

OPINION, PAGE 6 ♦ CALENDAR, PAGE 10 ♦ FAITH, PAGE 9 ♦ SPORTS, PAGE 16 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 17

PHOTO BY MIKE DICICCO/THE CONNECTION

## Celebrating Diversity At Cooper Middle

NEWS, PAGE 5

# McLean Youths Bring Narnia to Life

CALENDAR, PAGE 10

Chesterbrook Elementary sixth-grader Hugo Kessler plays the mischievous Edmund and McLean High School sophomore Amandine Thomas plays the White Witch in a dress rehearsal of 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe,' this year's McLean Kids Spring Show, now showing at the Alden Theatre.

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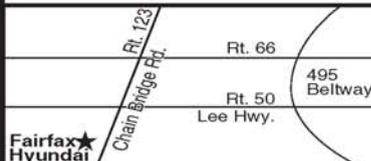
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**The Hon. Rev. Walter Fauntroy, center, former representative to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. flanked by Jerome Dixon of Shiloh Baptist Church of McLean, left, and Rev. Dr. Kenny Smith, right.**



PHOTOS BY PAUL D. SHINKMAN/THE CONNECTION

## Facing HIV/AIDS Challenge

**Health officials, church communities hold HIV/AIDS Prevention Summit.**

BY PAUL D. SHINKMAN  
THE CONNECTION

**I**n an effort to stem the growing pandemic of HIV/AIDS within the African American community, local health officials, clergy from area churches and members of their congregations met Saturday, March 7, at the First Baptist Church of Vienna to discuss revolutionary solutions.

The Fairfax County Department of Health and a newly formed association of local ministers, the Northern Virginia Clergy Council for the Prevention of HIV/AIDS, organized the HIV/AIDS Prevention Faith Summit for Teens and Adults. The event focused on the importance of eliminating the Baptist community's "stigmas" surrounding the disease by encouraging public discourse about sexual activity, contraception and living with infection.

"We need for parents to be more open, the clergy to be more open and the church to be more open," said Rev. Dr. Kenny Smith, pastor of the First Baptist Church and chairman of the Clergy Council, speaking on the recent decision by the Baptist community to cease preaching sexual abstinence only until marriage. "We need to inform [the sexually active] of the consequences without condemning."

"It's thought to be a gay white man's disease," said Dr. Gloria Addo-Ayensu, director of the Fairfax County Department of Health. A featured speaker on Saturday, Addo-Ayensu pointed out that discussion of homosexuality in the black church has been considered "taboo."

Addo-Ayensu, originally from Ghana, further explained that in the more than 20 years of HIV prevention, the level of infection within the gay community has leveled



**From left, McLean residents Mary Gordon, 16, and Bria Coleman, 12 with Alexandria resident Robert Winfree.**

off, while it continues to rise sharply with African Americans.

**THOUGH** blacks represent less than 10 percent of the population in Fairfax County, a recent Virginia Department of Health report indicates that they comprise 48 percent of those living with HIV/AIDS in Northern Virginia.

"When we identified the occurrences and growing numbers, it brought out a sense of urgency," said Rev. Dr. Eugene Johnson, moderator of the Northern Virginia Baptist Association and another member of the Clergy Council. "Despite the health department's efforts, the message was not effective in the black community. It required an immediate response."

This new dialogue between the health department and local ministers eventually led to the formation of the Northern Virginia-wide Clergy Council and, after 14 months of preparation, Saturday's event.

Volunteers from many local HIV prevention and care organizations, including the Northern Virginia AIDS Ministry (NOVAM) and George Mason University's School of Nursing, also attended the summit to provide supplemental information.

After listening to a series of speakers dispelling myths about HIV/AIDS transmission and living with the ailment, those in attendance Saturday divided into a group of adults and of teenagers, where organizers led more intimate discussions.

Following a question and answer session led by Addo-Ayensu, the adults group heard local resident and NOVAM member Bernard Jackson recount how he unknowingly contracted HIV from his wife, whose ex-husband had been having clandestine sexual relationships. She eventually died from the illness.

**BALTIMORE-BASED** awareness group Sisters Together and Reaching (STAR) led the teens in a series of role-playing activities to demonstrate how easily and quickly HIV/AIDS can be spread. They then watched and discussed a BET produced video that further emphasized the prevalence of the disease.

"It was really interesting," said Chantilly resident Jessica Johnson, a student at Notre Dame Academy. "I learned a lot."

The summit provided the HIV/AIDS organizations with important feedback from attendees, which will be used to tailor future prevention initiatives.



PHOTO BY JACQUELINE LECKER

**West Point Senior John Kreidler leads a discussion on ethics in regards to cheating.**

## Debating Ethics Dilemmas

**West Point cadets lead 108 area juniors' discussion.**

BY JACQUELINE LECKER  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS INTERN, FORT BELVOIR

**A** recent survey on high school ethics found that within the preceding year, 30 percent of students had stolen from a store and 64 percent had cheated on a test. To confront this problem, 11 West Point cadets lead 108 juniors, chosen for their leadership qualities, from 33 area high schools in the second annual Leadership and Ethics Conference at George Mason University.

In the keynote speech, Lt. Gen. Dave Palmer presented the history of George Washington and Benedict Arnold.

"For two people so similar, why were their legacies so different? One was a traitor, and the other the father of our nation. The answer is character. Your destiny is determined by the strength of your character," said Palmer.

The students then broke off into eight groups, each led by a cadet. "I liked that the cadets led the discussion. They were very engaging, nice, and we could really relate to them because of their age," said Corinthia Evans from Mount Vernon High School.

Each group discussed four vignettes taken from recent news events or everyday school

SEE ETHICS, PAGE 19

## Arrest Made in McLean Robbery

Arlington County Police arrested a 20-year-old Falls Church man on Friday, March 6 on outstanding warrants in reference to a robbery that occurred on Thursday, March 5, in which a 25-year-old clerk at the Medicine Chest Pharmacy, 6823 Old Dominion Drive in McLean, was robbed.

A man entered the store, produced a handgun and asked for Oxycontin and Fentanyl. The clerk handed over a bag with an undisclosed amount of both substances and the suspect fled. Several people were present in the store at the time, but no one was injured.

Detectives in Fairfax County received information that the suspect was staying at a hotel in Arlington County. He was charged with robbery, using a firearm in the commission of a felony and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. He was transported to the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center.

## Parents To Discuss Bullying, Cyber Bullying

The Longfellow Middle School PTA and the Safe Community Coalition invite parents in all Langley/McLean Schools to attend a Parent Focused Presentation on: Bullying & Cyber Bullying in Our Schools, Thursday, March 26, 7-9 p.m., at the McLean Community Center. Stefan Mascoll, ATOD Specialist, Fairfax County Office of Safe & Drug Free-Youth will be the speaker.

Longfellow PTA contacts and organizers are Julia Barber, Lana Barringer, Diane Begala, Wilma Bowers, Sophia Bruner and Allen Kim. Send questions to: [sophiabruner@verizon.net](mailto:sophiabruner@verizon.net).

## Free 2009 Franklin Planner

Individuals that recently lost their jobs are invited to visit a Franklin Covey store nationwide on Saturday, March 21, to receive a free 2009 Franklin Planner by providing the names of their last employer and supervisor, and the date they were laid off. This is an in-store event only and offer is limited to supplies on-hand and specific products. Visit the Tysons Corner Center store on Saturday, 10 a.m.-9:30 p.m. For more, call 703-442-7878.

## MCC Board Election Deadline

The filing deadline for the McLean Community Center's (MCC) 2009-10 Governing Board election Friday, March 27, at 5 p.m. Tax district residents who are interested in running for a seat can still enter the race. The board sets policy and provides general oversight for MCC facilities and programs, which include the Robert Ames Alden Theatre and the Old Firehouse Teen Center on Chain Bridge Road.

All residents of the Center's tax district (Dranesville Small District No. 1A) are eligible to run for a seat on the 11-member board. Candidates are required to obtain the signatures of 10 McLean tax district residents in order to have their names placed on the election ballot. Nominating petitions forms are available at the Center.

Three adult positions and two youth positions are open this year. Adult members serve three-year terms. Youth members serve one-year terms. Youth candidates must be 15, 16 or 17 years old. One youth member will be selected from the area served by McLean High School and one will represent the area served by Langley High School. Candidates do not have to attend these schools to serve on the board.

Residents of the tax district may cast their votes in the election on Saturday, May 16, from 10:30 a.m. and 5 p.m., at the McLean Day 2009: Celebrating Our Hometown festival at Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road. Adults vote for adults, and youth vote for the youth candidate who resides within their high school district, Langley or McLean.

Applications for absentee ballots will be available at the Center starting on Monday, April 13.

For more information on the MCC Governing Board Election, call the Center at 703-790-0123/TTY: 711, or visit [www.mcleancenter.org](http://www.mcleancenter.org).

## NEWS

# Extra Hours at Clemyjontri Carousel

In response to growing demand, the Fairfax County Park Authority will provide five extra weekends of expanded carousel operations at the Clemyjontri Park, fully accessible playground located at 6317 Georgetown Pike in McLean.

Now children can visit each of the four thematic play areas, enjoy a picnic and also ride the carousel which will have a longer operating season and will stay open one hour later on weekends. The American Classic Carousel is the centerpiece of the park. Chariots, a spinning teacup and 14

prancing steeds await only the imagination of children. The carousel is recessed to ground level so that it is accessible for wheelchairs, allowing for easy transfers. The chariot is designed to allow for transfer to a seated position or to remain seated in the wheelchair.

The 2009 carousel schedule will run as follows:

v April 4 until May 24 from 9:30 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. — Weekends Only

v May 25 through Sept. 7 from 9:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. Weekdays; 9:30 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. on Weekends.

v Sept. 8 through Nov. 22 from 9:30 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. — Weekends Only

The park is open 7 a.m. until dusk daily. Both weekend and weekday fees for the carousel are now \$1.50 per ride.

