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Great Falls CONNECTION

CAMPS & SCHOOLS PAGE 2



The Rockies Majors, a Great Falls Little League team, wanted to do its part to maintain GFL's fields by undertaking a NIKE-wide clean-up campaign. After more than two hours, the team collected more than 10 huge bags of trash.

Little Leaguers Clean Up NIKE Fields

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Comstock Challengers
Count on 'Blue Wave'
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Thelma's Now Louise
NEWS, PAGE 6

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED
OPINION, PAGE 4 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 8 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 10

CAMPS & SCHOOLS Affording Summer Camp

For families with a limited budget, paying for camp can be a challenge.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

One of the great pleasures of summer is going to camp. From kayaking and rock climbing to horseback riding and sailing, camp is a place where lifelong memories are created. A recent study by the non-profit, global policy think tank RAND Corporation shows that voluntary summer programs like camp have a significant, positive impact on low-income students during a time when they fall behind their wealthier peers both academically and socially.

Katie Crump, a case manager at Interfaith Works, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping the poor and underserved, says that the luxury of summer camp often eludes those who need it most.

"The opportunity of attending a real summer camp is a big thing for them. Unfortunately, this experience can be unattainable due to the high cost and finding transportation among other things," said Crump. "Attending summer camp affords kids a special and important experience that's all their own. It allows kids to be kids, something that is particularly vital for low-income children who are often forced to deal with the burdens of adulthood at a young age."

Despite the cost of summer camp, keeping children engaged during the stretch of time between June and August when school is not in session is a critical part of their

More

CAMP INVENTION

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GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

<https://www.fsafeds.com/>

development, says Jerome Short, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology at George Mason University.

"Summer camps give opportunities for children to develop social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral skills," he said. "Some research shows that higher [socioeconomic status] children increase academic and behavioral skills over the summer and lower [socioeconomic status] children lose skills over the summer. Research shows that lower [socioeconomic status] children benefit from learning social and behavioral skills in different settings with new peers and challenges to apply their skills."

Even with limited resources, summer camps can still be accessible, says Tom Rosenberg, president and CEO of the American Camp Association (ACA). "There is a camp for every budget," he said "[Most] ACA-accredited camps provide some form of scholarship assistance. Reach out to the camp directly to ask about specific financial aid and scholarship options."

The RAND study also showed that even though low-income students can lose up to two months of math and reading skills over

the summer, high-quality summer programs can bridge that gap. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) camps are an example of programs that can be effective, but possibly unaffordable for some families.

Wolftrap and Colvin Run elementary schools in Fairfax County will be the site of a non-profit STEM camp called Camp Invention. Organized by the National Inventors Hall of Fame (NIHF), the hands-on program is designed for children in kindergarten through sixth grade. Through activities like building robots and designing gadgets, campers get a sense of what it's like to be a physicist or engineer.

"The program has sponsors that provide funding that's used to help underrepresented kids attend the camps," said Ken Torisky, spokesman for National Inventors Hall of Fame. "The money is distributed to students by the school district."

Options for financial assistance for summer camp run the gamut from discounts for dependents of those serving in the military to camp funding offered by churches, synagogues, and civic organizations. "I would suggest to parents that they look into their child being sponsored by a local business to attend a camp or look into payment plan options at a camp that they are interested in attending," advised Stacie Gottlieb, director, Bullis Summer and Extended Day

Programs in Potomac, Md.

While Bullis does not offer financial assistance for summer camp, Gottlieb says that there are discounts for early registration and registering for multiple weeks of camp.

Parents should check to see if a camp participates in U.S. government assistance programs, particularly those with income eligibility requirements, like Title XX, advises Rosenberg. While it might be too late for this summer, he encourages parents to explore Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts and a Child and Dependent Care tax credit through the FSA Feds website: <https://www.fsafeds.com/>.

"I generally think lower income children benefit when they have access to the same opportunities as upper-income children and also gain cultural skills and knowledge important to upward mobility when they have opportunity to interact with upper-income kids," said Amy L. Best, Ph.D., professor and chair, Department of Sociology and Anthropology at George Mason University. "I also think upper-income kids gain mightily when they have genuine interactions with kids from other class backgrounds. Because empathy, cross cultural understanding, and an ability to work in diverse groups are skills that this new century demands, having opportunities to hone those skills are of value for all involved."

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STAYING SAFE TOGETHER

May is National Bike Month! Expect more people biking on roads and trails. Here are some safety tips from BikeFairfax.



SPEED LIMIT

35

Follow posted speed limits.



Come to a complete stop at red lights and stop signs, including when turning right. Always yield to people crossing the street.



Avoid distractions. Never text while operating a vehicle.

Join us for the National Bike Challenge - May
Bike to School Day - May 9 and
Bike to Work Day - May 18

fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/bike-walk







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www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar

Comstock Challengers Count on 'Blue Wave'

Six Democrats vying to unseat Barbara Comstock face off at Colvin Run Elementary

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

The six Democrats, four women and two men, competing for the chance to unseat incumbent U.S. Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-10) come November, took to the stage to face each other and more than 300 interested citizens from around the widespread boundaries of the 10th Congressional District. The district includes Loudoun, Frederick and Clarke counties, and parts of Fairfax and Prince William counties. The forum was hosted by the Dranesville District Democratic Committee at Colvin Run Elementary School in Vienna, and introduced by the organization's Chair, Jennifer Adeli.

There was much agreement among the candidates as they answered questions posed by moderator Glenn Kessler, the Washington Post Fact-Checker columnist. The crowd applauded enthusiastically as the contenders lambasted Comstock, President Trump, and the Republican Congress on issues that included the Trump Administration's attacks on the Affordable Care Act, the future of Social Security, climate change, sanctions against Iran and Russia, DACA and immigration reform, the recently passed Tax Reform bill, tariffs and the U.S.'s departure from the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

ALL OF THE DEBATERS expressed their support for the Affordable Care Act and their anger at how the program is being diluted, while offering differing solutions on the general topic of healthcare.

Lindsey Davis Stover, who served as a Chief of Staff on Capitol Hill, as well as a Senior Advisor at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs under President Obama, declared that access to affordable and quality healthcare "shouldn't be something we have to keep marching for. It's a right, not a privilege."

Two-term Virginia senator Jennifer Wexton and Paul Pelletier, a former federal prosecutor, both support adjusting the financial threshold for the Affordable Care Act to allow more citizens to qualify for subsidies, with Pelletier adding that controlling fraud would help drive down costs.

