

Small Reporters, Big Stories

NEWS, PAGE 3

Nick Berray of Great Falls, a member of the Scholastic Kids Press Corps, poses with award-winning local author Laura Elliott while he interviews her for a story. Recently, Nick and other Scholastic reporters have been covering local reactions to the crisis in Haiti.

A Taste Of Charity

NEWS, PAGE 3

Katie's Presents 'Food for Life'

CALENDAR, PAGE 8

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Small Reporters, Big Stories

Local members of Scholastic Kids Press Corps reflect on covering Haiti, possible careers.

BY MIKE DiCICCO
THE CONNECTION

Like many other reporters around the world, after Jan. 12, Nick Berray of Great Falls and Jonas Hosmer of Potomac, Md. suddenly found their attention turned to the island nation of Haiti, where a violent earthquake had devastated much of the country.

What set Berray and Hosmer apart from the mainstream press, though, was that they are in sixth and fifth grade, respectively.

On the Friday after the quake, Scholastic Kids Press Corps editor Suzanne Freeman contacted most

of the 54 members of her reporting team, instructing them to find out how people in their areas were helping the struggling country. She asked them to look for people who had come from Haiti or had family there. "I said, 'Go do it and have it in by Monday morning,'" Freeman said, adding that she had expected to receive seven or eight stories. On Monday, she found 20 stories in her inbox. "They really came back with, 'Here's what kids are doing and here's how kids can make a difference,'" she said.

Nick, who attends sixth grade at the Potomac School in McLean, immediately got in touch with Save the Children, an organization that had been working in Haiti for decades. "They had just jumped into action," he said. He came away not only with information on what the organization was doing to help quake victims but also with more general tips on how people could offer assistance and how to decide which charities to support. "Because, of course, some people might take advantage of a lot of people just trying to donate and send their money there," he said.

His story also let readers know that cash donations were preferable to contributions of supplies, as aid providers could avoid shipping costs and strengthen the island's economy by purchasing supplies in Haiti and the neighboring Dominican Republic.

Nick said he hoped his story would inspire more people to get involved in Haiti's recovery.

IN ANOTHER STORY, he reported on the efforts of Virginia's Task Force 1, the team of Fairfax County fire, rescue and emergency personnel that deployed to Haiti shortly after the quake. "That actually was really fun. I talked to a really nice lady," Nick said, referring to Bonnie Tobalske, firefighter, paramedic and rescue specialist for the task force. "She was extremely generous with her time." He said he had been especially impressed with the fact that Tobalske crawled through ditches performing emergency rescues but also as a grandmother.

Now that the task force has returned, he said he might do a follow-up story, although he had not yet received his next assignment.

Meanwhile, Jonas, who is in fifth grade at the Bullis



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Outside the Haitian Embassy, Scholastic Kids Press Corps reporter Jonas Hosmer of Potomac, Md. interviews Miss Caribbean Metro USA Chardelle Moore about local efforts to help residents of Haiti after an earthquake devastated much of the island nation.

School, headed to the Haitian Embassy, where he found that the streets had been closed down to make room for all the donations that were piling in. There, he interviewed volunteers for the National Organization for the Advancement of Haitians (NOAH), who were staging a survival kit drive, as well as Miss Caribbean Metro USA, Chardelle Moore.

For the same story, he also interviewed two members of his school's staff who had family in Haiti. "It was kind of sad, even though they were in kind of bright spirits," he said, noting that one of his interviewees still had not heard from his relatives in the shattered country.

"I thought the impact [of the story] was going to be to let everyone know even more about Haiti and what they actually really need," Jonas said.

He said he first heard about the Scholastic Kids Press Corps when his social studies teacher asked the class in early November whether anyone had an interest in reporting for the organization. "I came up to her and I said I was very interested," he said.

He was one of about 250 students who submitted sample stories about the areas where they lived and one of 37 selected to join the press corps, Freeman said. Seventeen reporters were kept on staff from the previous year.

New reporters received a packet that Jonas said "seemed like a thousand pages," giving them tips on how to handle different situations and assignments.

"My first interview was definitely the most challenging part of it," Jonas said, adding that he had been nervous about approaching a stranger as a reporter. That was at a Veterans Day event at George Washington University, attended by First Lady Michelle Obama, Second Lady Jill Biden and Alma Powell, chair of America's Promise Alliance and wife of former Secretary of State Colin Powell. There, he interviewed AmeriCorps volunteers and military veterans. "I was really excited," he said.

Nick said his involvement with the Kids Press Corps came as a surprise. The head of his school knew Freeman and knew she was looking for reporters. He had asked teachers for possible candidates, and Nick was recommended. He was put to work immediately, with

SEE LOCAL CHILDREN, PAGE 5



PHOTO BY JENNA PUGRANT/THE CONNECTION

Deli Italiano owner Yasser Baslios became the owner of the business in 2002. Employees of Deli Italiano Sam Shaia of Manassas, Osama Awadalla of Sterling, Yasser Baslios of Landsdowne, Jose Guevara of Reston and Toffy Guidera of Sterling have all worked at the restaurant for over five years.

A Taste of Charity

Deli Italiano known for food, community involvement.

BY JENNA PUGRANT
THE CONNECTION

Situated on the far corner of the Village Center between the Katie's Coffee and Cannon Seafood in Great Falls sits the familiar green, red and white awning of Deli Italiano Gourmet Pizza and Subs. Started in Great Falls in 1990, Deli Italiano has earned its reputation as one of the best restaurants in Great Falls.

"I've been eating food from Deli Italiano ever since I moved to Great Falls," said Mark Alan, a 10-year resident of Great Falls. "I've yet to find a pizza in Virginia that I enjoy as much as Deli Italiano's."

THE CURRENT OWNER of Deli Italiano is Yasser Baslios. Baslios came to the U.S. from Egypt in 1998 and now lives in Leesburg with his wife and three children. After some time in the U.S., he began working at the Deli as dishwasher. He then moved to jobs such as sub maker and manager, until he eventually became owner of the business after four years in 2002.

"We're all about quality here," said Baslios. "The people of Great Falls always want high quality food. If they're given high quality food, then they come back. Everything here is made with the best, most ex-

pensive ingredients and is made fresh every day." Deli Italiano is a business that provides catering, but the majority of their business comes from takeout and delivery requests. The walls of the restaurant are lined with framed photos of memorable customers who have eaten Deli Italiano's food, including pictures of such legends as former Redskins quarterback Mark Brunell and former Redskins coach Jim Zorn. Baslios mentioned that Gilbert Arenas and Santana Moss sometimes stop in to grab food as well.