Overflow parking is available at Langley Fork Park located just one-eighth of a mile from the park at 6250 Georgetown Pike. Due to safety concerns, park patrons are asked not to park along Georgetown Pike. The carousel does not operate in inclement or hazardous weather. For more information, call 703-388-2807.

### VIEWPOINTS



**Maria Cabrera,**  
Mother—Arlington:

"It's a really big park with many things to do. My son has a disability and this park is really easy to move around. Here he is entertained and can play for hours."

— EMMA GONZALEZ

## What Do You Like About Clemyjontri Park?



**Christopher Hildebrand,**  
age 4, Arlington:

"I love the Firetruck and I pretend that I drive with the steering wheel. It's my favorite. I get to run around a lot."



**Katherine Strong,** 4,  
McLean:

"I get to see my friends and play with them. I like it when they come and play with me. We get to run and play together with other kids too."



**Gianna Phillips,** 5,  
McLean:

"Swings, swings, swings. I love the tire swings too. It's really colorful and I meet my friends from school. I also like to look at the rainbow and I know when I'm bigger I will be able to climb the rainbow."



**Maxwell Phillips,** 5,  
McLean  
(Gianna's twin brother):

"There are a lot of fun things here. The swings are my favorite. I like all parks but this one is my favorite because I can play with friends."



PHOTOS BY ROBBIE HAMMER/THE CONNECTION

**Cooper Middle School students and family members try a variety of ethnic food from around the world during the school's annual International Festival on March 12.**



**Anne Gent, representing Ireland, performed a traditional Irish clog at Cooper Middle School's annual International Festival in March 12.**

## Celebrating Diversity at Cooper Middle



**As part of the school's annual International Festival, Jeeyune Park and Inah Jung, dressed in traditional garb representing South Korea.**



PHOTO BY ROBBIE HAMMER/THE CONNECTION

**Preparing to present a traditional Indian dance during International Festival activities at Cooper Middle School on March 12, Pallavi Rudraraju, warms-up before taking the stage.**



**Kevin Chin, an eighth-grader at Cooper Middle School, warms-up with his Chinese Yo-Yo, before performing at the school's International Festival on Friday night.**

**Caitlin Rose and Laurel Blooh, students at Cooper Middle School, play a game of Finger Sumo at the school during the school's annual International Festival on March 12.**



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PROPOSED NEW ISSUE

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Moody's: Aa3  
S&P: AA-

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# OPINION

## Fair Market Value?

Many concerns about assessing properties in Northern Virginia this year.

Less than a month ago, Fairfax, Arlington and Loudoun counties, and the City of Alexandria, like other local governments, mailed each property owner a new assessment of the fair market value of the property.

What is your home's fair market value?

Most homeowners probably believe that the fair market value of their home is what they could sell it for in a reasonable period of time right now — say putting it on the market this week and allowing 30-60 days. How much would that be?

It's a tough question this year, with values dropping by more than 12 percent on average in Fairfax, nearly 15 percent in Loudoun, less than 5 percent in Alexandria and about 2 percent in Arlington.

The tax assessors base their decisions on the sales of "comparable" properties that sold in 2008, sometimes earlier. But with the number

of sales down dramatically, there are sometimes very few "comparable" sales. In Fairfax County, the majority of sales are foreclosures.

But the assessors have decided that foreclosures should not be taken into consideration as a comparable sale.

This is questionable, and the exclusion of foreclosure sales likely inflates the value of many, if not most, properties. If houses in your neighborhood have sold in foreclosure for dramatically reduced prices, does that affect the value of your house? You know it does.

The value on the piece of paper sent to your house will determine the amount of property tax you owe this year, based on the tax rate which in most places will not be precisely set until April.

Local governments' budgets, the amount of money they have to fund schools, public safety, libraries and many other services, depend directly on how much the homes in each jurisdiction are worth, based on the tax rate. This is more so in Virginia than in many other states where localities have more leeway in choosing sources of revenue. Localities in Virginia are more dependent on property taxes because the General Assembly has strictly limited their access to other taxes. In Virginia, because it is a "Dillon Rule" state, localities only have exactly the power that the General Assembly has bestowed on them.

**YOU CAN APPEAL** your assessment, but the deadlines are fast approaching and the burden of proof is entirely on the homeowner. You will need to be prepared to cite comparable sales from 2008 that justify your view of your home's fair market value. There are two possible steps to appeal, first to the local department of tax administration, then to each locality's Board of Equalization. The Board of Equalization is independent of the tax assessors office; it is made up of citizens appointed by the governing board.

**IN FAIRFAX COUNTY**, the deadline to appeal to the Department of Tax Administration is April 3, and appeals to the next level must be postmarked no later than June 1. The second deadline could well roll around before a homeowner gets an answer to the administrative appeal, so it's important to engage in both processes at once.

See <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dta/> for instructions and information.

We want to hear from you; please share your opinion of your assessment, or any experiences you have in appealing your assessment.

— MARY KIMM,  
MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

### EDITORIAL

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Illusion of A Free Lunch

To the Editor:  
The editorial "A Million Trees?" [Connection, March 11-17, 2009] comments on the destruction of over 2 square miles of mature trees and wildlife habitat caused by the HOT-lanes project, and remarks that local residents as well as elected officials were surprised at the extent of the tree clearing and other work. Small wonder that they were surprised. This, like all other Public-Private Partnerships, has been hurried through without public hearings, without an Environmental Impact Statement and without financial transparency. VDOT and its partner, in this case Fluor-Transurban, were able to move very quickly, unencumbered by requirements for consultation and environmental analyses.

While this and other Public-Private Partnerships side-step many honored processes in our government, they are actually legal, based on legislation passed by the Virginia General Assembly in 1995 as a way to entice private companies to pay for construction projects instead of using tax revenue. Now, in retrospect, we may want to reconsider this illusion of a free lunch. We were unpleasantly

surprised by the extent of damage to our environment, but more surprises loom ahead. In the event of cost-overruns, or lack of sufficient profit for the private partner, Virginia taxpayers will pay. When developers and VDOT alone make all construction and financing decisions, we citizen taxpayers may not like what they decide. This could be the time to reconsider the Public-Private Transportation Act.

**Linda Burchfiel**  
McLean

## Helping Contain Hot Lanes Noise

To the Editor:  
It's not that area residents don't have enough to shoulder with the chaos we'll be living with for years to come with Dulles Rail and Tysons redevelopment, but the addition of 495 Hot Lanes would be disastrous to a number of neighborhoods whose residents were getting the runaround by VDOT over sound barrier walls.

Enter Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville) and his indefatigable aide, Cheryl Patten, who, along with Del. Margi Vanderhye (D-34), worked tirelessly on this issue, meeting with residents, calling meetings with VDOT officials and holding their feet to the fire on the

flaws in their computer model for neighborhood noise testing. VDOT Secretary Homer Pierce has announced the approval of sound barrier walls along the entire Dranesville corridor impacted by the increased noise and pollution of the Hot Lanes. We thank Secretary Pierce for granting us our walls, but even more so, we thank our local elected officials who are working on our behalf.

**Trish Butler**  
McLean

## Call To Join Vanderhye

To the Editor:  
I was happy to read about Del. Margi Vanderhye's (D-34) work to expand cancer screening and treatment for uninsured women in Virginia ["Vanderhye's 'Labor of Love' Meets Success in Richmond," McLean Connection, March 4-10, 2009]. This sort of innovative problem solving is what we need at a time when state funding is limited by the economic downturn.

Margi saw that many low-income women in Virginia did not have access to screening, diagnoses and treatment for breast and cervical cancer, so she identified existing federal funding and spon-

sored legislation to set up a special fund that would allow private contributions to be used as a match for federal funds. As a result, hundreds of women can now become eligible for services without increasing the cost to Virginia taxpayers.

The bill Margi worked to get passed will not only help these women but will also save money by treating cancer in the very early stages. We should all join Margi in the effort to raise money for the fund by considering a contribution from our state income tax refund next year.

**Doris Cheely**  
McLean

## Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors. Send to:

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# BULLETIN BOARD

**Anna Post, great-great granddaughter of Emily Post and author and business etiquette trainer for The Emily Post Institute, will speak to the Women in Technology Lunch Bunch, Tuesday, March 24, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Maggiano's, 2001 International Drive, McLean. Post will talk about how to use the principles of etiquette- consideration, respect and honesty - to enhance business relationships. Members: \$25, Non Members: \$45. Call 703-683-4003 or visit [www.womenintechology.com/calendar\\_day.asp?date=3/24/2009](http://www.womenintechology.com/calendar_day.asp?date=3/24/2009) to register.**



To have community events listed in the Connection, send to [mclean@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mclean@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is Friday.

## WEDNESDAY/MARCH 18

**League of Women Voters.** 7:30-9 p.m., George Mason University, Johnson Center, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. To celebrate "Sunshine Week", the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area is sponsoring a panel discussion of "Open and Transparent Government: Do We Expect Too Much or Not Enough?" The discussion will feature panelists such as Sen. George Barker, Del. Thomas Rust, Eliot Waxman, an educator from Oakton High School; Tom Moncure, Counsel for George Mason University and Amy Gardner, reporter from The Washington Post. E-mail [league@lwv-fairfax.org](mailto:league@lwv-fairfax.org) to reserve a seat. Call 703-658-9150.

## THURSDAY/MARCH 19

**New Providence Republican Women Meeting,** 7 p.m. at the Oakton Library, Meeting Room 1, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Speaker is Anthony Bedell, Chairman of the Fairfax County Republican Committee. 703-591-7368.

