

Students Raise Money for Haiti

NEWS, PAGE 3

On Martin Luther King Day, members of the Langley High School Theater Honor Society sold baked goods they had made by hand to raise money for Heifer International's efforts to help victims of the earthquake in Haiti. From left are Sarah Mendelsohn, Wes Brandt, Shamon Kovach, Allie Carlon, Yusuf Goal, Matt Grisdela and Abby Hargroves.



Helping in a
Time of Need

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Trick's Final Encore

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PHOTO BY MIKE DICICCO/THE CONNECTION

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Partners with CCH in the Haiti relief effort include: MedAssets; Inova Fairfax Hospital for Children; Missionary Flights International; and MTS Services.



"In addition to our prayers, the people of Haiti are in great need of our compassion and assistance."

— Charles Mann, Inova Health System Board Member



"Luciana and I have worked with the Community Coalition for Haiti and we ask you to join us in supporting the humanitarian efforts that are under way."

— Robert & Luciana Duvall



"We all need to take swift action to make sure that relief reaches the people of Haiti as quickly as it can."

— Darrell Green, NFL Hall of Fame

Photo by © Cameron Davidson

NEWS



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

From left, rescue squad officer Rodney Vaughan and hazmat specialist Mark Menton, who works the Alexandria-Lorton corridor, confer about the deployment.

Helping in a Time of Need

Fairfax County Search and Rescue Teams are in Haiti.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Following the 7.0 earthquake in Haiti, Fairfax County's Urban Search and Rescue Team (Virginia Task Force 1) was sent last week to look for and rescue victims.

Under the auspices of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), a 72-member team left Tuesday night, Jan. 12, arriving the next day and it quickly achieved success.

"We had a save Thursday morning [Jan. 14]," said county Fire and Rescue Department spokesman Dan Schmidt. "A U.N. security officer of Estonian descent was detected in a rubble pile and extricated in good condition by members of Virginia Task Force 1. And that's the essence of why firefighters do what they do — they want to save lives. So when they did, it was an incredible, adrenaline-booster for them."

But with the situation there still so dire, said Schmidt, "The USAID asked us to send a second team, and County Executive Anthony Griffin and Fire Chief Ron Mastin approved the request." So a 42-person contingent left Thursday, Jan. 14, arriving early Friday morning.

The team comprises two doctors, structural engineers, paramedics, specialists in search-and-rescue and hazardous materials, plus a search canine and handler. The structural engineers include rigging specialists who help shore up unsafe areas using block and tackle, plus other methods, so firefighters can continue to extricate people.

"The federal government funds all costs associated with training and deployment," said Schmidt. The team will be in Haiti, 10-14 days, while other firefighters fill in for them here. They flew on a chartered air-

craft, with their bags of personal items, while a second plane carried their equipment, such as jackhammers, cameras, listening devices, concrete-cutting saws and medical supplies. Water and military MREs (meals, ready-to-eat) also went along.

"This team deployed to Haiti in November 2008 for a school collapse, and many of those same members are returning," said Schmidt. The team's first mission was in December 1988, when it responded to an Armenian earthquake with a small, technical-rescue team. Since then, the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team has been deployed all over the world, including to Kenya, Iran, Taiwan, Turkey, Oklahoma City and the Pentagon after 9/11. It also responded after Hurricanes Katrina and Isabel.

LAST THURSDAY, team members reported to the county's Fire and Rescue Academy throughout the day. Some were accompanied by family members; each brought one red and one yellow bag. Lt. Diron Powell, who works at the Franconia, Kingstowne, Springfield and West Springfield stations, helped them check in.

Each person's bags had to be less than 90 pounds total for the two, and Powell made sure they contained all the necessary gear. Filling the red bags were uniforms, toiletries and personal items. The yellow bags were stuffed with operating gear such as flashlights, batteries, gloves, safety glasses, hearing protectors, rain gear, insect repellent and hand cleaner.

Teresa MacPherson of Catlett is the canine search specialist. She's not a member of the fire department, but has been on the team since 1993. Her partner's a 5-year-old black Labrador named Banks.

"We were in Haiti in '08 for the school collapse," she said. Before Banks begins a search, MacPherson unclips his leash so he's unencumbered. "We don't want any snagging," she said. "He can go places we can't. I say, 'Go find,' and he starts looking for live,

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NEWS

Walkways Coming to Pike, Walker Road

'Phase I' went to bid last week and is to be completed by summer's end.

BY MIKE DICICCO
THE CONNECTION

On Jan. 13, the job of building concrete, stone dust and asphalt walkways on Georgetown Pike and Walker Road was put out to bid. When it is finished sometime this summer, a 5-foot wide sidewalk will run north from Georgetown Pike past Great Falls Elementary School on Walker Road, and another pathway will run from the fire station west to Apple Wood Lane along the north side of Georgetown Pike. The westernmost 600 feet of the trail along the Pike will be stone dust, and the remaining 300 feet will be asphalt. That walkway will then be connected to Walker Road as part of the fire station renovation that is to begin in the next couple of months. The project also includes reconstructing 1,000 feet of stone dust trail running east from the village center along Georgetown Pike.

Bids on the work are due Feb. 4, and Walt Wozniak of the Utilities Planning and Design Division of the county's Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) said work would probably start two to three months later. The construction is then to be completed within 90 days, placing the finishing date sometime in July or August. The reason for the unusually long delay between receiving bids and starting work, Wozniak said, is that federal grants are funding much of the project, requiring additional approvals and paperwork.

THE TRAILS are part of an ongoing effort to make Great Falls more pedestrian-friendly, and, as a registered scenic byway, Georgetown Pike has received a number of grants for trails over the last 10 years. According to documentation by Great Falls Trail Blazers Vice President Eleanor Weck, four federal grants received between 1999 and 2005 allocated a total of more than \$900,000 for trails along the 4.2 miles of road between River Bend Road and Route 7, along with almost \$57,000 for a feasibility study for a trail from Great Falls Park to the Beltway. Another \$240,000 was granted for paths on Walker Road.

"In future years, basically, we'll try to build other segments," said Frank Roberts, senior engineer for the Planning and Design Division for DPWES. He said the county matches about 20 percent of the grant money, and the funding is administered by the state.

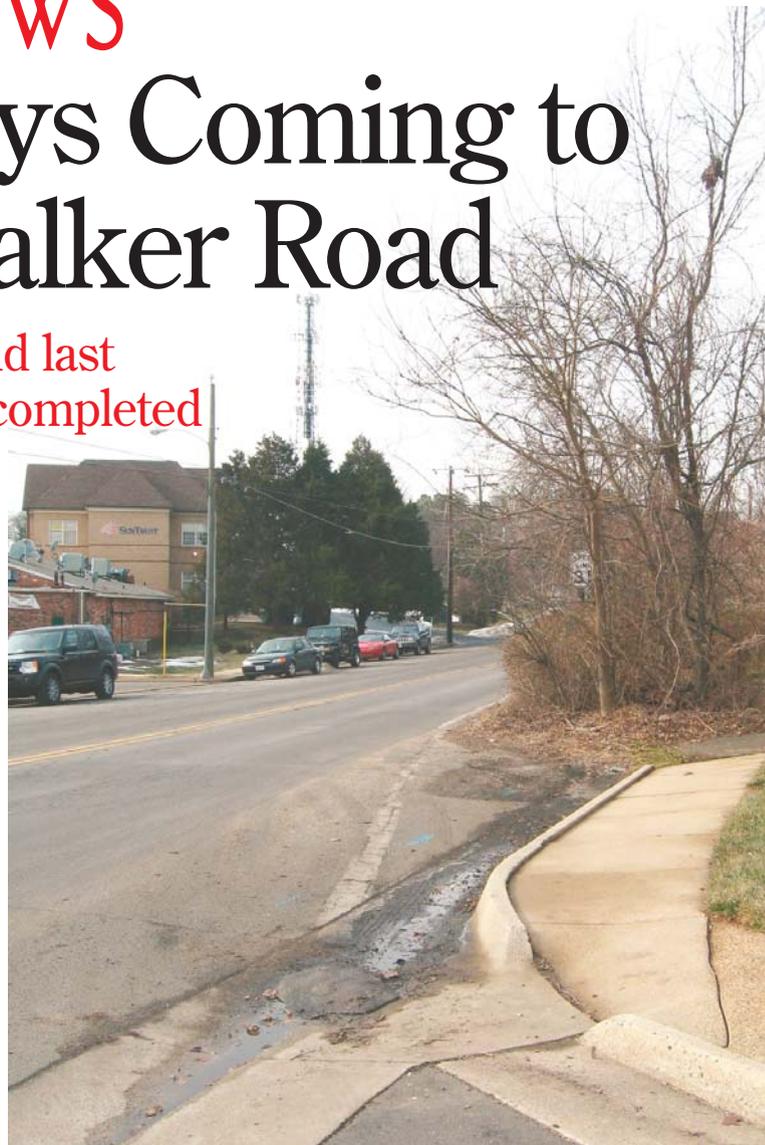


PHOTO BY MIKE DICICCO/THE CONNECTION

By the end of summer, this sidewalk on Walker Road, which dead-ends just north of Georgetown Pike, will run to Great Falls Elementary School. Walkway construction will also take place along the Pike.

"In future years, basically, we'll try to build other segments."

**— Frank Roberts,
Department of Public Works and
Environmental Services**

In addition to the many tiers of government involved, Weck said her and other Great Falls residents' preference for stone dust trails had further complicated the matter of putting the grant money to use. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will not maintain walkways that don't have hard surfaces, and Fairfax

County has been reluctant to allow volunteers to maintain, let alone build, trails where the county has easements, she said.