Wexton lauded "Obamacare" as a good first step, saying that "we don't need to reinvent the wheel" and that a sliding scale based on ability to pay should be investigated. "Let's get creative."

Dr. Julia Biggins, an infectious disease scientist, took the healthcare issue a step further, saying she would vote for a thresh-



The Democratic candidates vying for the chance to challenge incumbent Rep. Barbara Comstock's Congressional District 10 seat. From left, Dan Helmer, Lindsey Davis Stover, Alison Friedman, moderator Glenn Kessler, Paul Pelletier, State Sen. Jennifer Wexton, and Dr. Julia Biggins.

PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION



The event was hosted by the Dranesville District Democratic Committee. Chair Jennifer Adeli welcomed the attendees and introduced the moderator and the candidates.



Susan Jacobs and candidate Dan Helmer. Jacobs, a McLean resident is supporting Helmer as the "best candidate" but says she will back whoever wins the primary. "They are all good, with great resumes."

old increase while working toward a "single-payer" healthcare system and a focus on preventative care. "Let's shoot for the moon," she urged, saying that to date, Congressional efforts in this area have been "Band-Aids" on the greater problem. "It's complex," she added, "but we've been talking for decades." Biggins also believes that healthcare should be a government responsibility, and not tied to employment.

West Point graduate, Rhodes Scholar, and veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Dan Helmer envisions a system where Americans can opt into Medicare. Helmer's insistence that the Government's ability to use scale be "unleashed" to negotiate drug prices received a roar of approval from the attendees.

Questions concerning the Tax Reform Act also drew criticism from the candidates and approbation from the audience on their negative commentary.

"It's a horrible product for many reasons," was Alison Friedman's assessment. Friedman is a former senior official with the Obama Administration's State Department, authoring legislation to combat human trafficking and protect voting rights. In her estimation, the Tax Reform Act is anything but, benefiting corporations and the wealthy above working families, singles, and those in most need.

Helmer called the legislation "one of the most unpatriotic" bills ever passed, and thinks a complete re-write is needed, "starting from scratch" to get it right.

The Republicans' immigration bans and reforms and the proposed Border Wall also got a bashing from the candidates, with Davis Stover describing both as "heartless and bad economic decisions" and calling attention to the exemplary safety record of the city of El Paso, Texas "right there on that border. The 'wall' isn't about national security. It's a symbol of hate."

Friedman, who at one point during the two-hour debate called Donald Trump "the greatest threat to our national security," added that among the many reasons to run against Comstock, the comments she made during a debate when first running for Congress, likening the tracking of immigrants entering the country to tracking FedEx packages "are up there on my list."

"All my time in Iraq and Afghanistan, I never thought we were fighting to deport children," added Helmer.

If moderator Kessler was hoping to catch the candidates off guard with a direct question asking if they would support Nancy Pelosi in a Congressional leadership role if elected, first-to-the-mic Friedman wasn't phased. "Lucky me to get this one first!" she quipped, then fired back.

"This is not the conversation that we should be having now," she said, insisting that Democrats needed to avoid "being divided," and needed to pull together and stay on message.

While acknowledging Pelosi's contribu-

SEE CHALLENGERS, PAGE 11

Budget Hits All the Right Notes

BY SHARON BULOVA
CHAIRMAN, FAIRFAX COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



During today's [April 24] Board of Supervisors Meeting, the Board marked up the FY2019 Advertised Budget by a vote of 8-2. Formal adoption of the budget will take place on May 1. I would like to share with you my remarks prior to our vote this morning:

The process for adopting the County Budget every year is all about community engagement. Fiscal Year 2019 is no exception, with Budget Forums and Town Hall Meetings hosted in each of our nine Districts, Budget Committee meetings (which included our partners on the School Board), and three days of public hearings on the Advertised Budget earlier this month. Since February, our offices have received hundreds, if not thousands, of letters, e-mail messages,

phone calls and personal visits from our constituents.

The Budget "mood" this year was harmonic, thanks to an Advertised Budget that I believe hit all of the right notes.

The Budget that we are about to "Mark-Up," or amend, is based on a tax rate of \$1.15. The package:

- ❖ Fully funds the School Board's request, bringing teachers' salaries

into competitive alignment with our sister jurisdictions in the region;

- ❖ Overall support for our school system is increased by \$91.49 million or 4.22 percent over Fiscal Year 2018, with 52.8 percent of our General Fund Budget going to schools;

- ❖ Fully funds compensation for our County employees with a 2.25 percent Market Rate Adjustment, Performance, Merit and Longevity increases;

- ❖ Includes funding for Fairfax First, Gang Prevention, the expansion of Diversion First

and Opportunity Neighborhoods, additional slots for Early Childhood programs, and funding to address the Opioid Crisis;

- ❖ Provides an increase in funding for Metro (pending a long-term solution), VRE and our Connector Bus System.

While this Mark-Up package includes a 2 cent increase in the real estate tax rate, an increase of \$241 on the average annual tax bill, I believe the additional revenue is an important investment needed to shore up the foundation on which our quality of life rests.

I want to thank Budget Committee Chairman Jeff McKay for his excellent work bringing this Mark-Up Package to the Board today, along with Budget Guidance that addresses issues discussed during budget deliberations with each of our colleagues. Adoption of a Budget every year requires the good faith collaboration of each member of our Board and I appreciate everyone's willingness to come together on a Budget process that moves Fairfax County forward.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Time to Rediscover Libraries

To the Editor:

As a current high school teacher in Fairfax County, and a future school librarian, I frequently hear the question, "Why do you want to be a librarian? Do kids even read anymore?" April is National School Library Month, and I'd like to take the opportunity to clarify the answers to these questions.

In my school, the library is not only already an essential part of the school, it is filled with untapped potential as well, because so many parents, students, and teachers are not aware of all of the opportunities that are available. Our school library provides our students with technology access, research stations, a place to work and research, but also has lunch programs to help students meet each other and make friends; on some days during lunch there is a

knitting group that meets. Students meet and teach each other to create new stitches and patterns, and you haven't seen a school united until you've seen a freshman girl patiently demonstrating a stitch for the third time to a senior football player. We have a book club that meets during our remediation period once a month. The kids pick the books, and have some of the most lively discussions I've heard.

