

Great Falls CONNECTION

St. Francis Creche Preschool at St. Francis Episcopal Church in Great Falls performed the Christmas Story. Pictured: Bell Ringers singing "Mary riding on a Donkey" are Sam Rhines, Eva Steorts, Jamie Roth and Carter Martin.

Preschoolers Present Christmas Story

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Session Brings Sea Change

Wave election swamps Richmond with freshman members eager to make their mark.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

This year's General Assembly will be like no other. For starters, the members walking the halls of the Capitol will not look the same. The crop of freshman includes the first transgender woman to serve in the Virginia General Assembly, the first lesbian, the first Asian-American woman and the first two Latinas. Gone are the 12 Republican members who were unseated, all white males. Also gone are the three members who got out before the bloodbath that flipped their seats from red to blue, also all white males. In their place is a diverse and young group of new members who are eager to make their mark on the commonwealth.

At the top of the agenda for the Democratic freshmen is expanding Medicaid to 400,000 people who would be eligible under the Affordable Care Act.

"I think what's really important for us, as Democrats, is to identify on the other side who we could have come over and join us," said Kathy Tran, who flipped a formerly Republican seat held by Del. Dave Albo (D-42) for more than 20 years. "We're going to have to reach out and basically identify who's really vulnerable and who's going to be in a position where they're going to have to be supporting the progressive values that were voted in as a wave across the commonwealth."

Even if they're successful navigating the diminished House Republican caucus, House Democrats will still have to deal with a Republican-controlled Senate. But the culture in the Senate is more moderate, and Republican senators have a history of supporting bills that have been routinely blocked in the House.

For example, Senate Republicans have a history of supporting the effort raising the threshold for grand larceny. That's an issue that Democrats have been pushing unsuccessfully for years that may now finally have a chance in 2018.

"We heard during the gubernatorial campaign, Ed Gillespie was supporting an increase so this is one of those issues that — especially with the outcome of the election — I think you can see some support behind," said Del. Patrick Hope (D-47), who is introducing a bill that raises the threshold from \$200 to \$500. "If someone makes a dumb mistake and walks out of a store with something small we shouldn't make a felon



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Republicans were unseated in 12 House districts, and Democrats flipped three seats where GOP incumbents decided against running in a year that ended up being a Democratic wave.

out of them."

THE WAVE ELECTION of 2017 was widely seen as a reacting to the Trump administration, and some of the bills that are now being crafted are also a reaction to the Republican agenda in Washington. State Sen. Dave Marsden (D-37) is putting together a tax reform plan as a Virginia answer to federal tax reform that gives tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations. Marsden wants to eliminate the food tax, reinstitute the inheritance tax and increase the gas tax. His tax-reform plan also taxes some services for the first time. For example lawn care and dry cleaning would be taxed but lawyers and doctors would not.

"Ever since I've been in the legislature I've heard complaints that we have a 19th century agriculture and manufacturing tax base but we're now a service economy. So this will start to tax some of those services," said Marsden. "We're trying to draw a distinction and get the discussion going around which services are optional for people and which ones are really necessary that we shouldn't burden them with taxes on."

Democrats are also eager to finally get some traction on gun control, which House Republicans have blocked for years. Back in 2015, Democratic Gov. Terry McAuliffe was able to forge a deal with Republicans to make state police available for voluntary background checks at gun shows. Now Democrats are hoping that newly reconstituted House committees and subcommittees might give them a chance to at least get gun control legislation on the floor rather than having it killed in subcommittee, a strategy Republicans used that allowed them to avoid being on the record voting

against banning assault weapons, for example. State Sen. George Barker (D-39) is introducing a bill that would allow judges to confiscate firearms from individuals they consider dangerous.

"It would have to go to court, and a judge would have to issue a ruling that there's probable cause and it's a serious situation and the gun should be temporarily removed," said Barker. "In some states, it allows police officers to confiscate it. But the bills that we are putting in do not. You would have to go to court."

MANY OF THE BILLS lawmakers are working on involve unfinished business from previous sessions. State Sen. Scott Surovell (D-36) is working on a bill that would force Dominion to clean up decades of pollution at several coal ash ponds throughout Virginia. Dominion Energy plans to seal the pollution in place and put a cap on the ponds, which is significantly cheaper than cleaning up the pollution. But Surovell wants to require that the utility recycle the coal ash into concrete or ceramics. And, Surovell adds, it won't actually be more expensive for Dominion at all because the utility will end up passing along the cost to people who are paying for electricity.

