mid-century modern architectural style, enabling new owners to obtain the square footage needed for their family of four. The 630-square-foot addition affords a "spot-on" view of the lake.

to make a statement that can last, yet be easily adapted."

Sun Design Remodeling frequently sponsors design and remodeling seminars as well as tours of recently remodeled homes. Headquartered in Burke, Sun Design also maintains an office in McLean. Visit www.SunDesignInc.com.

John Byrd (byrdmatx@gmail.com) has been writing about home improvement for 30 years.

A Kitchen for the Ages

When empty nesters Mike Rogan and Sue Shaffer decided to move out of the Arlington home where they had lived for 27 years, they embarked on a two-year search for a new abode. They were looking for a home where they could age in place and have space for live-in caretakers if needed.

They settled on a McLean home and hired Rill Architects to redesign it, creating an open floor plan that allowed for entertaining. The design team created a space that connects the kitchen to the family room, dining room, rear patio and garage.

The Rogans wanted the kitchen to have an island, multiple workstations, clean lines with Victorian detailing and enough space for multiple cooks.

The design team incorporated the Rogan's love of casual and modern. "The painted wood ceiling and traditional casing with an arched pass-through play off the more contemporary cabinets and



PHOTO BY MICHAEL K. WILKINSON

This McLean kitchen by Rill Architects includes maplewood, furniture-style cabinets with brushed nickel hardware, classic millwork and granite countertops.

glass tile backsplash, creating both a sleek and casual inviting space for family gathering and team cooking," said Jim Rill.

— MARILYN CAMPBELL



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Madrigals at Langley High School serenade guests during the Renaissance Feaste.



Langley High student Madrigals entertain the guests during the Renaissance Feaste.

Langley Chorus Presents Renaissance Feaste

About 75 students serenade guests with holiday carols over catered meal.

Langley High School's Chorus presented the 15th annual Renaissance Feaste last Friday and Saturday nights, Dec. 1-2, where 75 students dressed as Medieval-costumed jesters, minstrels and musicians serenaded guests with holiday carols while they feasted on a catered meal from Boston Market. The show at "Langley Halle" that was decorated like Merrie Olde England was sold out both nights, serving about 330 guests.

"We try to imagine it as an old Medieval castle and we've decorated it that way. So it's the tradition that would have happened in the Renaissance – so there's lots of dialogue, lots of music and food to eat and drink," said Dr. Mac L. Lambert, Jr., Choral Director at Langley High School.

"We sing carols in English from France, Germany and Italy. These are all traditional carols that would have been sung around this time from many different countries. In addition, the Madrigals are performing several traditional Madrigal songs."

During the show, students serenaded

guests and served a catered meal (\$20 per student; \$35 per adult) from Boston Market, which included roast chicken, green beans, mashed potatoes with gravy, salad, breads, cheeses and fruit.

In addition to the familiar "Deck the Hall" and "What Child is This," students also sang songs like "Gloucestershire Wassail," "Touro-louro-louro," "Deo Gratias," and "Fum, Fum, Fum." The Madrigals have a total of 20 students; the Chamber has 10; the Concert Choir has 20; and the Treble and Select Treble Choirs have 27 students.

Interspersed throughout the singing were students who discussed the traditions of the Madrigals, how that singing came to be, as well as a presentation of the boar's head and plum pudding.

Students were dressed in colorful Renaissance costumes created 15 years ago by Judy Harkins and are still being used. The students rehearsed for the show for a month and a half with a lot of extra rehearsals after school.

— STEVE HIBBARD

PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION



The Langley High School Madrigals offer up a toast.



Shreya Balamurugan serves chicken to the guests.



The Langley High Women's Chamber Choir serenaded guests as they walked in.



Madrigals at Langley High School make a toast.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

From left: Volunteers Catherine Nesbitt and Fran Lagerfeld prepare to set out one of the many plates of donated holiday cookies at Share's annual client Holiday Celebration party held at the McLean Baptist Church Saturday morning, Dec. 9. Thirty volunteers staffed the morning event that drew 350 clients.