Even more than this, our library is teaching our students how to be digital citizens and 21st century learners. They foster curiosity — not always an easy feat in high schoolers. They have a coding station where our students can learn to code, even if they aren't taking computer science classes, and a media lab where students produce, film, and present daily announcements for the school. They are trying to get a 3D printer in the library, as well as virtual reality technology to allow our students to explore places and ideas to which they might never other-

wise have access.

So yes, kids do still read. But these also aren't the same school libraries that we had; no longer is the library a silent, intimidating tomb of books. Go check out your local school library after school one day in April — you might just be surprised at what you find!

Meagan Major
Fairfax

Stopping Violence in Any Form

To the Editor:

In response to your last week's opinion piece calling a new state license plate with the words "Stop Gun Violence" a small victory, I offer the following:

I notice that the Virginia General Assembly and the Governor have passed a bill for a new license plate with the words "Stop Gun Violence" on it. There are

those of us who are opposed to violence in any form — knife violence, explosives violence, poison violence, vehicular violence, and the like. Everett Piper recently stated: "Take away guns and we'll use a knife. Take away knives and we'll use a club. Take away clubs, and we'll use a rock." The lead editorial in the 4-10-18 edition of The Washington Times observed that knifings across the British Isles are up 21 percent. Stabbings in London in 2017 are at their highest level in 6 years, up 23 percent over the previous year. Knives and acid are the two most common weapons used in London. Violence starts in the heart — not in the hand.

The Virginia General Assembly's myopic focus on guns is not the solution to stopping violence. I suggest the General Assembly and Governor would better serve Virginians by renaming the license plate "Stop Violence".

Paul McIlvaine
Alexandria

BULLETIN

Fairfax County is offering the following FREE "Caring for You, Caring for Me" programs; a blend of interactive support and education for caregivers of older adults.

Monday, May 7-June 11 (5 weeks every Monday), 1:30-3:30 p.m. at Lincolnia Adult Day Health Care Center, 4710 North Chambliss St., Alexandria. Find out more at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/OlderAdults and click on Caring for You, Caring for Me Program or call 703-324-7577 or 703-324-7210, TTY 711.

Thursday, May 31-June 28 (5 weeks every Thursday), 7-8 p.m. at

Herndon Fortnightly Library, 768 Center St., Herndon. Find out more at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/OlderAdults and click on Caring for You, Caring for Me Program or call 703-324-7577 or 703-324-7210, TTY 711.

Fairfax County's free **Family Caregiver Telephone Support Group** meets by phone on **Tuesday, May 8, 7-8 p.m.** This month's topic is "Using Humor as a Survival Tool". Register beforehand at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/OlderAdults and click on Caregiver Support/Respite. Call 703-324-5484, TTY 711.

Fairfax County is offering a free Medicare 101 program. Learn the facts about health insurance for older adults. **Monday, May 14, 10:30 a.m.- Noon.** Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 5114 Twinbrook Rd., Fairfax. To register, call Mary Walker at 703-278-8375, TTY 711. Find out more at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/OlderAdults and click on Medicare/Insurance Counseling.

The **Fairfax Commission on Aging** meets on **Wednesday, May 16, 1-3 p.m.** at the Sully District Governmental Center, Richard Frank Room, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd.,

Chantilly. The public is welcome to attend and join in the comment period that begins each session. Find out more at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/coa.htm. Call 703-324-5403, TTY 711 for meeting access needs.

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OBITUARY

Adam Christopher Toohey, 30

Adam Christopher Toohey, 30, passed away on April 15, 2018 after a two-year battle with colorectal cancer.

The son of Michael Toohey and Jean Reimers, Adam was born on October 10, 1987 in Fairfax and grew up in Great Falls. He was a graduate of East Carolina University where he graduated with his Bachelors of Kinesiology. He was a huge East Carolina, Washington Redskins and Baltimore Orioles fan. Adam also received his Masters in Leadership Administration from the University of Oklahoma. While at OU, he worked as a graduate assistant and a strength and conditioning coach. He was proud to have worked with the OU baseball team when they won the Big 12 Championship.

After graduation, Adam owned and operated Toohey Athletic Performance, where he trained children from elementary to college age.

He enjoyed playing and watching golf, baseball, and football. He was an outdoorsman and also an Eagle Scout. Adam enjoyed goose hunting, deer hunting and trout fishing.

Adam was an amazing young man. He never complained during his courageous year battle with cancer. The family would like to especially thank Encompass Home Health and Hospice for their great



Adam Christopher Toohey

care and support they gave to Adam and the family.

In lieu of flowers, you may make donations to Ronald McDonald House at OU Children's Hospital 1301 NE 14th St, OKC, OK 73117, or <http://rmhc-okc.org/get-involved/donate/>

Adam is survived by his wife, Sarah Elizabeth Toohey; his beloved black lab, Crash; father Mike Toohey and wife Lisa of Sterling, Va.; mother Jean Reimers of Lovettsville, Va.; brothers, Mark Toohey and wife Carol Ann of Locust Grove, Va, Keith Toohey and wife Stephanie of Huntsville, Ala., and a host other loving family members and friends.

Fundraiser for Women's Education to Be Held May 3

Great Falls Friends and Neighbors Scholarship Fund (GFFNSF) will hold its second annual fundraiser on Thursday, May 3, 4 - 9 p.m. at Mookie's BBQ (1141 Walker Road, Great Falls). GFFNSF is a non-profit organization in Great Falls that provides scholarships to women. The money raised from the event will fund scholarships for local women for the upcoming academic year. Ten percent of all purchases at Mookie's BBQ will go directly toward these scholarships. This includes bar tabs, eat in, and take-out orders. So, if you don't have time to eat at Mookie's BBQ, take home some delectable BBQ to your friends and family.

GFFNSF is a 501(c)(3) organization providing scholarships to women over the age of 25 with financial need, a minimum GPA of 3.0, who live in Northern Virginia and attend George Mason University or Northern Virginia Community College. For the academic year 2017 - 2018, GFFNSF awarded five scholarships. One of these scholarships was funded by last year's fundraiser at Mookie's BBQ. This year, the goal is to raise funds for three scholarships.

The event promises a fun-filled night with delicious BBQ and "celebrity" bartenders who will pour you a drink and take donations. A raffle will be held for two \$100 Mookie's BBQ gift certificates - great for those summertime barbecues. Raffle tickets are \$5 each or five for \$20.