In addition to being known for their food, Deli Italiano has also created a reputation for being an active charitable business in the Great Falls community. "I love Great Falls because of the people here," said Baslios. "Most of my family is still in Egypt, so Great Falls has become a great community to be a part of and I want to make sure I can help wherever I can." Baslios' Deli Italiano has been an active sponsor of churches such as St. Francis on Georgetown Pike and other community organizations, offering them discounts on food. "We also give discounts to various boys scout troops and community activities, such as the concerts on Sundays in the summer," he said. "We always

SEE DELI, PAGE 4

Local Design, Build Firm Meets EPA Rules

Home Equity Builders ready to meet homeowner's environmental safety needs.

Home Equity Builders, a design/build firm operating for more than 20 years, is ready for the implementation of the EPA's Renovation, Repair and Painting Rule. Home Equity Builders' Jeff Rainey, president and CEO; Patrick Mullen, superintendent; and Donna West, senior designer, have all achieved certified status as EPA Certified Renovators.

The EPA rule, effective April 22, requires contracting firms to be certified in the use of lead-safe work practices, as well as lead-safe practices that minimize occupant's exposure to lead hazards. The law impacts a wide range of specialty trades including building maintenance and service personnel, dry-

wall mechanics, plumbers, electricians, HVAC technicians, window and siding installers, kitchen and bathroom cabinet specialists and painters.

The federal law applies to renovations including many typical housing maintenance, repair and remodeling activities for all houses built before 1978. Homes that have been tested and certified and lead free are exempt from the rule.

Home Equity Builders' services include kitchen and bath remodels, additions, renovations, handyman services, and home adaptations for seniors.



Sharon Rainey, co-owner, vice president of marketing and Jeff Rainey, president and CEO.

"This rule will affect many of our clients in neighborhoods throughout Northern Virginia," said

Rainey. "We are proud of our commitment to training and education to ensure lead-safe work practices. The health of our clients' families depends on it."

In becoming certified, Home Equity Builders submitted an application to the EPA and Rainey, Mullen and West completed an 8-hour training class. In working with clients, Home Equity Builders talks about the lead-safe methods they will use on their job sites, and discuss results of any previously conducted lead tests. Following work, Home Equity Builders keeps records documenting how lead-safe practices were followed.

"Lead exposure is a serious health hazard, particularly for children," West said. "The information I learned through this program is very important and I look forward to continuing to work with our clients to ensure this issue is at the forefront of our work together."

Deli Owner Sets High Expectations

FROM PAGE 3

like to give back." The restaurant supported Langley High School in McLean, sponsoring their baseball and football teams over the past five years.

OUTSIDE OF GREAT FALLS, Baslios has been involved in the startup of a new church in Ashburn to help new immigrants to the area, demonstrating how important giving back is to him. "Our beloved Yasser likes charity and he has a charitable heart," said Father John Farag of the new St. Moses Coptic Orthodox

Church. "He never says no to any project and does everything he can to help the communities he is a part of."

Since Baslios began at Deli Italiano more than a decade ago, he has always maintained high expectations for the food that he serves and has made sure that Deli Italiano has remained an active contributor to the community. While the restaurant has added some new items to their menu such as sandwich wraps, whole wheat sub rolls and some new salad options, Baslios does not plan on making any major changes to the business that has already



Deli Italiano, located next to the Katie's Coffee and Cannon Seafood in Great Falls, has been open since 1990.

gained its reputation. "Deli Italiano has customers that are loyal and keep coming back," said Baslios. "When people call in, we

often know their name, what they want to order, and where they want it delivered. We're like one big family."

McLean Hosts Jewelry Showcase

Designers, artisans bring their creations in time for Valentine's Day.

With Valentine's Day just around the corner, more than 42 juried jewelry designers and artisans will offer a variety of quality, handmade jewelry at the McLean Community Center's Fourth Annual McLean Jewelry Showcase. The show takes place Saturday, Feb. 6, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., at the Cen-

ter, which is located at 1234 Ingleside Ave. Admission is \$3 per person; a \$1 discount coupon is available on the Center's Web site, www.mcleancenter.org/special-events.

Shoppers of all ages, with budgets either large or small, can find something to love at the showcase. Whether they seek an heirloom

quality design for that someone special or want a custom piece made to order, they can find it.

Participants include 16-year-old Marisa Messina of McLean, a student at Georgetown Day School, who creates jewelry from semi-precious gemstones, glass, pearls, crystals and beads from around the world for her company, Callista Design.

To download a \$1 off admission coupon or for more information, visit the Center's Web site: www.mcleancenter.org/special-events, or call 703-790-0123, TTY: 711.



Jewelry on display includes this Roz Swartz Williams image.



Ingrid King

Talking About Pets

Author and pet health expert Ingrid King comes to Great Falls.

Ingrid King, author of the "Buckley's Story — Lessons from a Feline Master Teacher," will appear at Seneca Hill Animal Hospital Resort and Spa in Great Falls on Saturday, Feb. 13, 11 a.m. -1 p.m. King will be signing copies of her book and answer questions.

King is a former veterinary hospital manager turned writer. Her online magazine "News for You and Your Pet" goes out to subscribers around the world. Her blog, "The Conscious Cat," has been called "educational cat nip for the cat lover" and is a comprehensive resource for conscious living, health and happiness for pets and their people.

Seneca Hill Animal Hospital offers a general practice of veterinary medicine, surgery and dentistry. Its mission is to provide the highest quality pet care in a friendly, clean, odor free, relaxed setting. Guests at the Resort & Spa are spoiled with four daily walks and daily play sessions as well as extras such as a swim in the pool, Reiki, massage, and a photo album of the pet's vacation. Seneca Hill also provides doggy day care.

For more information about "Buckley's Story" and King, visit www.ingridking.com.

Local Children Pursue Global Stories

FROM PAGE 3

out formally submitting a writing sample, he said. "It was out of the blue. I didn't know about it."

HIS FIRST ASSIGNMENT was a story about artist Brian Jungen, who had recently opened an exhibit at the National Museum of the American Indian. "I wanted to show that great art can be done in many ways and expressed in many ways," he said, noting that Jungen turned everyday items like shoes and chairs into objects of beauty.

In another story, Nick followed State Department Chief of Protocol Capricia Marshall as she hosted "A Taste of India" to mark the Indian prime minister's visit to the White House. There, he interviewed the Indian ambassador, among other participants. "The message that I thought was behind that was that we can come together doing simple things, sharing food and talking," Nick said.

"Writing the stories can be challenging, depending on the kind of angle I'm trying to take," he said. "But I'm really happy doing it."

"Nick has been one of the most amazing kids I've worked with," Freeman said. For example, she said, when his interview with Jungen fell through at the last minute, Nick went to the exhibit anyway, examined the artwork, spoke with a curator and dug up a quote or two from Jungen that would be useable. "He basically triangulated the story and he did it," Freeman said.

"What I like about Jonas is he's got such a fresh, new look at things," she said. "He's always surprising me with the questions he asks." She recalled that Jonas had prepared questions for a certain set of people at the Veterans Day event he attended but ended up running into different guests and improvised new questions.