**VVA Membership Meeting.** 6:45 p.m., Neighbor's Restaurant, 262D Cedar Lane, Vienna. Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 227 will hold their monthly membership meeting, featuring special guest Patricia Robertson, Chapter AVVA member and VA employee. She will discuss the VA's research and development program that is improving veterans' lives through health care research. Call 703-968-0686 or visit [www.vva227.org](http://www.vva227.org).

## SATURDAY/MARCH 21

**Careers in Education.** 10 a.m.-1 p.m., The Women's Center, 127 Park St. N.E., Vienna. A panel will explore the qualifications needed and the many options that teachers/educators have classroom teaching, tutoring, corporate training, counseling and educational administration. \$55/person, \$45/Center Circle Donors. Call 703-281-2657 to register.

**Foster Care Training.** 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Northern Virginia Family Service, 10455 White Granite Drive, Suite 100, Oakton. The Northern Virginia Family Service is holding a free 3-week training course for prospective Foster Parents. Attendance does not obligate participants to become foster parents, nor does it guarantee placement. Visit [www.nvfs.org](http://www.nvfs.org) or call Ginny Snaider at 703-219-2184 to register.

**Special Education.** 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 1952 Gallows Road, Conference Room, Vienna. A presentation entitled "Special Education and IEPs: What To Do When the School Says No!" will be given in this workshop for parents and advocates. Free. E-mail [info@thearcofnova.org](mailto:info@thearcofnova.org) or call 703-532-3214 x101 to register.

## SUNDAY/MARCH 22

**Soil and Water Conservation.** 2-3:30 p.m., Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Guest speaker Willie Woode of the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District will be featured in the first session of the District's free seminar series. Call 703-759-3500 or e-mail [info@thesaddleryinc.com](mailto:info@thesaddleryinc.com).

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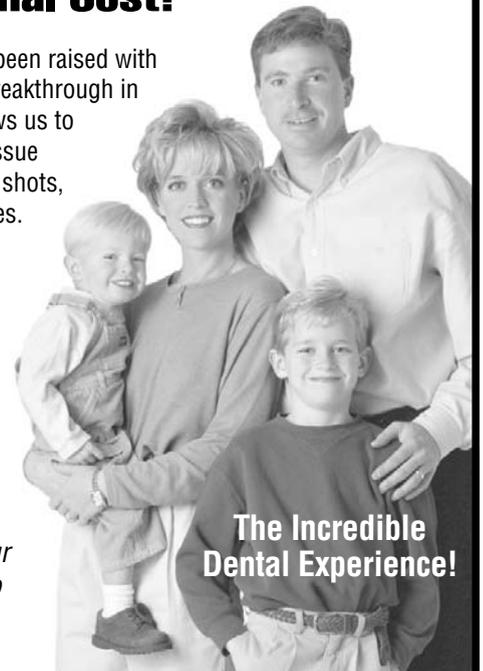
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## NEWS

# Rewards of Reading

Spring Hill Elementary bookworms celebrate completion of statewide reading program.

BY ROB WILE  
THE CONNECTION

Fourth, fifth and sixth grade-bibliophiles at the Spring Hill Elementary School in McLean chowed down on pizza and chips to celebrate their completion of the statewide Virginia Reader's Choice Program Voting Party.

Any student who read at least five books — four books for sixth graders — between Oct. 1 and March 1 on the state's elementary school reading list were invited to the celebration. In total, 127 students out of 438 were invited after completing an online quiz proving that they had read their books. Those who read at least 10 books received a Spring Hill Elementary tote bag; over 20, a certificate to purchase any book for \$5 at the Spring Hill Book Fair in May.

Michael Surratt was the first of the seven fourth graders who got through 20 books. He said his fa-



PHOTO BY ROB WILE/THE CONNECTION

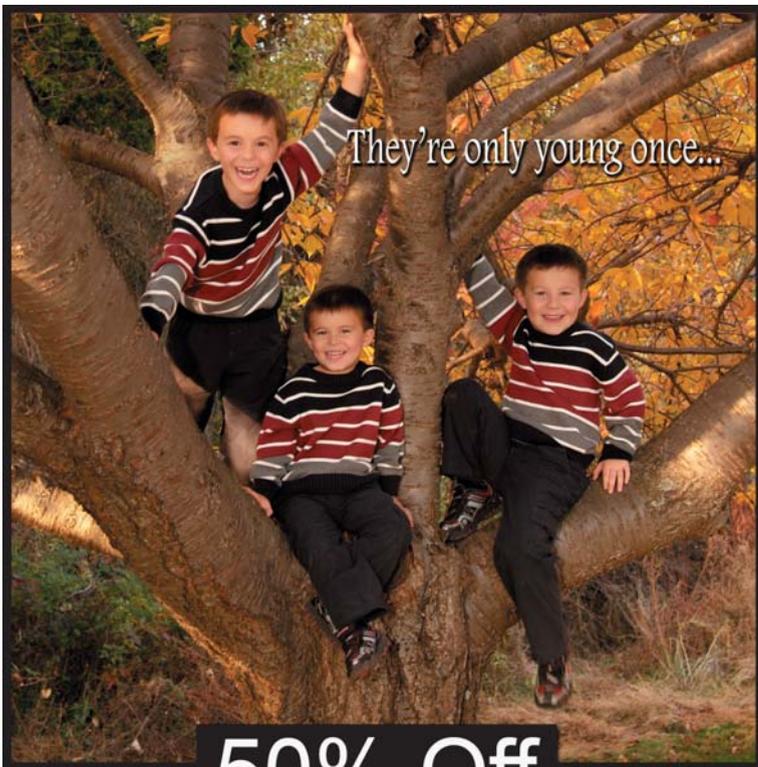
**Fourth graders at Spring Hill Elementary School dig in to slices of pizza, their reward for having read the most books in the state-wide Virginia Reader's Choice Program.**

vorite book was "Airborn," officially listed as sixth-grade level material, in which a young boy working on a luxury Zeppelin in the Victorian Era lands on a desert island in search of mythical creatures.

"I like action books," he said, adding that he still squeezes in

time for video games alongside his voracious reading habit.

Begun in 1981, the Reader's Choice program sets out to determine the consensus favorite book amongst Virginia students, with one book being chosen for primary, elementary, middle and high school.



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# FAITH

Faith Notes are for announcements and events in the faith community. Send to [mclean@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mclean@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is Friday.

**Redeemer Lutheran Church**, 1545 Chain Bridge Road, McLean, is hosting its semi-annual consignment sale of baby, child and maternity items Friday, March 20, 7-9 p.m. and Saturday, March 21, 8-11 a.m. 703-356-3567.

**McLean Bible Church Fitness Class** at Body & Soul fitness. Balance is key, energy is renewed, strength is gained, and friendships are formed. Mondays 9:15 a.m. and Fridays 9:45 a.m. Childcare is free for registered students. E-mail [bodyandsoul@mcleanbible.org](mailto:bodyandsoul@mcleanbible.org) for more information.

**St. John's Episcopal Church** supports over twenty outreach ministries, including SHARE, Habitat for Humanity, Martha's Table, and the Gen. Colin L. Powell Leadership Club at Macfarland Middle School in Washington D.C. Services at 7:45 a.m., 9 a.m., 11:15 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. St. John's Episcopal Church, 6715 Georgetown Pike, McLean. 703-356-4902 or [www.stjohnsmclean.org](http://www.stjohnsmclean.org).

**The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington** and the Jewish Outreach Institute offer the Mothers/Parents Circle, an umbrella of free educational events and resources. Jewish rituals, ethics and the creation of a Jewish home, regular meetings and group Shabbats and holidays. Participants include Sha'are Shalom, Congregation Beth Emeth, Temple Rodef Shalom and the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia. [ShalomDC.org](http://ShalomDC.org).

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A Fairfax County, Va., publication  
To request reasonable ADA accommodations, call the Division of Solid Waste Collection and Recycling at 703-324-5230, TTY 711.

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For event updates, including cancellation notification, please call the **Recycling Infoline** 703-324-5052, TTY 711.

For a complete schedule of Environmental Events in 2009, visit our web site at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/recycling](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/recycling).

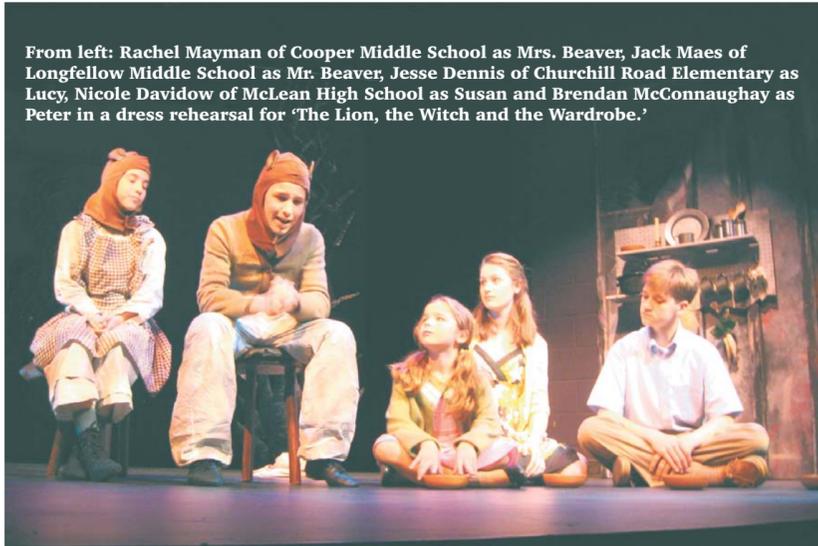


PHOTO BY MIKE DICICCO/THE CONNECTION

# McLean Youths Bring Narnia to Life

**This year's McLean Kids Spring Show, 'The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe,' continues this weekend.**

BY MIKE DICICCO  
THE CONNECTION

**B**rendan McConnaughay, an eighth-grader at Cooper Middle School, said it was the play's storyline that drew him to "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," which opened last weekend at the Alden Theatre. "I think it's absolutely awesome that there's a whole other world inside a wardrobe," he said.