To learn more about GFFNSF, visit www.GFFNSF.org

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Public Hearings

Funding the Right Transportation Projects

You are invited to share comments on transportation projects that have been recommended for funding in the FY2019-2024 Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP). Additionally, pursuant to §33.2-202, comments will be accepted for new projects valued in excess of \$25 million. The Commonwealth Transportation Board will take your comments into consideration as it develops the FY2019-2024 Six-Year Improvement Program. The program allocates public funds to highway, road, bridge, rail, bicycle, pedestrian and public transportation projects. All federally eligible projects in the SYIP will be included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program to document how Virginia will obligate its federal funds.

Meeting materials will be available at <http://www.ctb.virginia.gov/planning/springmeetings/default.asp> beginning April 16, 2018.

Public meetings begin at 4:00 p.m. in each of the locations except as noted below:
A formal comment period will be held at these meetings.

Monday, April 16, 2018 Hampton Roads - Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization, 723 Woodlake Drive Chesapeake, VA 23320	Thursday, April 19, 2018 Lynchburg - VDOT Lynchburg District Office Ramey Memorial Auditorium 4303 Campbell Avenue Lynchburg, VA 24501	Tuesday, April 24, 2018 Richmond - Hilton Garden Inn 800 Southpark Boulevard Colonial Heights, VA 23834
Monday, April 30, 2018* Northern Virginia - Northern Virginia District Office Potomac Conference Room 4975 Alliance Drive Fairfax, VA 22030 *meeting begins at 5:30 p.m.	Thursday, May 3, 2018 Staunton - Holiday Inn and Conference Center 152 Fairway Lane Staunton, VA 24402	Monday, May 7, 2018 Culpeper - Culpeper District Auditorium 1601 Orange Road Culpeper, VA 22701
Tuesday May 8, 2018 Fredericksburg - Germanna Community College Workforce and Technology Center 10000 Germanna Point Drive, Fredericksburg, VA 22408	Thursday, May 10, 2018 Salem - Holiday Inn Valley View 3315 Ordway Drive NW Roanoke, VA 24017	Monday, May 14, 2018 Bristol - Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center One Partnership Circle Abingdon, VA 24210

You can also submit your comments by email or mail by May 30, 2018:

For roads and highways: Six-YearProgram@VDOT.Virginia.gov, or Infrastructure Investment Director, Virginia Department of Transportation 1401 East Broad St., Richmond, VA 23219.

For rail and public transportation: DRPTPR@drpt.virginia.gov, Public Information Office, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation 600 East Main Street, Suite 2102, Richmond VA, 23219.

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Thelma's Now Louise

Second assisted-living facility sought in Colvin Run neighborhood, before past wounds fully heal.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Verity Commercial hasn't yet submitted a special exception application to build a 62-unit, assisted-living, memory-care facility in Great Falls; as of Wednesday, April 19, 2018, its co-founder Herman G. Diebler hadn't even officially closed on the purchase of land from Wayne Foley at 1131 Walker Road.

But Diebler and Rick Irwin, CEO of IntegraCare, wanted to begin a conversation with Great Falls residents and members of Great Falls Citizens Association, before the land use process officially begins.

"I have to give it to these guys, they haven't even applied for their thing, but they are here, they are listening," said Eric Knudsen, past president of Great Falls Citizens Association.

Knudsen said Great Falls Citizens Association probably "delayed their process six to eight months to ask for this."

Diebler and Irwin, with their land use attorney Lori Greenlief from Maguire Woods, plan to submit an application to the county for the 62-unit facility in June of 2018; should the process go smoothly, they hope for site plan approval by the Planning Commission and then the Board of Supervisors in January 2020 and hope to be open for residents in February 2021.

"You guys are right here at the beginning," Diebler told members of Great Falls Citizens Association, at the Land Use and Zoning committee meeting held at Great Falls Library on Wednesday, April 19, 2018.

"We have to be selective in the projects we do. Because we are a small company, we have to be successful," said Irwin, whose company from Wexford, Pa. outside Pittsburgh, has acquired and developed 21 assisted-living facilities, including two in development in Reston.

A SPECIAL EXCEPTION is needed because the 2.8 acre parcel at 1131 Walker Road is less than the required five acres required to build a medical facility.

Currently, the land is split zoned C-8 (commercial) and R-1 (residential), and a 49-foot, two-story office and retail building could be built by-right immediately, without need for additional county approval.

The property is located at the intersection of Colvin Run and Walker roads. Diebler said it's the last property in Great Falls with access to sewer.

"We believe our proposed use is significantly less impactful on the surrounding neighborhood than the by-right C-8 zoning uses that are currently allowed," wrote



PHOTO BY KEN MOORE/THE CONNECTION

Herman Diebler and Rick Irwin (seated) alert Great Falls Citizens Association of their plans to build 62-unit assisted living and memory care facility at the intersection of Walker and Colvin Run roads. They plan to submit a special exception application to the county in June 2018 and hope to open in February 2021.

Diebler to the Great Falls Citizens Association in early 2018, citing uses such as restaurants, gas stations, offices, a funeral home, a church or a bowling alley currently allowed. "Our proposed senior living facility will create less parking and traffic issues and less noise with no impact to schools."

Knudsen and president Bill Canis of Great Falls Citizens Association alerted its members that the community has more ability to get involved and impact the process and details because a special exception is being sought.

The soon-to-be proposed assisted living building will be 53,104 square feet in total; 20,644 square feet for a lower level memory care portion, 16,115 square feet for a second floor assisted living and 16,345 square feet for ground floor assisted living.

"We have no comment on a proposal until we have an actual plan before us," said Knudsen.

Diebler and Irwin anticipate the facility would generate approximately 169 daily car trips from the building, and that 44 parking spaces would be needed. The height of the building would be 32 feet in front, and 44 feet in back, they said.

THE POTENTIAL FACILITY would be a neighbor to Brightview Great Falls, at 12000 Colvin Mill Road, the former site of Great Falls famous Thelma's Country Store. Brightview Great Falls opened in 2014 and has 62 assisted living units and 25 memory

care units.

Brightview Great Falls successfully received a special exception in 2011 to build on the 3.56 acre lot, according to Planning Commission documents.

"The more involved the citizens are about the process ... the more thoroughly your concerns will be vetted," said Bill Canis, president of Great Falls.

Dranesville Supervisor John Foust is interested in public opinion, said his land use specialist Ben Wiles, who attended the meeting.

"We have five [GFCA] Board members in this room; so we're listening," said Knudsen.

BUT JOE SARTIANO, a close neighbor to the facility's proposed location, hasn't forgotten the BrightView Great Falls special exception and construction process; he isn't eager to begin again.