"What they finally have agreed to do is let us maintain existing trails," she said. "I think they're more interested now that they don't have money."

What may seem like a lot of grant money also only goes so many linear feet, as trail construction requires tree removal, erosion controls, the purchase of easements, grading, handicapped ramps, hand rails, fence reconstruction, and relocation of signs, mailboxes and utilities, in addition to various other expenses.

ROBERTS said another section of stone dust trail, known as Georgetown Pike Phase II, which is to run 1,800 feet from Falls Chase Court to Utterback Store Road, was now in the planning phase. A feasibility report was conducted in April, and Wes Callender of Supervisor John Foust's (D-Dranesville) office said a preliminary design was submitted to VDOT in mid-November.

Already completed is a 600-foot stretch of sidewalk in front of Great Falls Elementary school that was built as part of the school's renovation.



PHOTO BY MIKE DICICCO/THE CONNECTION

From left, Judith Beres picks out baked goods with the help of Langley High School Theater Honor Society members Becca Allen, Taylor Goodson, Hayley Mueller, Chris Paul and Emily Mannon.

Raising Money for Haiti

Langley Theater Honor Society stages bake sale to help long-term rebuilding in devastated country.

About 30 members of Langley High School's Theater Honor Society staged a bake sale on Martin Luther King Day to raise money for recovery efforts in Haiti. The students baked cookies, cupcakes, brownies and other deserts for the sale, which ran from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in front of the Great Falls Safeway. The goods were being sold for whatever donations customers thought appropriate.

Student Kate DaRocha said the group regularly staged charitable events and had been planning to hold the sale for the benefit of Heifer International since about a month ago. The international aid organization

trains the needy around the world in food production and makes gifts such as livestock, seeds and trees in order to create long-term self-reliance. After last week's earthquake, Heifer International issued a call for aid for its coming work to help Haitian residents rebuild their lives. The honor society decided to direct its earnings toward the organization's efforts in the devastated country, DaRocha said. "The fact that they were working with Haiti after the earthquake was a really good addition."

As of about 1 p.m., the students had raised almost \$1,000.

— MIKE DICICCO

Fifteen Lives Saved

Virginia Task Force 1 (VATF-1), deploying both a heavy and medium team, has rescued 15 individuals from the rubble in Haiti since their arrival last week in Port-au-Prince.

The last rescue came late Sunday night, Jan. 17, 2010, where a 21-year-old female was trapped in a multi-story building. She was pulled

from the rubble and transported to a nearby Israeli Hospital. The team was assisted by the Martinique Search and Rescue Team.

Shortly upon arrival, both teams were merged into one large team, and operate out of a Base of Operations on the grounds of the American Embassy [See the story on Virginia Task Force 1 – Page 2].

WEEK IN GREAT FALLS

Driver Dies in Head-On Crash

Fairfax County Police are investigating a fatal crash that occurred on Tuesday, Jan. 12, around 10:15 a.m., in the Great Falls portion of Fairfax County. Marilyn S. Miller, 64, of 11101 Streamview Court in Great Falls, was pronounced dead at the scene.

According to the police report, Miller was driving a 2006 Acura RSX westbound on Georgetown Pike near Springvale Road when she crossed the center line and struck an oncoming 2005 Ford Escape head-on. The 70-year-old driver and 62-year-old passenger of the Ford were both transported to Inova Fairfax Hospital with non life-threatening injuries.

Crash Reconstruction detectives responded to the scene and do not believe speed or alcohol are factors in the crash.

New Exhibit To Open at Riverbend Park

A new exhibit that examines one of the rarest biological ecosystems on the East Coast, known locally as the Potomac Gorge, as well as the first native people who called the shores of the Potomac River home, will open on Saturday, Jan. 23. Ribbon cutting ceremonies are slated for 12 p.m., at Riverbend Park in the Visitor's Center. Light refreshments will follow a brief program and tour of the exhibit.

The exhibit highlights the creation of local floodplains, rocky cliffs and narrow valleys carved by the erosive forces of the Potomac River. Find out about the Paleo-Indians known for their skills as big game hunters and the ancient lands of Fairfax County that once were covered by ocean and volcanic islands. Discover ancient cultures and learn about the land 500 million years ago by looking at rocks.

Of particular note is a totem pole designed and carved by Rose Powhatan, an American Indian, who is a renowned lecturer and teacher about Indian culture and has also created totem poles currently on display at the Jamestown Settlement. Powhatan will speak at the ceremonies, joining local officials, Park Authority representatives and members of the community.

Riverbend Park is located at 8700 Potomac Hills St. in Great Falls. The program is free and open to the public, but reservations are requested. Call 703-324-8662 for more information and reservations.

Celtic Winter Concerts at The Old Brogue

The Old Brogue Irish Pub of Great Falls and Barnaby Productions, Inc. will present the 22nd season of traditional Celtic winter concerts: six Sunday evening concerts music from the British Isles, Brittany (France), the Celtic areas of Northern Spain, and their transplants in the New World, are presented in the Snuggery (dining room). Featuring nationally and internationally recognized Celtic musicians, the concerts are performed by the fireside in a pub atmosphere, where audiences are requested to be quiet (except, of course, when encouraged to participate). This is a non-smoking event.

A full dinner menu of the Old Brogue's fine fare will be available, as well as one of the area's most extensive collection of choice beers and ales. Space is limited, and these are popular concerts, so booking early is recommended.

The concerts will take place on six consecutive Sundays, from Feb. 7 to March 14, with three sittings for each concert: 4 p.m., 6 p.m. and 8 p.m., at The Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760-C Walker Road, Great Falls. Season tickets may be purchased for \$78 for all six concerts.

Individual concerts are \$15 each. Call 703-759-3309.



Wayne Groves, owner of Great Falls' Tricks of Trade, will be moving his leathersmithing business to Berryville at the end of January. He and his wife Barbara moved their business into the Village Center in 1979, a place initially intended to be an artisan craftsman village, but that changed as the residential market transformed Great Falls.



The familiar boot-shaped sign of the storefront of Tricks of the Trade, Great Falls' shop for leatherwork and shoe repair, will be gone at the end of January as the shop closes its doors in Great Falls after more than three decades of business in the Village Center.

Trick's Final Encore

The old shop says goodbye to Great Falls, hello to new beginnings.

BY JENNA PUGRANT
THE CONNECTION

One year ago, owner of Great Falls' Tricks of the Trade Wayne Groves had tossed in his leathersmithing tools for a government job. He had prepared to move his 37-year-old business from the heart of Great Falls into his house in Oakton and drive a bus in order to get retirement money for his family. Then, after a series of errors involved in downsizing his business, Groves said, "I was called right back into my craft." He managed to obtain a one-year extension on his business' lease and continued on as he had since his business moved into the Great Falls Village Center in 1979. Now his lease is up and Groves will pick up his leather business and leave Great Falls for Berryville, Va.

Tricks of the Trade, located next to Peking Gourmet, was one of the initial businesses to enter into the retail area. Groves has lived in the

"I've stood behind my front desk and seen three generations of family walk through the front door, grandmothers, their daughters and then their daughters."

— Wayne Groves

area his entire life and has worked alongside his wife and high school sweetheart Barbara since they both attended Marshall High School.

SINCE THE BEGINNING of his 30-year tenure, Wayne Groves said he has seen a lot of changes in Great Falls. "This used to be a place where people came to raise kids and ride horses," he said. At

the end of January, he will be moving his business out to Berryville. Wayne Groves was initially drawn to his new residence because of the housing market, saying it "is similar to what Great Falls used to be 30 years ago in terms of the nature of the people there and the equestrian following."

Wayne Groves began working with leather when he was 17. "It was something to do in winter," he said. "I'd make projects for my family and friends initially, and then I ended up selling my work for money." Trained by a third generation Italian shoemaker, he claims that his art of "leathersmithing" is a business that he can take anywhere. "It will always be service that will be done the same way it was 20 years ago and no advancement in technology can change that."

"This has been more than just a business," said Wayne Groves. "It has more like a ministry in Great Falls and my front desk has been more like a pulpit." He has hired more than a dozen apprentices over the past three decades, offering help to those who were at a crossroads in their life that

SEE GROVES, PAGE 5

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NEWS

Groves Takes 'Road Not Taken'

FROM PAGE 4

leathersmithing helped get them through. "I've stood behind my front desk and seen three generations of family walk through the front door, grandmothers, their daughters and then their daughters. The relationships we've built through our business I am going to miss that greatly," he said.

Scott Hommel, the owner of the Falls Hardware Ltd., has developed a relationship with the Wayne and Barbara Groves since they moved their business next door to Tricks of the Trade. "Wayne and I have done some work for one another," Hommel said. "They've been great neighbors. Their move is an irreplaceable loss to the community of Great Falls."

AS WAYNE GROVES PREPARES to leave the area he has worked in his entire life, he compared the close of this chapter in his life to the final stanza of Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken."

"Life is a series of choices, not chances," he said. "We have a plan for each of our lives, and while I



PHOTO BY JENNA PURANT/THE CONNECTION

Wayne Groves' wife Barbara has worked alongside her husband doing leatherwork since Tricks of the Trade originally opened in 1972 in Fairfax. Both Wayne and Barbara Groves have lived in the Northern Virginia area their entire lives and were high school sweethearts at Marshall High School.

am sad to leave Great Falls behind, I know that what is important is not where I am, but who I am."

Wayne Groves said he will miss all the traditions associated with Great Falls, such as the Easter Egg hunts in the village and the annual

tree lighting. A man of God, as Wayne Groves prepares to move his business to Berryville, Groves keeps this anonymous quote near to his heart: "Give me to serve in humble sphere, I ask not aught beside. Content to fill a little place, if God be glorified."