The production is this year's McLean Kids Spring Show at the theater, with a cast aged 10 to 16, from a dozen different schools. All are McLean residents. In January, a record 175 children tried out for the 27 roles in the play, "and they've been working on it three times a week since then," said Kathy Herr, McLean Community Center youth director.

Herr said she thought the high turnout resulted from the popularity of the book from which the play is adapted. "It's just a favorite of mine. I get to choose [the play] every year," Herr said. "It's just a beautiful story." The version she chose is a straight script and not a musical.

**MCCONNAUGHAY**, who plays Peter, one of the four siblings that venture through the enchanted wardrobe, has performed in a number of plays and is currently taking a film academy class and performing in his school's production of the musical "Zombie Prom."

This will be the third time that McLean High School sophomore Amandine Thomas has performed at the Alden Theater. She plays the White Witch, a queen who holds Narnia in her sinister thrall.

Amandine was initially unfamiliar with the story. "When I read about it a little bit, the queen was definitely the role I wanted," she said. "I've never played a mean character, and I just thought it could allow me to think outside the box and be creative."

This will be Chesterbrook Elementary sixth-grader Hugo Kessler's first stage production. He is playing the role of Edmund, the sibling who comes to serve the White Witch. "I've taken acting classes, but I've never actually done a show," he said. "It's been a great experience. I've learned a lot about acting and it's been fun." Hugo said he enjoyed playing a morally corrupted character. "I like that he's very snooty and I get to have fun. I get to joke around onstage. I get to betray my friends and family."

The play continues this weekend, with performances on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

## Tickets and Times

Performances of "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" continue Friday, March 20 through Sunday, March 22 at the Alden Theatre in the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave. Friday's show starts at 7:30 p.m., and the Saturday and Sunday performances are at 3 p.m. Tickets cost \$8 for residents of the community center's tax district and \$12 for all others. They can be purchased at the door or online at [www.mcleancenter.org](http://www.mcleancenter.org).

**THE PLAY** is often set in World War II-era London, but the community center production is set in the present day, and the world of Narnia, usually presented as a sort of medieval realm, instead has a modern, post-apocalyptic look, director Melissa Richardson said. It still is always winter but never Christmas in Narnia, but the trees on the set are jagged, semi-abstract constructions.

"I think [the audience] will like the fact that it's got this different look," Herr said. Meanwhile, she said, young people, especially the teenagers, respond strongly to the story's theme of oppression and rebellion.

Most of the cast members have some acting experience.

## GALLERIES

The works of siblings Mohammad, Mostafa and Morteza Darehbaghi will be on display in the **Persian New Year Exhibit** starting Friday, **March 20** at Hermitage Design and Gallery, 6831 Tennyson Drive, McLean. The opening reception will be March 20, 5-8 p.m. Call 703-827-0066.

A **Painting Demonstration** by representational oil painter Denise Dumont will be held Saturday, **March 21**, 12:30-2:30 p.m. at the Ayr Hill Gallery, 141 Church St. N.W., Vienna. Dumont will create a painting from start to finish of the local landscape in oil. Free. RSVP to 703-

938-3880 or [info@ayrhillgallery.com](mailto:info@ayrhillgallery.com).

**Exhibitions by Deanna Clayton and Keith Clayton** will be on display March 5-April 20 at Habatat Galleries, 8020 Towers

SEE GALLERIES, PAGE 12

## CALENDAR

Send announcements to [mclean@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mclean@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is Thursday for the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged. For additional listings, visit [www.connectionnewspapers.com](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com)

### WEDNESDAY/MARCH 18

**Sonia & disappear fear.** Eclectic world music. 8 p.m. at The Barns. Tickets \$18. Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. 1-877-WOLFTRAP.

**Dave Barnes and Gabe Dixon Band,** 7:30 p.m. at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$15 advance, \$18 at the door. 703-255-1566 or [jamminjava.com](http://jamminjava.com).

**Too Many Frogs,** 10:30 a.m. at the Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave., McLean. Stories and activities. Age 2-5 with adult. 703-356-0770.

**Book Discussion Group,** 7:15 p.m. at the Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave., McLean. Call for book title. Adults. 703-356-0770.

### THURSDAY/MARCH 19

**Battlefield Band,** 8 p.m. at The Barns. Traditional and contemporary Scottish music. \$22. Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. 1-877-WOLFTRAP.

**Old School Freight Train CD Release.** 7:30 p.m. at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$15. 703-255-1566 or [jamminjava.com](http://jamminjava.com).

**Tiny Tot Tales,** 10:30 a.m. at the Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave., McLean. Stories and activities. Age 13-23 months with adult. 703-356-0770.

**Where Does Gold Come From: the Astronomical Origin of the Elements,** 7 p.m. at the Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Dr. Edward Murphy of the University of Virginia traces the history of a gold atom. Adults. 703-757-8560.

**Adult Roundtable.** 10 a.m., McLean Baptist Church, 1367 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. An "Adult Roundtable Middle School Forum" will be held by the Safe Community Coalition. Visit [www.safecommunitycoalition.net](http://www.safecommunitycoalition.net).

**Memoir Writing.** 8:45-10 a.m., Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St. S.E., Vienna. Instructor Cheryl Somers Aubin, who holds an MA in writing from Johns Hopkins University, will lead participants in weekly writing exercises and share the results in a supportive atmosphere. Class held Thursdays through April 30. \$57.60/ Town of Vienna residents. \$72/out-of-town participants. Call 703-255-6360 or visit [www.viennava.gov](http://www.viennava.gov).

### FRIDAY/MARCH 20

**Lara St. John, violinist,** 8 p.m. at The Barns. \$35. Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. 1-877-WOLFTRAP.

**The Russian National Ballet Theatre in "Cinderella,"** 8 p.m. at the George Mason Center for the Arts, on the Fairfax campus at the intersection of Braddock Road and Route 123. A pre-performance discussion, free to ticket holders, begins at 7:15 p.m. on the Grand Tier III. Tickets are \$27-\$54. Age 12 and under, half price Charge by phone at 888-945-2468 or visit [www.tickets.com](http://www.tickets.com). [www.gmu.edu/cfa](http://www.gmu.edu/cfa).

**Valery Lloyd Watts.** 7 p.m., at Vienna Baptist Church, 541 Marshall Road S.W., Vienna. Valery Lloyd-Watts, who has been hailed as the "world's most listened-to pianist," will perform live. Tickets: \$15/adults, \$10/seniors and students, free/children 2 and under. Call 703-734-0621 or e-mail [harnesselway@aol.com](mailto:harnesselway@aol.com).

**The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe.** 7:30 p.m., Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Watch local talent present this classic story. To purchase tickets, stop by the Alden Theatre Box Office, call 703-573-SEAT or visit [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com).



The Russian National Ballet Theatre will perform twice at the George Mason Center for the Arts, dancing in 'Cinderella' on Friday, March 20 and 'Sleeping Beauty' on Saturday, March 21.

Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Watch local talent present this classic story. To purchase tickets, stop by the Alden Theatre Box Office, call 703-573-SEAT or visit [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com).

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proceeds the latest trends in skin care and make-up, door prizes will be raffled and the McLean Youth Orchestra will perform. Tickets: \$50; call 703-821-6646.

### SUNDAY/MARCH 22

**HAPA, contemporary Hawaiian duo.** 7:30 p.m. at The Barns. \$25. Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. 1-877-WOLFTRAP.

**Todesbonden, Ephemeral Sun and Origin Theory,** 7 p.m. at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$10. 703-255-1566 or [jamminjava.com](http://jamminjava.com).

**The Academy of Ancient Music,** 4 p.m. at George Mason University Center for the Arts, on the Fairfax campus of George Mason University at the intersection of Braddock Road and Route 123. A pre-performance discussion, free to ticket holders, begins at 3:15 p.m. on the Center's Grand Tier III. Tickets are \$24-\$48. Charge by phone at 888-945-2468 or visit [www.tickets.com](http://www.tickets.com). [www.gmu.edu/cfa](http://www.gmu.edu/cfa).

**Spring Fashion Show and Luncheon.** 12:30 p.m., Le Mistral Restaurant, 6641 Old Dominion Drive, McLean. Bloomingdale's unveils their Spring Collection and a representative from Estée Lauder

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 12

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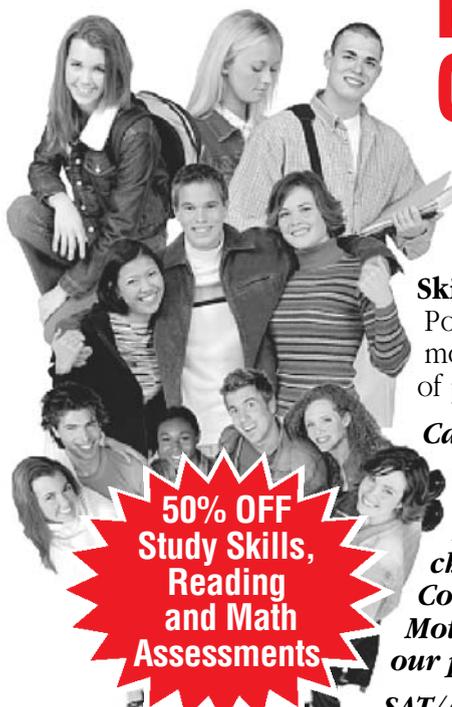
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## CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 11

She will focus on the daylily collection and other major collections that can be seen when visiting the gardens. Free. Call 703-534-7729.