"I lived through Brightview," said Sartiano, who organized a petition to say no to Brightview, when it sought a special exception from the Board of Supervisors in 2011 to build its facility at the site of the former Thelma's.

"I'd like to at least commend you on your transparency," he told Diebler and Irwin, "but it seems like the onus is on us to stop this."

Of the new location for an additional assisted-living and memory care facility, he said, "I drive by that property every day and it's an eyesore so I've been looking forward

to something being developed, but I'm truly against the special exception."

Sartiano had hoped free market would facilitate a different type of use, even if it's the one currently allowed for by-right.

Mark West is another immediate neighbor. "I love the architecture, I love what you're trying to do," he said, on first reaction. But obviously he will be affected, and he compared the size of the facility to the size of the White House.

He wanted to learn how Great Falls Citizens Association might help him and his neighbors as they determine how to respond to the special exception proposal when it's actually proposed.

"You're not alone," said Knudsen.

Brian Clark's house is located down the hill from the proposed facility.

Because of the topography of the site, "I'm going to look up at this huge building," said Clark.

He described his walks around the area at night, when it's pitch black and quiet. "It feels like you're in absolute nowhere," he said.

"This will change the dynamic entirely," he said. If he had known that an assisted living facility was going to be proposed, he said, "we would not have bought our house."

DIEBLER AND IRWIN did their research; they know Great Falls Citizens Association advocates for dark skies.

Their architect William R. Drury, of Architecture, Inc. in Reston, plans for the inside to mirror the look of the inside of Colvin Run.

Their site engineer is a Great Falls resident and knows the community's advocacy of tree preservation and open space.

The facilities look to have the potential to be an activities director's dream, with a brick oven and open kitchen facility where residents can remain involved in cooking demonstrations. Artists from Great Falls will be invited for activities in a planned art studio as well. Amenities also include a country house cabin decor, automatic sensor doors to residents' apartments, and automatic motion lighting to help prevent falls in the middle of the night.

And Diebler and Irwin presented statistical demographics to suggest that Great Falls will benefit from an additional assisted-living facility.

"We marketed this property for a year before we decided we wanted this site," said Diebler. The land is currently assessed at \$3,203,700, according to Fairfax County records.

With a total population of 17,793 in Great Falls, 3,058 people are older than 65 and 2,978 are between the ages of 55-64.

The building would include 42 assisted living units and 20 memory care units.

"To me, it's pretty striking that there's a need," said Diebler.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Karen of Arnest Seafood bring fresh-caught, unfrozen fish and seafood to the market every Saturday including oysters, shrimp, scallops, rockfish, and more.

Great Falls Farmers Market Opens for Summer Season

BY KATHLEEN MURPHY
MARKET MANAGER

When we packed up and headed for the historic Grange Hall in early December we never imagined that we would be setting up again in the parking lot at the Great Falls Village Centre. Planning is going a bit more slowly than expected and we welcome the chance to delight you once again in our old stomping grounds. The search continues for a new place, but we are very grateful for this chance to gather in our old digs once again.

Our warmest thanks to TD Bank, our winter market sponsors. In the old Grange tradition, winter is a time of fidelity. During the barren winter months, the Grangers developed the leadership trait of fidelity – being faithful to their mission in spite of the empty fields – having confidence that the earth will flourish again. TD Bank made it possible for the market to continue during the tough winter months, inviting new people to join in and creating consistent conditions in tough times. During our months indoors, friendships have blossomed through the many holidays, feasts, vacations, and storms.

We are ready to delight your family with healthy food options all summer long: Diaz Berries & Veggies returns this Saturday with Asparagus as the headline! OMG Microgreens will amaze you with a good spread of microgreen choices.

Tuscarora Organic Growers Coop returns with certified organic produce. Vordonia Extra Virgin Olive Oil has the most pure, low acid, rich EVOO you can find anywhere. Our Zaatar is made of the freshest ingredients, and SpicedForYou offers cryogenically dried herbs, spices, and curries, with spices combinations from around the world.

This summer, you may find your fresh, unfrozen local fish and seafood at our market, as well as per-



EC Pastries has returned with amazing selection of pastries, cakes, pies and more.

sonally wild-caught Alaskan Salmon by local fishermen who travel to Alaska (Cold Country Salmon). You will find grass-fed beef, pork, pastured chickens, and eggs at our market (Liberty Hill Farm and High View Farm). All supplemental feeds are organic. If you need some help with meal preparation, there are pot-pies and soups (Liberty Hill Farm), veggie burgers (Pure Veg), empanadas (World Eats), spanakopita and more (Our Mom Eugenia).

EC Pastries has returned with her amazing selection of pastries, cakes, pies and more. Baguette Republic has built a new kitchen over the winter and has one kitchen for breads and one for pastries. Taste the difference. Lemonade is joining the market this week with coffee! That will surely entice you to linger long. Boyah Gourmet offers gluten-free, sugar-free handmade chocolate.

We have music every Saturday and tables and chairs for you to take a moment to relax and enjoy your community. If you would like to participate in or contribute to the market, please let us know at Kathleen@GreatFallsFarmersMarket.org

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CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

Solo Art Exhibit. "A Study of Manhattan: Power, Dominance and Excitement" by Great Falls Studios Artist Robert Gilbert. Through May 6, at The Torpedo Factory at the Art League in Alexandria. The Gallery is located at 105 North Union St., Alexandria. Visit torpedofactory.org.

"Fly By Night." Through May 6 at 1st Stage in Tysons, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. It's 1965 in New York City and the lights are about to go out. But not before a melancholy sandwich maker becomes enchanted with two sisters in this bittersweet romantic tale about finding hope in a world beset by darkness. \$38 general admission, \$35 seniors (65+), \$15 students and military. Visit www.1ststage.org or call 703-854-1856.

BRX Artist Showcase. Through May 11 at BRX American Bistro, 1025-I Seneca Road, Great Falls. The Sorta-Quarterly Artist Showcase: throughout the year, BRX will be exhibiting a selection of works in their dining room by an artist from Broadway Gallery's portfolio. Currently on display is Hiromi Ashlin. Email Donald Dusenberre at donald@broadwaygalleries.net

Children's Art Exhibit. Through May 14 at Great Falls Village Starbucks, 9863 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Great Falls Studio Arts and Great Falls Village Starbucks present Colvin Run Elementary School children's artwork. The presentation was selected by Lauren Grimm and Rachel Wiseman, art instructors.

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.

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.

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.