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PEOPLE

Breaking into 'Big Biz'

Local resident and Bookkeeping Express CEO becomes national business talk radio show's 'franchise expert.'



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Greg Jones

Greg Jones, Great Falls resident and CEO of the McLean-based BookKeeping Express, has gone nationwide, and not just with franchises of his accounting business. In November, Jones became the "franchise expert" for "The Big Biz Show," a business talk radio show that airs on more than 150 AM stations across the country.

"It's very lighthearted, very loose [and has] almost a comic sense to a certain degree," Jones said. "It's certainly not '60 Minutes.'" Every other Wednesday, he spends 20 minutes or so chatting with the show's hosts on the air. "We decide on topics, but we typically never stay on topic," he said.

THE COMPANY he hires for public relations, Fishman PR, inquired about getting him on the show after the CEO of a company he invests in made a "Big Biz" appearance. Jones had rare qualifications,

with experience on both ends of the franchise business model. He and a partner are in the process of opening their third Five Guys restaurant franchise in Florida, while he and two partners sell franchises of BookKeeping Express. Although they bought the accounting company at about the time that the economy fell apart in late 2008, they have opened 19 franchises since then, with the latest opening last week in Pennsylvania. "We've been selling consistently every month," he said.

BookKeeping Express, which was founded in 1984

SEE TRAINING, PAGE 7

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PEOPLE

Training for a Business World

FROM PAGE 6

in southern California, offers accounting services for small businesses, a market that Jones said does not diminish when the economy suffers. "This service, it's not sexy. Accounting is not sexy. But it's a service that doesn't go away," he said.

Most small businesses try to do their own accounting, "which tends to end in a bad way," Jones said, noting that small business owners rarely are trained in accounting. When the economy sours, businesses that were hiring certified public accountants (CPAs) to do the work may start trying to keep their own books in order to save money. BookKeeping Express, he said, offers an alternative that is cheaper than hiring a CPA, which can cost up to \$200 per hour.

Jones and his partners sell territories that contain a minimum of 1,500 businesses with revenues of \$2.5 million per year or less, the company's target demographic, and they offer franchisees full training, certification, a franchise development program, public relations, an information technology structure and other services. "We give them a turnkey business operation, so that they really just have to drive the ship," he said.

"It's been very well received. We're obviously pretty happy with how we got out of the gate here," Jones

said. "We're going through the franchise process with the Canadian government, so we're soon going to be expanding up into Canada."

As an affordable dining option, Five Guys, too, is weathering the economic crisis well, he said. "If you've got five or eight bucks in your pocket and you're hungry, you're going to get a burger." He and his partner bought a five-unit territory of the chain at the end of 2005.

JONES was originally in the telecommunications industry, working in Chicago for LCI International, which was later bought out by Qwest Communications International. After moving to the area in 1999, he began investing in real estate but stopped when home prices got too high. Franchising offered another option.

In 1981, he was captain of the Penn State football team, an experience that he said taught him discipline and toughness that helped him later in life. Playing a sport, he said, "gives you a lot of great attributes that apply to the business world."

"The Big Biz Show" airs weekdays from 4-6 p.m. and can be heard locally on WDMV AM 700. Jones' slot is usually around 5:40 p.m. every other Wednesday.

"We decide on topics, but we typically never stay on topic."

— Greg Jones

— MIKE DICICCO

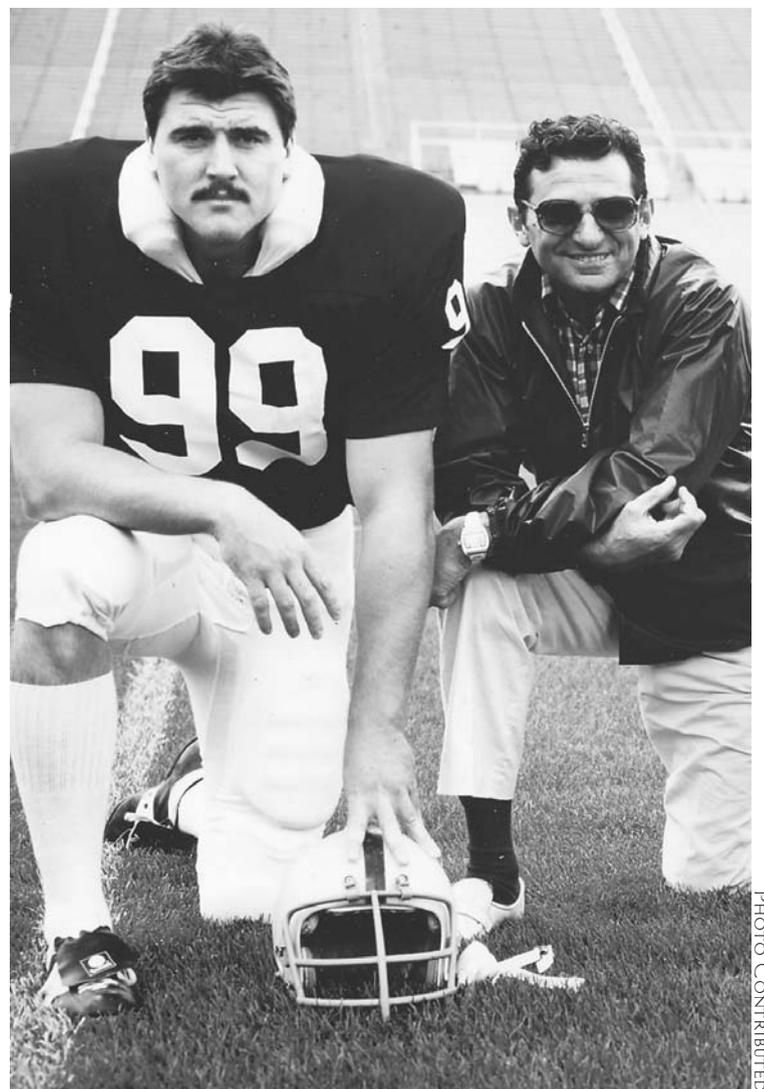


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In his days as the Penn State football captain, Greg Jones poses with head coach Joe Paterno.



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OPINION

Many Numbers Point to Needs

Challenging times as we commemorate vision of Martin Luther King Jr., inaugurate new governor.

Unemployed, uninsured, homeless, hungry. While on a percentage basis, Northern Virginia is better off than most of the rest of Virginia, in raw numbers, we have more people here who are unemployed, more people here who lack health insurance, more people who spend parts of most months without enough food on the table, more people who are homeless.

Some sobering numbers as we celebrate the day of hope and aspiration that is Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Sobering statistics as we inaugurate a new governor who has many good ideas, but no plans for new revenue. Cuts in the state budget will affect everyone in Virginia, even those who are not needy.

In November, more than 68,000 unemployed people were looking for full time work here in Northern Virginia, according to the Virginia Employment Commission, up from just under 50,000 in November, 2008.

Later this month, officials and advocates will conduct the annual "point in time" census of homeless. Last January, there were 1,730 homeless people in Fairfax County at the "point

in time" count, more than 1,000 of those are members of families, most of the adults with jobs. In the City of Alexandria, there were 360 homeless people. In Arlington, 527 homeless, about 200 of those were people in families.

According to the latest U.S. Census numbers, from 2008, there were about 200,000 people (under 65) in Northern Virginia without health insurance. These are people who can't get preventative care, can't get routine care for minor illnesses.

EDITORIAL

In Arlington County 38,018 or 21.1 percent of the population lacked health insurance. That number jumped to 62 percent of those living below 200 percent of poverty line.

In Fairfax County, 149,642 people or more than 16 percent of the population lacked health insurance. In the City of Alexandria, 22,399 people lack health insurance, or 18.2 percent of the population. In the City of Fairfax, 3,685 people lack health insurance, or 18.8 of the population.

Another measure of need, and a way of identifying concentrations of poverty, is to look at students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals in public schools.

In Alexandria more than 50 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced meals.

In Arlington, more than one-third of students are eligible for free or reduced meals.

More than 37,000 students in Fairfax County Public Schools are eligible for free and reduced meals, that's 22 percent of the student body. And the needy students also tend to be concentrated in particular schools. For example, some schools, like Wolf Trap Elementary, had no students qualifying for free or reduced meals. Then consider Graham Road Elementary, with more than 78 percent of its students qualifying for free and reduced meals, Lynbrook Elementary with more than 76 percent of its students qualifying; Mount Vernon Woods, more than 75 percent; Mount Eagle more than 74 percent. The uneven distribution showed dozens of schools with very high rates of poor students lumped together; dozens with poverty rates in the single digits.

Food for thought. These numbers don't indicate a tiny population of needy people, they indicate a region with ongoing problems of "haves" and "have-nots." Those 15-30 percent of our populations in local jurisdictions who "have not" are about to have quite a bit less as the state and local budget processes move forward.

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Disturbing Secrecy

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to the opinion letter in the Jan. 14 edition of the Great Falls Connection entitled "Lifesaving Bill." I agree with the author of that letter that changes should be made within our system to help people with pre-existing conditions, such as cancer, gain access to affordable care. However, I certainly do not agree that what's contained in the 2,000 page bills before the Senate and the House effectively respond to that need. The disturbing secrecy with which this legislation has been forced through both houses has made it difficult to thoroughly analyze the details, but we do know enough to clearly demonstrate that these bills fall far short of their promises. First and foremost is the question of the role of the federal government in each citizen's private life. Our founders detailed this relationship quite beautifully and simply in our founding documents. The current legislation strays far from those governing principle. It mandates that every citizen purchase health insurance in an amount deemed appropriate by some bureaucratic board somewhere in Washington. If you fail to purchase

the required amount, you will then be subject to a fee and if you fail to pay the fee, you face imprisonment. I find it disturbing, Orwellian and probably unconstitutional that the federal government can force me to purchase something against my will or send me to jail. This is an issue that should be decided in each individual state where control and power would be more closely vested in the people it serves.

