

McLean CONNECTION

The Trio

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Samson (Great Dane) and Bentley (Olde English Bulldogge) belong to Chris and Jill Farrell of McLean. They can be seen walking with their owner every day at 7:20 a.m. at the Old Dominion Drive.

McLean Central Park Improves, Expands

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Student Orchestra Takes the Stage

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Housing Market Stabilizing

Area faring better than many others.

BY DONNA MANZ
THE CONNECTION

Vienna and Oakton's many in-demand neighborhoods, excellent schools, proximity to Tysons Corner and Washington, D.C., and access to mass transit afforded the area greater protection in the economic downswing than many other locations had in 2009.

"Vienna and Oakton, McLean and Great Falls are doing better holding their values than outlying locations," said Barbara McHale, a Vienna resident and Long and Foster Realtor. "If a house is in a good location and in good condition, updated, it will sell for a decent price, relatively speaking. In overall value, we did go down 10 percent, though. This has been a terrific drop in value."

McHale noted that banks have come a long way in learning how to handle the housing crisis, particularly in the area of foreclosure and short sales.

During her 31-year career, McHale has gone through real estate ups and downs, but none like this current one.

"We knew that the market could not sustain this upward mobility and that it would have to settle down," she said. "I have always been confident the market would rebound in downturns, but there are different conditions this time. We will regain ground in one to two years, but we have other economic factors that have come into play in the past year or so."

"The market will turn around," McHale said. "It will get better. The economy seems to be rebounding. Interest rates will go up, too."

To buyers, McHale would say, "there's not going to be a better time to buy." Prices and interest rates are down.

To a seller, she has this recommendation: "Unless you have to sell immediately, it might be to your advantage to wait a couple of years to list your home."

ZIP CODE 22182 was hardest-hit in the November 2008/November 2009 sales comparison. The average sold price in November 2009 dropped to \$627,250, compared to \$788,107 in November 2008, a drop of 20.41 percent. Average



'The market will turn around,' said Vienna realtor Barbara McHale.

"You have excellent fundamentals in Vienna and Oakton. ... Good schools, desirable neighborhoods, close in proximity to D.C., mass transit close by, lots of extracurricular opportunities ... What's not to like about those areas?"

— Jill Landsman, Northern Virginia Association of Realtors

days on the market, however, improved to 51 percent in 2009, a decrease of 48.48 percent from 2008. The average sale price as percentage of average list price was 95.61 percent.

The average sold price in Zip code 22180 in November 2009 was \$560,701, compared to \$594,928 in November 2008, a decrease of 5.75 percent. Average days on market in November 2009 was 59; in November 2008, 113. That represents a 47.79 percent improvement in 2009 over 2008. The average sale price as percentage of the average list price was 97.58 percent.

For Zip code 22181, the November 2009 average sold price dropped to \$573,385, compared to \$614,900 in November 2008, a decrease of 6.75 percent. The average days on market increased to 35 in November 2009, compared to 13 in November 2008, an increase of 169.23 percent. The average sale price as percentage of the average list price was 95.49 percent.

The biggest challenge of getting a home to market is getting the property appraised. Appraisers, McHale said, are cautious about putting their names on an appraisal nowadays. It's not unusual for appraisals to come in for less than the sales value. McHale meets with appraisers when listing homes to ensure that the appraiser has the details he needs to make an appropriate appraisal.

McHale cited the recent sale of an East Street home appraised for \$857,000. A large beautiful home

in a convenient location close to Maple Avenue, it sold in two days for \$850,000. "It was worth what it sold for," McHale said.

CALLING THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA MARKET "mostly stabilized," Jill Landsman of the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors (NVAR) identified additional foreclosure activity in Virginia. "In Vienna, there won't be pervasive problems. Unemployment is not major in these Zip codes.

"You have excellent fundamentals in Vienna and Oakton," said Landsman. "Good schools, desirable neighborhoods, close-in proximity to D.C., mass transit close by, lots of extracurricular opportunities ... What's not to like about those areas?"

The people who purchased homes before 2005 are in a better position than those who did so in 2005 and later, Landsman added.

Currently, a lower inventory of homes under \$800,000 exists because they sell quickly. Market rebound for Vienna/Oakton will be easier, quicker and better than areas further out. Short sales and foreclosures may have multiple contracts, even in Vienna, McHale said.

The future of the real estate market is going to lie with first-time buyers, McHale thinks. "With every negative, there is a positive," she said. "The positive is that with the short sales and foreclosures, it has given first-time buyers an opportunity to get into a home at a price that they can afford."

Area Families Will Feel School Budget Crunch

BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE
THE CONNECTION
Center (Lee).

Superintendent Jack Dale wants to ask the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors for an additional \$57.8 million in funding to help meet Fairfax County Public Schools budget needs next year, according to a presentation he made to the school board Jan. 7.

Fairfax already allocates the school system approximately \$1.7 billion annually, or about 53 percent of the county's overall revenue. But Dale said the schools are facing a projected shortfall of \$166 million in the 2010-2011 school year, in part due to rising costs that are out of the system's control.

The additional money equates to an increase of three-cents per \$100 of assessed land value in the Fairfax County real estate property tax rate. Fairfax schools draw approximately 75 percent of their funding from the local county government, which in turn, almost exclusively relies on real estate taxes for revenue.

In addition to requesting more money from the county, Dale has suggested \$108.2 million in spending cuts to assist in closing the schools system's projected funding gap for next year.

The superintendent added that the quality of Fairfax County public education system will suffer as a result of the cuts.

"We spend the same amount of money on schools as Montgomery County, Md. but we have 30,000 more students than they do," said Dale, referencing Fairfax's largest public education rival in the region.

Dale does not ultimately make the decision about the Fairfax schools' budget. The school board – largely relying on the superintendent's budget proposal as a template – will make its formal request for funding from the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors next month.

In late April, the supervisors will pass an annual countywide budget and announce how much they intend to allocate to Fairfax schools overall next year.

Some school board members have already indicated that they would like to ask the county for funding above and beyond what Dale has suggested.

"Let's just say \$57.8 million is not my favorite number," said School Board member Brad

New Fees For Families

To make up for the budget shortfall, Dale is proposing \$3.4 million in new fees for families and students, such as:

- ❖ a \$75 charge for any Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate exam a student takes
- ❖ a \$100 student fee for participating on a sports team

Proposed programs for elimination

Dale has proposed the elimination of the following services:

- ❖ "behind the wheel" drivers education. Fairfax students would now have to depend on the private sector for such training.
- ❖ bus service to "gifted and talented" centers if a base school has "gifted and talented" equivalent classes available.
- ❖ bus service to academy programs if there are fewer than five students enrolled in the program from a high school.

❖ freshman athletics, indoor track and winter cheerleading

❖ foreign language in the elementary schools (not including immersion programs)

❖ elementary "focus" programs (currently present at Riverside, Fort Hunt, Hollin Meadows, Woodley Hills elementary schools in Mount Vernon; Lake Anne and Forest Edge elementary schools in Reston; Kent Gardens Elementary School in McLean; Daniels Run Elementary School in Fairfax)

❖ Pimmit Hills Alternative High School in Falls Church

❖ Modified School Calendar (currently present at Dogwood Elementary School in Reston, Franconia Elementary School in the Springfield area, and Timber Lane Elementary School in the McLean area)

❖ Project Excel

❖ Most traditional summer school programs

Other Budget Actions

Dale has also proposed the following:

- ❖ To increase class size by one student per teacher for all classes except special education.
- ❖ To freeze employees salaries and not give school system staff a "cost of living" increase in the next year.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Resident Eric Males sent this photo of a crowded classroom at Churchill Road Elementary School in McLean to Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville) and Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell (R).

Coping with Large Classes

Fairfax's average class size bumps up against physical and legal constraints.

BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE
THE CONNECTION

Increasingly large classes in local schools could begin to threaten student safety as well as student learning, according to school officials.