Fishing Rod Rentals. Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Rentals available during visitor center hours. Fishing tackle and live bait are available for purchase. Reservations required for group rentals. \$6/rental (2 hour max). Valid driver's license required. Rod/reel combinations are perfect for beginners and children. A Virginia or Maryland freshwater fishing license is required for those 16 years or older. The park does not sell fishing licenses. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend-park/.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 25

Restaurant Fundraiser. 11 a.m.-9 p.m. at Mookie's BBQ, 1141 Walker Road, Great Falls. Mookie's BBQ will donate 10 percent of all sales all day to paws4vets, a nonprofit that places service dogs with veterans. Join your friends and neighbors at Mookie's or enjoy take-out at home. Check out



Nobody's Girl

Featuring BettySoo, Grace Pettis, Rebecca Loebe. The all-female group offers delicate and complex harmonies and innovative songwriting. \$20. Thursday, April 26, 7:30-9 p.m. at Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave., East, Vienna. Visit www.jamminjava.com or call 877-987-6487.



Colors of Change

PHOTO COURTESY OF JENNY NICHOLS

Filmmaker Jenny Nichols, who grew up in Great Falls, explores Greenland through the eyes of an artist, a NASA scientist, and an Inuit elder. Each character represents a different way that humans internalize information: heart, mind and spirit. They demonstrate the intersection of art, culture and science in a region defined by climate change. Presented by Great Falls Studios. Thursday, April 26, 7 p.m. at Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Contact James Diedrich at james.jemail@gmail.com.

the online silent auction to benefit paws4vets running through April 26. Visit www.biddingowl.com/paws4people to bid on gift certificates for local restaurants, jewelry, event tickets and more. Contact Susan Kurtz at skurtzie@verizon.net or call 703-472-8079.

THURSDAY/APRIL 26

"Colors of Change" Film. 7 p.m. at Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Filmmaker Jenny Nichols, who grew up in Great Falls, explores Greenland through the eyes of an artist, a NASA scientist, and an Inuit elder. Each character represents a different way that humans internalize information: heart, mind and spirit. They demonstrate the intersection of art, culture and science in a region defined by climate change. Presented by Great Falls Studios. Contact James Diedrich at james.jemail@gmail.com.

THURSDAY-SUNDAY/APRIL 26-29

"9 to 5, The Musical." April 26, 27, and 28 at 7 p.m.; with matinees April 28 and 29, 2 p.m. at McLean High School's Burke Auditorium, 1633 Davidson Road, McLean. Get up and work as McLean High School's "TheatreMcLean" presents Dolly Parton's hit musical comedy, "9 to 5." Tickets are \$12/online; \$15/door. To order tickets, visit theatremclean.org.

FRIDAY/APRIL 27

Night Out at National Harbor. 3:30-11:30 p.m. Meets at The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Part of the Old Firehouse Friday Night Trips. Cost is \$55/\$45 MCC District Residents. Take in extraordinary views of Washington, D.C., on the Capital Wheel, dinner and discover much more. Admission and dinner are included in the fee. Visit www.mcleancenter.org.

SATURDAY/APRIL 28

Fairfax Run for the Children. 8 a.m. at Fairfax County Courthouse Complex, 4110 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax. Join Fairfax Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for the 8th Annual 8K and 3K races. The superhero-themed race attracts nearly 1,000 runners and walkers, 250 volunteers, and raises almost \$85,000 each year to support Fairfax CASA's advocacy work with abused and neglected children in the community. Participants can enjoy the after race celebration, including superhero meet and greets, a DJ, free food, face painting, kids' crafts, photo booth, and more. Visit www.fairfaxrunforthechildren.com/.

Visitors from Outer Space. 11 a.m.-noon at Turner Farm's Observatory Park, 925 Springvale Road, Great Falls. Learn about meteorites and where they come from. Touch and examine visitors from space, including meteorite specimens from

the moon and Mars. The cost is \$8 per person. Call 703-324-8618 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/turner-farm.

Taste of Vienna. 11 a.m.-8 p.m. at Vienna Volunteer Fire Station, 400 Center St., South, Vienna. Admission free with live entertainment. Proceeds benefit the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department. Visit www.tasteofvienna.com or contact Joanie at joanie@vffd.org.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/APRIL 28-29

National Community Band Festival. Saturday, 4 p.m.; Sunday, 1 p.m. at GMU's Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Sponsored by Fairfax Wind Symphony and GMU's School of Music. The Fairfax Wind Symphony was formed in the fall of 1999 for the benefit of local music directors and teachers. Visit www.facebook.com/ffxws/.

SUNDAY/APRIL 29

Sustainable Style Expo. 1-3 p.m. at McLean Old Firehouse Center, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Free. Join the Sustainable Style Initiative in commemorating Fashion Revolution Week 2018. Enjoy a screening of documentary "The True Cost," DIY station, vendors and more. RSVP at sustainablestyleinitiative.org.

Walk on the Hill & Green Expo. 2-5 p.m. at Windover Heights Historic District, Vienna. Approximately 50 homes in the town's northwest historic district will be open to visitors, which also will feature the second annual green expo. Vienna Art Society members will be in the gardens doing plein air paintings. Free and open to public. Visit www.viennava.gov/index.aspx?NID=1244.

Flower Show "Bringing Nature to Your Home." 2-5 p.m. at 307 Windover Ave., NW, Vienna. Hosted by Ayr Hill Garden Club during Vienna's Annual Walk on the Hill in the Windover Heights Historic District home of AHGC member Louise Davidson. Free and open to the public. Parking is available at Green Hedges School. Visit Facebook at www.facebook.com/AYRHILLGARDENCLUB/.

Silver Jubilee Concert. 4-6 p.m. Free. At Saint Luke Catholic Church, 7001 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Honoring Artistic Director Paul Skevington and his 25 years at St. Luke's. Features Skevington playing the Franck Chorale No. 2 and the Bach Passacaglia and Fugue on the Steiner-Reck Organ. A gala reception follows. Contact www.musicinmclean.org.

TUESDAY/MAY 1

Golf Clinic Registration Opens. At Oak Marr Golf Complex, 3136 Jermantown Road, Oakton. Introduce your 8-17-year-old to the fundamentals of golf with one-hour junior clinics. Clinics are offered for \$15 each and run April through August. Spring registration is now open; summer registration opens May 1, 2018. Space is limited. To register, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/golf/junior.