"You eliminate the possibility that this toxic gunk will continue to leak arsenic, lead and other chemicals into our groundwater forever," said Surovell. "Landfilling is the short-term cheap solution. But long-term it has the worst potential effects because the stuff continues to leach out chemicals and give people cancer and poison fish and birds and ruin our groundwater."

State Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-30) is also returning to a familiar theme: decriminaliz-

ing marijuana. Several states across the country have already done this, and now that California has legalized pot for recreational use many feel that the tide may be turning on this issue. According to a recent report by the Virginia State Crime Commission, law enforcement officers have arrested more than 130,000 people for possession of marijuana in the last decade — 84 percent of them first-time offenders.

"I think people are realizing how inappropriate it is to give people a criminal penalty for a drug that so many people have tried and used and is arguably less significant and harmful than alcohol," said Ebbin. "It's still a tough fight. But we've got Senate Majority Leader Tommy Norment supporting it generally. And we've got Governor-elect Ralph Northam supporting it, generally."

ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL last year, Republicans and Democrats both supported several key agenda items — an indication that members from both sides of the aisle may end up working together this year on certain issues. One of those is ethics reform, a hot topic in Virginia since former Republican Gov. Bob McDonnell was convicted of corruption then cleared of wrongdoing by the U.S. Supreme Court. During the campaign last year, Republican candidate for governor Ed Gillespie and Republican candidate for lieutenant governor Jill Vogel both talked about closing a loophole that allows candidates to use campaign money for personal use. That's an issue that already has support among Democrats, although drawing a distinction between official use and personal use can be a gray area.

"I think we've got a consensus that we need to do something," said Del. Marcus Simon (D-53). "Whether we make it a weak ban or a strong ban — a civil violation or a criminal act — I think we're going to outlaw it one way or another."

Another issue where Republicans and Democrats are in agreement is expanding broadband to rural areas. Of course the details of how to make that happen and who benefits are where lawmakers get divided, although this is one of those issues where party ideology is less important than regional ties. Last year, for example, Republicans were divided about whether to create new hurdles for local governments to set up broadband networks in places where that might create competition for private providers. This year, the issue of broadband will once again be an important topic of conversation.

"I'm looking at ways to reduce regulatory burdens," said Del. Jennifer Boysko (D-86). "So I'm talking about including broadband in your municipal comprehensive plan, setting up a dig-once policy and creating a data governance board for smart communities."

SEE ASSEMBLY, PAGE 11

OPINION

2018 A Happy New Year? At least some cause for hope

Virginia's election last November, just two months ago, was the first in the nation since the current administration took over in Washington.

Here in Virginia there was some anxiety and uncertainty rolling into Election Day. First, at least one race will not be decided until later this week. Second, the Democrats swept the statewide races, Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney General.

EDITORIAL

Democrats hoped to make gains in the House of Delegates. It's fair to say no one anticipated the Democrats taking the House. After all, Republicans held a 66-34 majority, a nearly insurmountable advantage.

Democrats gained at least 15 seats in a turn-about that could leave the House split 50-50.

New members include the first transgender woman to serve in the Virginia General Assembly, the first lesbian delegate, the first Asian-American woman delegate and the first two Latina delegates.

Virginia's success has generated buzz about pursuing sweeping change in other state legislatures around the country.

Del. Marcus Simon said it well recently (on Facebook): "If someone had told me on Jan. 1, 2017 that one year later Democrats would have picked up no fewer than 15 and probably as many as 17 seats in the Virginia House of Delegates I would have said, 'Love your optimism, but don't get carried away.'"

"My advice to anyone running for office or thinking about running for office, or working for people running for office in 2018: Get carried away."

The new look and balance in the General Assembly could provide progress on some long stalled issues. (More Democrats in office do not equate to progress in all of these areas, it's important to note.)

❖ Expanding Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act to cover hundreds of thousands of poor people without coverage

❖ Nonpartisan redistricting and use of national best practices when it comes to drawing

political district boundaries after the next census.

❖ Progress in transparency, and making public information public. This includes lawmakers killing most proposed legislation with unrecorded voice votes in subcommittee, with no accountability or record of how members voted. It should also include rolling back some of the many exemptions to the Freedom of Information Act passed by the General Assembly.