Share Fulfills Holiday Wishes for Hundreds in Need

Donors step forward with gifts, food, and welcoming smiles.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

While gray skies loomed and the first snow of the season fell Saturday morning, Dec. 9, families and individuals arrived at the McLean Baptist Church, 1367 Chain Bridge Road for the production of Share, Inc.'s annual client Holiday Celebration party.

Volunteers scurried in the kitchen and the gym to put the final touches on the festive holiday gathering. Share clients from McLean, Great Falls, and Pimmit Hills lined the hallways, patiently waiting for the doors to open.

At 8:30, the doors opened, and volunteers warmly greeted each Share client and welcomed them, setting the tone for the rest of the party. In the background, local musicians played festive music adding to the holiday spirit.

Of course, the sight of Santa Claus brought smiles to both children and parents, many dressed in Santa hats or their holiday clothes, ready for that incredible moment – a visit and photo with the man from the North Pole.

After their visit, clients received donated gifts chosen for them from their own wish list. Inside were items such as gift cards, small household items, linens, clothing,

and toys for the children. A light meal of donated sandwiches, fruit, and holiday cookies rounded out the event.

Chris Wilbur is the Share Holiday program chair. Wilbur said 350 clients from McLean, Great Falls, and Pimmit Hills attended the holiday party staffed by 30 volunteers.

Wilbur discussed why this event was so important to her. "The reason I love Share and working on the Holiday Celebration is that with no paid staff and no government funding, this program is truly neighbors helping their neighbors in need." Wilbur said that thus far, the nonprofit organization has served 291 families over the course of the holiday season, nearly 800 people, and done so with the support of more than 50 volunteers.

Share, Incorporated is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation providing emergency assistance since 1969 to the less fortunate in McLean and Pimmit Hills, and nearby areas of Northern Virginia.

According to Share's website, need still exists. Their Food Pantry is in significant need of supplies, and the Furniture Program needs drivers and helpers. To make a difference in the community during this holiday season or all year long, visit shareofmclean.org for more information.

CALENDAR

			1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31		

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HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

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

ONGOING

Vienna-Wide Food Drive. Through Dec. 31, 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; Caffe 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 for more.

Textures Exhibit. Through Jan. 7, various times at the Vienna Arts Center, 115 Pleasant St., NW. Call 703-319-3971 or visit www.ViennaArtsSociety.org for more.

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 for more.

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

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 for more.

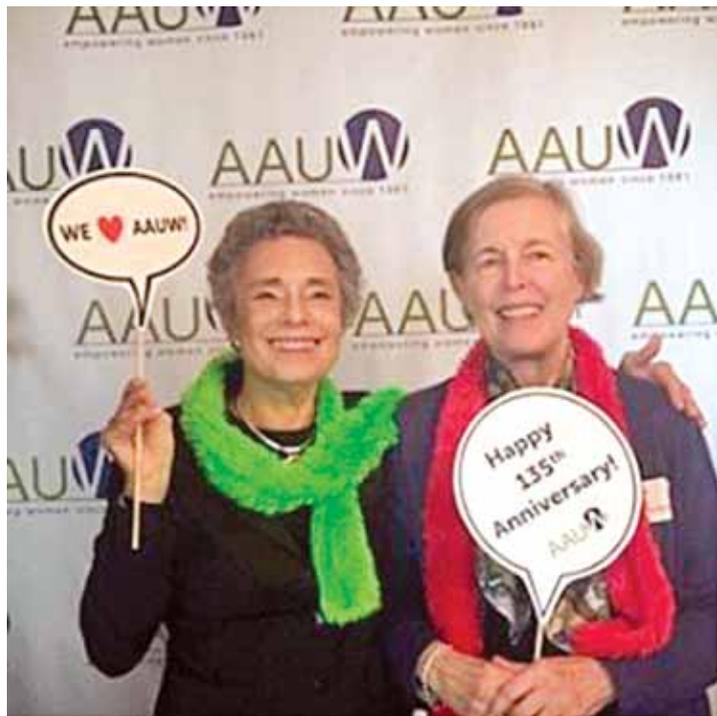
The Freeman Store & Museum Wednesday through Sunday noon-4 p.m. 131 Church St. NE, Vienna. The Freeman Store & Museum is dedicated to Preserving and promoting Vienna's heritage through the identification, preservation, and interpretation of history significant places, events, and persons. Historicviennainc.org

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.