"The thing I enjoy about this is they really get it," Freeman said of her reporters, noting that each of their stories is better than the last. She started the Scholastic Kids Press Corps as a temporary outfit to cover the 2000 presidential race. In 2005, after the next presidential election, the group became a year-round, nationwide entity.

She said the corps epitomized Scholastic Magazines' longstanding mission to present the world to children in a way that they can understand and that involves them. Not only do the reporters get hands-on experience, she said, but the readers "learn they're really as important a part of the world as anyone

else, as the adults are."

Jonas said he had considered reporting prior to his stint at Scholastic. Now, he said, he is more certain that it is a job he would enjoy. "Now that I've done some work in the field, I really, really love doing it," he said. While many of his peers may find the job attractive because it affords chances to meet the famous and powerful,

he said, what he enjoyed was getting to be part of events and interviewing the people involved.

"Before this, I was never really thinking about being a reporter," Nick said. "After seeing how interesting it is, I can see the perks of being a reporter." He said he enjoyed meeting people who were smart and capable and who were using their skills to help others.



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Adding More Painful Cuts

With talk of cutting programs that make it bearable to go to school for students, pay cuts should also be on the table.

Some of the cuts proposed by Fairfax County Public Schools might sound like they will not affect learning very much.

Freshman sports, for instance, involves 2,200 students across the county who are engaged in the delicate transition from middle school to high school. Why would it matter?

How about the 5,000 students who participate in indoor track?

Or the thousands of students who find their love of learning through music.

Or the students getting a second chance on success at Pimmit Hills Alternative School.

Succeeding in school is all about finding a niche, a reason to go, particularly in high school. For some students, this is band. For others it is the chance to run track. For some,

it's an art class. For others it might be a connection to friends made through freshman sports.

Education succeeds for many different reasons. It is a huge mistake to cut off the very things that help students engage.

Nevertheless, schools across the area will have less money per student this year, and they will have to make cuts. Before they cut the life out of the school day for some many children, parents

and the rest of local taxpayers deserve to see administration and staff over a certain level willing to share the pain.

No doubt many administrative cuts are not receiving as much publicity as cuts that impact students. But what administrative departments will face cuts similar to those proposed

for music or some sports programs?

Pay cuts for staff with salaries more than \$75,000 should also be on the table, holding classroom teachers harmless. Here are some suggested guidelines, more moderate than many of the cuts in many private companies with revenue shortfall in the past two years:

- ❖ 5 percent for employees who make \$75,000-\$90,000

- ❖ 10 percent for employees who make \$90,000-\$115,000

- ❖ 15 percent for employees who make \$115,000-\$140,000

- ❖ 20 percent for employees who make \$140,000-\$200,000

- ❖ 30 percent for employees who make more than \$200,000

This budget crisis is different than in the past. Right now for the first time, taxpayers are looking at drastically lower home values, and many are underwater. Tens of thousands of taxpayers in Northern Virginia are unemployed. For the public to press for more money for schools, schools will have to demonstrate that they "get it."

EDITORIAL

LETTERS

Conflicting Advice on Mammograms

BY DR. KIRSTEN EDMISTON
MEDICAL DIRECTOR, INOVA
CANCER SERVICES

Women can be apprehensive about going for their annual mammogram. The stress of waiting for results, or even the test itself, can be something many would gladly avoid.

In November, the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSF) may have added to this stress by announcing revised screening mammography guidelines. The new recommendations left many women uncertain about what to do about their breast health. The USPSF recommended against routine screening mammography in women aged 40 to 49 and recommended that women aged 50 to 74 have a mammogram every two years rather than every year, unless there is a high-risk for breast cancer because of family history or gene mutations.

The new guidelines conflict with those of the American Cancer Society and the American College of Radiology, which both remain committed to advising annual mammograms starting at age 40, as well as the National Cancer Institute, which recommends that women age 40 and older have mammograms every one to two years.

The Inova Breast Care Institute, which has entry points throughout Northern Virginia for patients with any type of breast health issues, continues to support routine annual screening mammograms from qualified breast imaging centers for women over the age of 40 as long as they are in good health.



Dr. Kirsten Edmiston

In the United States, breast cancer is the most common cancer and the second leading cause of cancer deaths in women according to the American Cancer Society. More than 192,000 new cases and 40,000 deaths from the disease are expected in the U.S.

this year.

The best approach to maintaining a women's breast health is to maintain a healthy lifestyle, have appropriate screening based on risk and to encourage women to discuss their specific family history and circumstances with their physician.

Women who have found breast cancer after having an annual mammogram agree that it is important to be diligent about having regular breast exams. Early detection leads to the best chance for a successful outcome.

The Inova Breast Care Institute at Inova Alexandria, Inova Fairfax, Inova Fair Oaks, Inova Loudoun and Inova Mount Vernon hospitals are some of the first programs in the Washington, D.C., metro area to receive three-year accreditation from the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers, which awards accreditation only to programs that embrace a multidisciplinary approach and can meet or exceed 27 strict standards for excellence in breast care.

When there are questions about breast care, experts at the Inova Breast Care Institute are available to answer those questions, alleviate any concerns and offer our commitment to supporting women's breast health. For more information about breast health visit inova.org/ibci.

More Involvement For 2020 Goals

To the Editor:

I am writing to express my view in opposition to the proposal of Kathleen Murphy to establish a special tax district for Great Falls ["Taking a High Road to 2020," Great Falls Connection, Jan. 27-Feb. 2, 2010]. Murphy proposes that each family of Great Falls pay \$100 a year to generate \$500,000, as a method of "gaining political clout." She also states that "our inability to take effective action to realize our vision of Great Falls by the year 2020 is due to our ineffective method of self-governance," and proposes to hire attorneys, transportation experts, or even become a separate political entity such as Vienna or Herndon.

There are many reasons to be concerned about this proposal. First, Great Falls is not self-governed, but is a part of Fairfax County. Becoming a separate political entity is like buying an entire farm in order to obtain a single melon.

Second, as Murphy should be aware, it would be inappropriate to use tax money for political purposes. Political clout comes from involvement of the electorate.

Third, contrary to Murphy's personal feeling of ineffective

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 7

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LETTERS

FAITH NOTES

FROM PAGE 6

ness, the community of Great Falls has been reasonably effective over many decades at “preserving the semirural character of the area” and achieving other community goals through the efforts of concerned citizens, through its Great Falls Citizens Association, and a close working relationship with the Dranesville Supervisor’s Office and other county organizations.

The success of these efforts has not been and would not be enhanced by hiring lawyers or transportation experts. Great Falls success has been largely due to the dedicated involvement of talented and politically savvy individuals and businesses residing in Great Falls, and through its many community minded organizations such as Great Falls Friends, the Volunteer Fire Department, Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, various ad hoc groups and the sports leagues. Indeed, these efforts have directly resulted in the preservation of existing low density development in Great Falls, preservation of Georgetown Pike as a Scenic Byway, the Grange and the old School House, the construction of an excellent library and post office, and Freedom Memorial, trails and parks, many excellent sports fields, preservation of the Turner Farm, preservation of the Nike Site, not to mention approval of the new firehouse soon to be constructed, and the numerous excellent small town functions that give Great Falls its cohesive community spirit. I have participated in and observed these effective efforts unfold during my 38 years as a member of the Great Falls Community.