❖ Ethics reform, campaign finance reform.

❖ Making it easier, not harder, to vote.

❖ More control over utility rates and pollution.

❖ Criminal justice reform, including raising the threshold for a felony from \$200 to \$500.

❖ Tax reform.

A "wish list" could go on at some length. The 2018 session of the Virginia General Assembly begins Jan. 10.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

County Faces More Budget Challenges

What to expect in Dranesville District?

BY SUPERVISOR JOHN FOUST
(D-Dranesville)

Once again, the County adopting a budget that adequately funds essential services will be challenging. Continuing impacts from sequestration, slow job growth, weak commercial real estate markets and uncertainty about U.S. fiscal policy and tax reform will make the Board's job particularly challenging this year. The County Executive will present his advertised FY 2019 budget to the Board in February.

Preliminary information suggests a projected shortfall of \$99 million, including \$56 million for the County budget and \$43 million for the School budget. Even after the investments FCPS has made in teacher pay in recent budgets, our teachers are still paid below the market average. Closing that pay gap is key to recruiting and retaining great teachers, and it will again be a major budget priority for the Board of Supervisors and the School Board.

Strategic Partnerships in Economy

The County's Economic Success Strategic Plan, which focuses on high-level policy recommendations aimed at helping the County expand and diversify the economy, was adopted in 2015. The implementation status of the plan is updated annually. The most recent update included several actions related to the Plan's goals. For example, in 2017, Fairfax County partnered with Virginia Tech



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Turner Farm House: After initial review of a number of applications for the curator program at Turner Farm Park, the Park Authority selected one to continue through the application process.

National Capital Region to host a connected and autonomous vehicles event, and later in the year, with VDOT to host a transportation and mobility hackathon. These are examples of the kind of strategic partners and innovative and entrepreneurial thinking we hope to encourage. As chairman of the County's Economic Advisory Commission, I will continue to work with County staff, the Economic Development Authority, businesses, and non-profit groups to further implement the recommendations of the Strategic Plan.

Transportation Improvements

Several pedestrian and road projects are scheduled to be started or completed in 2018, including the following:

❖ Route 7 Widening – A design-build contract will be awarded and land acquisition will

begin on the fully funded Route 7 Corridor Improvements Project to widen and improve 6.9 miles of Route 7 between Reston Avenue and Jarrett Valley Drive. The improvements will decrease congestion, increase capacity, improve safety, and expand mobility for cyclists and pedestrians – all in conformity with Fairfax County's Comprehensive Plan. Delivering the project using a design-build team is expected to condense the project timeline and save two years over conventional project delivery. Construction is expected to be completed in fall 2025.

❖ McLean Streetscape – This project includes installation of brick pavers, lights and landscaping along the south side of Chain Bridge Road from Redmond Drive to Old Dominion Drive to Center Street, and along both sides of Chain Bridge Road from Laughlin Street to Curran Street.

❖ Baron Road Walkway – Approximately 430 linear feet of sidewalk including curb and gutter will be installed along Baron Road connecting the Dead Run Park trail to Douglas Drive.

❖ Kirby Road Walkway – Approximately 800 linear feet of sidewalk will be installed on Kirby Road from Chesterbrook Road to Chesterbrook Elementary School. Additional projects south of this section will follow and are currently in design.

❖ Dolley Madison Boulevard Walkway – Approximately 2,400 linear feet of sidewalk will be installed from Great Falls Street/Lewinsville Intersection to McLean Metro Station, providing a pedestrian connection from downtown McLean to the Metro.

❖ Sunrise Valley Drive Sidewalk – Approximately 370 linear feet of sidewalk will be constructed along Sunrise Valley Drive from River Birch Road to Legacy Circle.

SEE A LOOK AHEAD, PAGE 10

Great Falls CONNECTION

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News

"Budapest Parliament Reflection" captures the dramatic night view of the Hungarian Parliament and front plaza with its reflection. This photo will be on display at Katie's Coffee in Great Falls, Jan. 1-31, 2018



PHOTO BY DEE LEGGETT

'Evening in Europe' At Katie's Coffee

"Evening in Europe" is an exhibit of photography capturing the stunning evening scenes in several European cities on display at Katie's Coffee in Great Falls, Jan. 1-31, 2018. Through Dee Leggett's photographs the visitor can wander the streets and enjoy the beautifully lit evening sites of castles, bridges, parliament, churches, and rivers in Budapest, Lucerne, and Prague. Dee and her husband visited these cities over the past two years and were surprised by their magnificence.