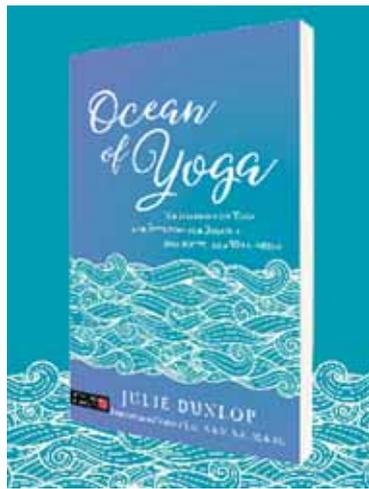
Gentle Yoga. Thursdays, 6:30 p.m. Emmaus United Church of Christ, 900 E Maple Ave. E., Vienna. Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Gentle Kundalini Yoga, one free introductory session, senior discounts. Increase flexibility, improve breathing 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.



AAUW

Women at the Helm event Saturday, Jan. 13, 10 a.m. at the Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. E. Vienna Mayor Laurie DiRocco and Town Council Members Carey Sienicki and Linda Colbert will share their experiences of leading the Town of Vienna. For more information visit vienna-va.aauw.net/.



Yoga

Former Vienna resident Julie Dunlop will be hosting a collaborative yoga workshop and discussing her book on Sunday, Dec. 17 from 1:30-3 p.m. at Body Grace Yoga, 215 Mill St., Vienna. Dunlop is a James Madison High School alumni, class of 1991. \$30. Visit bodygrace.com/events/ for more.

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.

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 for more.

SATURDAY/DEC. 16

Breakfast With Santa. 8 a.m.-noon at the Vienna Volunteer Fire

Department, 400 Center St. S., Vienna. Pancakes, sausage, bacon, juice and coffee. Visit www.vvfd.org for more.

Night In Bethlehem Performance. 5-7 p.m. at Andrew Chapel United Methodist Church, 1301 Trap Road, Vienna. Nativity scene with live animals. Visit www.andrewchapelumc.org for more.

Ryan Kinder in Concert. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave. E. \$12-\$20. All ages. Visit www.jaminjava.com for more.

SUNDAY/DEC. 17

Breakfast Buffet. 8 a.m.-noon, at Vienna American Legion Post 180, 330 Center St., N. Adults \$9, children 12 and under \$3. Get omelets, scrambled eggs, blueberry pancakes, bacon, sausage, hash browns and more. Call 703-938-6580 for more.

Meet the Yoga Author. 1:30-3 p.m. at Body Grace Yoga, 215 Mill St., Vienna. Former Vienna resident Julie Dunlop will be hosting a collaborative yoga workshop. Dunlop is a James Madison High School alumni, class of 1991. \$30. Visit bodygrace.com/events/ for more.

Christmas Caroling Sing-Along. 3-5



PHOTO BY JOHN SHEARER

Live Music

Ryan Kinder is at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave E., Vienna, 7 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 16. Call 703-255-1566 or visit www.leralynn.com for more.



Live Music

On Friday, Feb. 3, its Lera Lynn in Concert 7 p.m. at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave E., Vienna. Call 703-255-1566 or visit www.leralynn.com for more.

The Old Firehouse Teen Center, 1440 Chain Bridge Road; and the MCC Dance Program Studio, 1374 Chain Bridge Road. Visit www.mcleancenter.org/ for more.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 20

Timeline Arcade and Ice Cream. 8 a.m.-6 p.m.-noon at The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Play old-school video games and then eat ice cream. \$55/45 for McLean Community Center district residents. Call 703-790-0123 or visit www.mcleancenter.org.

THURSDAY/DEC. 21

Bowling and Movie. 8 a.m.-6 p.m.-noon at The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. \$65/55 for McLean residents. Call 703-790-0123 or visit www.mcleancenter.org.