**The Washington Moroccan Club Youth Art Event:** To celebrate President Obama's Inauguration and to honor the First Family, youth, ages 5-15, are invited to create a picture at the event inspired by the theme, "Welcome the Obama Family to the White House." Pictures will then be selected to present to the First Family. Refreshments and art supplies provided. Every artist awarded. 3-6 p.m. at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean, VA 22101

### MONDAY/MARCH 23

**Open Mic Showcase Hosted by Ron Goad.** 7-10 p.m. at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$2. 703-255-1566 or jamminjava.com.

### TUESDAY/MARCH 24

**That 1 Guy: unlike anything you have heard before.** 8 p.m. at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door. 703-255-1566 or jamminjava.com.

**Jazz Night at James Madison High School Auditorium,** 7 p.m. Featuring: The James Madison and McLean High School Jazz Bands and The US Army Field Band Jazz Ambassadors.

### WEDNESDAY/MARCH 25

**Taylor Carson, Matt York and Andrew Hoover,** 7:30 p.m. at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E.,

Vienna. \$10. 703-255-1566 or jamminjava.com.

**Hop Into Spring,** 10:30 a.m. at the Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave., McLean. Bunny tales and activities. Age 2-5 with adult. 703-356-0770.

**Buddy Hatton.** 7 p.m., Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Watch "In Search of Shangri-La" with Alden favorite Buddy Hatton. \$8/district residents, \$10/others. Call 703-790-9223.

**Cuvaision Wine Dinner.** 6:30 p.m., Wildfire Tysons Galleria, 1714U International Drive, McLean. Guest speaker Don Clemens joins with Wildfire's Executive Chef Steven Lukis. \$95/person. To view the menu, visit wildfirerestaurant.com or for reservations contact Michelle Bringham at 703-442-9110. °

### THURSDAY/MARCH 26

**Paul Thorn, gospel-inspired Americana.** 8 p.m. at The Barns. \$20. Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. 1-877-WOLFTRAP.

**White Burgundy and Pinot Noir.** 6:30-8:30 p.m., Ritz-Carlton Tysons Corner, 1700 Tysons Blvd., McLean. A wine tour of France. Experience one of the most delicate grape varietals.

**Garnet Rogers,** 7:30 p.m. at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$15. 703-255-1566 or jamminjava.com.

### FRIDAY/MARCH 27

**Susan Werner with Madi Diaz.** Folk and gospel. 8 p.m. at The Barns. \$22. Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. 1-877-WOLFTRAP.

## GALLERIES

FROM PAGE 10

Crescent Drive, Tysons Corner. The opening reception will be March 5, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Habitat will also host "Habitat for Healing," a fundraiser for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Donated pieces from several artists will be on display March 5-April 20. The pieces will then be auctioned off in a silent auction April 7. Call 703-989-7110.

**The U.S. Geological Survey,** National Center Art Hallway, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, presents paintings by Pauline D. Lorfano **March 3-30**, Monday through Friday, 7 a.m.-6:30 p.m.

**Drawings, collages, and sculptures** by students of Great Falls Elementary School under will be on display in the Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, **March 3-31**. On March 5, 3-5 p.m., an ice cream social to celebrate the students' art will be held in the conference room.

**Ted Ramsey's** new works, a show entitled "Planet Joy," will be on display March 7-April 1st Applegate Gallery & Custom Framing, 101 Church St. N.W., Suite C, Vienna.

Nature paintings by **Jola Noska** will be on display beginning **March 15** at the Vienna Arts Society Gallery, 513 W. Maple Ave., Vienna. The gallery is open Tuesdays-Saturday s, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Call 703-319-3220.



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# COMMUNITY



PHOTO BY KATHLEEN MULLERY

Pictured are McKenzie Malpede a Churchill Road Elementary alumnus and Cooper Middle School eighth grader; parent sponsor Lezlie McBride, fourth graders Sara Forburger, Kristen Kircher and Katie Bellaschi and alumnus Hayley Soutter, also a Cooper Middle school eighth grader.

## Sandwiches for Martha's Table

On Wednesday, March 11, Churchill Road Elementary third and fourth graders, along with some eighth grade alumni, made 773 sandwiches for Martha's Table. Located

in Washington, D.C., it serves more than 2,500 meals every day to homeless and low-income children and seniors.

Sponsored by CRS PTA members Liz Holzapfel, Lezlie McBride and

Kathleen Mullery, over the course of this school year, the school community provided about 2,400 sandwiches for the hungry at Martha's Table — the highest total in years.

## BUSINESS NOTES

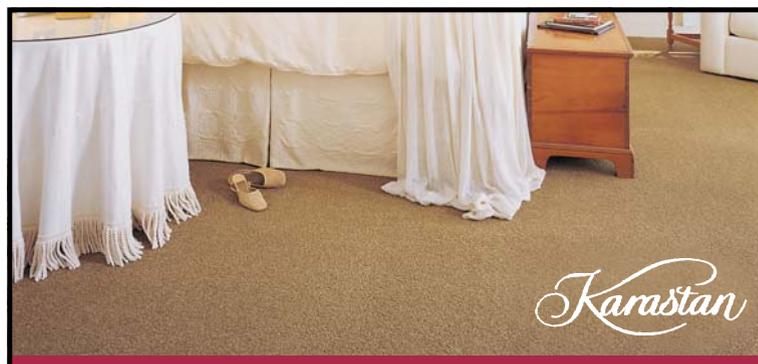
To have business notes listed, send to [mclean@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mclean@connectionnewspapers.com) or 7913 Westpark Drive, McLean, VA 22102. Call 703-917-6449 with questions. Deadline is Friday.

**Dr. Ashkan Ghaffari** of Vienna is hosting an open house at his Orthodontic Practice at 100 Church St., Vienna, Saturday, **March 21**, 1-4 p.m. Enjoy egg decorating, a magician, and a prize raffle. RSVP to [DrGhaffari@ViennaBraces.com](mailto:DrGhaffari@ViennaBraces.com).

The **JBG Companies**, a leader in mixed-use development throughout the Washington Metropolitan Area, acquired two class-B office buildings in downtown McLean. The properties, located at 6862 Elm St. and 6849 Old Dominion Drive, consist of 167,000 square feet of rentable space. The properties are leased to a mix of tenants and have a historically low vacancy rate for the sub-market.

The eight-story 6862 Elm Street building has 101,389 rentable square feet. Located on 2.06 acres of land, 6849 Old Dominion Drive has 65,999 rentable square feet.

**Alion Science and Technology**, an employee-owned technology solutions provider in McLean, was awarded a \$3.3 million task order to analyze technical data and emerging technologies for the Joint and Special Operations Program at Navy Crane in Crane, IN. Under the three-year program named USSOCOM Navy Crane Engineering, Alion will provide engineering analysis of relevant emerging technologies and weapons systems to ensure applicable technologies are quickly implemented to meet end-user requirements. The objective is to make the best use of technology to maintain and enhance the warfighter's asymmetrical advantage.



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## OPEN HOUSES

Saturday & Sunday, March 21st & 22nd



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When you visit one of these Open Houses, tell the Realtor you saw it in this Connection Newspaper. For more real estate listings and open houses visit [www.ConnectionNewspapers.com](http://www.ConnectionNewspapers.com), click the Real Estate links on the right side.

**Call Specific Agents to Confirm Dates & Times.**

### Great Falls

10605 Good Spring Ave	\$694,500	3/21 1-4	Stephanie White	Sothebys	703-489-5045
251 Carrwood Rd	\$1,399,000	Sun 1-4	Carol Jackson	Long & Foster	703-217-2163
11539 Tralee Dr	\$1,748,940	Sun 1-4	Rosalie Sarson	Weichert	703-934-0400
639 Nalls Farm Way	\$2,500,000	Sun 1-4	Carol Ellickson	Weichert	703-862-2135

### Falls Church

7437 Timberock Rd	\$475,000	Sun 1-4	Eve Shapiro	Weichert	703-517-7511
7029 Haycock Rd #6	\$565,000	Sun 1-3	Kathryn D. Bellaschi	Long & Foster	703-790-1990
6502 Orland St	\$649,900	3/17 11am-1pm	Shirley Bishop	Coldwell Banker	703-734-7020
6795 Colby Crossing Way	\$1,175,000	Sat & Sun 12-4:30	Anne DiBenedetto	McEearney	703-790-9090
6795 Colby Crossing Way	\$1,299,000	Sat & Sun 12-4:30	Anne DiBenedetto	McEearney	703-790-9090

### McLean

1504 Hampton Hill Cir	\$899,000	Sun 1-4	John Maucher	Weichert	703-472-6206
6304 Walden Woods Ct	\$1,545,000	3/22 1-4	Victoria Kilcullen	Washington Fine	703-915-8845
1342 Gunnell Ct	\$1,595,000	Sun 1-4	Gail Edie	WC & AN Miller	301-229-4000
1527 Brookhaven Dr	\$1,699,000	3/22 1-4	Mark McFadden	Coldwell	202-333-6100
1143 Daleview Dr	\$1,769,000	Sun 2-4	Marianne Prendergast	Long & Foster	703-873-5155

### Vienna

9855 Snowbound Ct	\$489,900	Sun 1-4	Lynda O'Shaughnessy	Long & Foster	703-938-4200
9905 Montclair Ct	\$599,900	Sun 1-5	Walter Licht	Weichert	571-338-2487
1415 Beulah Rd	\$650,000	3/29 1-4	Lisa DeCarlo	Coldwell Banker	571-239-8690
2149 Red Vine Dr #75	\$689,000	Sat & Sun 12-4	David Mayhood	Mayhood Company	703-448-0400
2147 Red Vine Dr #76	\$699,000	Sat & Sun 12-4	David Mayhood	Mayhood Company	703-448-0400
8033 Reserve Way #43	\$699,000	Sat & Sun 12-4	David Mayhood	Mayhood Company	703-448-0400
10200 Westford Drive	\$699,000	Sun 12-4	Arthur DuHaime	Fairfax Realty	703-887-0439
10412 Hunters Valley Rd	\$1,900,000	Sun 1-3	Jeffrey Stein	Tranzon Fox	703-539-8111

### Oakton

2984 Borge St	\$405,000	Sun 1-4	Debra Heft	Metro Area	
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To add your Realtor represented Open House to these weekly listings, please contact:

In Great Falls, Salome, 703-917-6467, or [salome@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:salome@connectionnewspapers.com)

In Vienna, Don, 703-917-6466, or [donpark@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:donpark@connectionnewspapers.com)

In McLean, Lauri, 703-917-6460, or [lauri@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:lauri@connectionnewspapers.com)

# SCHOOLS

## Celebrating World Cultures

PHOTOS BY ERIK DAHLIN



**First-grade instructional assistant Suba Khan showcases the traditional garb of her native Pakistan.**

Churchill Road Elementary School celebrated respect for all cultures in the "We Are the World" pep rally. The event was organized by assistant principal Kathy Manoa and school counselor Katie Griffith.