WEDNESDAY/MAY 2

Farmers Market Re-Opens. 8 a.m.-noon at Oak Marr, Jermantown Road, Oakton. Runs Wednesdays, May 2-Nov. 14. To kick off spring, farmers expect to have an abundance of fresh cut greens, asparagus, strawberries, rhubarb, apples, beets, carrots and more. Everything is harvested hours before sale to ensure optimum taste and nutrition. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets or contact the Community Horticulture Office at 703-342-9773.

Coffee for Newcomers. 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at McLean Project for the Arts, 1446 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. McLean Newcomers and Neighbors will host a coffee for its members and for others who might be interested in joining. Visit www.McLeanNewcomers.org.

FRIDAY/MAY 4

Farmers Market Re-Opens. 8 a.m.-noon at 1659 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Runs Fridays, May 4-Nov. 16. To kick off spring, farmers expect to have an abundance of fresh cut greens, asparagus, strawberries, rhubarb, apples, beets, carrots and more. Everything is harvested hours before sale to ensure optimum taste and nutrition. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets or contact the Community Horticulture Office at 703-342-9773.

SATURDAY/MAY 5

Taste of Korea. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at Korean United Methodist Church of Greater Washington, 1219 Swinks Mill Road, McLean. Sample homemade Korean food and experience Korean culture. Cultural programs such as Korean traditional dance performances (11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.), Tiger Den's Tae Kwon Do demo performance (noon), trying on traditional Korean costumes and games for children. Also there will be a rummage sale and sale of Korean knick-knacks. Visit www.kumcgw.org

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/MAY 5-MAY 6

Annual GFS ArtFest. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at Great Falls Grange and Great Falls Village Center Studios, 9818 Georgetown Pike and 756 and 766 Walker Road, Great Falls. Paintings, photography, pottery, jewelry, fiber arts and more will be available for purchase. Many artists will have smaller items available for purchase. Free. Visit www.greatfallsstudios.com.

SUNDAY/MAY 6

"Blithe Spirit" Play Production. 2 p.m. at Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St., SE, Vienna. Noel Coward's famous 1941 comedy. Presented by Vienna Theatre Company and Vienna Department of Recreation. Tickets \$14. Visit www.viennatheatrecompany.org.

Vienna Jammers Big Jam Concert. 4 p.m. at Madison High School, 2500 James Madison Drive, Vienna. The Vienna Jammers are an auditioned percussion ensemble made up of children ages 7-18, led by Vienna Elementary School music teacher David Lee Reynolds, Jr. Performing a mix of cover songs, original pieces, and traditional music. Get your tickets at www.viennajammers.org.

Barclay Brass Concert. Free concert at Holy Comforter, 4-5 p.m.. The Barclay Brass is an 11-piece ensemble featuring some of the Washington area's top brass musicians. Including a suite from the soundtrack to Star Wars by John Williams. www.holycomforter.com. Church of the Holy Comforter is located at 543 Beulah Rd, NE, Vienna, VA 22180.

WEDNESDAY/MAY 9

Speaker Carole Herrick. 7 p.m. at Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Presented by the Great Falls Historical Society, her talk titled "Washington in Flames, the 1812 Sacking of Washington, and the Escape of the President and Mrs. Madison Through Our Area," is based on her published book on this subject. Carole Herrick is currently the Chair of the Fairfax County History Commission and President of the McLean Historical Society.

NEWS

The Rockies Majors team wanted to do its part to maintain GFL's wonderful fields by undertaking a NIKE-wide clean-up campaign.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Little Leaguers Clean Up NIKE Fields

On Saturday, April 14, Great Falls Little League (GFL) kicked-off another spectacular opening day ceremony. For baseball and softball families, it's a memorable experience. The beauty of the NIKE fields adjacent to Forestville Elementary school, contributes to the overall pageantry.

The Rockies Majors team wanted to do its part to maintain GFL's wonderful fields by undertaking a NIKE-wide clean-up campaign.

So, on Sunday, the team gathered before 10 a.m., divided into six groups of two, each armed with 50-gallon garbage bags, and spread out to cover as much territory as possible picking up litter on and along the fields, including any adjacent areas that could

be seen from the fields.

After more than two hours, the team collected more than 10 huge bags, plus miscellaneous debris, which were discarded in the Forestville dumpster. This exercise proved to be an effective team-building experience which gave the boys a real sense of accomplishment.

Coaches Mike Costello and Jeff Minsky, Robin Fleming, Karen Misener and Jack Bowles also participated.

The Rockies undertook this exercise to encourage other GFL baseball and softball teams to do the same throughout the season. They'd also like to encourage Great Falls soccer, lacrosse and field hockey leagues to join in this ongoing clean-up effort.

The clean-up exercise proved to be an effective team-building experience which gave the boys a real sense of accomplishment.



Carole Herrick to Speak at Great Falls Historical Society Meeting

Carole Herrick will be the speaker at the May 9 meeting of the Great Falls Historical Society, at 7 p.m. at the Great Falls Library. Her talk, titled "Washington in Flames, the 1812 Sacking of Washington, and the Escape of the President and Mrs. Madison Through Our Area," is based on her published book on this subject. Herrick is


currently the Chair of the Fairfax County History Commission and President of the McLean Historical Society.

Herrick also received the Jean Tibbetts History Award in February this year from the Great Falls Historical Society. The Annual Meeting of the Society will also be then and the Election of Officers and Directors will also be held.



Carole Herrick

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



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"Meet the Candidates" in the 2018 McLean Community Center Governing Board Elections.

When:
Sunday, May 6, 2-4 p.m.

Who:
Four adult candidates, two teens from the Langley High School boundary area, and three teens from the McLean High School boundary area.


Where:
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McLean, VA 22101

Format:
Informal Reception


Come and meet the four adults and five teens who are vying for votes to fill vacant seats on the MCC Governing Board. Three adult and two teen seats (one for the Langley High School boundary area; one for the McLean High School boundary area) will be filled. Only residents of Small District 1A-Dranesville are eligible to vote.

Refreshments will be served.
For planning purposes, please let us know if you will attend by emailing elections@mcleancenter.org.

See you there!



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NEWS

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



On April 4, a handful of children came into Great Falls Library to drop off their favorite stuffed animals for a sleepover.

Stuffed Animal Sleepover at Great Falls Library

On April 4, a handful of children came into Great Falls Library to drop off their favorite stuffed animals for a sleepover. While the children were away, their stuffed animals came to play! From a stuffed gerbil, sheep, and teddy bears to a blue bunny and even Scooby Doo, these animals roamed the library shelves and even caused mischief in the staff room. These clever furry friends found where the librarians stashed the library cards and they cozied together in a chair to read some books together all with flare. They even scored once more as they found the ice cream in the staffroom refrigerator!