Second, in the long term, this legislation will erode the level of excellence in our physician base and research and medical technology. The bright minds at the Mayo Clinic that currently perform cutting edge research and complex surgeries will slowly but surely leave the field, or more importantly, never pursue a medical career at all. What will be the incentive to spend thousands of dollars on education, slave away your prime years working as a resident and intern, spend millions on liability insurance all the while wondering when the frivolous lawsuit will be brought against you and ruin your career and livelihood? Why would would-be physicians pursue a career that forces them to make these sacrifices and take these risks knowing that a federal bureaucrat will dictate what type of patient they can see, what tests they can perform, how much they

can charge and how much they can earn? The same question could be asked regarding the production of the miracle drugs and innovative technologies developed by companies and people who make large investments of time and risk. These innovations don't occur free of cost yet we demand it free of charge.

Finally, it is a sheer fallacy to believe that we can continue to raise taxes on an increasingly smaller portion of the population and expect to cover more people with better results. The unions just got their exemption from the tax on Cadillac plans, there will be substantial subsidies for low income families (up to 400 percent of the poverty level or \$80,000 annual income), Congress will be exempted, and, if you can believe it, even the Amish will be exempt from the higher tax to fund the medical utopia promised by this legislation. Our elected representatives, particularly Sens. Webb and Warner, should engage in open dialogue regarding real health care reform for the small part of our Virginian population that needs it and jettison the idea that the federal government should and can be the panacea for all our woes.

Pete Ryan
Great Falls

Supporting Climate Legislation

To the Editor:

Virginia stands to gain a great deal if Congress passes climate legislation that rewards investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy. We are well positioned to attract new businesses and create thousands of new jobs in the offshore wind industry, and the fact that we currently lag on energy efficiency means we can harvest a lot of low-hanging fruit and make significant gains relatively easily. Moreover, we are one of the states that stand to lose the most from sea level rise resulting from climate change, as large portions of our coastline, including sections of Norfolk, would be flooded. So Sens. Jim Webb (D) and Mark Warner (D) should work to pass limits carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions.

Unfortunately, most Senate Republicans are determined to see climate legislation fail, something they can accomplish with only enough votes to sustain a filibuster. Now, Sen. Murkowski of Alaska is trying to ensure that if

THE CONNECTION

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COMMUNITY

Troop 55 Celebrates Eagle Achievements

Eight members of Great Falls troop attain Eagle status.

Boy Scout Troop 55 was busy in 2009. Eight members of the troop have now attained the highest rank a scout can achieve. "Being an Eagle Scout is the result of hard work, and our boys have not only worked hard to meet the necessary requirements for Eagle Scout, but they have also played leadership roles that have been invaluable to everyone," said Scoutmaster Gary Pan.

Graham Reid is a 17-year-old who attends Georgetown Preparatory School. His Eagle project in April 2009 was to repair a steep section of trail that was damaged by water at River Bend Park. He was drawn to the park because his family uses it frequently.

Patrick Canis is a 17-year-old attending Falls Church High



From left are Graham Reid, Patrick Canis, A.J. Lu, Garret Pan, Corey Lynch and Will Wilson.

School. His Eagle project focused on renovating a trail at Great Falls National Park that was frequently used by horses. Erosion had become a problem and made the trail dangerous.

A.J. Lu is a 17-year-old attending Langley High School. He said

scouting has "given him time to grow and something to do" and also helped "make me more responsible about my schoolwork." Lu's family friends run the local Tzu Chi Foundation, and his Eagle project was to lay a wooden floor on top of a vinyl floor in a room

they use for events and worship, in order to save the foundation money.

Garrett Pan, 15, attends the Landon School in Bethesda. He currently serves as the senior patrol leader for the troop and completed his Eagle project around Earth Day. He worked with the Wolf Trap Foundation to stage a temporary collection center where people could properly dispose of electronic waste. He also worked to educate the public about the importance of proper recycling and the poisons and toxins from electronics that can leech into the water table jeopardizing community health.

Corey Lynch is now 18 but achieved his Eagle rank at 17. He attends Quinnipiac University in Hamden, Conn. but will always remember his experiences with

Troop 55 as being more important than achieving Eagle Scout. His Eagle project was to design and construct the back room of Harris Hall at St. Francis Episcopal Church in Great Falls. He built shelving and reorganized the room so that church supplies could be more easily accessed. St. Francis supported him with funding and Lynch also provided private funding to complete the project.

Will Wilson just turned 18 and completed his Eagle project in June 2009. Wilson attends Christ the King Lutheran Church and heard members talking about how they would like to move their outdoor events to the front of the church. He got excited and decided to help by constructing an above ground barbecue pit. He received funds from the church to buy materials and he and his friends provided the labor after being trained by a local mason to lay mortar.

Grant Maxwell and Billy Frayer, who were not available for the picture, also earned their Eagle Scout Rank during the summer of 2009.

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Friday, February 5, 2010

Hilton McLean Tysons Corner

6:30 pm – Silent Auction and Cocktail Reception

8:00 pm – Dinner

9:30 pm – Fairfax Symphony Orchestra in concert,
featuring Robert Petillo, tenor, and Jeanine Thames, soprano

Tables of 10 available for \$3,000, \$5,000 and \$7,500.

Individual tickets available for \$300 each.

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The Fairfax Symphony Orchestra Board of Directors
and the 2010 Valentine Pops Gala Committee

FAMILY FUN BINGO

**Saturday, Jan. 23
2:30-4 p.m.**

\$15/\$10 McLean District residents
Children 2 and under free
Advance Registration is required
No walk-ins

For parents and children age 3 and older. Vertical, horizontal, diagonal, or picture frame, join us for this family fun-filled afternoon of bingo! There'll be prizes, guessing games, snacks and more!



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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. 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 a lifelong appreciation of all performing arts. Free, reservations suggested. 703-356-1920 or www.langleyschool.org.

Reception and Gallery Talk. 7-9 p.m. at Emerson Gallery, McLean Project for the Arts, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Synergy: Sculpture by Nicole Fall. 703-790-1953 or www.mpaart.org.

FRIDAY/JAN. 22

English Conversation. 10 a.m. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. Group for adult non-native English speakers of all levels. Call for details. 703-938-0405.

Pokemon League. 3 p.m. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. Learn and play. Age 5-18. 703-938-0405.

Enter the Haggis and Adam Ezra Group. 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$12. www.jamminjava.com.

American Legion Post 270 Citrus Sale. 8 a.m.-6 p.m. at American Legion Post 270, 1355 Balls Hill Road, McLean. Honeybells, seedless grapefruit, navel oranges, Murcot tangerines and maple syrup. Proceeds support local community youth, patriotic activities and veteran needs. 703-356-8259.

SATURDAY/JAN. 23

Violinist Augustin Hadelich and the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra. 8 p.m. at George Mason University Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. 7 p.m. pre-concert lecture free to ticketed patrons. Tickets \$25-\$55, available at 1-888-945-2468 or Tickets.com.

So You Think You Can Dance Fairfax County Final Competition. 4-7 p.m. at the Annandale High School in the Gymnasium, 4700 Medford Drive, Annandale. \$3 per person. Sponsored by the Fairfax County Department of Community and Recreation Services' Teen Services Division. 703-324-TEEN (8336), TTY 711.

American Legion Post 270 Citrus Sale. 8 a.m.-12 p.m. at American Legion Post 270, 1355 Balls Hill Road, McLean. Honeybells, seedless grapefruit, navel oranges, Murcot tangerines and maple syrup. Proceeds support local community youth, patriotic activities and veteran needs. 703-356-8259.

Potomac Gorge Biological Ecosystems Exhibit Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. 12 noon at the Riverbend Park Visitor's Center, 8700

Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Speakers will include American Indian lecturer and teacher Rose Powhatan, local officials, Park Authority representatives and members of the community. The exhibit highlights the creation of floodplains, cliffs and valleys carved by erosion, how Fairfax County was once covered by ocean and volcanic islands, the big-game hunting Paleo Indians, and a totem pole designed and carved by Rose Powhatan. Free. Reservations requested at 703-324-8662.

The McLean Branch of the American Association of University Women Monthly Meeting. 9:30 a.m. at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Speaker, Jeff Offutt, professor of Information and Software Engineering at George Mason University. 703-830-6503 or www.mcleanaauw.org

Charity Rock Concert with Irresponsible. 7 p.m. at the Soudry, 316 Dominion Road, Vienna. Featuring four local bands. All proceeds will be donated to CHO-Committee for Helping Others, to aid needy members of the Vienna/Oakton communities. www.cho-va.com or www.soudry.net

Family Fun Bingo. 2:30-4 p.m. at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean.

Plan on Living Happily Ever After. 10 a.m. at The Women's Center, 127 Park St., N.E., Vienna. \$35 non-members, \$25 members. www.thewomenscenter.org or 703-281-2657.