The Parade of Nations highlighted 44 countries represented at the school; costumed students and staff members enchanted the audience by saying "hello" and "respect" in their native languages. Following weeks of daily practices, the pep rally featured students and staff cheering and dancing to music from around the world. Highlights included a respect cheer, a salsa dance and the cotton-eyed Joe. In addition, a geography bee competition pitted a student team against a teacher team. The student team won the competition.



**Dressed in keeping with their national origins, Mark Anthony Bosset, a second-grader, speaks about his native Puerto Rico, while second-grade classmate Nihal Khurana waits to speak about India.**



**Churchill Road students and staff perform a rendition of the cotton-eyed Joe. From left, Maddie Rubin, Caroline Bollinger, sixth-grade teacher Stuart Baumgardner, Alex Forman, SACC team member Ronnell Peters, Ella Shapland, and counselor Katie Griffith.**

## SCHOOL NOTES

Send School Notes to [mclean@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mclean@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is Friday.

**Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology** recently won its ninth Virginia High School League Group AAA Scholastic Bowl championship. The team of seniors Naren Tallapragada, Kevin Casto and Josh Hahn and junior Greyson Lewis defeated Maggie Walker Governor's School 280-170 to take the title.

**George C. Marshall High School** will perform "Reflex Action" Saturday, March 21, 12:15 p.m. at the VHSL One-Act Theatre Competition at Piedmont Virginia Community College in Charlottesville. "Reflex Action" is co-directed by Seniors Curtis Cooper and Zach Popkin-Hall.

A "Fun Fair" will be held at Lemon Road Elementary School, 7230 Idylwood Road, Falls Church, Saturday, **March 21**, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Games, prizes, food, moon bounce, silent auctions. Call 703-714-6400.

**Amanda Courtney** of Herndon and **Nancy Foeckler** of Columbia, MD were named as the recipients of the Veritas Award at Oakcrest School, an independent Catholic school for girls grades 6-12. The Veritas Award is the school's merit award for current students and applying students entering the ninth grade at Oakcrest. Awarded annually, it consists of a \$7,500 tuition remission per year for four years at Oakcrest School for up to two students.

**Titus Solomon** earned a bachelor's of business degree in marketing at Radford University at the end of the fall semester.

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 1:30 PM Spanish Liturgy  
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## Higher Tax Rate, Car Fee on Table

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors set an upper limit for the residential real estate tax rate March 9 that leaves the door open for an average property tax increase on homeowners of approximately \$60 this year.

The supervisors have also put an annual vehicle registration fee back on the table after abolishing it three years ago. For the average car, the old fee was \$25, though the county board has given itself the leeway charge as much as \$33 in the next fiscal cycle. The supervisors will finalize the tax rate and vote on the car fee next month as part of the county budget.

The current property tax rate is 92 cents per \$100 of assessed property value. With this vote, the supervisors have given themselves the ability to raise it to a higher rate of \$1.05 per \$100 of assessed property value. They would also consider an additional 1.5 cent rate increase per \$100 of assessed value that would go directly to storm water management. The owner of a median-priced home at \$459,228 would pay property taxes of \$4,776 under this proposal.

Fairfax County executive Tony Griffin, who presented his budget proposal earlier this month, recommended the supervisors raise the property tax rate to \$1.04 per \$100 of assessed property value, plus the 1.5 cent increase for storm water management. He has also suggested adding a \$20 vehicle registration fee to help close the gap in next year's budget of approximately \$650 million.

Supervisors chose to advertise a higher tax rate to give themselves flexibility. Griffin had suggested the board advertise a rate that was even higher, \$1.07 per \$100 of assessed property value.

"Between the time we advertised the tax rate and the budget mark up last year, we saw a \$40 million drop in the county. ... The economy is very volatile right now," said Fairfax County chairman Sharon Bulova (D.).

The board's two Republicans, supervisors Patrick Herrity (R-Springfield) and Mike Frey (R-Sully), opposed both measures.

In an interview, Herrity said he would have been supportive of setting the tax rate at a level that would ensure the average real estate tax bill would not go up this year.

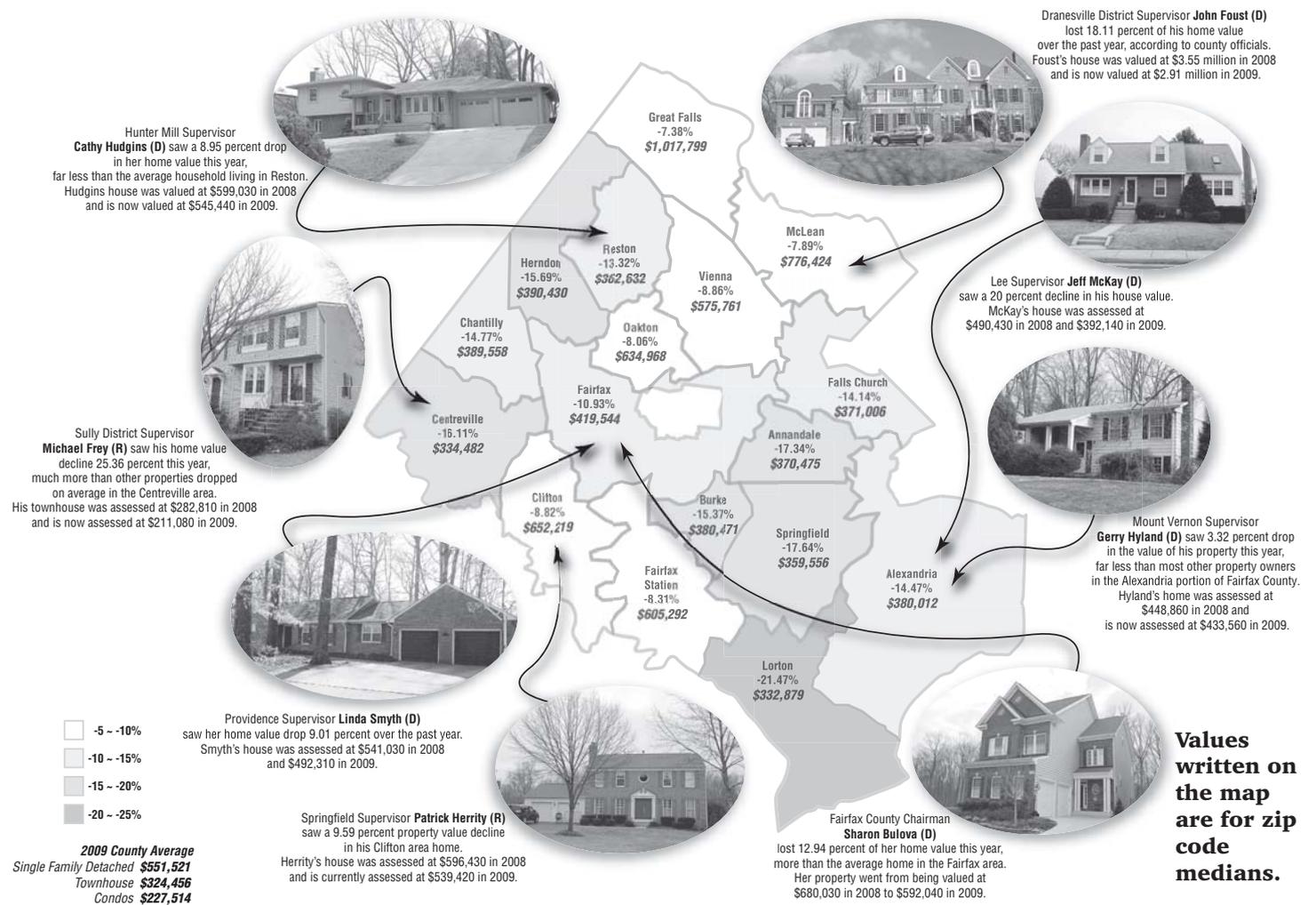
"We are in a critical time with our economy," said Herrity.

The Springfield supervisor added that many of the "revenue enhancements" Griffin has already proposed in his budget come in the form of increased fees, such as a higher price to participate in youth athletics.

— JULIA O'DONOGHUE

## THE COUNTY LINE

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# How Much Is It Worth?

### Assessments in question as fewer home sales offer fewer properties for comparison.

BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE  
THE CONNECTION

**J**eff McKay is very familiar with Groveton, his neighborhood off Richmond Highway near Huntley Meadows Park.

McKay's grandparents moved into his home when it was newly constructed in the 1940s and a member of the Lee District supervisor's extended family has always lived in the house. McKay bought the property himself 12 years ago after graduating from college.

So it came as a surprise to McKay when he looked up his real estate property assessment online and found many of the home sales used to determine his house's property value this year were located on unfamiliar streets.