Fourth, this area of the county probably contributes more in taxes than it receives through local county expenditures, so it should be able to continue to make reasonable proposals to the county for reasonable improvements, such as are alluded to in the 2020 Vision Statement.

In summary, the answer to being effective at achieving the goals of this community is not to have Great Falls residents pay more taxes to have someone do what we want or what we need, or to take over the County functions. The answer is continued vigilance and effective citizen’s involvement within the county processes, by people who care enough to do their civic duty. Stop this nonsense about creating another rice bowl.

Glen Sjoblom
Great Falls

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

St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 8991 Brook Road, McLean, has a Fellowship Hour after the 10 a.m. services. On Feb. 7, the Winter Sunday will focus on children, with hot chocolate with marshmallows and a long frieze of snowmen and other winter-oriented crafts. On Feb. 14, Valentine Sunday will focus on love and friendship, as children and adults make Valentine’s cards for the residents of the nearby Sunrise Assisted Living home. A chocolate fountain will be operating. www.stthomasmcleanva.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.

Maggie Page of Vienna is beginning a one-year service assignment with Mennonite Central Committee in Europe as a teacher’s assistant. Page has a bachelor’s in studio art from St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn. She is associated with Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Shoreview, Minn. Page is serving through MCC’s Serving and Learning Together program for young adults. MCC is a relief, development and peace organization of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in Canada and the U.S. mcc.org.

Antioch Christian Church Youth will collect one-dollar donations in large soup pots for the **Souper Bowl of Caring**, at the 11 a.m. service on Sunday, Feb. 7, at Antioch Christian Church, 1860 Beulah Road, Vienna. Each group gives their donation directly to the charity of their choice; no money is sent to Souper Bowl of Caring headquarters. Organizers simply ask that groups report their collection amount so a national total can be determined. www.antiochdoc.org.

Emmaus United Church of Christ will offer the lecture series “Nurturing the Body through Nutrition.” Classes will be 7 p.m. in the parlor of Emmaus Church, 900 East Maple Avenue, Vienna. Free and open to the public. Contact Dana Krauskopf, 703-272-8675 or hamanasi@bellsouth.net, or Marsha Komandt, 703-938-1264 or mgkomandt@verizon.net.

❖ Monday, Feb. 8. Learning to Reconnect to Your Body in Healthy Ways: Weight Management.

❖ Monday, Feb. 22. Learning to Reconnect to Your Body in Healthy Ways: Energy Enhancement.

❖ Monday, March 8. Sugar: The Unsweet Truth.

❖ Monday, March 29. Food is Medicine.

McLean Bible Church, 8925 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, will host LifeWay Women’s Going Beyond with Priscilla Shirer, at 7 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 26 and 9 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 27. Shirer encourages women to go beyond everyday life to walk with Christ. Tickets are the two-day event are \$45. Register at www.lifeway.com/goingbeyond or 800-254-2022.



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Just in time for Valentine's Day!

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McLean Jewelry
Showcase**
Juried Handcrafted Jewelry

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11 A.M.-5 P.M. *Take \$10 off with this ad*

ADMISSION: **\$3⁰⁰**

Designs by Shant Jewelry Works Nonpartid, Ltd.

This fabulous showcase will feature a variety of juried, handmade jewelry and custom work by over 40 east coast artisans. From artsy to elegant; there is something for every price range and taste. Find that perfect gift for Valentine's Day.

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The McLean Community Center
1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean VA 22101
703-790-0123/TTY: 711
www.mcleancenter.org/special-events

CALENDAR

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

FRIDAY/FEB. 5

The Vagina Monologues. 8 p.m. at George Mason University Harris Theatre, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Tickets \$25. Part of the Vday campaign to end violence against women and girls. sas.gmu.edu.

SATURDAY/FEB. 6

Cabaret Series: Jeri Sager. 7:30 p.m. at Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1624 Trap Road, Vienna. Northern Virginia native and Broadway star Sager debuts at the Barns of Wolf Trap with her solo cabaret show, Broadway by Jeri. Accompanied by a four-piece band, Sager will re-create her roles in Cats, Les Misérables, and Evita. \$25. 703-938-2404 or www.wolftrap.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.

Chocolate Lovers Festival. 8 a.m.-5 p.m. at City Hall, 10455 Armstrong St. Taste of Chocolate, Chocolate Challenge, pancake breakfast, craft show and bake sale, children's activities and Chocolate Caper. Open Houses include the Fairfax Museum, Ford Building, Legato School and Ratcliffe-Allison House. www.chocolatefestival.net or 703-385-1661.

By The Bog of Cats. 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. Tickets \$25 adults, \$15 students. 703-854-1856 or www.1stStageTysons.org/cats.

Family Art Workshop: Haiku Scroll Paintings. 10 a.m. at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Families will work together to create a Haiku poem as part of each painting. \$10 per family. Register at 703-790-1953 or www.mpaart.org.

Polyhymnia A Capella Choir. 8 p.m. at Immanuel Presbyterian Church Assembly Hall, 1125 Saville Lane, McLean. Performances of works by Flemish Renaissance composers, Gioachino Rossini, Carl Loewe, Claude Debussy and Paul Moravec. 301-565-0314 or polyhymniasings.org.

Sonorus, Virginia's 1st Wizard Rock Festival. 11:30 a.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. \$20. 703-255-1566 or www.jamminjava.com.

Ballyhoo! And Mojo. 10 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. \$10 advance, \$13 day of show. 703-255-1566 or www.jamminjava.com.

McLean Community Center's 4th Annual McLean Jewelry Showcase. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. More than 42 juried jewelry designers and artisans with a wide variety of handmade jewelry. Admission \$3. A \$1 discount coupon is available at www.mcleancenter.org/special-events.

Dancing to the Helmut Licht Band. 9 p.m. at Colvin Run Schoolhouse, 10201 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Ballroom, latin and swing music, including a Samba lesson at 8 p.m. prior to the dance. Lesson \$5; dancing 9-11:30 p.m. \$12. Sodas, snacks available for purchase. 703-795-2003 or www.colvinrun.org.

The Smart Split: Legal Aspects of Separation And Divorce. 10 a.m.

at 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean. \$45 non-members, \$35 members. www.thewomenscenter.org or 703-281-2657.

Starshine Theater of Great Falls Performs 'Zorro: Legend of a Hero.' 7 p.m. at The Great Falls Grange Theater. With local actors, dancers and singers, ages 6 through high school. Reserve at 703-790-9050 or StarshineTheater@aol.com.