Dee Leggett, a Great Falls resident, has been capturing beauty in her photographs for more than 10 years. Although primarily a

nature photographer, the dramatic evening views in these locations captured her eye. Dee said, "Light is key for photographers. It was fascinating to see and photograph the dramatic lighting of these old beautiful cities with their church domes and spires, castles, government buildings, and bridges. The reflection of the lights on the river just added to the ethereal scenes."

"Visions of Great Falls," Dee's photo journal of scenes and history of Great Falls, contains numerous photos of the falls, as well as many from the Great Falls area. To see more of Dee's work visit her website at deeleggettphotography.vpweb.com.

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VIEWPOINTS

What's Your New Year's Resolution for 2018?

— COLIN STOECKER

Ottonsuren Bandihkuu, from Inner Mongolia, lives in Arlington and works at River Nail and Spa in Great Falls.

"We hope our business will be successful. I am personally excited to finish my Master's degree next year. I study psychology."



Rebecca Owen, a Reston resident, the manager of Jinny Beyer Studio in Great Falls.

"I want to quilt more and to finish some of the quilts that I have already started. I find quilting very relaxing and I love making something where I have something to show for it at the end."

Sharon Gokey, a Vienna resident, a sales clerk in the mail order department at Jinny Beyer Studio in Great Falls.

"First of all I've got to get more organized and quilt more. I also want to exercise more. I feel like I'm out of control sometimes, so if I am more organized I will have more inner peace and inner Zen."



Linda Waitkus, Great Falls resident and owner of Great Dogs of Great Falls for nine years, believes in New Year's resolutions for dogs.

"Those are to eat healthy, to eat whole foods, play a lot, go for walks with their loved ones, eat lots of treats,

and all kinds of fun things. All of the above is how you do it. Because if they eat well and play a lot and get lots of exercise and lots of love, snuggle on the bed and couch with your people they will be healthy."

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CHILDREN'S & TEENS' CONNECTION 2017

Alex Gryzlov, 14, of Great Falls, submitted these late entries for the Children's & Teens' Connection 2017. Clockwise, from top left: Spiderman, Star Wars BB-8 and Tiger.

9/21/17
Alex



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Shepherds: Carter Martin, Ben Moser, Wesley Martin and Sebastien McHugh.

St. Francis Creche Preschool Presents Christmas Story

St. Francis Creche Preschool at St. Francis Episcopal Church in Great Falls performed the Christmas Story. The annual school-wide pageant is conducted by Susan Gardiner and accompanied by Walter Koehler, organist. Students ages 2 1/2-5 years participate.



Pictured: Mary – Olivia Meng, Gabriel – Erin Handoll, Joseph – Anthony Shadid and Angel – Annie Baker.

Kings – Mila Sarkar, Emma Ejtemai and Lukas Wolff.



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WELLBEING

Ready for the Cold

Preventing, recognizing
and treating hypothermia
and frostbite.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Frigid temperatures and the chill of winter can usher in dangerous health conditions, particularly for those most vulnerable: the elderly and young children. Two of the most prevalent cold-weather ills are hypothermia and frostbite. For those who have to be outside when it is dangerously cold, knowing the warning signs and prevention techniques for these conditions are the keys to keeping them at bay, say health care providers.

"Even a typical winter in this area can be dangerous," said Amy Talbot, Ph.D. of George Mason University. "But extreme conditions can make it even worse for those most vulnerable."

Hypothermia, which occurs when one's body core temperature drops, can develop more quickly than many people realize, says Talbot. "Obviously feeling very cold is a warning sign, but also shivering and experiencing signs that the cold is affecting your brain, so feeling disoriented, stumbling or losing balance easily, unusual speech pattern or changes in personality."

Frostbite is when the skin and underlying tissue are damaged by cold temperatures, says Beth Lowe, RN, a private-duty nurse in Arlington. "During the beginning stages of frostbite, you might see your skin turn red and you'll feel numb or tingling or stinging," she said. "The main thing to remember is not to try to re-warm your own skin, because you can do more damage. It's best to seek emergency medical treatment."