Typically, Fairfax County tries to use home sales from a property's immediate neighborhood or subdivision to determine its value. In the case of McKay's home this year, they were factoring in home sales from Burgundy Village, a community several miles away in a different zip code, he said.

"Something different was done this year than we have done in the past," said McKay, a Democrat.

In 2009, 30 percent of Fairfax County's real estate assessments were calculated us-

ing home sales from "sister neighborhoods" as well as immediate communities, said Janet Coldsmith, director of the real estate division in Fairfax County's Department of Tax Administration.

County staff have always brought in home sales from other comparable neighborhoods to determine some property values but the practice was much more widespread this year, due to the downturn in the housing market, she said.

"We looked at similar neighborhoods and have looked at similar neighborhoods throughout the years but it has become more important this year. While there are still enough sales to value property, they are not as evenly distributed," said Coldsmith.

Fairfax County only incorporates "fair market" home sales into real estate property assessments. Foreclosures and other distressed sales are not supposed to factor into calculating property value for tax purposes. It can be difficult to determine home assessments in neighborhoods that have been hit hard by the foreclosure crisis and where few or no non-distressed sales have taken place, she said.

"It is standard appraisal practice to choose the best comparable properties that you have. If you don't have them in your immediate neighborhood, then you widen your search," said Coldsmith.

"When you start including other neighborhoods that are miles away in a different zip code, it becomes more difficult to try and figure out whether the properties included were fair or not," McKay said.

According to Coldsmith, the county does take geography into account when coming up with "sister neighborhoods" for assessment purposes. When looking for a comparison, they look for two neighborhoods of a similar price level and age as well as those with a similar housing stock, she said.

"We would be looking at what somebody going out to buy a house would be looking at. Someone looking to buy a house might be searching in two neighborhoods in same price range with the same type of housing," said Coldsmith. "Appraisal is a lot of judgment. It is not an exact science. There is a lot of judgment in there," she added.

But McKay differed. "There are not many homeowners who go out and say they want a rambler built in the 1950s. They go out and look for a house that is in a certain school district or on a certain transportation route. ... Is it better to base an assessment on a small number of sales or to really stretch and include properties that are a far distance away?" asked McKay.

The county has fielded fewer calls from angry property owners upset about their assessments, probably because most people saw a drop in their property value.

"So far, the call volume is down. We have gotten a few calls from some people who think their property value has fallen too far," said Coldsmith.

# SPORTS

## Starting Pitching Will Pace McLean Baseball Team

Highlanders have two solid starters in Fitzgerald, Buckley.

BY RICH SANDERS  
THE CONNECTION

A year ago, a relatively young McLean High baseball team finished 15-8 and tied for second place in the regular season Liberty District standings. In the postseason, the Highlanders reached the district tournament semifinals before losing to eventual champion Stone Bridge, 2-0. Then, in the 16-team Northern Region playoffs, the Highlanders saw their season end with a first round loss to eventual region champion Lake Braddock, 5-2.

So McLean, under coach John Thomas, was right on the edge of being one of the region's elite teams. This year, with six returning starters back in the line-up, Thomas hopes his squad can take that next step forward.

The fourth year coach said his players have proven that they are hungry to excel.

"A big thing for us since losing to Lake Braddock last year is we had every guy in the weight room four times a week [during the offseason]," said Thomas. "We have a lot of kids back and reason to be excited. This team has worked harder than any team I've ever had."

**LANGLEY** will receive a big test right out of the gate when it opens up the new season at defending district champion Stone Bridge this Friday night in Ashburn. The Saxons' next game after that is scheduled to be at home against perennial power and district rival Madison next Tuesday night.

McLean's leadership will come from its



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

**Highlander head coach John Thomas led a young McLean squad to a 15-8 record last year. That team's season ended with a region playoff loss to Lake Braddock.**

senior co-captains – Erik Payne and Brett Bleiweis.

Payne, a Second Team All-District first baseman last year, will see action at both first and catcher this season. He caught for just the first time this past autumn during McLean's fall ball season. He has impressed the McLean coaching staff with his desire to learn the position. He is currently tabbed to catch when junior pitcher Denis Buckley takes the mound.

"He's never caught," said Thomas, of Payne. "He just worked hard all winter. We told him we wanted him to do this last summer. He's a great kid and great leader and we trusted he would work on [his new position]. He's a big, strong kid with a good arm. He's a tough kid and we knew he wouldn't be afraid of the ball [behind the plate]."

A right-handed batter, Payne, as the Highlanders' No. 5 hitter in the batting order last year, led McLean in hitting with a nifty .393 average.

Bleiweis, meanwhile, is a player who has successfully worked his way up through the McLean High baseball program. He played JV ball for the Highlanders in both his freshman and sophomore years. Last year, as a junior, he saw limited playing time before starting in McLean's final eight games of the season as an infielder. Bleiweis, who batted over .300, is making the transition to leftfield this spring.

"He's steady and has improved every year he's been here," said Thomas. "He's a classical [organization] kid."

**MCLEAN** has two of the region's top starting pitchers in juniors Sean Fitzgerald and Buckley, both right handers.

Fitzgerald already has accumulated 11 career varsity wins. Last year, as McLean's No. 1 pitcher, he was 6-3 with a 2.20 ERA. In 60 innings, he fanned 62 batters. He was team MVP.

"Sean has definitely proved through two years that he is a very good pitcher," said Thomas, of his ace. "He's worked very hard and his velocity is up. He's always been a kid who knows how to pitch around the plate."

Fitzgerald, who will play shortstop when he is not on the mound, is coming off a sophomore season at the plate where he hit .357 with 23 RBIs as his team's No. 3 hitter in the line-up. He was named First Team All-District as a utility player, and also was named Second Team All-Region.

Buckley, a First Team All-District pitcher last year, went 5-3 with a 2.68 ERA as a sophomore. He struck out 42 batters in 44 innings of work. When he is not on the mound Buckley catches for the Highlanders. As a clean-up hitter last year, he batted

.295 and scored 19 runs.

On the mound, Buckley is pretty much lights out when he gets ahead in the count.

"Denis is a power pitcher and has a good breaking ball," said Thomas. "When he gets ahead in the count, he's up there with anybody."

Two other key players for McLean this season will be junior outfielder Riley Beiro and senior shortstop/second baseman Chris Russo.

Beiro earned First Team All-District and Second Team All-Region accolades last year as a center fielder. A leadoff hitter, Beiro batted .340 last spring. He utilized his outstanding speed with 25 stolen bases and 24 runs scored. His on-base percentage was .536. On 12 occasions, he reached first base after being hit by a pitch.

"He really understands how to hit in the leadoff spot," said Thomas. "He's our best pure power hitter and very patient at the plate. He knows how to get on base."

In the outfield, Beiro might be the best centerfielder in the region.

"He plays that position about as good as a player can play it," said Thomas. "He's got a very good arm, covers a lot of ground and gets a jump a jump [off the batted ball] extremely well."

Russo, a middle infielder, had an on-base percentage of .489 with 14 RBI and two home runs from the No. 2 spot in the line-up last year. He coaxed 21 walks and stole 10 bases.

McLean is in a tough district, but should be in the running for the regular season title.

Both McLean and Langley are co-hosting the first McLean/Great Falls Babe Ruth Invitational tournament over spring break in a few weeks. Twelve teams will compete in the tournament, including Chantilly, Robinson, Oakton, Yorktown and South Lakes. Games will be played at both McLean and Langley.

### SPORTS ROUNDUPS

The veteran **Langley High girls' lacrosse team**, with seven returning seniors, is off to a great start with two preseason game wins. Langley's first scrimmage victory was a 15-9 win against Bishop Sullivan in Virginia Beach. The trip to the beach gave the Saxons a game under their belt and helped build team unity.

Langley, in its next scrimmage, won big over host Westfield High, 26-7. Langley head coach Richard DeSomma praised the girls for working hard over the winter and coming into the new season in great shape.

"My goal for the season is to use the great experience of the seven returning seniors to regain the Liberty District title which the team held in the 2006 and 2007 seasons," said DeSomma.

The returning seniors are

Maggie Kovacs, Lee Quinby, Jesse Ryan, Sophie Spivack, Annie Swanson, Erin Wiltse and Katie Wingo.

Next school year, Kovacs will be playing Div. 1 collegiate lacrosse at the University of Oregon on a combined athletic-academic scholarship. There, she will study Human Physiology. Sophie Spivack, meanwhile, will be playing lacrosse on scholarship at the Savannah College of Arts and Design. And Katie Wingo will be playing field hockey for Georgetown University.

Following the two scrimmage wins, Langley was primed for the start of the regular season on March 12. And the Saxons won their season opener, defeating South County, 15-9. Langley exhibited its broad offensive firepower as seven girls contributed goals in the victory. Maggie Kovacs

led the way with five goals and four assists, while Annie Swanson and Erin Wiltse each scored three goals with an assist. Elspeth McGarry, Lee Quinby and Torrie Zarella each had a goal and an assist, and Katy Wingo had one goal.

Langley's defense was solid throughout the game. Saxon goalie Mary Riley Pembroke had 15 saves.

DeSomma was delighted with the team's play.

"They did just what a team should do," he said. "They like each other and they easily move the ball around the field because they trust each other. They assist each other and this lets them score. We had seven players score 15 goals and eight of the scores were off of assists. This kind of teamwork makes coaching a great job."



PHOTO COURTESY/MCLEAN YOUTH FOOTBALL

**McLean Youth Football players Ashton Nyanteh (75-pound Mustangs) and Donny Sanders (85-Mustangs) were honored at the Fairfax County Youth Football League Hall of Fame banquet on March 1 at the McLean Hilton Hotel. Both received Player of the Year awards for their respective weight classes and divisions. Here, the two youngsters – Nyanteh (front row, left) and Sanders (front row, right) – have their picture taken with (back row, left to right): McLean Mustangs Commissioner Craig Richardson, coach David Sanders and coach Brian Sulc.**

# EMPLOYMENT

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ZONE 6 AD DEADLINE:  
TUESDAY 11 A.M.