The Vagina Monologues. 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. at George Mason University Harris Theatre, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Tickets \$25. Part of the Vday campaign to end violence against women and girls. sas.gmu.edu.

SUNDAY/FEB. 7

Ensemble Gaudi: Soggiorno Italiano Concert. 4 p.m. at Vienna Presbyterian church, 124 Park St., Vienna. Italian sonatas by Corelli, Vivaldi and more in a benefit concert for New Hope International. Free, the public is invited. Donations accepted. Reception to follow. 703-395-2899 or



PHOTOS BY AL REITAN

In his Great Falls studio, Tuthill prepares an image on a lithographic stone for etching. The stone sits on his antique Fuchs and Lang press made of cast iron and wood.

Great Falls Artist Cranks Out Prints on 19th Century Press

During the month of February, images by Great Falls artist W. R. Tuthill will be on display in the large conference room at the Great Falls Library. The show is titled "Light and Dark: Playing with Form and Feeling." Visitors can take part in informal chats with the artist on Monday, Feb. 8, 6-8 p.m. and Friday, Feb. 26, 4-6 p.m. The artist will discuss his work and the vanishing art of traditional stone lithography.

Tuthill lives and works in Great Falls. His art studio, complete with antique Fuchs and Lang lithographic press, was a popular stop on the 2009 Great Falls Tour. Tuthill is a member of the Great Falls Studios, a network of local artists. His work consists primarily of highly detailed black and white lithographic images printed by tra-

ensembleaudiogmail.com. **Max and Ruby.** 3 p.m. at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Age 3 and up. 703-790-0123.

Chocolate Lovers Festival. 8 a.m.-5 p.m. at City Hall, 10455 Armstrong St. Taste of Chocolate, Chocolate Challenge, pancake breakfast, craft show and bake sale, children's activities and Chocolate Caper. Open Houses include the Fairfax Museum, Ford Building, Legato School and Ratcliffe-Allison House. www.chocolatefestival.net or 703-385-1661.

By The Bog of Cats. 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. Tickets \$25 adults, \$15 students. 703-854-1856 or www.1stStageTysons.org/cats.

Charlie Zahn and Tad Marks: ballads and fiddle. 4 p.m., 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. at The Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760-C Walker Road, Great Falls. \$15. Reserve at 703-759-3309. www.oldbrogue.com.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

Katie's Presents 'Food for Life'

Great Falls artist Naz Akbar featured at the cafe.

Katie's Coffee in the Great Falls Village Centre is currently displaying the art exhibit by local Great Falls artist Naz Akbar titled "Food for Life." All of the paintings presented in this exhibit feature different varieties of food from around the world, inspired by the artist's travels to places such as Bangladesh and Pakistan. When asked what inspired her to paint food, Akbar said "We all love food. I felt food complemented the surroundings of Katie's Coffee well."

The works are primarily painted with oil paints and incorporate vibrant colors and textures. One of the Akbar's most popular paintings titled "Blue Crabs" is also for sale at Katie's, in both a large and small variety. In addition, Akbar's paintings have been on display in other public venues such as the Great Falls Li-



PHOTO BY JENNA PUGRANT/THE CONNECTION

Great Falls artist Naz Akbar's art exhibit titled 'Food for Life' is currently on display at Katie's Coffee in the Great Falls Village Centre. All the paintings in the exhibit are of food that the artist found in traveling around the world.

brary and Great Falls Animal Hospital, where she chose to paint animals to appropriately fit the setting in which her art was being displayed in.

Naz Akbar lives in Great Falls with her husband and is a member of Great Falls Studios, the umbrella artist organization that currently has approximately 90 members. "Being a part of Great Falls Studios has been such a wonderful experience," said Akbar. "It is a very supportive organization that has helped me with my art."

Most of the pieces featured at Katie's are on sale, ranging anywhere from \$400 to \$1,500. The "Food for Life" exhibit will be on display at Katie's until the end of February. Visit <http://web.me.com/nazakbarart/Site/Welcomed.html> for more details.

— JENNA PUGRANT

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Here's What's Happening at MCC

Yu Wei Chinese Dance Collection

Friday, Feb. 5, 8 p.m.

\$28/\$10 district residents

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McLean Jewelry Showcase

Saturday, Feb. 6

11 a.m.-5 p.m.

Admission: \$3

Take \$1 off admission with this ad
This fabulous collection of 42 juried jewelry designer-artisans will feature a variety of quality, handmade jewelry—and it's just in time for Valentine's Day!



Philadanco

Friday, Feb. 12, 8 p.m.

\$40/\$35 district residents

This celebrated dance company is renowned for its innovative choreography, blending African American-based dance with ballet, jazz and modern.

The Real World of Fiji

With Filmmaker Rick Howard

Wednesday, Feb. 17, 7:30 p.m.

John Eaton

Friday, Feb. 19, 8 p.m.

\$28/\$10 district residents

Jazz treasure John Eaton celebrates the immeasurable contributions of Duke Ellington and Fats Waller. Part of our Black History Month celebration.

The McLean Community Center
1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean VA 22101
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www.mcleancenter.org

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 Feb. 20- ESPN BracketBuster/Homecoming
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Open House

Options Program Thursday, Feb 11 7 pm

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Options for High School! Join us for an Open House and learn more about Paul VI Catholic High School's Options Program on Thursday, February 11 at 7:00 p.m. The Options Program serves students with intellectual disabilities and significant learning disabilities. A primary goal for each student is to be as fully integrated as possible into the total life of the school community.

For more information on the PVI Options Program contact Mrs. Chris Desmarais @ 703 352-0925 Ext 333 or visit our website: www.paulvi.net/academics/departments/options

The Options Program is now accepting applications for the academic year 2010/2011. Space is limited, so apply now!

SCHOOL NOTES

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

Andrew Paulson of Great Falls has been named to the fall 2009 dean's list at Westminster Choir College of Rider University in Princeton, N.J. Paulson is majoring in voice performance.

Julie Benjamin of Great Falls was named to the fall 2009 dean's list for the College of Architecture and Urban Studies at Virginia Tech, where she is an architecture major and Honors Program student. Benjamin is a graduate of Langley High School and the daughter of Thomas and Susan Benjamin.

Margherita Scott of Great Falls was accepted as a first-year student at Hamilton College in Clinton, N.Y. Scott is a graduate of The Madeira School and the daughter of Thomas and Betsy Sue Scott.

Brian Benjamin of Great Falls was named to the fall 2009 dean's list for the College of Engineering at Virginia Tech, where he is a civil engineering major. Benjamin is a graduate of Langley High School and the son of Thomas and Susan Benjamin.

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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 8

The Old Dominion

Chrysanthemum Society. 2:30 p.m. at the Falls Church Community Center, 223 Little Falls St., Falls Church. A slide program reviewing 2009 ODCS Mum Show winners and introducing the new Exhibition Mums offered by King's Mums. Open to the public. Free Admission and refreshments. 703-560-8776.