Fairfax County schools superintendent Jack Dale said local class sizes are getting to a point where officials will have to be careful about going over the maximum capacity allowed in some classrooms.

"Quite frankly, we are getting to the point in some schools where we are pushing the envelope in terms of the fire code," said Dale, during a budget presentation to the Fairfax County School Board Jan. 7.

Schools are being forced to cram 35 to 38 students into classrooms that were built to a 28-person capacity, said Dean Tistadt, Fairfax County Public Schools chief operating officer.

"If it is an older high school or an older middle school, we have some concerns about whether they can fit all the students into the classroom that they need to fit into the classroom because of building

and fire code reasons," said Tistadt.

DALE SAID the school system does not have classes exceeding room or building capacities currently.

"There is nothing in violation now. We would never do that because I am not going to sit here and violate the fire code," said Dale.

The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department said they have received no complaints about violations in public schools. The department has a "pro-active" approach to investigating county facilities, including public schools, though officials said the inspections are not necessarily done on

might not be the best space for that subject," said Dale.

IN SPITE OF CONCERNS about class size, Dale has suggested raising Fairfax's average class size by one student during the 2010-2011 school year as a way of closing the system's budget gap of \$100 million to \$200 million. By increasing the average class by one student, the school system saves approximately \$17.1 million, according to budget documents.

The Fairfax County School Board has raised the average class size twice in the last two years in order to make up for past financial shortfalls.

"People are not going to be happy to see another increase in class size," said Dale.

Class size is likely to go up even more next year if the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors does not give the school

system the extra \$57.8 million Dale has requested, he said. Without the extra funding, Dale and the school board will be forced to bump the average class by more than one student in 2010 and 2011.

In March, the county supervisors decide on a budget, defined primarily by the real estate property tax rate, and announce the county's total transfer to the school system. The school board will then make its final decision about spending cuts, including whether to raise average class size again,

SEE LARGE CLASSES, PAGE 15

"Let's be frank. The impact on instruction is already here and it is only going to get worse."

— Leonard Bumbaca, Fairfax Education Association

a regular schedule.

"If we received a complaint about a school, we would investigate it immediately. ... We do inspect the school periodically but they also have their own inspectors," said Dan Schmidt, spokesperson for the fire and rescue department.

If officials discover a class is too large for the room where it is scheduled to take place, they often move that section to a larger space, like a small lecture hall or assembly meeting room, he said.

"Sometime you have to move classes into a larger room that



Map by FCPA Planning and Development Division Land Acquisition Branch
Birge-Fadoul Properties
Dranesville District
TM# 30-2 (1) 1A, 5, 6, 7 & 8
2.02 Acres Total

ILLUSTRATION COURTESY FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

The Park Authority recently acquired four parcels between McLean Central Park and Ingleside Avenue.

McLean Central Park Improves, Expands

Stream, trails, lighting are improved on existing parkland.

BY MIKE DICICCO
THE CONNECTION

Although the county Park Authority authorized its staff to initiate eminent domain proceedings on the residential properties between the park and Ingleside Avenue in November of 2008, the land changed hands amicably last month.

Landowners John Birge and Susan Fadoul said in an e-mail that they were "delighted that the entire community will benefit from the addition to McLean Central Park."

Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville) said he was pleased that the property had been purchased without the county exercising eminent domain. "The community wanted to see the Park Authority get that property but didn't want to see it done through the courts," he said.

The properties consist of three homes located on four properties totaling just more than two acres. The house on the corner of Ingleside Avenue and Route 123 already belongs to the county Board of Supervisors.

THE ACQUISITION cost \$3.5 million, with the Board of Supervisors contributing \$1 million and park bond funding allocated for land acquisition covering the rest of the cost. According to the county tax map, the land and three buildings were assessed in 2009 at

a total of \$2,019,630, but zoning would have allowed up to six homes on the properties collectively, and Birge and Fadoul had expressed interest in redeveloping accordingly.

It was this potential for more intensive development that aroused the Park Authority's interest in acquiring the property. At meetings in fall of 2008, Dranesville District Park Authority representative Kevin Fay said that adding the properties to the park would protect them from redevelopment, create a more natural park boundary and help protect the Dead Run streambed, which runs through the park.

The stream is badly eroded and the portion of it that runs through the park is currently undergoing restoration. "The more open land and control we have over what goes on the land, the better we can protect the stream," said Park Authority spokeswoman Judy Pedersen.

Renovations to the adjacent Dolley Madison library, which have been in the works for years and are to begin in late February, prompted both the acquisition of the Birge-Fadoul property and the stream restoration. A Park Authority press release said the agency became interested in the property in 2000, when the library expansion was expected to impact the park, and county Stormwater Planning Division spokeswoman Irene Haske said

SEE CENTRAL PARK, PAGE 5



Thinking of Those in War Zones

Over winter break, the Langley High School's boys varsity basketball team and their Coach Travis Hess performed a service project with Neighbors International in Great Falls to pack boxes of food and supplies for American troops in the war zones of Iraq and Afghanistan. They purchased the goods and packed more than 25 large boxes under the guidance of Neighbors' Sharon Rainey and Pam Gilbert.

WEEK IN McLEAN

Bank Employee Robbed

An employee of the United Bank, located at 1320 Old Chain Bridge Road, was robbed on Wednesday, Jan. 6. The victim, a 49-year-old man, was working behind the counter when a man entered the bank wearing a mask; he displayed a handgun and demanded money. The victim relinquished an undisclosed amount of cash and the suspect fled on foot toward Dolley Madison Boulevard.

The suspect was described as black, between 5 feet 9 inches and 5 feet 11 inches tall and 200 pounds. He wore a red sweatshirt and blue pants.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Crime Solvers by phone at 1-866-411-TIPS/8477, e-mail at www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org or text "TIP187" plus your message to CRIMES/274637 or call Fairfax County Police at 703-691-2131.

Lace & Grace Tea Tickets on Sale

The Episcopal Church Women of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in McLean will host a Lace & Grace Tea on Saturday, Feb. 13, at 2 p.m. A portion of the tea proceeds will benefit local women served by Alternative House in Vienna.

The event features a variety of tea delicacies and sweets created by Mary Lee's Desserts of Vienna. Local instrumentalists will provide salon music. A portion of the tea proceeds will benefit local women served by Alternative House in Vienna. The event is open to girlfriends, mothers, grandmothers, aunts, friends and 'tween-to-teen girls, and will take place at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Hudson Hall, 8991 Brook Road, McLean, near the intersection of Route 7 and Lewinsville Road.

Tickets priced \$30 per person will be available through Jan. 20. Contact St. Thomas Episcopal Church at 703-442-0330 to reserve tickets. Group sales are welcome.

Grief Share Program Offered

A 12-week Grief Share Group program begins on Thursday, Jan. 21, 7-9 p.m., at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 7426 Idylwood Road in Falls Church to support those who are grieving the loss of a loved one. stpaulsoff@aol.com or 703-573-0295.



PHOTO BY LINA ABU-BAKER/THE CONNECTION

About 45-50 people attend the T'ai Chi class that meets every Saturday at the St. Luke Catholic School Gym in McLean.

Balancing Act

BY LINA ABU-BAKER
THE CONNECTION

Warren Conner, who has been practicing T'ai Chi since 1973, offers free classes every Saturday morning for 52 weeks a year at the St. Luke Catholic School Gym in McLean. Conner has been conducting T'ai Chi classes for more than 15 years and does it because, according to him, it's "challenging, interesting, happens to be good for your health, and primarily very enjoyable."

T'ai Chi is an ancient form of exercise that was originally developed in China and was used as a self defense or martial arts strategy. Today, T'ai Chi is an exercise

system that uses slow and smooth body movements to achieve a state of relaxation for both the body and the mind. T'ai Chi is not only the harmony of yin and yang but has physical and spiritual health benefits as well.