Dressing in layers and wearing shoes that are appropriate for extreme cold are keys to preventing hypothermia and frostbite, advises Carolyn Johnson, Ph.D. of Montgomery College. "When it's extremely cold you want to wear



Record cold
temperatures
can lead to
frostbite and
hypothermia.

PHOTO BY
MARILYN CAMPBELL

clothing that traps your body temperature and protects you from cold air and wind," she said. "A basic formula to keep in mind: a base layer that should be made from a fabric that wicks away moisture. The second layer should trap heat so it should be made of a polyester fleece over something similar. The top layer should be waterproof and windproof."

Lowe recommends avoiding cotton clothing during the extreme cold because if it gets wet, it can make you cold. "Many of these preventative measure are things that most people already know, but may not think about until it's too late," she said.

Another preventative component, says Talbot, is nutrition. Both food and liquids can help keep one's body warm. "Skipping a meal can make you more susceptible to hypothermia and frostbite," she said. "It's important to eat carbs and protein for energy when you're going to be outside for a prolonged period of time, like if you're hiking or playing sports."

If you believe that you are beginning to develop frostbite or hypothermia, Lowe says in order to avoid advancing the seriousness of the condition, move your body by doing jumping jacks or some other vigorous movement and get out of the frigid elements. "There's no set amount of time that it takes for [hypothermia or frostbite] to develop, so it's important to keep an eye on those who are most vulnerable. But once you notice the warning signs you can try to stop the conditions before they advance, by drinking plenty of fluids, eating carbs and getting inside to a warmer temperature."

LOCAL SHELTERS

For those who are not able to seek shelter, social service providers in Virginia and Maryland are ramping up efforts to provide shelter to those who need to get out of the cold. For more information:

Fairfax County
703-691-2131 or fairfaxcounty.gov

City of Alexandria
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CALENDAR

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ONGOING

Winter Walk of Lights. At Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. During the Winter Walk of Lights, the garden is transformed into a half-mile, walk of lights. Revisit perennial favorites such as the animated Lakeside Lights, the Fountain of Lights, and the Holiday Nature Walk – and look for new displays each year. Round out a visit roasting marshmallows and sipping on hot beverages, available for purchase. Visit www.novaparks.com/events/winter-walk-of-lights.

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. www.fairfaxcount.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/JAN. 6

Rainbows, Haloes, and Glories. 10-11 a.m. at Turner Farm Park, 925 Springvale Road, Great Falls. At Observatory Park at Turner Farm, explore phenomena that can be seen in the open sky. Learn about rainbows, haloes and glories, the green flash and purple light, and why the sky is blue and sunsets are orange. \$8. Call 703-324-8618 for more.

Aesop's Fables. 11 a.m. at Churchill Road Elementary School, 7100 Churchill Road, McLean. Barter players act out "Androcles and the Lion," "The Oak and the Reed," "The Fox Without a Tail," "The Beast in Love," "The Tortoise and The Hare" and "The Boy Who Cried Wolf." \$15, or \$10 to McLean Community Center members. Call 703-790-0123 for more.

Dog Sled Drama. 3 p.m. at Churchill Road Elementary School, 7100 Churchill Road, McLean. Barter Players presents "The Call of the Wild." \$15, or \$10 to McLean Community Center members. For ages 12 and older. Call 703-790-0123 for more.

SUNDAY/JAN. 7

Meet the Plant Artist. 1-3 p.m. at Green Spring Botanical Gardens, 4603 Green Spring, Road, Alexandria. Great Falls artist, Betty Ganley will be presented with the First Place award for her watercolor, La Plumage at the event. Vienna Art Society multi media art exhibit, "Up Close To Mother Nature" will be on exhibit until Feb 25. Call 703-642-5173 for more.

A Gershwin Celebration. 4 p.m. at Saint Francis Episcopal Church, 9220 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Featuring Millicent Scarlett, soprano; Brian Quenton Thorne, tenor; Alvy Powell, bass-baritone; and Frank Conlon, pianist and host. A pre-concert lecture by Music Director A. Scott Wood will begin at 3:15 pm, 45 minutes prior to the start of the concert. Visit www.amadeusconcerts.com for more.

TUESDAY/JAN. 9

Civil War in Fairfax. 7:30 p.m. at the McLean Governmental Center, 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean. The program will feature noted historian Don Hakenson who will discuss "Rare Civil War Stories in Fairfax County." Call 703-356-8223 for more.