As the day came to an end, these critters found library tote bags to use as sleeping bags and paired together to dream for the night. The next day, the

children were eager to come back to pick up their stuffed friends and were surprised with a storybook filled with pictures of all of their adventures in the library, which was created and put together by Great Falls Library Youth Services Manager, Roxanne Ringer.

Great Falls Library was sad to see the children and stuffed animals go but never fret! Roxanne has a plentiful amount of children's programs lined up for the months to come. Some of the upcoming programs are PJ Storytime, Finger Painting Fun, STEM: Build Your Own Kite and My First Book Club. Come visit and join the fun at Great Falls Library!

—MICHELLE PEPINO/LIBRARY AIDE

Great Falls Library has a plentiful amount of children's programs lined up for the months to come.



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Armon Cemetery Assn. declares its intention to recover the abandoned cemetery lots listed in this notice. If there is no response from lot owners or their heirs or assigns within 120 days from the publication of this notice, the interment rights shall be deemed abandoned and shall revert to Armon Cemetery Assn. PO. Box 617 Great Falls, VA. 22066 C11 Jewell, C17 J. Wentzel, C23 J.Tucker, C31 J.S.Pearson, N-E O'Neil, N-D Caylor Trammell, N13 Trammell, N19 Voorhees, N26 Armstrong, N44 Garner, S18 Cumberland, S24 J.H.Weeden, S26 Alsop, S31 Alsop.

An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.
-Werner Heisenberg

Challengers

FROM PAGE 3

tions and service, Helmer suggested that it was time for a new generation to take the helm in Congress. "There is something wrong with our politics," he said, "that made so many willing to vote for Donald Trump."

Helmer was also the candidate to turn up the heat on one of his opponents when the issue of gun violence was raised. Helmer called out "someone on this stage" who he said accepted money from the National Rifle Association and other corporations during her political career, and who had voted for legislation approving reciprocity for permitted carriers of concealed weapons from other states.

SEVERAL OTHER QUESTIONS were asked of the candidates and answered, but Helmer smoothly looped back to the gun control issue and acceptance of corporate political contributions.

Sen. Wexton was ultimately identified as the target of Helmer's attack and Kessler gave her the opportunity to respond.

Pointing out that among the candidates she was the only one to ever hold elected office, Wexton said "this is what you do when you govern. You compromise." She further defended her vote saying that the bill was the result of a deal between the NRA, Republicans, and then-Gov. Terry McAuliffe and that its passage aided victims of domestic violence and allowed background checks at gun shows.

Wexton later acknowledged taking contributions from Dominion Energy in previous campaigns, but has already pledged not to take PAC money during this election.

Despite those few more heated exchanges, the candidates and their supporters seemed focused on the goal of continuing the "Blue Wave" that saw a dozen Democrats sweep into office in Richmond, and their mission to "replace and repeal Barbara Comstock" as Alison Friedman put it. Attendees like Susan Jacobs of McLean who backs Dan Helmer and thinks he's the best chance to beat Comstock, and Andrew Fierro of Great Falls who supports Dr. Biggins, both say they are rooting for their candidate, but will support whoever wins the June 12 primary.



PHOTO BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION
The inflatable "greeter" at the entrance to the debate. The candidates spent much of their time attacking the Republican Congress, incumbent Rep. Barbara Comstock, and President Trump.

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You Mean Tomorrow Tuesday?



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Not that deadlines don't happen in the newspaper business; of course they do, every Tuesday for us weeklies. But when combined with my usual post-chemotherapy malaise, it is a bit more challenging. More so when the deadline is tightened up due to the nature of hitting and occasionally missing in-house communications, which is also not unreasonable given the multiple demands multi tasking imposes.

Compounding this task even more is that until I'm back to semi post-chemo normal, in the interim, I am not eating too much, not sleeping well, have low energy (related to the previous two deficiencies), my hands are shaky, my balance is off and I'm having some difficulty focusing. It's a good thing I'm sitting at a desk while attempting to write this column because operating any heavy machinery would definitely be out of the question. What I need to do is mind my own business.

Business which at the moment involves fending off my buff-colored male cat, Chino, as he angles to sit on my writing pad as I move him from left to right – and then right to left since he won't take "Chino, move!" for a directive. But if I know anything, other than what to expect post chemo, I also know what to expect from Chino – or any of the other cats we manage: independence, as any fellow cat owner knows. Unlike a "true and loyal dog," a cat, generally speaking, is not inclined to respond to your commands, well, too many of them, anyway. Nor are they likely to respond to any physical discipline and/or pushing/pulling/redirection. Invariably, if you push, they pull. If you pull, they push.

How Chino knows I'm not feeling well and on an unanticipated and abbreviated deadline, I'll never know. But rather than leave me to it, he'll interfere every way possible: nuzzling, nudging, leaning, rubbing, meowing, moving about and plopping down when all else fails. If you love cats as we do, this is their charm. If you don't love them and their antics, I can see how this kind of behavior can be very frustrating.

I mean, with all this activity, it's difficult to think about what I'm supposed to be doing when I'm so busy preventing things from getting done. I imagine Chino thinks he's doing me a favor, being so affectionate and so in the way. Maybe he thinks he's contributing to the creative process by sitting in the middle of my writing pad? In a way, maybe he is. He's forcing me to concentrate. Moreover, he's forcing me to focus on this most immediate task which, at the moment, has me fending him off with my left wrist while I'm scribbling prose with my right hand. Oddly enough, it might be working as I'm three-quarters finished with this column which 30 minutes ago was a weekend task until it became a today/Tuesday task.

Now if I didn't have a CT scan and lower abdomen MRI scheduled for Wednesday, I'd have a bit more time to sort out the details of writing this column. Unfortunately, post-chemo, mid-newspaper deadline and pre-scan is a triple threat which sometimes can impose its will. A 'will' which I take personally so I will persevere and complete this column with one final paragraph now that Chino has left my desk and likely ended up on some unoccupied couch to sleep; he's had a big day.

All kidding aside, if there's one behavior I need more than any other during these deadline triple threats, it's companionship. Because of Chino and our other four cats: Andrew, Sloane, Biscuit and Twinkle, I am never alone and always have someone to talk to who, occasionally talks back. Not that we understand one another, but it's giving and getting, and it's loving and affecting – me and my cancer; and everything in between.

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

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