"It's a way of learning how to be centered and it helps with daily life and relationships," said Bealei Bson, who has been practicing T'ai Chi for 10 years.

Chuck Peck recommends taking the class because it's a "nice relaxing flow" and it's also a good way to "get centered and get your mind off the busy world."

As for Pat Best, taking T'ai Chi is for those who want a fuller life that's not busy and hectic. It also allows a person time to take a look

at what's inside and see where they hold their tension.

"On a physical level, you become more limber and stronger and on an inner level you become more centered," said Chris Paul, on the benefits of practicing T'ai Chi.

Rupert Welch, who has been studying T'ai Chi for number of years now, finds that one of the benefits is "the strengthening of the legs especially for people who are getting older."

Every Saturday, about 45-50 people attend the T'ai Chi class at the St. Luke Catholic School Gym. Joan Haffey, who has been practicing T'ai Chi for 12 years, encourages people "to come out and try it, you have nothing to lose."

VIEWPOINTS

Why do you take T'ai Chi?



Joan Haffey

"To bring more balance into my life, physically, mentally and spiritually."



Rupert Welch

"Very soft type of exercise that is good for the strength of the legs and balance."



Chris Paul

"I live in a pretty crazy world and this just centers me and gives me a sense of peace."



Pat Best

"For body, mind, and spirit and it's a very relaxing, calming exercise."

— LINA ABU-BAKER

NEWS

Central Park Gets Facelift

FROM PAGE 3

work on the library brought new environmental standards for the nearby watershed.

ADDITIONALLY, since last summer, most trails in the park have been resurfaced, and energy-efficient LED (light-emitting diode) lights were installed along the walkway from the library to Route 123 in September, said Cheryl Patton of

Foust's office. She said new stone dust would be laid on the paths of the disc golf course, where much of the stream restoration work is taking place, and some of the course would be rebuilt. Pedersen said a timetable had not yet been set for public meetings regarding the updating of the park's master plan to incorporate the new property. Tenants in two of the houses on the property have leases that extend

for up to the next 18 months.

No "active" amenities, such as sports facilities or playground equipment, are planned for the new acquisition, but Park Authority officials have said expansion of the village green, additional picnic areas and improved park access are possibilities.

The planning process, which will begin with public outreach, is expected to take 12 to 18 months.

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Large Classes, Tough Choices

Opening the doors for more charter schools in Virginia.

One reason for growth in the student population in public school systems in the area right now is the effect of the recession on family budgets. With more than 70,000 unemployed people in Northern Virginia, and thousands more underemployed, some families who did have children in private schools have switched to public school. Given the stellar reputations of the schools in question, it's a rational financial move.

But now growing enrollment and costs combined with stagnant budgets are forcing some local public school systems to rework their budget calculations as well, resulting in more than 30 students in many classes, more than 40 students in some classes.

This will no doubt send some parents back to the family budget drawing board, seeking a way to afford private school and smaller class sizes for their children.

EDITORIAL

Most parents don't care very much about the size of the average class, only the sizes of the classes in which their children are trying to learn.

Very large classes, especially classes with 30 or more students in them, are a detriment to learning. Students with any sort of challenges are particularly poorly served by large classes. Very large classes also make the

task of maintaining a civil school environment much more difficult.

Schools would do well to focus first on limiting very large classes, worrying a bit less about average class size.

It's also an excellent time to begin paving the way for charter schools in Virginia. What, in the middle of a financial crunch? If we start now to develop more encouraging guidelines for charter schools in the region, by the time the first schools are open, the economic climate will be vastly different.

Public schools cannot meet all the needs of all the students that come through the doors. Families deserve some well-constructed alternatives. Governor-elect Bob McDonnell, along with President Obama, is right to push to open the doors for more charter schools in Virginia.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

2010 Session Begins

To the Editor:
In 1619, a delegation of Virginians convened in Jamestown for the first meeting of the House of Burgesses. On Wednesday, Jan. 13, the western world's oldest continuing legislative body returns to Richmond for the 2010 General Assembly session. This year, the session is 60 days long. It will be a busy 60 days as we will be swearing in a new governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, as well as 20 freshman delegates, passing a budget for the next two years, and reviewing the hundreds of bills that will be considered by the House of Delegates and the State Senate.

As the delegate from the 53rd District, which includes the City of Falls Church, and parts of Fairfax County including parts of McLean, Vienna and Fairfax, I look forward to hearing your thoughts on issues and legislation to be acted upon during the legislative session. I encourage you to follow the bills and share your questions, thoughts and concerns. With revenues sharply lower, we will have a very difficult, but necessary job, of balancing the state budget without doing serious damage to important services. I hope you will let me know of any concerns and/or recommendations that you have. You can track the bills at <http://legis.state.va.us/> and contact me through my e-mail at DelJScott@house.state.va.us or by phone at 804-698-1053.

Del. Jim Scott/D-53

Lifesaving Bill

To the Editor,
As a two-time cancer survivor I was encouraged that the Senate passed its health care reform legislation before the Christmas holiday. It was an early gift for cancer patients, survivors and their families, who are closer than ever to reaping the benefits of historic legislation that will dramatically improve the health care system in this country.

The experiences of families affected by cancer highlight the major problems in our health care system. The difficult and complex road that begins with a diagnosis, cancer patients can encounter all of the major problems in the health care system today. They are often denied coverage because of preexisting condition exclusions or charged more than they can afford for critical care simply because they have cancer.

If enacted, this bill could have immediate and lasting benefits for millions of people with cancer and other life-threatening chronic diseases. Getting a cancer diagnosis would no longer put families at risk of being denied or getting priced out of lifesaving coverage.

This is a critical point in the war against cancer. And I would like to thank Sens. Warner and Webb for putting patients before politics by voting in favor of this lifesaving bill.

Thank you Sen. Warner and Sen. Webb for standing up and looking out for cancer patients.

Jim Radmore
American Cancer Society
Cancer Action
Network Volunteer
Herndon

Preserve And Protect

To the Editor:
On Monday, Jan. 18, Virginians from all over the state will gather on the Capitol Grounds in Richmond to commemorate Martin Luther King's birthday and his message of obtaining peace through non-violence. In addition, we will remember the approximately 800 Virginians who lose their lives every year to gun violence. We will meet with legislators to encourage them to pass bills that protect the public while preserving the Second Amendment right to bear arms.

This year, the following bills have been filed: HB 32, allowing faculty at state colleges and universities to carry concealed handguns on campus; HB 49, repealing Virginia's one gun-a-month law; HB 54, allowing the carrying of handguns into a courthouse when the courthouse is being used for non-judicial purposes; HB 69, declaring that firearms and ammunition made and/or retained in Virginia not be subject to federal or Congressional law; HB 72, changing the penalty for possession of a firearm on school property from a Class 6 felony to a Class 1 misdemeanor; HB 106, allowing a person with a valid permit to carry a concealed handgun in a place of worship with permission of the leader of the religious meeting and eliminating the restriction against carrying a concealed handgun in a restaurant that serves alcohol.

Presently, Virginia law allows citizens to carry weapons in every venue, except K-12 schools,

churches and courthouses. Citizens may open carry in a restaurant or establishment that serves alcohol but may not conceal carry. The Board of Visitors of each individual college or university determines whether students, faculty or staff may carry firearms on campus. Currently, Virginia citizens may only purchase one gun per month and federal law traditionally overrules state law.

Should the above bills pass, Virginia will allow the following: Virginia citizens to purchase an unlimited number of guns, the right of faculty to conceal carry on our campuses, allow guns in our courthouses and churches during "off" hours, lessen the penalty for those carrying firearms on K-12 school property, allow concealed weapons in establishments that serve alcohol and allow Virginia to ignore laws passed by the United States Congress.