AuPairCare Share-A-Bear

Campaign. 3 p.m. at the Tyson's Corner Center Build-A-Bear Workshop, McLean. Over 30 au pairs from 14 different countries make bears for children in need at National Institutes of Health. www.aupaircare.com.

MONDAY/FEB. 8

Toddlin' Time. 10:30 a.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Stories, fingerplays, and activities. Age 24-35 months with adult. 703-757-8560.

An Evening with 9Davine. 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. \$10. 703-255-1566 or www.jamminjava.com.

Light and Dark: Playing with Form and Feeling. 8 p.m. at Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. over 20 hand-crafted lithographs and drawings portraying moods from light to dark by artist W. R. Tuthill. 703-759-2810.

TUESDAY/FEB. 9

Canibus Melatonin Magik Tour. 9 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. \$12 advance, \$15 at the door. 703-255-1566 or www.jamminjava.com.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 10

'Danger Between the Lines: the Civil War History of Hunter Mill Uncovered.' 7 p.m. at the Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. The film includes authentic period music by the 2nd Carolina String Band, and features local historian Tom Evans. Jim Lewis of the Hunter Mill Defense League will introduce the film and conduct a question and answer session. www.gfhs.org.

McLean Highlanders 2010 Winter Cheerleading Clinic. Two-day clinic, 5-7 p.m. on Feb. 10-11 at McLean High School in the cheer/dance studio, with a performance Friday, Feb. 12 at the Girls varsity basketball game. \$75 includes 2 clinic sessions, admission to game for participant and one parent, and a t-shirt for the performance; \$60 for returning participants who already have the t-shirt. Register at www.mcleanactivities.org.

Green River Ordinance and Sleeperstar. 7:30 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$10. www.jamminjava.com.

It's Cold Outside. 10:30 a.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Stories and activities about winter presented by Barbara Effron of Storytime Express. Ages 2-5 with adult. 703-757-8560.

THURSDAY/FEB. 11

McLean Historical Society: George Washington's Mind or, A General's Genius. 7:30 p.m. at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave. McLean. William M. Ferraro demonstrates the potency of Washington's mind and

the centrality of Washington's intellect to his achievements through an analysis of Washington's correspondence, especially his Revolutionary War letters. Ferraro is an assistant professor and assistant editor with the Papers of George Washington at the University of Virginia. Free, the public is invited. 703-442-9370 or www.mcleancenter.org.

Cracker (acoustic) and Michael McDermott. 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. \$20. 703-255-1566 or www.jamminjava.com.

Dan Dietz's 'tempODYSSEY.' 8 p.m. at George Mason University's Black Box Theater in the Performing Arts Building, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. \$6, \$3 for students and seniors. Tickets may be purchased at the door or by phone at 703-993-8888.

FRIDAY/FEB. 12

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

By The Bog of Cats. 8 p.m. at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. 1st Stage, Fairfax County's non-profit professional theatre, presents a loose retelling of Euripides' Medea, set in rural Ireland. Tickets \$25 adults, \$15 students. 703-854-1856 or www.1stStageTysons.org/cats.

Mercury in Summer CD Release. 6 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. \$10 advance, \$13 day of show. 703-255-1566 or www.jamminjava.com.

Marco Benevento Trio and Nathan Moore. 10 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. \$15. 703-255-1566 or www.jamminjava.com.

OPEN HOUSES

Sunday, February 7

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



Call Specific Agents to Confirm Dates & Times.



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To add your FREE Realtor represented Open House to these weekly listings, please contact Trisha at 703-778-9419, or trisha@connectionnewspapers.com All listings are due by Monday at 3 p.m.

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SPORTS

Postseason Meets Underway

Madison boys and girls victorious at districts; Saxons, Highlanders, Seahawks and Statesmen each have highlight moments as well.

Both the Madison High boys' and girls' swim and dive teams captured titles at their respective Liberty District championships Friday night, Jan. 29. The event, shortened to one day due to the snow storm that hit the area last weekend, took place at Wakefield Park's Audrey Moore Recreation Center.

The Madison girls finished with 435.50 points to capture the title, ahead of second place Langley (404.50) and third place McLean (323). South Lakes (154) finished sixth overall in the eight-team field.

On the boys' side, the Warhawks were champions with 404.50 points, besting runner-up Fairfax (393) and third place Langley (334). South Lakes (201), Marshall (172) and McLean (168) finished fifth through seventh, respectively, among eight-teams.

Madison High's Adam Pennington, a senior, won both the 200 and 500-yard boys' freestyle races. In boys' diving, Warhawk junior Ryan Fox captured first (390.15). For the Madison girls, junior Bev Dobrenz was a first place finisher in the 500-free event.

For the Langley boys, junior Chuck Katis won both the 200-yard individual medley and 100-breaststroke events. Other first place finishes for the Saxon boys came from sophomore Ryan Natal (100-butterfly) and senior Stephen Richards (100-free). The Langley boys' 200-medley relay team of Richards, Katis, junior Alex Brumas and senior Chris Pivik finished first. Also, the Langley boys' 400-free relay team of Natal, senior David Case, Katis and Richards was a winner.

For the Langley girls, freshman Abi Speers was the winner in the 50-free race and junior Jayme Katis won the 100-free. The Saxon girls' 200-free relay team of Katis, junior Torrie Zarella, junior Megan Howard and Speers was victorious.

"Although both boys and girls teams were aiming

for district titles, we had a great meet with 48 season best times," said Langley coach Ryan Jackson. "Highlights for the boys were the medley and 400 free relay wins, and Chuck Katis' two individual wins. The girls' depth proved instrumental in their second place team finish. Highlights for the girls were the 200 free relay victory and individual wins for Jayme Katis and Abi Speers."

FOR THE MCLEAN BOYS, junior Charlie Putnam finished first in the 100-back race.

For the Highlander girls, junior Eva Greene was first in both the 200-free and 100-back events. Annie Springsteen, a freshman, won the 200-IM. The Highlander girls' 400-free relay team of senior Margaret Harlow, Springsteen, Greene and junior Katie Yensen finished first. The same foursome also teamed up to win the 200-medley relay. In individual girls' races, Margaret Harlow was second in the 500-free and fourth in the girls' 100-fly, while sophomore Adrienne Harlow was a third place finisher in the 500-free.

South Lakes' Emily Sennett, a sophomore, won the girls' 100-fly event and was third in the 200-IM. The South Lakes boys' 200-medley relay team of senior Brad Dillon, senior Nick Hazelton, junior Sean Shada and senior Mike Grimmert-Norris finished a strong third place. In individual boys' races, Dillon was a second place finisher in the 100-back and a third place finisher in the boys' 100-fly race.