THURSDAY/JAN. 11

McLean Traveler Day Trip. 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Churchill Road Elementary School, 7100 Churchill Road, McLean. Trip to National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. to see "Johannes Vermeer and the Masters of Genre Painting." Call 703-790-0123 for more.

Adventures in Learning Open House. 10-noon at UUCF Unitarian

Universalist Congregation of Fairfax - Program Building, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Increase brain power. Visit www.scov.org for more.

FRIDAY/JAN. 12

Dining with Dorothy. 12:30 p.m. at Skorpio's Maggios Greek Family Restaurant, 421 Maple Ave. E, Vienna. Socializing and dining event. Email dflood1706@gmail.com for more.

5th and 6th Grader Party. 7-9 p.m. at The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Patrons will enjoy free catered food and beverages, music played by a professional disc jockey, dancing on an open dance floor and other attractions, such as a photo booth, temporary tattoos and board games. \$35/\$25 MCC district residents. Call 703-448-TEEN for more.

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/.

Star Gazing. 10-11 a.m. at Turner Farm Park, 925 Springvale Road, Great Falls. Enjoy guided star gazing, look through a telescope, and listen to constellation stories around the campfire at Observatory Park at Turner Farm. \$10. Call 703-324-8618 for more.

SUNDAY/JAN. 14

MLK Speaker. 2 p.m. at The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road. Award-winning sports columnist William Rhoden will speak on the timely subject of "Activist Athletes." \$20, \$10 for McLean Community Center tax district residents. Visit: www.aldentheatre.org or call 703-790-0123 for more.

Rorie in Concert. 7 p.m. at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave E, Vienna. Local musician plays her new EP called "Dawn." Call 703-255-1566 or visit www.roriemusic.com for more.

TUESDAY/JAN. 16

Meet the Civil War Author. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at St. Francis Episcopal Church, 9220 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. James G. Lewis talks about his book "Confederate Calvary General Jeb Stuart" and Civil War history around Great Falls. Lunch will be served and reservations are required. Contact Karen Emami at karen.emami@globalinfotek.com or call 703-938-6471.

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/JAN. 26

Artists Reception. 6-9 p.m. at Torpedo Factory Artists @ Mosaic, 2905 District Ave, Suite 115, Fairfax. Artist Susan Gulick will be there discussing her show "Uncommon Visions," which will be on display Jan. 24-Feb. 25. Visit torpedofactory.org for more.

SATURDAY/JAN. 27

Artists Reception. 4-6 p.m. at Vienna Art Center, 115 Pleasant St., NW. Jazz It Up! Exhibit open until March 3. Free and open to the public. Call 703-319-3971 or visit www.ViennaArtsSociety.org for more.



McLean
Community
Center

The Center of It All



Here's What's Happening at MCC

Sponsored by The Alden
Barter Players presents



"Aesop's Fables"
by Catherine Bush
with music by Ben Mackel

Saturday, Jan. 6, 11 a.m.

and

"The Call of the Wild"

Adapted from Jack London
by Catherine Bush



Saturday, Jan. 6, 3 p.m.

Churchill Road Elementary School
7100 Churchill Rd.

\$15 per show/\$10 MCC district residents

McLean Traveler
National Gallery of Art - Washington, D.C.

Thursday, Jan. 11

9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

\$55/\$50 MCC district residents

The Old Firehouse
5th & 6th Grader Party

Snow Ball

Friday, Jan. 12, 7-9 p.m.

The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Rd.

\$35 per person/\$25 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

MCC Governing Board Election
Run for a seat on MCC's Governing Board!



Petition forms are available

Monday, Jan. 22

View full details on the Center's website.



The McLean Community Center

www.mcleancenter.org

Home of the Alden Theatre

www.aldentheatre.org



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Announcements

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Announcements

DISAPPEARED
Six-foot three-inch Pooka rabbit last
seen in or around the Great Falls Grange
on November 30, 1986. Answers (some-
times) to the name "Harvey." Has capac-
ity to stop a clock so no time passes.
May thus still be located, 31 years
since last non-appearance, on Grange
property. Services may be needed for
upcoming theatrical production. Anyone
with information as to whereabouts is
asked to email Harvey.and.Elwood@
gmail.com (For further information,
visit www.McLeanPlayers.org)

OPINION

A Look Ahead in 2018

FROM PAGE 4

❖ Traffic Signal at River Birch Road and Coppermine Road – As a result of numerous citizen comments and concerns, I advocated for the installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of River Birch Road and Coppermine Road in Herndon. The signal will be installed in 2018.