My question has been and continues to be, how can Virginia, the place where the worst mass tragedy in American history occurred, and which loses more than 800 people every year to gun violence, continue to ignore the loss of life and create policies that leave families and communities devastated? Join us on Jan. 18 -please go to the Virginia Center for Public Safety Web site: <http://www.vacps.org/>.

Lu Ann Maciulla McNabb
Centreville

Letters to the Editor
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Every day at 7:20 a.m., Chris Farrell crosses the Old Dominion Drive walking his two dogs.

The Trio

A story of the trio McLean commuters see daily at 7:20 a.m.

BY DONNA SOUTHWORTH

Every day, at exactly 7:20 a.m., heads turn, cars swerve and early morning drivers squint their tired eyes to take a closer look at what appears to be a man walking a deer across Old Dominion Drive at a busy intersection in McLean. On closer look, it's not a deer, but a Great Dane — the exact size and color of a deer. Catch the sight on a misty morning, and one would swear it was a deer on a leash in this man's left hand. As if that's not enough, in stark contrast to this long, leggy beige figure on this man's left — to his right is a stocky, bowed-legged Olde English Bulldogge.

THE DOGS, affectionately known as Samson (Great Dane) and Bentley (Bulldogge), belong to Chris and Jill Farrell. Weighing in at 155 and 75 pounds respectively, or a combined 230 pounds, the dogs outweigh Chris Farrell, and these guys know it. They head out every morning for their 45-minute journey "Three-hundred-sixty-five, no matter what," he said. The repeat the journey in the evening. Both owners have full-time jobs, but, Chris Farrell said, "When you have these kinds of dogs, you can't ignore them."

To keep things "interesting," Chris Farrell varies the route. "We don't always pick the same paths, we mix it up, so there's a lot of sniffing around and the occasional squirrel they feel compelled to chase," Chris Farrell said. The boys do know some "regulars" at the park — Airedale Noah and Black Lab Liza — "so there's lots of sniffing and tail wagging," he said. And like commuters, the dogs don't

care much for car rides although they adjust, both in their respective corners. Cars are necessary for weekend jaunts to battlefields, trails, and new adventures.

Samson, now 6 1/2-years old, is "extraordinarily well mannered, has two beds on two floors to choose from, each depending on his mood," Chris Farrell said. "He can bake in the sun on one floor or chill out on another floor, consumes six cups of food a day, doesn't particularly care to walk in the rain and has free reign of the house."

Bentley, 18 months old, is "America's happiest dog, exuberant, and loves everyone, all the time, hard," he said. "So we're working on good manners right now."

After the morning hike, Chris Farrell often runs Bentley a couple of miles to "knock the wind out of his sails," so he's [Bentley] "wiped out" for the day. Still, he finds it easier to have two dogs "the older dog trains the younger dog, and the younger dog keeps the older dog company." While Samson has free roam, Bentley prefers the refuge of his crate, "the cave."

Chris Farrell swears the dogs never get on the furniture when he's not home. "They love to wrestle," he said. "To the uninitiated, it's horrifying. The growling, groaning, snarling, sounds like something horrible is going on, but they're just being knuckleheads together."

DELIVERYMEN, pizza guys and strangers don't make it past the front door, but what particularly sets these two off is "the harmless Lhasa Apso" they encounter in the park, said Chris Farrell. "They

SEE TRIO, PAGE 10

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Student Orchestra Takes the Stage

By WILLIAM SCOTT MARTIN
THE CONNECTION

It's hard enough to organize and synchronize almost three dozen people. It's even more difficult with something as sensitive as music. But to conductor Matthew Martz and the about three dozen musicians in the Student Symphonic Orchestra, success is determined by passion and love for music.

The students had been rehearsing the pieces for five months, only set back by the recent snowstorm and by the holidays. "We've had a bit of a struggle because we missed rehearsals here and there," said Martz. The music includes pieces from John Williams to theme songs from TV shows to even video game music. The students chose all of the music. "It's music. ... I love it, so it's a fantastic thing," said Martz.

The musicians of the Student Symphonic Orchestra put in a great deal of practice and artistry, and Martz is often seen urging, sometimes playfully, the students to strive to be better.

"I'm trying to compliment you, guys," said Martz to the orchestra during a rehearsal.

Some of the families drive half-hour distances to practice. Even



PHOTO BY WILLIAM SCOTT MARTIN/THE CONNECTION
The Student Symphonic Orchestra's brass section during the rehearsal at the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in McLean.

students who were reluctant at first, like flautist Ellen Upsal, warmed up to it. "My mom kind of made me," she said. "At first, I didn't like it, but now I like it."

For many of the students, this Saturday will be their first performance.

They will be performing selections from the "Phantom of the Opera" at the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in McLean, beginning at 7 p.m. For many parents, it will also be the first time they see

their children on stage.

MARTZ, WHO was a senior at Marshall High, founded the orchestra, beginning with only a handful of students. "It started off with about 12 players that were all just my friends," said Martz. "I had purchased some music. I just started telling about it my friends who played stringed instruments and wind instruments and it started growing." Since Martz graduated, the orchestra now

boasts 35 members.

"Originally, it was mostly kids from Marshall High School," said Nick Kemp, orchestra member. "But I was one of the first ones that was outside the general group of the first year, and now we're recruiting from different schools more than just Marshall. I've recruited several players. ... It's just a good way to connect."

Martz attributed the rapid growth and success of the orchestra to several things. First, the orchestra does not charge the students to be able to play, unlike other major youth orchestras. Many of these organizations must buy their music and these fees are transferred to orchestra members. The orchestra also doesn't use auditions. "I pretty much want players to play at a reasonable level and we work with the rest," said Martz.

Finally, Martz insists that students pick out their own music, even if it may not be traditional. "In high school, you play whatever the director wants you to play," Martz said. "A lot of that is the traditional band music, and there's so much more out there."

The musicians come from middle and high schools from all over Fairfax. Most of them already knew Martz and joined the orchestra at

his request. Others heard about it from another friend or were told about it at church. The students drive the entire organization. They are the ones who decide what and where they want to play. "There's no parental direction," said Katherine Culbertson, mother of orchestra member Lizzie Culbertson. "We're just here as support for them."

FOR PLAYERS like pianist Bobby McKay, the enjoyment comes from something that is ultimately simple. "It's a good way to play music with people I don't know and I get to meet people from all over the county," he said. McKay attended school with Martz and has been playing the piano for six years.

Already, the Student Symphonic Orchestra has been attracting attention. "We work with Wolfrap, the Kennedy Center, National Theater, the NSO, and the National Philharmonic," said Martz. Their Saturday concert will include cellist David Cho, and a professor from Shenandoah University will be performing a pre-show.

The Student Symphonic Orchestra performs Saturday, Jan. 16, 7 p.m. at the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, 1545 Chain Bridge Road in McLean. Concert is open to the public with no charge.

CALENDAR

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

THURSDAY/JAN. 14

Recollections of McLean and Great Falls. 7:30 p.m. at the McLean Historical Society, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. With Carole Herrick. Free. schulm@erols.com or 703-442-9370.

Financial Planning During Separation and Divorce. 7 p.m. at the Women's Center, 127 Park St., N.E., Vienna. \$45 non-members, \$35 members. www.thewomenscenter.org or 703-281-2657.

FRIDAY/JAN. 15

Capitol Steps. 8 p.m. at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. 703-790-0123.

U.S. Navy Band's 33rd International Saxophone Symposium. 8 p.m. at George Mason University Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. With clinics, recitals and vendor displays, 3-7 p.m. 202-433-2525 or www.navyband.navy.mil/saxophonesymposium.

Chelsea Lee. 6 p.m. Jamin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$15. www.jaminjava.com.

Sonos. 10 p.m. Jamin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$15. www.jaminjava.com.

Daedalus Quartet. 8 p.m. at The Barks at Wolf Trap, Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1624 Trap Road, Vienna. \$35. www.wolfrap.org or 703-938-2404.