Marshall High sophomore Cyrus Heshemi finished second place in the boys' 500-free event. Katherine Van Winkle, another Marshall sophomore, finished fourth place in the girls' diving event. Statesmen sophomore Andrew Nice finished third in the boys' 100-breaststroke.

— RICH SANDERS

McLean High Wins Over Stone Bridge

The McLean High boys' swim and dive team was a 175-111 winner over Stone Bridge High in a recent late season meet. Triple event winners for the Highlanders were Charlie Putnam, Colin Fitzgibbon, Bill Kim and Ben Southern. Kevin Geiger was a double event winner for McLean.

The McLean girls' team was also victorious over the lady Bulldogs, 179-107. Quadruple winners for the Highlanders were Margaret Harlow and Annie Springsteen.

Katie Yensen, meanwhile, won three events and McLean double winners were Adrienne Harlow and Eva Greene.

The Thomas Jefferson High girls' swim and dive team's quest for an undefeated season ended two weeks ago with a loss to Langley in the final dual meet of the regular season. The Saxons were victorious, 174-141. Both Langley and the Colonials finished the regular season with 6-1 records.

Three of Jefferson's top swim-

mers are McLean residents Anna Lan (team captain), Aedan Collins and Leah Gonzalez.

In boys' meet action, Jefferson (4-3) fell to Langley (6-1) by a score of 158-157. Jefferson senior team captain Matt Callahan (Vienna resident) won two individual events — the 50 and 100-freestyle races. Also against Langley, sophomore Stephen Seliskar (McLean) won the 200-freestyle with a time of 1:43.82. Sam Speers (McLean) and Callahan led the Jefferson boys' relay teams.

SPORTS ROUNDUPS



PHOTO COURTESY OF MCLEAN CHRISTIAN BASKETBALL

Four seniors on the McLean High girls' basketball team, from left, Lauren Sutherland, Melissa Wilson, Brittany McCray and Caitlin Baker, helped the Highlanders capture the Rotary Cup trophy by defeating cross-town rival Langley last week.

The McLean High girls' basketball team beat cross-town rival Langley, 55-34, two weeks ago to claim the Rotary Cup for the second consecutive year. The Highlanders played outstanding pressure defense the whole game. McLean's scoring leaders in the win were Melissa Wilson (17 points) and Andie Romness (12). Other scoring contributions came from Brittany McCray (8 points), Erin Mundy (7), Caitlin Baker (6), Shelly Kaniut (3), Kristina Bettner (1) and Caroline Gray (1).

Langley High graduate Katie Hansan is a sophomore guard on the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (Troy, N.Y.) women's basketball team this winter. The Red Hawks were 3-5 over their first eight games.

Christine Grilliot, a senior and a standout athlete at Marshall High, has committed to play softball at the University of Mary Washington next school year. Grilliot, recruited as a pitcher, earned First Team All-Liberty District honors the past two seasons as a member of the Statesmen's softball program. She was also named the team's Most Outstanding Player each of the past two seasons as well. Last spring, Grilliot led the Lady Statesmen on the pitching mound and was her team's top hitter, leading Marshall in batting average, RBIs, and total hits. She is the daughter of Carl and Cathy Grilliot.

The McLean High ice hockey team beat Woodson High, 8-7, two weeks ago to

improve its record to 5-2. Following the win, the McLean squad was two points behind first place Langley in the league standings.

McLean, in the win over Woodson, got a hat trick (3 goals) from Ajmal Behsudi. Other scoring contributions came from Connor Gilmartin (1 goal, 1 assist), Julian Kell (1 goal, 1 assist), Tommy Borman (1 goal, 1 assist), Matt Stewart (1 goal), Nick Baker (1 goal), Maury Winter (1 assist) and Max Alm (1 assist).

Point leaders this season for the young McLean team include the following: junior Matt Stewart (17 points on 10 goals, 7 assists); sophomore Nick Baker (15 points on 2 goals, 13 assists); sophomore Connor Gilmartin (13 points on 8 goals, 5 assists); and sophomore Maury Winter (12 points on 6 goals, 6 assists).

McLean Youth Soccer (MYS) Spring 2010 registration has begun on MYS' web site at www.mcleansoccer.org. Returning players as well as new players are welcome to register. MYS offers various programs for children ages 4 through 18. MYS programs include - recreation, travel, McLean Premier Soccer Travel, U5 for Pre-K players, and TOP Soccer for children with special needs. The season will begin the week of April 5 and extend through mid-June. Be sure to register no later than Jan. 30 to take advantage of the early discounted registration fees. Contact the MYS Administrator at admin@mcleansoccer.org. For more information, call the MYS office at 703-506-8068.

Kim Pilka, a 2009 Langley High graduate, is a member of the Colgate University swim and dive team. Pilka, a two-time Liberty District dive champion while at Langley, has twice been named Patriot League Diver of the week this season. She has had impressive individual wins in

team meets against Penn State, West Virginia University, Boston College, Dartmouth and Cornell. She will compete in the Patriot League Championships on 1 and 3 meter boards at The Naval Academy Feb. 18-20. Colgate is located in Hamilton, N.Y.

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Nothing is too small to know, and nothing too big to attempt.
-William Van Horne

21 Announcements 21 Announcements

Wilma A. L. Dando
(Age 83)
Educator



A longtime resident of Alexandria, on January 25, 2010 died of complications from COPD. A public school teacher for 37 years, Wilma taught at all grade levels from K-12, including private tutoring. She was born and raised in Pavilion, NY. In 1926 she married Thomas O. Dando and together they raised two children. She loved theater and dance and volunteered at the St. Clement Thrift Shop. Wilma spent her retirement years traveling and enjoying the company of her husband, Thomas, and her children and grandchildren. The Dandos celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary last August. Wilma is survived by her beloved husband, Thomas, and numerous family members. A funeral service will be held at the Church of St. Clement, 1701 N. Quaker Lane Alexandria, VA 22302 on February 6 at 3:00. In lieu of flowers, Wilma requested donations to the Church of St. Clement Outreach Fund, Capital Hospice, or the American Lung Association.

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Strength in Numbers



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

My wife, Dina, and I found out the other day that a friend in our social circle was recently diagnosed with lung cancer. It's the first friend/acquaintance of ours so diagnosed since I was similarly informed last February. Naturally I was sorry to hear of another person joining this less-than-exclusive cancer club. However, since I knew this new member, its effect on me was more personal. I called her the next day to offer any insights, answer any questions, share a few anecdotes, some of which hopefully she might find helpful. And in so doing, I felt another sensation, the sensation of not being alone, vis-a-vis the whole honor/camaraderie-amongst-cancer-patients thing.

Initially, upon hearing this friend's news (after she had called and confided in Dina), I again felt the all-too-familiar fear, shock and anxiety I had felt a year earlier when I was told my biopsy confirmed a malignant growth in my lung. And so I could certainly appreciate, although I hadn't yet talked to this friend and learned of the particular set of cancer-related circumstances (X-Ray, scans, biopsy), which lead to this diagnosis, to learn what she had been going through and for how long (it's not exactly share and tell in the beginning, or in the middle or the end, either).