TUESDAY/DEC. 26

Beatrix Potter Tea. noon-1:30 p.m. at Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Learn about the famous author. Nibble on cupcakes and sip fruit punch or tea while hearing stories about the bunny family of her creation. Meet a live white tale rabbit and learn what wild bunnies do in the winter. Make a bunny of your own to take home. Call 703-759-9018 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend-park/.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 27

Dave and Buster's arcade. 8 a.m.-6 p.m.-noon at The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Lunch and a \$25 game card with unlimited arcade game play are included. \$70/60 for McLean residents. Call 703-790-0123 or visit www.mcleancenter.org.

THURSDAY/DEC. 28

Tubing/Ice Skating Trip. 8 a.m.-6 p.m.-noon at The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Chill out racing down hills on the tubes or gliding on skates. During the day, there is a pizza party. Admission for tubing or ice skating and lunch are included in the fee. \$55/45 for McLean residents. Call 703-790-0123 or visit www.mcleancenter.org.

FRIDAY/DEC. 29

Movie Double Feature. 8 a.m.-6 p.m.-noon at The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Road trip to AMC for two movies. Movie tickets and lunch are included in the fee. \$55/45 for McLean residents. Call 703-790-0123 or visit www.mcleancenter.org.

SATURDAY/JAN. 13

Women at the Helm. 10 a.m. at the Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. E. Vienna Mayor Laurie DiRocco and Town Council Members Carey Sienicki and Linda Colbert will share their experiences of leading the Town of Vienna. Visit vienna-va.aauw.net/.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 17

Art Workshop. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Vienna Arts Center, 115 Pleasant St. Artist Jacqueline Saunders is hosting a one day workshop. Call 703-319-3971 or visit www.ViennaArtsSociety.org for more.

FRIDAY/FEB. 3

Lera Lynn in Concert. 7 p.m. at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave E, Vienna. Call 703-255-1566 or visit www.leralynn.com for more.

FAITH

FROM PAGE 5

- ❖ 7 p.m. – Holy Eucharist with Christmas Music at 6:30 pm
- ❖ 10 p.m. – Holy Eucharist with Christmas Music at 9:30 pm
- Christmas Day, Monday, Dec. 25
- ❖ 10 a.m. – Holy Eucharist

Blue Christmas Service – a non-traditional service of remembrance and hope – will be held at Katie's Coffee House 760 Walker Road, Great Falls on Sunday, Dec. 10 at 3:30 p.m. brought to you by Great Falls Area Ministries. For more, call Carol Wright 703-582-1640.

Haven of Northern Virginia provides support, compassion, information and resources to the bereaved and seriously ill. To become a Haven volunteer, please call 703-941-7000 to request an orientation. Volunteers must complete a 30-hour training and commit to one year of service answering Haven phones (2.5 hours weekly). Next training is scheduled for fall 2017.

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton, offers the Religious Exploration program for all children, from pre-K toddlers through high school seniors, emphasizing exploration of all religious traditions while developing a personal spiritual path. The program offers classes on Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings. 703-281-4230.

Trinity United Methodist Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean. Sunday worship services are at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday School for young adults follows the 10:30 a.m. worship services and for children at 9:30 a.m. Youth Group for grades 7-12 meets Sundays at 5 p.m. A 20-minute service of Holy Communion is held each Wednesday at noon. 703-356-3312 or umtrinity.org.

Passages DivorceCare. For those experiencing the pain of separation or divorce, the caring community at Vienna Presbyterian Church offers Passages DivorceCare. This 15-week program offers a path toward healing. Vienna Presbyterian Church is located on the corner of Maple Avenue (Rt. 123) and Park Street in Vienna. Cost to cover materials is \$20, scholarships available. For more information or to register call 703-938-9050, go to www.viennapres.org, or send an email to Passages@ViennaPres.org.