McLean Traffic Mitigation Efforts

During the past year, I have worked with other elected officials and staff from VDOT and Fairfax County to address resident concerns regarding congestion and cut-through traffic caused by the lack of sufficient capacity on the American Legion Bridge and the Beltway on the Maryland side of that bridge. VDOT has begun implementing improvements to the intersection of Balls Hill Road and Georgetown Pike, including the construction of a pull-off area on the north side of Georgetown Pike between Balls Hill Road and the Beltway ramp so that the police can safely enforce traffic violations in the area. In addition, we have formed a community Advisory Group to review options for addressing traffic concerns, make recommendations, and share updates with their neighbors. The first meeting will take place in January. I look forward to continuing to work with the community to address these very serious traffic problems.

Revitalization Efforts in McLean

Fostering reinvestment in downtown McLean remains a priority. I am happy to report that the Signet, a 123-unit condominium project, by JBG SMITH will be completed in 2018. This project will provide additional housing choices for McLean area residents and will increase the customer base for downtown businesses. While I am disappointed that the applicant for the Main Street project withdrew its proposal, there continues to be community support for high-quality redevelopment in downtown McLean. While it is good to see interest in individual projects, it is also important to periodically take a holistic review of the vision for McLean. That is why I have asked County staff to initiate a community-led review of the Comprehensive Plan for the McLean Central Business District. That effort will commence in early 2018. I look forward to working on this visioning and planning project with residents and stakeholder groups such as the McLean Planning Committee, McLean Revitalization Corporation, and McLean Citizens Association.

Lewinsville Senior Center

Next year will see the grand opening of the first of two buildings in the Lewinsville Redevelopment Project in McLean. That building will consist of 80 independent affordable living apartments for low-income seniors. The second building, which is also under construction, will house an expanded senior center, an adult day care center and two children's day care centers. The second building is estimated to open in early 2019. The Lewinsville Project is a



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Shoulder pull-off area: Several pedestrian and road projects are scheduled to be started or completed in 2018.

private-public partnership between the County and Wesley-Hamel Lewinsville LLC.

McLean Community Center Expands

Next fall, residents will be welcomed back to a renovated and expanded McLean Community Center. The project involves renovating approximately 33,000 existing square feet and adding 7,700 square feet. The project includes two additional multi-purpose rooms, an enclosed outdoor courtyard with seating and landscaping, refurbished meeting rooms, and a more modern look with new wall, ceiling, and floor treatments. The renovation will also upgrade the technology throughout the building and improve and enhance the storm water management system while bringing the MCC into compliance with current ADA and building code regulations. The parking lot will be regraded and resurfaced; additional parking spaces will be added, and walkway lighting will be improved. The \$8 million renovation project is fully funded through the MCC's capital reserves. The MCC building has been closed since April 2017; however, programs and special events have continued to be held in various locations around town.

Turner Farm Re-imagined

Turner Farm Park offers a unique mix of educational and recreational facilities with horseback riding and jumping facilities, picnic pavilion/shelter, playground, trails and an astronomy area with a roll-top observatory that offers adults and children a chance to gaze upon the stars. The Park Authority is currently undertaking a revision to the master plan for the park to incorporate three parcels of land acquired subsequent to the 2000 master plan approval as well as to implement the Resident Curator Program. After initial review of a number of applications for the curator program at Turner Farm Park, the Park Authority selected one to continue through the application process. The applicant, a resident of Great Falls, has proposed to live in and maintain the historic Turner Farm House, create a pony farm on a portion of the land and convert the current garage-apartment structure into a bereavement retreat center for youth who have lost a parent or sibling. The Park Authority is currently reviewing comments on the draft plan received from the public and will incorporate changes to the plan as deemed appropriate. It is expected that the Park Authority Board will approve the revision to the Master Plan in early 2018. The Board of Supervisors is expected to enter into a lease with the resident curator also in 2018.

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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.

TUESDAY/JAN. 9

Vienna Oakton Chapter of NARFE. 1 p.m. at the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St SE. Speaker will be Lisa Mottesheard, Account Manager for Caption Call, of Eastern Virginia. Call 703-938-9757 for more.