Respecting her privacy and understanding full well the whole private/public, want to talk/need to talk/don't want to talk/don't need to talk cycle, I decided nonetheless to call the next day (not that previous evening when the initial call to my wife had been made). Our friend was very receptive to my call and eager even (can't really say happy) to discuss her health-related deficiencies of late which ultimately lead to her cancer diagnosis.

Similar in some respects to my experience and different in others, still it was comforting (to me) in some ways to not be the one providing the details and discussing medical matters of such severity and sensitivity. I felt as if in making the call I was providing a public service, almost, to someone in need. And in feeling good I began to feel selfish about feeling good. What was wrong with me? Here I am talking to a friend who is sharing intimate – and very personal – details, and life-changing details at that, that very few others in our group have been privileged/entrusted to hear about her tumors, life expectancy, inoperability and so forth, and I'm feeling a kind of serenity and strength, rather than sympathy and sorrow. How, why, do I feel anything other than sadness, especially considering all that I know that lies ahead, for this friend?

I think the explanation has to do with her future now being a part of my present/future, sort of. It's another connection I have in the cancer world. And from what I've read, what I've felt, what I've been encouraged and reminded to pursue during this whole cancer thing is, to find and maintain, connections. And having another member in the club (some club!), a member who so far exhibits all the attributes of a positive force for good/overcoming evil, I feel empowered, emboldened even by her membership. Not that either one of us is particularly interested in fighting this fight. Nevertheless, her attitude and willingness to do so, and her desire to take on all comers in the process, makes me feel stronger, more capable, more determined than ever to win this war.

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

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NEWS

1st Stage Kicks Off Fourth Production

'By the Bog of Cats' opens Feb. 5 in Tysons Corner.

BY DONNA MANZ
THE CONNECTION

1st Stage of Tysons Corner kicks off its February production with a Helen Hayes honor and a charitable contribution. "By the Bog of Cats" opens on Friday, Feb. 5, and 1st Stage will donate 20 percent of ticket sales to the American Red Cross Haitian relief efforts during the opening weekend, Feb. 5-7.

"We've gotten a lot from the community. You have to give back as well," said Artistic Director Mark Krikstan.

Krikstan called "By the Bog of Cats" the best script he had read in years. "As soon as I read it, I was so moved by this play, the dialogue, I knew we had to produce it."

Based loosely on Euripides' Medea, "By the Bog of Cats" mixes human tragedy and comedy, misfits, witches and ghosts in a rural Ireland setting. The production features a cast of 12, including a professional 10-year-old actress from Ashburn.

When Krikstan retired from a career teaching drama at George C. Marshall High School, he looked at the homegrown talent leaving the area and decided to create an institution that would beckon local professional actors home. It worked.

Many of the cast and crew are former students of Krikstan's while he taught at George C. Marshall High School. They went away to college or to drama school in New York City but returned to the Vienna area to help build 1st Stage into a top-quality professional theatre.

Peter Van Valkenburgh of Vienna graduated from Marshall in 2003, studied acting in New York and came back to Vienna two years ago expressly to work with Krikstan and help develop 1st Stage. For "By the Bog of Cats," Van Valkenburgh is doing computer graphics to simulate background scenery.

Ryan Tumulty graduated from Marshall in 2005 and from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill last spring. He moved to New York, hoping to crack the theater industry there. After a few months, he decided it wasn't the right place at the right time for him. He came home and 1st Stage was there for him.

"1st Stage is the embodiment of the importance of maintaining an appreciation of the arts and a sense of community," Tumulty said. "It's home, a place I belong, a place where anyone who wishes to can belong. Theater is for everyone."

THE HELEN HAYES AWARDS announced on Jan. 25 that 1st Stage would be honored with the John Aniello Award



PHOTO COURTESY 1ST STAGE

Kelly Slagle and Ryan Tumulty, a George C. Marshall High School graduate and Vienna resident, in a scene from 1st Stage's fourth production of the season.

1st Stage Theatre

1st Stage Theatre is located at 1524 Spring Hill Road, Suite LL, McLean, in an industrial center near Leesburg Pike. Phone 703-854-1856 for information on tickets and volunteering.

Performances are Fridays at 8 p.m. Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. The production runs through Feb. 28. Tickets are \$25. Student tickets are \$15. Tickets are available online at www.1stStageTysons.org/ or as walk-in patrons.

for Outstanding Emerging Theatre Company in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

"It's interesting that the much older artistic community in Washington, D.C., is recognizing a brand new suburban group as part of the metropolitan theatre community," said Van Valkenburgh of the Helen Hayes award. "It's nice that high art can spread to the suburbs."

While it has been a slow climb in this economic climate, 1st Stage has gathered great support from the community, Krikstan said. Only in its second season, 1st Stage has gotten the attention of theatre critics, theater aficionados and local residents looking for live theater.

"When Tysons Corner is redeveloped, when it becomes the arts and entertainment center of Fairfax County, we will already have been here, established, the first Fairfax County theatre company to put on professional plays with paid cast and crew," said Krikstan.

REMAINING SHOWS on the 2009-10 schedule for 1st Stage are "Humble Boy," a musical "The Last Five Years" and "Suburban Motel" closing the season in June.

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Jinny Beyer Studio	703-759-0250
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King Creole Catering	703-759-7306
Kloman*McDonald Const.	703-759-7662
Knowlera Media	703-757-5444
Loebig Chiropractic	703-757-5817
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Nextel	443-904-9305
New Paradigm Capital Mgmt.	703-757-4802
Old Brogue	703-759-3309
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Peking Delight	703-759-5040
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Roundhouse Design Consult	703-582-9403
Robert Mobley, AIA Architect	703-759-1927
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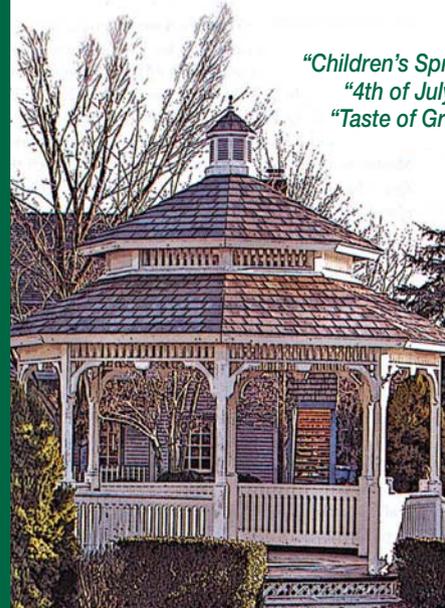
"Children's Spring Festival" • "Tree Lighting Ceremony"
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Celtic Winter Concerts at The Old Brogue

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.

The Great Falls Village Centre
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