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

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

For those struggling physically or spiritually, on the first Sunday of each month, **Christ the King Lutheran Church** offers a rite of healing as part of worship; the opportunity to be anointed with oil and prayed over. During the healing rite, the pastor or another person says a short prayer while two people lay hands on the recipient. Then the pastor or helper anoints them with oil as a sign of God's healing and forgiveness. Christ the King Lutheran Church, 10550 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Call 703-759-6068 or visit www.gflutheran.org.



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• 7:00 pm - Holy Eucharist
Christmas music at 6:30 pm

• 10:00 pm - Holy Eucharist
Christmas music at 9:30 pm

Christmas Day
• 10:00 am - Holy Eucharist

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Dec. 17, 10:30 a.m. Lessons & Carols during worship
Dec. 20, 7 p.m. Blue Christmas: Service of Hope
Dec. 24, 10:30 a.m. One morning worship
Dec. 24, 5 p.m. Christmas Eve Family Worship
Dec. 24, 8 & 10 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight & Communion
Dec. 31, 8:30 a.m. Worship
Dec. 31, 10:30 a.m. Celtic-inspired worship

Please join us Wednesdays for noon worship.
Trinity United Methodist Church
1205 Dolley Madison Blvd. | McLean, VA 22101 | umtrinity.org

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Saturday, Jan. 6, 11 a.m.
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**"The Call of
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Adapted from Jack London
by Catherine Bush
Saturday, Jan. 6, 3 p.m.
Churchill Road Elementary School
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**McLean Traveler
National Gallery of Art -
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Thursday, Jan. 11
9:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
\$55/\$50 MCC district residents

Sponsored by The Alden
**Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
Day Celebration**
**William Rhoden:
"Activist Athletes"**
Sunday, Jan. 14, 2 p.m.
The Old Firehouse
1440 Chain Bridge Rd.
\$20/\$10 MCC district residents

The McLean Community Center
www.mcleancenter.org
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Completing Eagle Project at Riverbend Park

Paul "Mitch" Williams completed his Eagle Project Sunday, Dec. 10 with help from many fellow scouts and adult advisors from Great Falls Troop 673 and support from the Friends of Riverbend Park. They constructed a set of stairs from the lower parking lot to the picnic area in the park to preserve the slope from degradation due to foot traffic. Pictured from left: Greg Stephens, Greg Roszyk, Alex Marjanovich, Mitch Williams, Mickey Williams, Charlie Clyne, Cam Williams, Greg Roszyk, and David Walton.

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BULLETIN

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

SOBER-RIDE FOR WINTER HOLIDAYS

Free Sober Rides. The annual Holiday SoberRider program will operate 8 p.m.-4 a.m. each night from Friday, Dec. 15, 2017-Monday, Jan. 1, 2018. Area residents age 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download Lyft to their phones, then enter the code in the app's "Promo" section to receive their no cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. WRAP's weekly Holiday SoberRide promo codes will be posted at 2:00 pm on Dec. 15, Dec. 23 and Dec. 31 on www.SoberRide.com.

THURSDAY/DEC. 21

Caregivers Support Group. 10-11:30 a.m. at UUCF Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax - Program Building, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna Caregivers Support Group is held the first and third Thursdays of every month, year round. Call 703-821-6838 or email jtarr5@verizon.net for more.

TUESDAY/JAN. 9

English as a Second Language Classes. 7-8 p.m. at St. Mark Christian Formation Center, 9972 Vale Road, Vienna. Come help 150+ adult learners master the English language, prepare for American citizenship, learn to converse fluently in English, improve their writing skills, and integrate into the local community. Call 703-980-9380, email stmarksesl@gmail.com, or visit www.stmarksesl.org.

THURSDAY/JAN. 11

English as a Second Language Classes. 7-8 p.m. at St. Mark Christian Formation Center, 9972 Vale Road, Vienna. Come help 150+ adult learners master the English language, prepare for American citizenship, learn to converse fluently in English, improve their writing skills, and integrate into the local community. Call 703-980-9380, email stmarksesl@gmail.com, or visit www.stmarksesl.org.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Are You A Caregiver? Shepherd's Center of Oakton Vienna Caregivers' Support Group takes place first & third Thursday of each month. February 2nd and 16th, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Join us at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax (UUCF) - Program Building, 2709 Hunter Mill Rd, Oakton, VA. For more info contact facilitator, Jack Tarr, 703-821-6838 jtarr5@verizon.net.