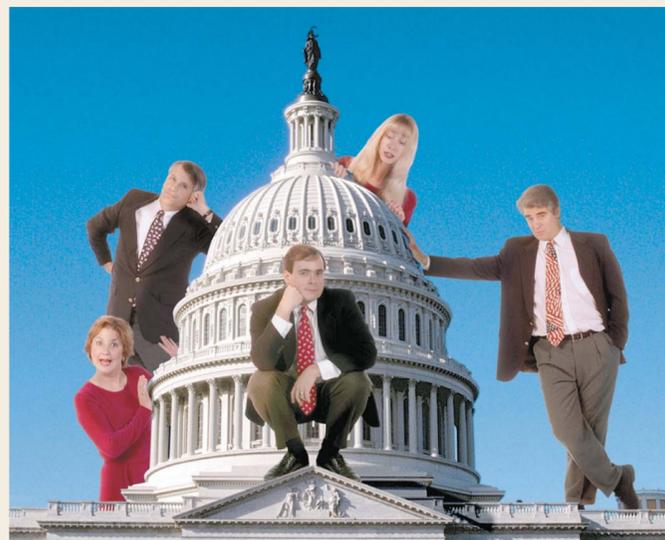
Diane Welland, M.S., R.D.: The Complete Idiot's Guide to Eating Clean. 12 p.m. Barnes & Noble Books, 7851L Tysons Corner Center, McLean. crm2238@bn.com.

SUNDAY/JAN. 24

The Band of the Irish Guards and the Pipes and Drums of the Royal Regiment of Scotland. 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. at George Mason University's Center for the Arts Concert Hall, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. The U. S. debut of the Band of the Irish Guards, with marches, sailor ballads and Celtic folk songs. A pre-performance discussion, free to ticket holders, begins 45 minutes prior to the performance on the Center's Grand Tier. \$24-\$48. Youth through grade 12 half price when accompanied by an adult. Charge by phone at 888-945-2468 or www.gmu.edu/cfa.

Tap Kids. 3 p.m. at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. 703-790-0123.

Mid-Atlantic Song Contest Awards Gala. 5 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$7 in advance, \$10 at the door. www.jamminjava.com.



Capitol Steps Come to Langley High

The Capitol Steps will be performing at Langley High School on Sunday, Jan. 24 at 7 p.m. Tickets for this annual performance are \$30 and proceeds support the June 17 All Night Graduation Party for the Class of 2010. To order tickets, download the order form from the PTSA Web site: www.langleyptsa.org, or contact Mollie Vardell: molliev@verizon.net or Andrea Sotter: andrea4@cox.net. Tickets will be available for pickup at the "Will-Call" desk on the night of the performance.



The Capitol Steps tackle the hot issues of the day, including the airport security.

Capitol Steps. 7 p.m. at Langley High School, 1454 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. \$30, proceeds support the All Night Graduation Party for the Class of 2010. www.langleyptsa.org.

MONDAY/JAN. 25
Game On Afternoon Edition. 3:30 p.m. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. Test your prowess at the Wii Mario Kart or Super Smashbros. Age 6-16. 703-938-0405.
Matt Hires, Jason Castro and Caitlin Crosby. 7:30 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$10. www.jamminjava.com

www.jamminjava.com.

TUESDAY/JAN. 26

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

Treasured Threes to Fives. 10:30 a.m. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. Stories and songs. Age 3-5 with adult. 703-938-0405.

Great Decisions Seminar. 2 p.m. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. Roundtable discussion of U.S. foreign policy. Adults. Reading material will be available for pick-up at the Information Desk 2 weeks before the program. 703-938-0405.

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Outlaw Nation and Chase Long Beach. 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 27

Furry Foxes. 10:30 a.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Learn about foxes through activities; practice yipping like a fox. 703-757-8560.

Wales: Land of Song. 7:30 p.m. at the Alden Theatre, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Visit Wales by film. 703-573-SEAT.

THURSDAY/JAN. 28

Five Local Chefs, Five Local Wines, Five Local Farms, One Local Cause: Loudoun Interfaith Relief. 6:30 p.m. \$150 all inclusive, with sparkling wine and hors d'oeuvres, followed by a five course menu with wine pairings. Each course will be prepared by chefs Mark Marrocco of Magnolias at the Mill, Patrick Dinh of Tuscarora Mill, Aaron McCloud of Vintage 50/51, Chris Carey of The Wine Kitchen and Christopher Edwards of The Restaurant at Patowmack Farm. Live Music by Olivera Music Entertainment. Reserve at 540 822-9017 or info@patowmackfarm.com.

Toddlin' Twos. 10:30 a.m. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. Stories and songs. Age 2 with adult. 703-938-0405.

Patrick Henry Book Club. 1 p.m. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. Book discussion. Call for title. Adults. 703-938-0405.

FRIDAY/JAN. 29

Turner to Cézanne: An Evening with Corcoran Director, President and Exhibition Curator Paul Greenhalgh. 7 p.m. at Alden Theatre, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. 703-790-1953 or www.mpaart.org.

English Conversation. 10 a.m. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. Group for adult non-native English speakers of all levels. Call for details. 703-938-0405.

Pokemon League. 3 p.m. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. Learn and play. Age 5-18. 703-938-0405.

SATURDAY/JAN. 30

Sing Me Insomnia, The Goodnight Anthem and Struan Shields. 6 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$12. www.jamminjava.com.

An Evening with Charlie Hunter. 9:30 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door. www.jamminjava.com.

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Road, Falls Church. Line dance beginning at 7:30 p.m., couples specialty dance at 8 p.m., open dancing 8:30-11 p.m. \$10 members, \$12 non-members, \$5 for ages 16-20 with student ID. website: www.swevda.org or 703-860-4941.

Michelle Singletary, with Power to Prosper: 21 Days to Financial Freedom. 1 p.m. Barnes & Noble Books, 7851L Tysons Corner Center, McLean. crm2238@bn.com.

Ingrid King, author of Buckley's Story: Lessons from a Feline Master Teacher. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at Seneca Hill Animal Hospital Resort and Spa, 11415 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. 703-450-6760.

SUNDAY/JAN. 31

Martina McBride and Trace Adkins. 7:30 p.m. at the George Mason University Patriot Center, 4500 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. Tickets are \$49.75-\$69.75, available at all Ticketmaster locations or Phonecharge at 703-573-SEAT. 703-993-3000 or www.patriotcenter.com.

Learn to Predict the Weather During the Groundhog's Day Out. 2-3:30 p.m. at Frying Pan Farm Park, 2709 West Ox Road in Herndon. Learn about groundhogs and other ways to forecast the weather. Take a short walk to visit a real groundhog burrow. Appropriate for all ages, with a puppet show, crafts, games and hot chocolate. \$5 per person. Registration required at 703-437-9101. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/fpp.

Pianist Audrey Andrist. 3 p.m. at the Alden Theatre, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Free. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/aldenconcerts.

TUESDAY/FEB. 2

Alternative House: Open Door at the House. 8-9 a.m. at 2100 Gallows Road, Vienna. Alternative House offers counseling, shelter, neighborhood support and after school programs. Learn about issues facing young people and get an overview of the House's history and services. Talk with the Executive Director, a Board member and staff, and take a tour of the teen shelter. Space is limited; contact Gina Cocomello at gina.cocomello@TheAlternativeHouse.org or 703 506-9191 or www.TheAlternativeHouse.org.

Patrick Henry Book Club. 1 p.m. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. Book discussion. Call for title. Adults. 703-938-0405.

English Conversation. 10 a.m. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. Group for adult non-native English speakers of all levels. Call for details. 703-938-0405.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 3

Gals in the Gallery. 7-9 p.m. at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. With jewelry artist J.J. Singh. Donations accepted. 703-790-1953 or www.mpaart.org.

FRIDAY/FEB. 5

Fairfax Symphony Valentine Pops Gala: Amore! An Evening of Italian Love Songs. At the Hilton McLean Tysons Corner, 7920 Jones Branch Drive, McLean. 6:30 p.m. silent auction and cocktail reception, 8 p.m. dinner, 9 p.m. FSO in concert with tenor Robert Pettilo and soprano Jeanine Thames. \$300 per person or \$3,000 per table, available by credit card at 703-563-1990, or by check to Fairfax Symphony Orchestra, 3905 Railroad Ave., Suite 202N, Fairfax, Va. 22030. www.fairfaxsymphony.org.

Yu Wei Chinese Dance Collection. 8 p.m. at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. www.mcleancenter.org.

Mark Morris Dance Group. 8 p.m. at George Mason University Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. With the area premieres of 'Visitation' and 'Empire Garden.' A pre-performance discussion, free to ticket holders, begins at 7:15 p.m. on the Center's Grand Tier III. \$22-\$44, available at 888-945-2468 or www.gmu.edu/cfa.



McLean Community Center
The Center of It All

Here's What's Happening at MCC

Family Fun Bingo
Saturday, Jan. 23, 2:30-4 p.m.
\$15/\$10 district residents;
2 and younger are free
Advance registration required.
Activity No. 4504.310

Vertical, horizontal, diagonal, or picture frame, join us for a family fun-filled afternoon of bingo!

Travel and Adventure Film Series
Wales: Land of Song
Wednesday, Jan. 27, 7:30 p.m.
\$10/\$8 district residents

OFTC Teacher Workday Trips
Snow Tubing at Wisp Resort
Friday, Jan. 29
Shadowland Laser Tag
Monday, Feb. 1

Sign your teen up for one of these day trips on FCPS Teacher Workdays.

Alden Theatre Dance Festival
TAP Kids
Sunday, Jan. 24, 3 p.m.
\$20/\$16 district residents

Eight of the nation's most talented young tap dancers take to the stage in this rousing, joyous celebration of American youth culture.

Yu Wei Chinese Dance Collection
Friday, Feb. 5, 8 p.m.
\$28/\$10 district residents

Experience Chinese culture through exhilarating dance and stunning film, all just in time for Chinese New Year!
Stop by the Alden Theatre Box Office, or contact Ticketmaster, 703-573-SEAT.