## Time Out Of Mind



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

### Time Out Of Mind

After my mother's death, it took me over two months to finally write and send thank you notes to the friends who remembered my mother by making charitable donations in her name. And though I'm not particularly proud of the lack of initiative I showed in taking as long as I did to properly respond, I am still most appreciative of the extra effort and thoughtfulness these friends exhibited. As I wrote in the thank yous that I sent, it seemed like the loss of a second parent in two years sort of knocked the initiative right out of me (or maybe that was simply my mother not being around to remind me to do something). I remember experiencing a similar malaise after my father died in Dec., 2006. And though my mother was most definitely alive and well back then, I recall feeling a little unmotivated, a little empty, and not really seeing the point and/or significance in much as I tried to find a new routine now that my father was gone.

Moreover, given the fact that our mother was now widowed, without my father as her companion for the first time in over 65 years, my brother and I knew we still had major responsibilities, not exactly care and feeding since my father's caregiver, Maria, stayed on, but life full-filling nevertheless. And not that we were the least bit put off — or put upon, quite frankly — by the task at hand, it was more that we were fulfilling a role that, unbeknownst to us, we had been preparing for — and prepared for, our whole lives.

And for most of these past two years, we had fun doing it. As difficult as I know it was for my mother to live on without my father alive and in her life, it was really quite remarkable how she adjusted to the loss. Not exactly ambulatory and almost totally hearing impaired, she persevered, and almost always with good humor. Surrounded by pictures of my father as well as pictures of the two of them at various stops in their life, she was never far removed, physically, from reminders of what, for her, had been the most important responsibility in her life: her husband (my father) and her family. Yet, she was rarely morose; sad of course, in tears occasionally, but overall, happy to be alive and not "woeing" at all about her loss or physical limitations.

Mentally, she was as sharp at the end as she had been her entire life (so far as we ever saw) and as concerned about others (my brother and I) even as she lay in the bed in which she would eventually die, as she had ever been; still concerned about my brother's comfort (sitting vs. standing by the side of her bed) and whether or not we had eaten or were hungry. Amazing!

This was the second time that my brother and I have been witness to acts of love and unselfishness by our parents as they lie dying. Whatever lessons they sought to impart to us while they were alive pale in comparison to the lessons they taught us while they were dying.

My parents both died with dignity, class and concern for their family. At a time in their lives when it most assuredly should have been about them, they continued to try and make it about us. No wonder we miss them so much.

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

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In execution of a Deed of Trust from Michael Cole and Susan Benikas, dated July 24, 2002, and recorded August 5, 2002, in Deed Book 13181 at page 1017 among the Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia, the undersigned substitute trustee will offer for sale at public auction at the front entrance of the Judicial Center for Fairfax County, at 4110 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax, Virginia, on

**Monday, March 30, 2009 At 11:00 a.m.**

the following property being the property contained in said Deed of Trust, described as follows:

Lot 36, Section 4-C, Valewood Manor Subdivision, as the same appears duly dedicated, platted and recorded in Deed Book 5534 at page 1575, among the Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia.

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**TERMS OF SALE:** A deposit of \$5,000.00 or ten percent (10%) of the sale price, whichever amount is less, in the form of cash or its equivalent will be required of the purchaser at the time and place of sale; the balance of the purchase money being due and payable within fifteen (15) days after sale, time expressly being of the essence, with interest at the rate of 3.25 percent per annum from date of sale to date of settlement. Provided, however, that if the holder of the secured promissory note is the successful bidder at the sale, no cash deposit shall be required, and part of or the entire indebtedness, including interest and costs, secured by the Deed of Trust, may be set off against the purchase price.

Any defaulting purchaser shall forfeit the deposit and stand the risk and cost of resale.

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The subject property and all improvements thereon will be sold in "as is" condition without warranty of any kind. Purchaser shall be responsible for any and all building and/or zoning code violations whether of record or not of record, as well as for all unpaid and enforceable homeowners' or condominium owners' association dues and assessments, if any. Purchaser also

shall be responsible for obtaining possession of the property at his/her expense. Purchaser shall assume the risk of loss and shall be responsible for any damage, vandalism, theft, destruction, or the like, of or to the property occurring after the time of sale. Conveyance will be by special warranty deed. Conveyancing, recording, transfer taxes, notary fees, examination of title, state stamps, and all other costs of conveyance are to be at the expense of purchaser. State and local taxes, public charges, and special or regular assessments, if any, shall be adjusted to the date of sale and thereafter shall be assumed by the purchaser.

The undersigned trustee unconditionally reserves the right: (i) to waive the deposit requirement; (ii) to approve or disapprove the creditworthiness of any bidder and/or purchaser; (iii) to withdraw the property from sale at any time prior to termination of the bidding; (iv) to extend the time for bidding; (v) to reject any or all bids; (vi) to postpone or set over the date or time of sale; and (vii) to extend the period of time for settlement hereunder.

Additional terms and conditions of sale may be announced at the time of sale.

DAVID N. PRENSKY  
Substitute Trustee

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

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## NEWS

# Juniors Discuss Ethics

FROM PAGE 3

life. Should you turn in a friend who cheated on a test? "Is someone really your friend if they ask you to jeopardize your morals?" asked Steve Hojnicky, a senior at West Point.

With no "approved solutions," only principles, each group presented a skit based on the vignettes, showing how to apply what they had learned to make ethical decisions every day.

"Today, I learned sometimes ethical issues go beyond just right and wrong. It's OK to disagree," said Ashley Brigham, of West Springfield High School.

The West Point class of 1979 hosts the event annually. "We want to send seeds out to the schools. These students will be able lead by example," said Carl Cecil, co-chairman of the conference.

## Middle School Forum Addresses Teen Issues

The Safe Community Coalition (SCC) will sponsor the 13th annual Middle School Forum on Thursday, March 19, 9:45 a.m.-1:45 p.m. The goal of the program is to provide an open forum for seventh and eighth graders to discuss with their peers topics and issues concerning middle school students. Approximately 220 students from Cooper and Longfellow will be participating along with teen facilitators from the SCC Youth Advisory Council which is comprised of students from Langley, McLean and The Potomac School.

During the morning sessions, the seventh graders will discuss issues such as stress, healthy relationships, substance use and abuse, and cyber-ethics. They will develop presentations in the form of skits, rap, public service announcements, etc. about their areas of concern and strategies for dealing with the issues and present them in the afternoon. The eighth grade discussion sessions will focus on transitioning to high school issues, starting with a panel of ninth and 12th graders who will share their experiences and take questions from the eighth graders. Then, they divide up into smaller groups for in depth conversations about some of their concerns. The discussion sessions will be led by trained high school facilitators from the Youth Advisory Council who will provide feedback about the forum upon its conclusion.

While the middle school students attend their respective discussion groups, parents, teachers, and other members of the community will have the opportunity to attend an adult forum where they discuss issues facing their children and exchange ideas.

The Middle School Forum will meet at the McLean Baptist Church, 1367 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. For more about the SCC, visit [www.safecommunitycoalition.net](http://www.safecommunitycoalition.net).

## VIEWPOINTS

# What is the ethical issue of the day, what have you learned today?

— DANIELLE LANDAU & MERRILL ROTH



**Colin Cannon, McLean High School**

"Cheating has become the norm in this area. Competition in Northern Virginia to get into colleges is so high that people do whatever it takes. It's become regular, and everyone just lets it go."

"Today I learned not to be afraid to talk about things, to meet new people, and share your opinion. Don't feel guilty, come clean. You don't want to live with a bad decision even if there are consequences."

**Paula Novacki, Langley High School**

"Lying is a big issue, because I feel like it can be so broad, from a white lie to something that can put someone in imminent danger. One lie leads to another, leads to another."

"I've learned that leadership and ethics are two different things. One can be a leader without ethics. There are bad people in the world that can still be considered good leaders."



**Lauren Hurlburt, 16, Marshall High School**

"I also feel that substance abuse is the most relevant ethics issue right now. As people get older drugs become more available; you need to stand up for what you believe in even if doing so pulls you out of your comfort zone. I have

learned how to be a strong leader. I know how to go through the whole decision making process."

**Elizabeth Gauf, Madison High School**

"A big issue is the decision between staying loyal to your friends versus what's legal. For instance, if you saw your friends cheating. I think a lot of teens face that controversy."

"I learned the importance of character and staying true to what you value in your decisions so that you can make the right one."



**Caroline Beury, 16, Oakton High School**

"The current drinking laws are a big issue for people in our area. Teenagers are having trouble deciding when to step into difficult situations. Many kids are comfortable going to a party where there is drinking but drinking and driving then becomes an issue. Today's program forced me to question my morals and re-think what I would do in pressure-centered circumstances."



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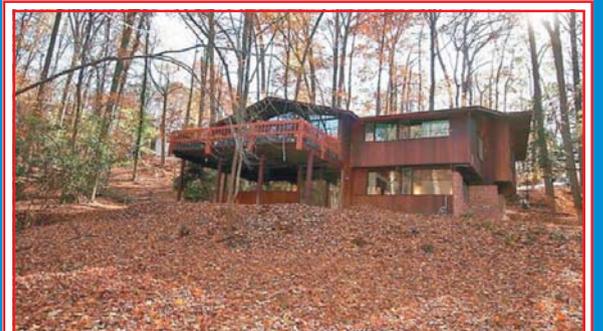
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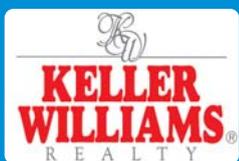
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