SATURDAY/JAN. 16

Gizmo Guys Juggling. 2 p.m. at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. \$14 non-residents, \$10 district residents. There will also be a Tennis Ball Juggling Workshop for ages 9-adult at 3:30 p.m.; the cost is \$10 per person. 703-790-9223.

Capitol Steps. 8 p.m. at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. 703-790-0123.

U.S. Navy Band's 33rd International Saxophone Symposium. 8 p.m. at George Mason University Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. With clinics, recitals and vendor displays, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. 202-433-2525 or www.navyband.navy.mil/saxophonesymposium.

Learn Tai Chi. 1 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. The ancient art of movement, energy awareness and mental concentration. Wear comfortable clothes and shoes. 703-757-8560.

Northern Virginia Model Railroaders Open House. 1-5 p.m. at the W&OD Depot (along bike trail), 231 Dominion Rd., Vienna. Operating HO scale display depicting the Western North Carolina Railroad, a portion of the Southern Railway. Free, donations accepted. www.nvmr.org or 703-938-5157.

Chelsea Lee. 6 p.m. Jamin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$15. www.jaminjava.com.

John Eddie (full band). 9:30 p.m. Jamin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$15 in advance, \$18 at the door. www.jaminjava.com.

Northern Virginia Country Western Dance. at Luther Jackson Middle School, 3020 Gallows Road, Falls Church. Line dance at 7:30 p.m., beginners' couples dance at 8 p.m. Open dancing 8:30-11 p.m. \$10 for NVCWDA members, \$12 for non-members, \$5 for ages 16-20 with

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

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BULLETIN BOARD

To have community events listed in the Connection, send to McLean@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Friday.

THURSDAY/JAN. 14

Vienna-Tysons Regional Chamber of Commerce. 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Board Installation Luncheon at Fleming's Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar. 1960 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. www.vtrcc.org.

FRIDAY/JAN. 15

Republican Club of Greater Reston Annual General Meeting and Election of Officers. 7:30 p.m. Lake Anne Community Center. 703-406-9740.

SUNDAY/JAN. 17

NAACP Fairfax County Youth Council Meeting. 4 p.m. at the George Mason University Johnson Center, Robeson Room, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Meetings are open to youth ages 10-20. restonbell7@gmail.com.

TUESDAY/JAN. 19

Virginia Liberty Project Meeting with Walter Williams. 6 p.m. The Waterford at Fair Oaks, 12025 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, Fairfax. Free. Reserve at 703-286-5241.

SATURDAY/JAN. 23

League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area General Meeting. 10:30 a.m. at Country Club of Fairfax, 5110 Ox Road, Fairfax. 'A New Tysons: Vision or Pipe Dream?'

with Clark Tyler, Chairman of Tysons' Land Use Task Force. The discussion is free, reservations for lunch following are required. Reserve at www.lwv-fairfax.org.

Town Hall: Senator Janet Howell, Delegate Jim Scott, and Delegate Barbara Comstock. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at the Little Theatre at Longfellow Middle School, 2000 Westmoreland St., Falls Church. DelJScott@house.state.va.us or 804-698-1053.

Town Hall: Senator Mary Margaret Whipple and Delegate Jim Scott. 1-3 p.m. at Falls Church Community Center, 223 Little Falls Street Falls Church. DelJScott@house.state.va.us or 804-698-1053.

MONDAY/JAN. 25

McLean & Great Falls Celebrate Virginia. 5:30 p.m. at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The group is planning an event for June 26, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the beginning of McLean. Contact Carole Herrick at 703-356-8223.

Mental Health and Mental Illness Planning Session. 7 p.m. at First Christian Church, 6165 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. With the National Alliance on Mental Illness, Northern Virginia Chapter. 703-535-1577 or ioov-nova@nami.org.

TUESDAY/JAN. 26

Vienna-Tysons Regional Chamber of Commerce. 5:30 p.m. Chamber 101 and Monthly Mixer at Chima Brazilian Steakhouse, 8010 Towers Crescent Drive, Vienna. www.vtrcc.org.

The Trio

FROM PAGE 7

sometimes go into defensive alert mode with very small dogs. It's really quite ridiculous when some little puffball yaps at them, and they react full speed ahead."

Aside from the Farrells, the dogs' third best friend is the FURminator, the 21st century de-shedding tool Chris uses to remove loose fur. In actuality, the guys are getting a full body "massage" and, of course, they know it. While it appears these two have it made, the receiving is equally on the other end.

"You can't have a dog and not laugh at least once a day," said Chris Farrell. "Like they say, 'Man's best friend.' I really love them. As Truman said, 'If you want a friend in D.C., get a dog.' I've got two of them. It's unconditional love. They're two sweet animals."

Donna M. Cedar-Southworth is a writer living in McLean. She served as speechwriter to the director, Office on Disabilities, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 9

student ID. www.nvcwda.org or 703-860-4941.

Ballroom dancing with The Family Band. Colvin Run Schoolhouse, 10201 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Jitterbug lesson at 8 p.m., \$5; dancing 9-11:30 p.m., \$12. 703-795-2003 or www.colvinrun.org.

John Jennings & Friends. 8 p.m. at The Barns at Wolf Trap, Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1624 Trap Road, Vienna. \$22. www.wolftrap.org or 703-938-2404.

SUNDAY/JAN 17

Martin Luther King Celebration. 4 p.m. at Saint Luke Catholic Church, 7001 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Joseph Schwantner's New Morning for the World, the Washington Symphonic Brass and more. \$25, students under 18 free. 866-962-7277 or www.wsbrass.com.

McLean Community Center Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration. 3-5 p.m. at MCC, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. With Michael Hill's Blues Mob and the Rev. Robert Cheeks of Shiloh Baptist Church. The architect of the Dr. King D.C. Memorial, Dr. Ed Jackson, Jr. will give a project update. www.mcleancenter.org.

Hungry For Music Benefit. 7 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$12. www.jamminjava.com.

Garden Scale Trains. 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Washington, Virginia, Maryland Garden Railway Society will run G-Scale model railway trains. Adults \$2, children \$1. 703-425-9225.

MONDAY/JAN. 18

Give Together: A Family Volunteer Day. 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at Dewberry Hall in the Johnson Center, George Mason University, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Volunteer for multiple nonprofit agencies at one central location. Service projects will benefit populations served by FACETS, Fairfax 4-H, the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia and the Orphan Foundation of America. Pre-registration encouraged at www.volunteerfairfax.org. Contact 703-246-3826 or swatson@volunteerfairfax.org.

Open Mic Showcase hosted by Ron Goad. 7 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$2. www.jamminjava.com.

McLean Art Society Meeting. 10 a.m. at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Featured artist: watercolorist David Daniels. 703-790-0123.

TUESDAY/JAN. 19

Colvin Run Community Center Weekly Dance. 7 p.m. at Colvin Run Schoolhouse, 10201 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. \$10. www.colvinrun.org.

Chris Merritt (full band), Gills and Wings, Greg Holden and Ian Axel. 7:30 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$10 in advance, \$13 at the door. www.jamminjava.com.

Building and Maintaining Credit and Debt Management. 7 p.m. at The Women's Center, 127 Park St., N.E., Vienna. Free. Registration required at www.thewomenscenter.org or 703-281-2657 ext. 266.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 20

Todd Fickley Organ Recital. 1 p.m. at Saint Luke Catholic Church, 7001 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Free. 703-356-0670 or

www.musicinmclean.org.
International Guitar Night. 8 p.m. at The Barns, Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1624 Trap Road, Vienna. Lulo Reinhardt, Itamar Erez, Stephen Bennett & Brian Gore. \$24. 703-938-2404 or www.wolftrap.org.

Avoiding Divorce Court: How To Negotiate a Property Settlement Agreement. 7 p.m. at The Women's Center, 127 Park St., N.E., Vienna. \$40 non-members, \$30 members; \$75 non-member couples, \$50 member couples. www.thewomenscenter.org or 703-281-2657.