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SCHOOLS

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

The Langley School will host Septime Webre, artistic director of The Washington Ballet, 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 21 in Langley's Jeffrey J. Sherman Arts Center, 1411 Balls Hill Road, McLean. During his talk, 'Learned Leadership Skills Through Performing Arts Education,' Webre will discuss how a strong education in the arts prepares children to excel in life. Webre will also share strategies to help build 'performing arts intelligence' in their children, encouraging an appreciation of all performing arts. Free; reservations

encouraged at www.langleyschool.org or 703-356-1920.

Colin Sheldon, Brown University Class of 2004, received his PHD in electrical engineering and computer technology from UCSB in June 2009. He will continue his research as a senior scientist at Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab. Sheldon is the son of Ray and Sharon Sheldon of Great Falls.

Eric Childress has been named to the fall 2009 dean's list at Ferum College. Childress is the son of Rev. Nancy Childress of the Great Falls United Methodist Church and Edwin Childress of Remington, Va.

Tips on Trips and Camps Fair. Saturday, Jan. 30 at The Potomac School, 1301 Potomac School Road, McLean. Camp Fair 1 p.m.; Panel Discussion on Foreign Language Programs 12:30 p.m. Summer overnight camps, travel, language or cultural immersion programs, community service, internships and more for children 8-18. Directors of various programs will attend. 703-345-0722 or meg@tipsontripsandcamps.com.

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 8

climate legislation fails, there is no fallback. She has proposed an amendment to the budget bill that would prevent the EPA from regulating greenhouse gas emissions under the Clean Air Act. The EPA's regulatory authority is a major incentive for members of both parties in Congress to substitute a legislative approach; without it, the obstructionists are likely to gain their objective of keeping a climate bill off the books.

Virginians need strong climate legislation. Sens. Webb and Warner should come out strongly against the Murkowski amendment — and we, their constituents, should tell them so.

Ivy Main
McLean



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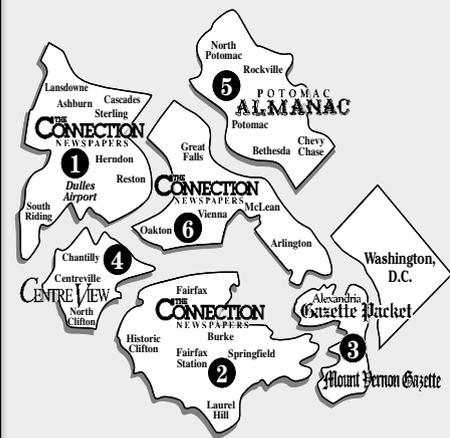
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Not Able Without Cable



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

It's only now, the Sunday afternoon following the previous Thursday night, that I'm able to recount the difficulties and demands of the 15-day, eight-hour period beginning 1:34 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 16 and ending at 8:45 p.m., Thursday, New Year's Eve. It had nothing at all to do with my cancer and/or any consequences there to (not really, anyway). It had to do with my Cable. Specifically, not having Cable service, meaning no television and computer for over two weeks.

Let me try to explain as patiently as I am able to do so, now, the events leading up to and the ultimate conclusion to some of the worst two weeks of my life (death, taxes and health-related news notwithstanding).

On Wednesday, Dec. 16, a contractor for Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission began digging up my neighborhood street to solve a much-needed browning-of-our-tap-water problem. Days before the initial dig, I noticed spray paint markings on the street and on my driveway indicating Miss Utility had been contacted. (Little did I know that certain colors were missing; had I known that, the subsequent pain and suffering that we endured could have been avoided. But alas, poor Yurik, I know very little of what I'm talking.) Within an hour of the beginning of the dig, sure enough, the unmarked ground did not direct the construction crew away from my cable and phone lines and as a direct result, I received one (two, actually) of the most unkindest cuts.

I will spare you the details of the many phone calls made by yours truly to rectify the problem because that's not really the point of this column, and besides, I can't do the story justice in print as I can in voice. The point of this column is to discuss how one survives when they lose something that is most crucial to their day-to-day existence and lose it not because of anything they said or did, but lose it (and then not have it repaired or responded to in a reasonable time) due to the negligence of others. Collateral damage is how I found myself characterizing my circumstances.

If truth be admitted to, I barely survived. Every day that the problem persisted, I fell deeper into an emotional hole. Every day that the much-needed connections to the outside world remained disconnected, I fell even deeper into that abyss. Every day that progress was supposed to be made to repair the lines (and then ultimately wasn't) took an ICC-type toll on my psyche. Every day that I couldn't resume my routine: work, play, business, banking, hobbies, areas of interest, areas of need, etc., via the television and computer and thus fill my day accordingly was yet another day spent not in paradise (we did borrow DVDs from a neighbor, one of which included the first two seasons of Magnum PI; he was in paradise, literally and figuratively) but one spent in a blackening hole, cratering more and more every day.

When the third (fourth? fifth? I've lost track) cable technician/team knocked on my door on Dec. 31st at 8:15 and asked if I had a picture, I thought I had died and ended up back on my couch watching television. It wasn't until 30 minutes later that my service was 100 percent restored, finally; you can't imagine the emotional release I experienced when that service returned to normal. It's still taken me a few days to regain my composure, resume my routine and get myself back on track, however.

In retrospect, I don't know how I managed, really. Given that I'm a homebody, not a reader and connected to the outside world electronically (like most people), being cut off as I was, without any warning was almost too much; in fact, it may have been one of the hardest things I've ever had to do. I may be reconnected now, but I feel like I've lost two weeks of my life, two weeks that I really didn't have to lose.

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

Mission: 'Saving Some Lives'

FROM PAGE 2

human scent in the rubble. He covers a lot of area in a short amount of time. Where he finds the strongest scent, he starts barking; then someone will start searching."

MacPherson was eager to leave and get busy. "We train hard for this," she said. "We want to go and help."

Lt. Rodney Vaughan is a rescue squad officer on the team. Formerly of Centre Ridge, in Centreville, he now lives in Gainesville and has been a team member since 1998. He responded to numerous hurricanes, including Katrina, plus Taiwan in 1999 and Iran in 2003. In Haiti, eight to 10 people will be assigned to him.

"When Technical Search locates victims, through listening devices, dogs or hearing them yell out, we'll confirm how deeply they're embedded," said Vaughan. "For example, they could have been on the first floor of a six-story building that collapsed, so we coordinate the rescue effort."

THE FAIRFAX RESCUERS will probably work in 24-hour shifts, to start, with down time, here and there. Normally, half the team would work days, and the other half, nights. But, said Vaughan, "Due to the amount of work, it's 'round the clock now."

Vaughan said they'd all "done this enough" so that they can quickly assess whatever situation they encounter and proceed accordingly. Hardest, he said, was wanting to get there as fast as they could, but understanding that it takes six to 14 hours to assemble all the gear, get the plane ready and the equipment on board.

"It's a huge undertaking and we'd like it done in 30 minutes," he said. "Then, once we're on the ground, the physical work and sleep deprivation will eventually take a toll on us. But when we're working, we don't let it bother us."

Vaughan will miss his two daughters and wife Erica, though. But, said Erica Vaughan, "I'm so proud of what he's doing. He's been training to do this and I hope he'll save some lives." She said she never gets used to his deployments and worries about him while he's gone. But, she added, "I know he's in the Big Man's hands and [the fire department] does a good job of keeping us updated."

Technician Kevin Dabney of Vienna has been on the team more than 10 years. A rescue specialist, he helps with team organization and works under the Task Force leaders, Fire Chiefs Jim Strickland and Robert Zoldos.

"I'll command others to do search and rescue, and we'll help in any way we can," said Dabney. "We're 100-percent self-sufficient and don't need anything from the local government."

After receiving a geographical location to search, the Command and General Staff Team that Dabney's on determines which people should go where and sees that they're properly equipped. It also handles safety, logistics, medical, planning and operations matters.

"We ask, 'Is there medical transport? Where do we send survivors?'" said Dabney.



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Canine search specialist Teresa MacPherson and her dog Banks.

"What about security issues — are there roadblocks?" So behind the scenes, there's a whole lot of work."

SINCE THE FIREFIGHTERS communicate by radio, Lt. Wes Rogers' specialty is also crucial. Rogers, of Oak Hill, works in communications in the Massey Building in Fairfax and also on the USAR team.

"I set up repeaters, enabling the radios to talk further than line of sight," he said. "Depending on the terrain, we could have a 4-mile range. I'll also set up satellite communications to talk to our Operations Center at the Fire and Rescue Academy and will establish communications with our USAR team already in Haiti."

Typically, team managers receive radio updates about the victims, plus the status of the search teams, where they are, if they're all right and if they need anything.

Last Thursday, Rogers could hardly wait to get there already and start helping. "Everybody here has that attitude," he said. "I'm proud of the team. Everybody works together, and we all want to save some lives."

Squad officer Richard McKinney of Fair Oaks is captain of the Frying Pan Station. He's a 30-year member of the fire department and has been on Task Force 1 since its inception.

"We'll search buildings, going in void spaces and looking for trapped people," he said. "USAID will tell us which buildings and areas to check." What makes it so dangerous, said McKinney, is the unknown. "You really don't know what you're getting yourself into," he said. "Once an earthquake's destroyed a building, it's unstable."

But he's glad to do what he can and he likes the camaraderie among the people on the team. "Most of them I've known, my whole career, so they're just like a second family," he said. He's been with them to Oklahoma City, Taiwan and the Pentagon after 9/11.

Toughest, said McKinney, is "the death and seeing people at their worst." But he finds satisfaction in "the chance of finding someone alive — or even finding deceased people so their families can have closure."