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.

THURSDAY/JAN. 18

Caregivers Support Group. 10-11:30 a.m. at UUCF Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax - Program Building, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. For caregivers to adult family members with dementia, meets first and third Thursdays of every month. Call 703-821-6838 or email jtarr5@verizon.net for more.

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.

Assembly

FROM PAGE 3

IT MAY SEEM like the elections never cease in Virginia, where voters go to the polls multiple times every year. And although Washington is already focused on the 2018 campaign, Richmond is already preparing for an epic election in 2019. Not only will that election include all members of the House and the Senate, it will also set the scene for who controls the redistricting process. Both parties are eager to control as much of the process as possible, and Democrats have already won a major victory by electing a governor who will have veto power over the maps drawn by lawmakers.

"The one piece of this that I'm interested in doing is having a factor of competitiveness and competition being part of the equation," said Del. Mark Keam (D-35). "Right now all the standards that they use for redistricting are things like partisanship, demographics and minority status. But there's nothing that talks about whether a district is competitive or not."

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I'm Very Seldom Wrong, But This Time I'm Write



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Since I don't have to write for a deadline this week (12/27/17 papers have already gone to press), maybe I'll write for pleasure. Not that writing this column is ever not my pleasure, but it is time-sensitive, at least on a weekly basis. And though that "weekliness" can occasionally induce some pressure, mostly I can manage it. Besides, it contributes to what you read and my feelings about having written. As such, my columns are rarely about the past, well, only in so far as it gives the present and future concerns some context. Generally speaking however, I am writing about extremely-current events. It's not exactly real time, but the timing is exceptionally real.

This sort of holiday break occurs at The Connection every year as we condense our publication schedule and finish/publish three weeks of newspapers in nine business days. And even though this "condensation" is nothing new for any of us long-sitting employees, it does present its own unique set of challenges, yet it is a schedule which has stood the test of time. Time which eventually leads to pleasure.

And time off is part of what drives this mid-to-late December rush. Because in the newspaper business, especially considering the 24/7 news cycle, with which we are all familiar, even for a weekly publication - for both editorial and sales, you are mostly on. So getting a chance to publish and then pause, gives us all an opportunity to refresh and recharge. And since I'm honeymooning, so to speak, (see column dated 12/13/17 titled "As Good As It Gets"), I have nothing particularly cancer-centric to write about and/or worry about, well, top of mind anyway. There's plenty of cancer stuff bottom of mind though. The difficulty is keeping it there.

The problem/reality is, even when you're meandering around in your head, in order to write, there is a cancer section which inevitably fights its way to the top. It's not as if I have a multiple personality disorder: Kenny-without-cancer and Kenny-with-cancer (my website, by the way: www.KennyWithCancer.com), but sometimes I think I must. Thinking one could totally compartmentalize the facts and fissures that a "terminal" lung cancer diagnosis/"13 month to two year" prognosis imposes is an admirable, much talked about goal but in truth, it's probably unrealistic and likely leads to that dual personality. But who's kidding whom? It's hard/IMPOSSIBLE to know.

So for the moment, I can pretend/presume that Kenny-without-cancer is front and center, top of mind and in control, free to wander aimlessly in print and ponder his fate as if nothing much - other than one's own mortality, is effecting his judgment. Ah, one can dream. And oddly enough, I have been dreaming more, and sleeping longer and deeper, too. I'm sure it's simply a coincidence that having five weeks off from any cancer-related activities/obligations, and likewise having nine days off from any newspaper-related activities has contributed to this semi peace and quiet. A quiet which will soon end when we leave for two days in Pennsylvania to spend Christmas with my wife Dina's cousins, which, along with the cheesesteak I plan on eating, provides it's own sort of comfort and joy.

Still, any port in the cancer storm provides a welcome respite from the - with apologies to Shakespeare - slings and arrows of outrageous misfortune (Shakespeare's quote was "fortune"), however real or imagined. To be sure, cancer is no joke, neither is being diagnosed with a "terminal" form of it: non-small cell lung cancer, stage IV, at age 54 and a half. But making fun of it and the circumstances surrounding it, has been my stock and trade since I first went public - in print, in June 2009. The means I've justified to prevent my premature end. So far, so good.

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



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