THURSDAY/JAN. 21

Chapter 227, Vietnam Veterans of America Inc. Meeting. 7:30 p.m. at Neighbor's Restaurant, 262D Cedar Lane, Cedar Lane Shopping Center, Vienna. Challenges of Women Serving in the Modern U.S.,

Military, with speaker Kayla Williams, former army Arabic linguist of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and Iraq War veteran, author of "Love My Rifle More Than You: Young and Female in the U.S. Army." All invited. Free. 703-255-0353 or www.vva227.org.

Peter Mulvey and Jeffrey Foucault. 7:30 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$12 in advance, \$15 at the door. www.jamminjava.com.

Washington Ballet Artistic Director Septime Webre. 7:30 p.m. at Langley School, 1411 Balls Hill Road McLean. Webre will discuss how a strong education in the arts prepares children to excel, and will share strategies for parents to help build 'performing arts intelligence,' in their children, encouraging them to develop a lifelong appreciation of all performing arts. Free, reservations suggested. 703-356-1920 or www.langleyschool.org.

FAITH

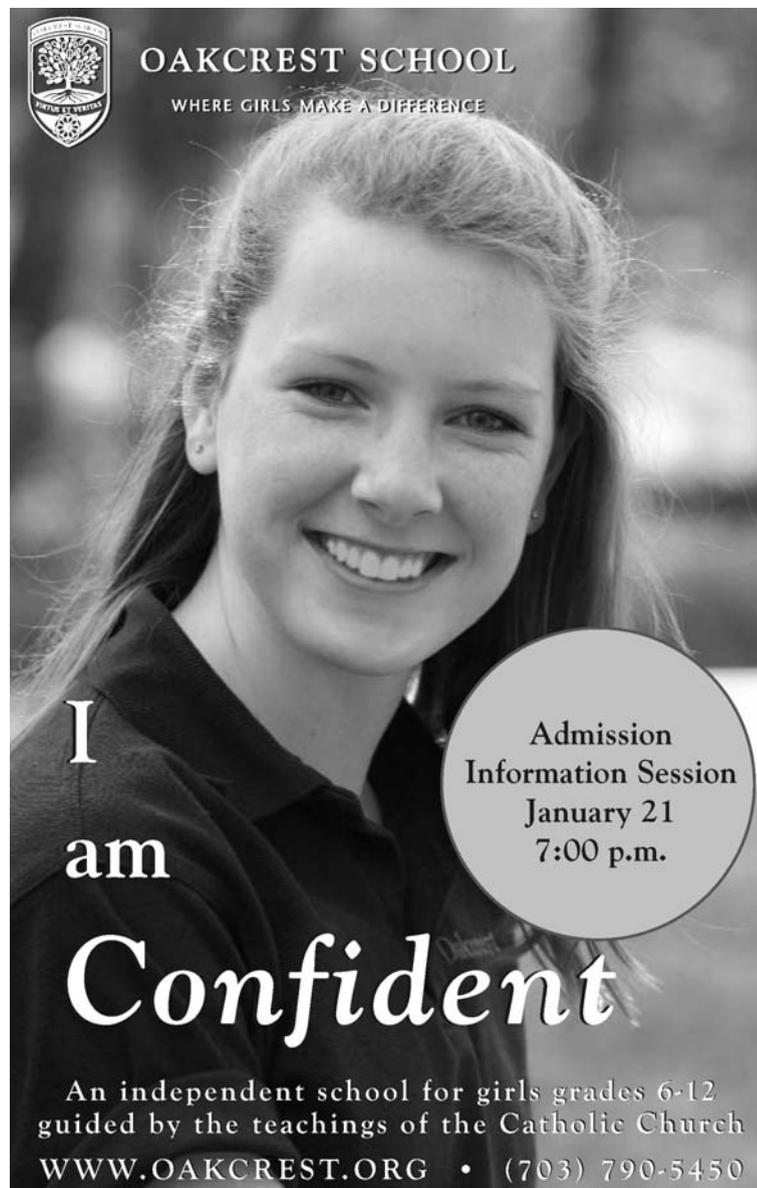
Faith Notes are for announcements and events in the faith community. Send to McLean@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Friday.

Antioch Christian Church, 1860 Beulah Road in Vienna, is hosting guest speaker the Rev. Deborah Thompson for the church's Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday Celebration at 11 a.m. Sunday, Jan. 17. The public is invited, and a reception will follow. www.antiochdoc.org or 703-938-6753.

Grief Share Group. 7-9 p.m. at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 7426 Idylwood Road, Falls Church. A 12-week program beginning 7 p.m. on

Thursday, Jan. 21 to support those who are grieving the loss of a loved one. stpaulsoff@aol.com or 703-573-0295.

Episcopal Church Women of St. Thomas Episcopal Church Lace & Grace Tea, 2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13. With a variety of tea delicacies and sweets, and live music by local instrumentalists, at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Hudson Hall, 8991 Brook Road, McLean. A portion of the proceeds will benefit Alternative House in Vienna. \$30 per person. Reserve tickets at 703-442-0330. Group sales welcome. 703-272-7796 or mollieregans@verizon.net.



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McLean Girls Looking To Turn Up Intensity

Highlanders' basketball team thinks it can compete in tough Liberty District.

BY RICH SANDERS
THE CONNECTION

With solid players such as Melissa Wilson, Andie Romness and Caitlin Baker, the potential is certainly there for the McLean High girls' basketball team to be among the better group of teams in the Liberty District this season.

The questions facing the Highlanders (6-5 record, 1-3 district) with the recent start of the district schedule is the team's ability to play at a fairly high level over an entire game as well as its ability to consistently play with high energy.

Over three district games last week, McLean had both good and bad stretches of play. The team's best game was at the start of the week, a 51-35 district road win at Marshall on Monday, Jan. 4. The Highlanders struggled over the game's first five minutes with their shooting touch, although McLean coach Mike O'Brien said he was pleased with his players' shot selections early on. They just weren't fallen. But McLean heated up as the game continued and, particularly from the second through the



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

McLean High senior forward Melissa Wilson, shown here going up for a shot, recently earned All-Tournament accolades for her fine play during the Highlanders' recent holiday tournament action in Fredericksburg.

fourth quarters, played good basketball.

McLean received a balanced scoring attack in the victory. Erin Mundy, a junior forward, led the

Highlanders with 11 points, while Romness, a junior guard, added nine. Other scoring contributions came from freshmen guard Shellie Kanuit (8 points), senior forward

Patricia Pascoe (6) and Wilson (7 points), the team's senior forward.

In its following game on Wednesday, Jan. 6, McLean lost by a point at Jefferson. O'Brien credited a hard-working Jefferson team (3-8) with earning the down-to-the-wire win. The coach said his team did not play with the same intensity it had shown against Marshall.

On last Friday night, McLean lost at home to defending district champion Madison, 60-47. The Highlanders fell behind by 18 points in the first half before surging back and getting within four points late in the third quarter. But a pair of long range Madison three-pointers in the final 14 seconds of the third quarter put the Warhawks back into the driver's seat and they went on to the win.

McLean struggled throughout the first half against Madison, trailing 18-8 after one quarter and 32-18 at the half. The Highlanders, however, played much better in the second half.

"We played a very inspired second half," said O'Brien.

Wilson scored 14 points in the loss and Romness tallied 13. Baker, meanwhile, added seven points.

"We've been inconsistent," said O'Brien, summing up the team's first 11 games this season. "We're a very athletic group. We want to try to out hustle teams. We're trying to focus on our intensity level. If we can figure out how to play [a strong] four quarters, we can play with anyone in the district."

Romness and Wilson are leading McLean in scoring this season

with 10 points per game each. The duo is also the team's top leading rebounders.

"Andie is a very athletic wing who has the ability to go into the lane and draw contact," said O'Brien, of Romness' determination to get to the basket. "She has no fears of going into the lane and goes in hard and strong."