Two Area Sculptors Exhibit at Tysons II Office Centre

An exhibition of six sculptures by Jonathan Fisher of Great Falls and six by Shirley Koller of Washington has opened at The Corporate Office Centre at Tysons II, through April 10, illustrating the importance of a major corporation in supporting the arts by making its lobbies available for display.

Fisher's work, in the tradition of geometric abstraction, is a series of wood constructions that emphasizes textures and recurring shapes. Koller's are painted metal, more random and spontaneous, assembled from strips of polished aluminum and steel. Both are highly colorful and were chosen to be displayed together, the wood of one artist working off the reflective metal of the other as counterpoints.

The exhibit is in the lobbies of two buildings on either side of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in McLean. Both are owned by the Lerner Corporation, the largest private real estate developer in the greater Washington, D.C. area. One building is at 1650 Tysons Blvd. The other is at 1750 Tysons Blvd.

Lerner has been making the public spaces of its building available to artists for more than 30 years and has displayed the work of both established and emerging artists. "The lobbies of major buildings like Lerner's are outstanding venues that offer sculptors such as Fisher and Koller an opportunity to display their artworks in contexts that show them to best advantage," said Richard Suib, an art-management consultant and curator for the exhibition for the Lerner Corporation.

Fisher is relatively new on the art scene, having spent most of his professional life as a magazine editor. Six years ago, he began producing wood reliefs, sculptures, games and other wood constructions in a small barn behind his house. Most are abstract pieces with a simple color palette that,



'Light in the Pyramid,' a wood construction by Jonathan Fisher. It is made of painted pine strips screwed together.

he says, is deliberately limited to emphasize patterns. Some of his pieces, including one in the exhibit, are seven feet high. Last year he was awarded a Strauss Fellowship from the Arts Council of Fairfax County "to support and encourage Fairfax County's finest creative artists."

Koller is more of a fixture in the Washington, D.C. art world, having created colorful reliefs and sculptures for years.

The Lerner building lobbies are open Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Visitors can park free for one hour at parking garages behind either building. They can easily walk in front of the Ritz-Carlton from one venue to the other. There are five sculptures in each lobby and one each on the second floor of each building.

Fisher and Suib are both Great Falls residents and members of Great Falls Studios, a network of 88 artists who live or work in Great Falls.



'The Shape or Color,' a metal sculpture by Shirley Koller. It is made of assembled strips of polished and painted aluminum, with a base of polished steel.

SPORTS

Winning Langley Boys Working Inside Paint

Saxon center Kriz is experiencing breakout season for Saxon basketball.

BY RICH SANDERS
THE CONNECTION

Langley High boys' basketball center Austin Kriz is helping give the Saxons a new look this season.

Over the past two years, Langley has captured consecutive Liberty District titles behind its outstanding play in the backcourt. Last year, Saxon perimeter players such as Derek Baker, Thomas Kody and Barrett Hunter were instrumental in leading Langley to the district crown. Baker, in fact, was district tourney MVP.

All three graduated last spring and this year's edition of Langley basketball has taken a different offensive approach. The Saxons (11-2 overall) are utilizing there inside game more and, in their two post offensive scheme, are receiving good production from frontcourt players Kriz and Joey Kiffe. Kriz, a 6-foot-6 inch senior, is averaging 15 points per game, while fellow 12th grader Kiffe, who is 6-3, is tallying close to 10 points a game.

"[The new offense has] worked and our kids have embraced it," said Langley coach Travis Hess, whose team defeated Madison, 57-33, in a district home game last Friday night, Jan. 15. "I think they believe they can be successful with it."

Kriz scored a game-high 23 points — 12 of those coming in the first quarter when Langley jumped out to a 23-5 lead — in the win over the Warhawks. Last year, the center saw limited playing time. But this season he is perhaps the team's go-to player.

"He's playing very well," said Hess, of his big man. "We're feeding him the ball and he's continuing to make plays. He's got good post moves and good hands. He's rebound-

ing very well. Last year he did not play much. He kind of paid his dues. He's a great kid."

Hess said the reserved Kriz, who scored a season high 26 points in Langley's 69-48 district home win over McLean on Dec. 18, has a keen awareness of how the game is played.

"He really does have an understanding of the game and knows what's going on," said the coach. "He knows he has to score for us to be successful."

Kriz credits his teammates with getting him the ball and setting screens for him, according to Hess. The pivot player, along with scoring and rebounding well, is also a good passer.

IN THE LANGLEY BACKCOURT, the Saxons have received an exceptional season from sophomore point guard Austin Vasiliadis, who is averaging 7.5 points per game and doing a good job of setting up teammates with his good passing.

"He has run our offense and handles defensive pressure well," said Hess. "He's a very nice player and very smart. He's a true point guard in the sense he loves to pass. He'll drive in the lane and gets us in our sets. His



Senior Austin Kriz scored 23 points in Langley's win over visiting Madison last Friday night.

pull-up jumper is pretty good and he has a good three [point shot]."

A big season for the Saxons is also com-

ing from shooting guard Colin Jones, who has drained 24 long distance treys on the season and is averaging 13.5 points per game.

Hess and his players realize there is still lots of season remaining. The team's only losses have come at Edison, 68-67, on Dec. 11, and to Centreville, 66-44, in the finals of the Westfield Bulldog Bash tournament over the holidays.

"We're playing well and we're unbeaten in [district] play," said Hess. "There have been games where we didn't look great but we were still able to win. I'm real pleased. I didn't think we'd be [11-2]."

Langley, which a couple times this season has broken up the day-to-day practice routine with a good old fashioned game of "horse," is hardly caught up in its impressive win-loss record.

"Our kids come into games with expectations to win," said Hess. "They believe in themselves and what they're doing. They've handled [success] very well."

"The guys get along with each other and are great kids," he said. "We're just trying to get better and put ourselves in position to win another district championship. We want to go out and get better and win ball games."

This week, the Saxons play district road games at South Lakes on Tuesday, Jan. 19 and at McLean on Friday, Jan. 22.

SPORTS ROUNDUPS

The Marshall High indoor track and field teams have competed in several meets over the course of the winter. The Statesmen, earlier this season, took part in the Friends of Indoor Track Invitational. There, Marshall's Brittany Johnson was a region qualifier in the long jump and 55-dash events. Johnson also was a district qualifier in those two events as well as in the high jump and 300. Other district qualifiers for the Statesmen were Meara Goss (shot put), Courtney Herbolsheimer (1,600) and Christian Gravatt (high jump). Strong outings at the Friends meet came from Madeleine Lewsen, Hallie McIntyre, Alexandra Sandlin, and Steven Savage.

Marshall also participated in the PR Holiday Invitational. Highlights included a first place finish in the high jump by Brittany

Johnson and strong outings across the board from Goss, Herbolsheimer, Sandlin, John Tortella and Savage.

Marshall, in another big meet this winter season, went up against local rivals McLean and Langley. Individual event winners for the Statesmen were Gravatt (high jump, 500), Goss (shot put), Jocelyn Golden (300), Herbolsheimer (1,000) and Tortella (shot put). Other good outings for Marshall came from Saweel Ahmed, Claudia Castaneda, Milton Cruz, Andrew Dickson, Jennifer Felter, Maha Hassan, Ritika Jain, Katrina McLeod, Victoria Nickson, Helene Nygard, Samuel Pak, Jonathan Pierre and Werking James.

The Madeira swim and dive team lost for the first time this sea-

son, falling at host school Holton-Arms, 113-73, on Jan. 14. Individual event winners for Madeira were junior Christa Ann Saunders (200-yard individual medley and 500-freestyle) and sophomore Brittany Jansen (50-freestyle and 100-freestyle). Notable performances were turned in by senior Jen Dussault (second in diving), senior Carsen Anderson (third in 100-backstroke) and sophomore Ann Griffin (second in 100-breaststroke).

Madeira (3-1 record) won two of the three relays. Saunders, Griffin, Jansen and freshman Maddy Alagia swam in the winning 200-yard medley relay, and Jansen, freshman Grace Johnson, Alagia and Saunders swam in the winning 400-freestyle relay.

"We swam a good meet against a very strong team," said Madeira

coach Rod Montrie. "I was proud of our girls for keeping it close all the way through and never giving up. Our relays and our divers looked strong tonight."

Madeira's next meet is scheduled for this Friday, Jan. 22 at Stone Ridge.

On Jan. 8, Madeira bested Maret School, 118-65. Madeira sophomore Jansen won both the 200-freestyle and 100-freestyle events. Sophomore Ann Griffin won the 100-breaststroke and junior Saunders won the 100-backstroke. Dussault won the diving event. Notable performances for Madeira were also turned in by freshman divers Debbie Druckerman and Grace Callander.

Madeira won all three relays. Saunders, Griffin, Grace Johnson and Alagia swam in the 200-medley relay; junior Rachel Tang, Grif-

fin, senior Megan Basel, and Jansen swam in the 200-freestyle relay; and Saunders, Johnson, Jansen and Alagia swam in the 400-freestyle relay.

"Our opponent had several great swimmers, but we won with our depth," said Montrie. "We had lots of swimmers taking second, third and fourth places and our B-relays made a huge difference."

Andie Romness scored 19 points and Melissa Wilson 16 to lead the McLean High girls' basketball team to a 60-55 Liberty District home win over South Lakes on Jan. 12. Caitlin Baker also scored in double figures with 10 points. Kristina Bettner and Patricia Pascoe both scored five points for the Highlanders. The exciting game went back and forth as both teams played with intensity. With the

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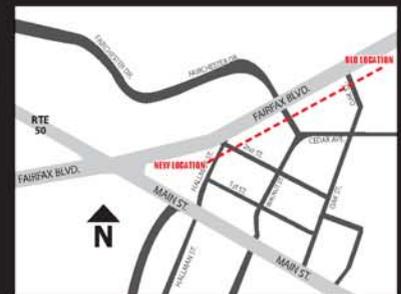
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Pursuing Three 'Fs'

Great Falls couple launches Bible Memory.