Haven of Northern Virginia Support Group. 703-941-7000, www.havenofnova.org or havenofnova@verizon.net.

Virginia Chronic Pain Support Group Meets from 1:30 - 3 p.m. the 2nd Wednesday of each month at Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine, 6829 Elm St., Suite 300, McLean. Group leader, Jodi Brayton, LCSW. 703-532-4892.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvpnova.org.

Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean continues to have an urgent need for new volunteers to help area senior citizens get to and from their medical and therapy appointments. 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 e-mail the Center at info@scmafc.org. The Center's website is www.scmafc.org.

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As Good As It Gets



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Five weeks of blissful ignorance. (Speak for yourself. I am.) No 24-hour urine collection. No pre-chemotherapy lab work. No chemotherapy infusion. No CT scan. No follow-up appointment with my oncologist – or any other doctor for that matter. No brain MRI. No fasting. No emailing. No prescription-drug refilling. No vitals. No weight check. No taste/eating side effects. No anything. Other than pretending and presuming that all is not wrong in my “whirled” (my underlying diagnosis), life is for the living, and I’m living proof, random though it may be, that an incredibly grim/surreal prognosis: “13 months to two years,” was not all it was cracked up to be.

Forgive me if I unleash my pent-up inner demons. As a cancer patient, there’s just so much to worry about; daily, weekly, monthly and always, that when you get a break/brake in the action, it becomes a moment in time to celebrate and cherish.

Good things may come in small packages, but great things come in five-week intervals. And though the minor deficits I have as a result of nearly nine years of chemotherapy have not dissipated; in the scheme of things, in the midst of two-fortnights-and-a-half of “uncumbrances,” to quote my late father, I am “untethered,” to once again quote my father. This time however, quoting the late, great Sid Caesar for a skit he performed (involving “an elephant,” my father always said) on “The Show of Shows” back in the early 50s.

And so for the next month and change, I am almost normal (or a reasonable facsimile thereof); other than following my daily anti-cancer, non-Western routine which I have long ago assimilated into my dos and don’ts, that is. A routine which, though it can always be enhanced, is a direct result of the advice I’ve received from my certified Holistic Health Coach. And despite the fact that I may not exactly be on the straight and narrow – more like the squiggly and wiggly, I certainly am not on the path I was when my cancer cells activated after I slid into my first PET scan back in early February 2009, and “lit it up like a Christmas tree,” according to my thoracic surgeon. An indication/confirmation which led to a surgical biopsy a week or so later which then led to the last nine years of my life.

Still, it’s been a life worth living and one for which I have few regrets. I have lived so far beyond my original prognosis, it’s not even funny; it’s ridiculous. Sure, I’m doing more of the right things than I ever did, but hardly am I the poster boy for “see what happens when you” If I’m the poster boy for anything, it’s more likely “how to maintain and even increase your weight while being treated for stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer.”

Not that I won’t savor the moments ahead, but I am mindful, which led to the substance of this column, of what happens after this semi-party is over: Jan. 2, 2018 – 24-hour urine collection; Jan. 3, 2018 – pre-chemotherapy lab work; Jan. 5, 2018 – chemotherapy infusion; Jan. 17, 2018 – CT scan; and finally, Jan. 26, 2018 – follow-up appointment with my oncologist to discuss the results of my scan, and then maybe another emotional honeymoon or, God forbid, a nightmare that diagnosis to date has rarely raised its ugly head.

That possibility roams my head, constantly; compartmentalized – yes; “in the vault” – yes, but unfortunately, “the cancer,” (as “Forrest, Forrest Gump” said) still in my body and, medically speaking, not yet something one can flush out with treatment. But there’s always hope.

In the past few years, the FDA has approved half-a-dozen new lung cancer drugs, more than during the preceding decade. I don’t think medical professionals would say they have lung cancer on the run; they might say however, they have it on the trot. Which is good for me because I can’t run, but I can trot.

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



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