Wilson, meanwhile, is the team's best inside player. She also has the ability to shoot from long range. At times, trailing a fast break, the ball will be kicked out to Wilson who will nail a trey.

OVER THE HOLIDAYS, McLean competed at the Stafford High Christmas Tournament outside of Fredericksburg. There, the Highlanders went 2-1 overall. The wins came over Colonial Forge (Stafford) and Riverbend High (Fredericksburg). The lone loss was to Woodbridge High, 42-39, on Dec. 29. Wilson, who scored 15 points in the loss to Woodbridge, earned All-Tournament honors for her stellar play over the three games.

"The tournament was good for the kids because we didn't know what to expect," said O'Brien, of going up against teams from outside of the Northern Region. "We went into every game mentally thinking it would be a hard game and we were ready at tip off."

McLean was scheduled to play a pair of district games this week, at home against South Lakes on Tuesday, Jan. 12, and at Stone Bridge High this Friday night, Jan. 15.

SPORTS ROUNDUPS

Fairfax Adult Softball (FAS), the largest softball organization in the area, is seeking umpires for its adult slowpitch softball leagues in Fairfax County. Umpires are paid monthly. Net pay starts at \$25 per one-hour game. Enjoy great pay plus bonus pay opportunities. Experience is desired but ASA training is provided beginning early February. Flexible scheduling based on availability. This is a great part-time profession where one can get out of the home/office and into the outdoor environment of recreational softball for a little exercise, excellent camaraderie, and fun. Contact FAS at 703-815-9007 or e-mail to office@fairfaxadultsoftball.com.

McLean Little League Spring Registration will take place on the following dates: Thursday, Jan. 14, 5-8 p.m.; and Saturday, Jan. 23 from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Register at McLean Little League Fields. McLean Little League boundaries include: all of Haycock, Kent Gardens, Chesterbrook, Franklin Sherman and Churchill Road Elementary School; all of Spring Hill Elementary School on the school side of the Dulles Access Road; and a portion of the Colvin Run Elementary School boundary, which includes that part of the old Spring Hill boundary that was shifted to Colvin Run. The Spring Hill and Colvin Run School boundaries along Route 7 that are in the McLean Little League boundaries

are south of Route 7 and east of Beulah Road. This includes the subdivisions of Carrington, Wolf Trap Woods, Shouse Village, Wolf Den, Lucky Estates, Beau Ridge, Millrace Estates, Towlston Meadow, Ciara Estates and A Country Place. Please visit the McLean Little League Web site at www.mcleanll.com.

The McLean Youth Soccer Fire White U-13 boys' team won the NVSC Fall Classic 2009. Coached by Trevor Parker and Moe Jebali, the boys scored a total of 13 goals and defeated the Arlington Strikers Red team, 2-1, in the finals to win the championship. Team members are Ethan Harker, Onur Marsan, Mark Martinkov, Nick Ange, Johnathan Zegler, John

Froelich, Brian Maffei, Sammy Bennett, Adam Jebali, RJ Doro, Matthew Grocock, Tucker Reilly, Arif Biyik, Ryan McLain and Matt Vasco.

Registration is open for the Spring 2010 season of Herndon-Reston Youth Lacrosse. Registration is open through February to youth in the Herndon and Reston areas for girls and boys, ages 6 to 15. No experience is needed. Separate teams are available for boys and girls in age divisions U-15, U-13, U-11 and U-9, with various levels of play based on experience and skill level. The teams compete in the Northern Virginia Youth Lacrosse League (www.nvyll.org) against opponents throughout Northern Vir-

ginia. Equipment rental and financial assistance is available. The season begins in March and runs through the second week of June. For more information on the league and to register, visit www.HRYL.org.

Registration is open for Reston Youth Association's Coed-Flag football Spring 2010 season. The league is for boys and girls ages 5-to-16. Visit www.restonseahawks.org to register for the upcoming season. The fee is \$65. Registration deadline is April 1. For any additional information visit the FAQ section on the Web site under Flag Football or contact flag@restonseahawks.org.

REAL ESTATE

To have real estate information listed in the Connection, send to mclean@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Friday.

Bruce Green, regional vice president of Weichert, Realtors announced Joyce Becker of the McLean-Old Dominion office was recognized for industry success in December. A neighborhood specialist, Becker led the region for new home dollar volume. The region comprises offices located throughout Virginia. Weichert, Realtors' neighborhood specialists can be reached in Weichert's McLean-Old Dominion office at (703) 821-8300 at 6257 Old Dominion Drive.



Joyce Becker

Green also announced J.D. Callander of the McLean/Dolley Madison office was recognized for industry successes in December. A neighborhood specialist, Callander led the region for resale dollar volume. The region is comprised of offices located throughout Virginia. Weichert, Realtors' McLean/Dolley Madison branch specialists can be reached at (703) 760-8880, located at 1313 Dolley Madison Boulevard.



J.D. Callander

Karen Briscoe with the Huckaby Briscoe Group, Keller Williams Realty in McLean has earned the Certified Luxury Home Marketing Specialist designation in recognition of her experience, knowledge and expertise in the luxury home market. "Karen is an example of a real estate professional who has worked to develop market knowledge and the special skills and competencies necessary to provide exceptional service in the fine homes and estates marketplace," said Institute President Laurie Moore-Moore, upon announcing Briscoe's designation.

Briscoe is an award-winning real estate professional who has gone through special training and met performance standards in the upper tier market. She has been in real estate since 1983. She specializes in the McLean, Great Falls, Arlington, Falls Church, Vienna, and Alexandria markets.

For current information on the local market, contact Karen Briscoe at the Huckaby Briscoe Group at (703) 734-0192 or e-mail Homes@HBGroup.us.

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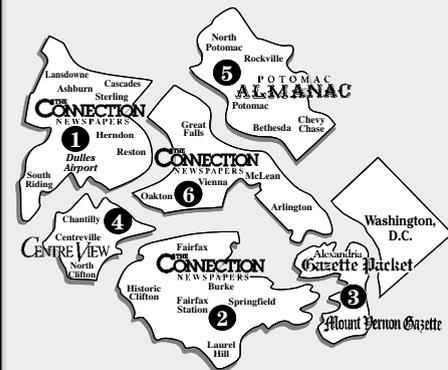
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CSI: Burtonsville



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I think I've been watching "CSI" and "NCIS" (along with spin offs CSI: Miami, CSI: NY and NCIS: Los Angeles) too long. After an unknown neighbor cleaned 18 inches of snow off my second car (I had cleaned off our primary car myself; it was closer to the road), in an attempt to determine who unselfishly "unsnowed" my buried car and shoveled all around it as well (to provide easy access, should I be so inclined), I looked first for physical evidence of this extremely good deed and noticed boot prints in the snow. (Determining directionality was impossible given the number of intersecting boot prints.) I only wish I would have had the same materials the CSIs have on television (presumably in real life, too) in order to secure the evidence for further inside consideration and avoid any degradation. Said consideration would have included having the appropriate materials on hand to make a plaster cast of the boot print which I then could scan and run through the boot-tread software to determine a size and hopefully find a brand/tread-pattern match.

Once having learned the brand and the size, I could then call the manufacturer to inquire what stores locally carried that brand - and size - of boot. With that information, I could then contact the stores directly (in person or over the phone) to see if the specific matching size and brand had been sold recently. If any matches were found, I could ask for sales receipts to see how payment had been made. If any payments had been made with a credit card, it would enable me to quickly identify the non-guilty but so far, anonymous party. If payments had been made with cash, I could then visit the stores myself and bring pictures of my neighbors to show to whomever had sold the matching brand and size boot to further corroborate the non-D.N.A. evidence and hopefully make a positive I.D. If one of my neighbors was picked out of the photo array, I believe I would then have sufficient evidence/information to confirm who was responsible for this non-random act of kindness.