The Great Falls-based Mobilize Faith, LLC has introduced the Bible Memory app for iPhone and iPod Touch, making it easier and more fun to build Bible knowledge and memorize scripture. The Bible Memory app is available on the iTunes App Store for \$3.99.

Bible Memory is the first app for the iPhone and iPod Touch that solves many of the barriers associated with creating a daily, weekly or monthly practice of memorizing scripture. Bible Memory puts 250 categorized verses in four translations at users' fingertips wherever and whenever they have a free moment for quiet study and reflection, while commuting, during a break, or while waiting for an appointment.

"The idea for Bible Memory came to us while listening to our pastor, who was speaking of the virtues and importance of memorizing scripture and challenged the congregation to memorize one



Petra Barrientos

verse a week for the rest of the year. When we got home, my husband and I began thinking about how we would memorize our verses. We were still on fire after that morning's call to action and out came the index cards and pens and we began to wonder whether there was a better and less archaic way to memorize scripture," said Petra Barrientos, managing partner of Mobilize Faith, LLC.

Mobilize Faith is a technology startup based in Great Falls, that harnesses mobile technology to provide tools for anyone seeking

to follow a God-led Christian lifestyle.

Barrientos was born and raised in a small village outside of Munich, Germany. After graduating from high school, she came to the United States, initially on a one-year exchange program, which turned into four years of college and graduate school.

She earned a B.S. from Virginia Commonwealth University and an M.B.A. from George Washington University. After college, she moved back to southern Germany and worked as a management consultant at Management Partner GmbH, Stuttgart followed by a management position at Max Schlatterer GmbH & Co. KG, Herbrechtingen.

Since her final move back to the United States in 1995, she has spent most of her time raising three boys. Together with her husband and three sons, she lives in Great Falls.

Last summer, Barrientos and her husband founded Mobilize Faith, LLC. "Acting as managing partner has allowed me to kick my entrepreneurial side back into gear while at the same time serving the three Fs that are truly important to me: Faith, Family and Friends," Barrientos said.

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

McLean Presbyterian Church is holding the worship service at 9:15 a.m. and 11 a.m. During these services, the church also offers a variety of adult education classes, as well as children's ministry program and student ministries gatherings. The church also invites the public to informal and more intimate Saturday Night Service, which meets in the Fellowship Hall at 5:30 p.m. every Saturday. The worship music is provided by Saturday night band and the message is the same as Sunday morning but with opportunity for more interaction with the pastor. Childcare and children's programs are provided for infants through 2nd grade.

McLean Presbyterian Church is located at 1020 Balls Hill Road in McLean. For more information visit www.mcleanpres.org or call church office at 703.821.0800.

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.

Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton, will show 'Until The Violence Stops' at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 29. The film is a documentary about how the play The Vagina Monologues grew into an international grassroots movement called V-Day to stop violence against women and girls. Donations ac-

cepted to benefit V-Day Oakton 2010. 703-716-0150 or www.uucf.org.

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 mollieregan@verizon.net.

The Jewish Social Services Agency (JSSA) offers a wide variety of support groups for those with emotional, social, and physical challenges. Contact Gary Axelrod, 301-610-8309 or gaxelrod@jssa.org, or www.jssa.org.

HAVEN of Northern Virginia offers a variety of free bereavement support groups, meeting on a weekly basis. Contact 703-941-7000 or www.havenofnova.org for schedules and registration information.

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 for more information.

Vajrayogini Buddhist Center offers ongoing classes on meditation and Buddhist philosophy, Mondays at 7 p.m. at Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. \$10 per class. 202-331-2122 or www.meditation-dc.org.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

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. DeJScott@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.

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Washington Christian Church... 703-938-7720
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Baha'i
Baha'i Faith for Northern Virginia ... 703-821-3345
Baptist
Global Mission Church ... 703-757-0877
Peace Baptist Church ... 703-560-8462
Bethel Primitive Baptist Church ... 703-757-8134

Cartersville Baptist Church ... 703-255-7075
Fellowship Baptist Church ... 703-385-8516
First Baptist Church ... 703-938-8525
The Light Mission Church ... 703-757-0877
Vienna Baptist Church ... 703-281-4400
New Union Baptist Church... 703-281-2556

Buddhist
Vajrayogini Buddhist Center... 202-331-2122

Church of the Brethren
Oakton Church of the Brethren ... 703-281-4411

Catholic
Light Mission Church ... 703-757-0877
Our Lady of Good Counsel ... 703-938-2828
St. Athanasius Catholic Church ... 703-759-4555
St. Mark's Catholic Church ... 703-281-9100

Charismatic
Christian Assembly ... 703-698-9777
Church of Christ
Berea Church of Christ ... 703-893-7040

Disciples of Christ
Antioch Christian Church ... 703-938-6753

Episcopal
Church of the Holy Comforter ... 703-938-6521
Church of the Holy Cross ... 703-698-6991
St. Francis Episcopal ... 703-759-2082

Jehovah's Witness
Jehovah's Witnesses ... 703-759-1579

Lutheran
Emmanuel Lutheran Church... 703-938-2119
St. Athanasius Lutheran Church... 703-455-4003

Methodist
Andrew Chapel United Methodist ... 703-759-3509
Church of the Good Shepherd ... 703-281-3987
Dunn Loving United Methodist ... 703-573-5386
Epiphany United Methodist ... 703-938-3494
Great Falls United Methodist... 703-759-3705
Oakton United Methodist ... 703-938-1233

Vale United Methodist ... 703-620-2594
Smith Chapel United Methodist ... 571-434-9680
Wesley United Methodist ... 703-938-8700

Non-Denominational
Christian Assembly Church ... 703-698-9777

Presbyterian
Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church ... 703-560-6336
Korean Central Presbyterian ... 703-698-5577
Vienna Presbyterian ... 703-938-9050

Quaker
Langley Hills Friends... 703-442-8394

Seventh-Day Adventist
Northern Virginia Christian Fellowship ... 703-242-9001
Vienna Seventh Day Adventists ... 703-938-6383

Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of Fairfax ... 703-281-4230

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Unity of Fairfax ... 703-281-1767

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A Tale of Two Markets

The best of times, the worst of times for local real estate market.

BY KAREN BRISCOE

The famous opening line of "A Tale of Two Cities" by Charles Dickens is, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." The residential real estate market for McLean and Great Falls in 2009 has a similar theme, depending on the price range. I shall now tell "A Tale of Two Markets" and my opening line is, "It is the best of times in McLean and Great Falls for homes priced under \$1.25 million and it is the worst of times for those priced above."

In McLean and Great Falls, the overall number of transactions went up in 2009 by 14.1 percent over 2008. However, the significance of "A Tale of Two Markets" is evident when broken down by price range. The number of sales under \$1.25 million is up by 25.9 percent, which is the "best of times," and the number of sales over \$1.25 million is down by 18 percent, which is the "worst of times."

In my view, the reason the upper bracket market (anything over \$1.25 million) has suffered so much in 2009 is twofold. First is the issue of mortgage funding. It is perhaps obvious and may go without saying, but everyone is not independently wealthy to pay cash for a home in McLean or Great Falls. Most home purchasers have to obtain financing from a lender. In this market area, the upper limit for Conforming loans from Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae for 2009 (and continuing for 2010) is \$729,750. If you add the typical buyers' down payment of 20 percent to the maximum conforming loan amount of \$729,750 you get about \$900,000 as the purchasing power for the majority of buyers in the market. To purchase anything more than \$900,000 means that the buyer would have to come up with a larger down payment and/or pay higher jumbo rates. Other mortgage options are only now coming out allowing for financing up to \$1 million, with 20 percent down, yielding maximum purchasing power of typically \$1.25 million in 2009. Even today, the best mort-



gage option is 15 percent down payment up to a purchase price of \$1.47 million. Any purchase price above that usually requires a larger cash down payment. Further, once the loan is greater than \$1 million, the interest on the portion of the loan over \$1 million is not tax deductible (always check with your tax advisor for specifics).

The second issue is supply. There are fundamentally fewer buyers for the upper bracket homes, therefore that supply hasn't been absorbed and continues to not be absorbed by the market. Thus, inventory continues to build. Basic economics underscores that when there is more supply than demand, prices go down.

From year-end data as illustrated by the chart, homes that would have sold for more than \$3 million in 2008, probably sold between \$2 million to \$3 million in order to find a buyer. The homes that sold between \$2 million and \$3 million in 2008 moved to the lower end of that range or sold below \$2 million in order to be able to sell. And down it went.

What is my prediction for 2010? I believe that it will be more of the same. While I feel that we are at the bottom of the trough in the under \$1.25 million market in McLean and Great Falls, I anticipate that we will not recover the prices of the peak of the market until at least 2012 or 2013, if even then.

One of the themes of "A Tale of Two Cities" is the plight of the peasantry under the aristocracy, which led up to the revolution. "A Tale of Two Markets" has a similar theme in my view. Housing prices escalated in 2004-06 to levels that even the average affluent person couldn't afford. The fundamental reality is that not everyone is independently wealthy. As long as the majority of the buyers in the market are dependent on obtaining financing at the conforming loan level, the upper bracket real estate market will be obtainable to only a very few and is dependent on what financing the banks can offer. When there is a limited pool of qualified buyers in one portion of the market, that market segment is forced to shrink in order to survive. It shrinks by lowering the price to what the market will bear.

The author is the principal, Huckaby Briscoe Group, Keller Williams in McLean.

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