Or I could just ask. Nevertheless, no good deed of such caring and unselfish concern - and sensitivity to another person's less than ideal medical situation (my stage IV lung cancer diagnosis, with which the neighborhood is keenly aware) - should go unacknowledged. As such, I want to give/express my heartfelt gratitude to my neighbor/neighbors who gave so selflessly of themselves and their time to do for me what I was not so inclined/able to do for myself. And even though the "act" performed here this snow-bound Sunday was no crime, I think its commission would make Gil Grissom, Horatio "H." Caine, Mac Taylor, Leroy "Jethro" Gibbs and "G" Callen proud of their fellow man. I sure am. And lucky as well, to be living amongst such kind and considerate individuals.

It makes my future, with all its uncertainty, less uncertain. And if there's one thing, other than love and positive vibrations that a cancer patient can't have enough of, it's certainty. Of that, I'm certain.

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

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21 Announcements

TRUSTEE'S SALE
OF VALUABLE
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Improved by the premises known as
1634 Hicks Drive, Vienna, Virginia

In execution of a Deed of Trust from Michael Dalakis and Tammy Dalakis, dated August 10, 2007, and recorded August 13, 2007, in Deed Book 19510 at page 1433 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

Tuesday, January 19, 2010 at 9:30 a.m.
the following property being the property contained in said Deed of Trust, described as follows:

Lot 6, CHAPEL, as the same appears duly dedicated, platted and recorded in Deed Book 1123 at page 56 and Outlot A of a resubdivision of Lots 1, 2 and 3 and a residue of the Hicks land, CHAPEL HILL, as per Deed of Resubdivision recorded in Deed Book 1783 at page 491, among the Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia.

Commonly known as 1634 Hicks Drive, Vienna, Virginia 22182.

TERMS OF SALE: A deposit of \$60,000.00 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 7.75 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.

Sale shall be made subject to all existing easements and restrictive covenants as the same may lawfully affect the real estate. Sale is further subject to mechanic's and/or materialman's liens of record and not of record. The property will be sold subject to all conditions, covenants, restrictions, rights of redemption of federal lienholders or encumbrances, and agreements of record affecting the same, if any.

In the event the undersigned trustee is unable to convey to the purchaser good title, then purchaser's sole and exclusive remedy shall be in the refund of the deposit paid at the time of sale.

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:
David N. Prenskey
Chasen & Chasen
5225 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W. #500
Washington, D.C. 20015
(202) 244-4000

NEWS

Large Classes Put Students In A Tight Spot

FROM PAGE 3
in April.

Several school board members fear that Fairfax County will either freeze or cut the school budget from where it was last year in order to avoid raising taxes. If the county were to hold the schools budget to its present level, the school system would have to make approximately \$160 million in cuts.

"If we have to cut \$160 million, there is going to be a lot of pain. If we have to cut \$160 million, we are going to have to increase class size," said School Board member Stu Gibson (Hunter Mill.)

PARENTS have been complaining to the county Council of Parent Teacher Associations about students having to sit on everything from radiators to bookshelves because some classrooms do not fit enough desks for each student to have their own.

"I have seen photos of classes that are so packed with desks already, there is no place to put some of the students," said Michelle Menapace, the parent organization's president.

When principal Laraine Edwards told Stenwood Elementary School that they would have to cope with at least one very large fourth grade class of 35 students, it was obvious she had already racked her brain trying to find a different solution, said Kelly Grizzell, the Vienna school's parent teacher association president.

"Our principal works very closely with the PTA. She went over every possible scenario with us and kept us in contact about what her plans were," said Grizzell.

The parent added that Edwards and the rest of Stenwood's staff had done everything they could to devote extra instruction assistant hours and other staff support to the exceptionally large class. That Stenwood fourth grade section is one of the largest, if not the largest, of its kind at the elementary school level, according to Fairfax County schools communications director Paul Regnier.

"We are trying to make the best of a difficult situation. At Stenwood, class size is big concern for us," said Grizzell.

THE LARGER CLASSES are having a negative impact on instruction, said several school advocates.

At the elementary school level, principals are being forced to create more combination classrooms, where students from two different grades are put in one homeroom class for most of the day.

SCHOOL NOTES

Send School Notes to mclean@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Friday.

Trevor Eissler will speak about Montessori principles of education at three local Montessori schools.

❖ Wednesday, Jan. 20 at 7:30 p.m. Ridgmont Montessori School in the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside

This can result in very large classes for certain subject areas..

In high schools, an increase in the average class size has meant that electives, including advanced science and math courses, which do not attract a substantial number of students to sign up have to be dropped from the school schedules altogether.

Teachers also complain that they are having difficulty moving around some classrooms and that they have had to seat children in areas of the classroom that they cannot easily reach for one-on-one instruction, said Leonard Bumbaca, president of the Fairfax Education Association.

SEVERAL FAIRFAX classes already exceed the teacher-to-student-ratio laid out by the Virginia Department of Education in state regulations. The commonwealth's "standards of quality" in education call for the teacher-to-student ratio in an average kindergarten class to be one to 24. In Fairfax, the ratio is one to 26.25, according to this year's budget documents.

State regulations also call for a teacher-to-student ratio of one to 24 for first through third grade classes and one to 25 for fourth and fifth grades. According to budget documents, Fairfax County is maintaining a staffing ratio of one-to-26.25 students in grades first through six this year.

Fairfax school officials said the school system calculates their student-to-teacher ratio differently than Virginia's Department of Education and that Fairfax is not in violation of state regulations, even if the budget documents suggest they are.

But in certain schools, several classes are much larger than Fairfax's average class size as well as the Virginia Department of Education's recommendations.

At Springhill Elementary School in McLean, parent Catherine Lorenze said two fifth-grade homerooms have 31 students and every sixth grade homeroom has 30 students.

According to Lorenze, Forestville Elementary School in Great Falls also has a third, fourth and sixth-grade class with 30 students each. Colvin Run Elementary School in Vienna has three fifth-grade classes with 31 students each and two fifth-grade classes with 33 students each.

"We have several fifth and sixth grade classes that are 30 to 35 students and primary class sizes that are 29 to 30 kids in the lower grades. Class sizes of 30 to 35 students are troublesome," said School Board member Jane Strauss (Dranesville.)

Ave., McLean.

❖ Thursday, Jan. 21 at 7 p.m. Montessori School of Oakton, 12113 Vale Road, Oakton

❖ Friday, Jan. 22 at 7:30 p.m. Montessori School of South Riding.

Eissler is author of "Montessori Madness! A Parent to Parent Argument for Montessori Education." Copies of his book will be available for \$20. Free admission. 703-715-0611.

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OBITUARY

Roger Jacob Chavez passed away on December 29th at his home in Millwood, Virginia surrounded by his loved ones.

There are no immediate plans for a service. We will gather in the spring to celebrate Roger's life. As for now, raise your glass to a printer, a tinkerer, a farmer, a dreamer, a visionary in Clarke County who made his dream real.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Clarke County Historical Association, P.O. Box 306, Berryville, VA 22611.

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LEGAL NOTICE

AT&T intends to file an application to construct a cellular telecommunications tower at 2505 Cedar Lane, Vienna, Fairfax County, Virginia 22180. AT&T is publishing this notice in accordance with Federal regulation 37CFR1.1301 et seq, the National Environmental Policy Act and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation 36 CFR 800. The project referenced as "Maple Avenue" will consist of the construction of a new telecommunications compound which includes the installation of a 115-foot tall monopole on which 12 telecommunications antennas will be mounted, AT&T and T-Mobile equipment areas on raised platforms, and a ground level mesa cabinet and power back board. An 8'x 115'x 35' wood fence and landscaping will surround the compound. Parties interested in submitting comments or questions regarding any potential effects of the proposed facility on Historic Properties may do so in writing by contacting Carolyn Mitchell, AT&T, at 7150 Standard Drive, Hanover, Maryland 21076 or michael.wolf@atcassociates.com

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