

# New Way to Celebrate Great Falls

NEWS, PAGE 3

Great Falls residents discuss opportunities for the future at the kickoff event for Celebrate Great Falls Friday at the Colvin Run Schoolhouse.

## Second Chance For Sporting Goods

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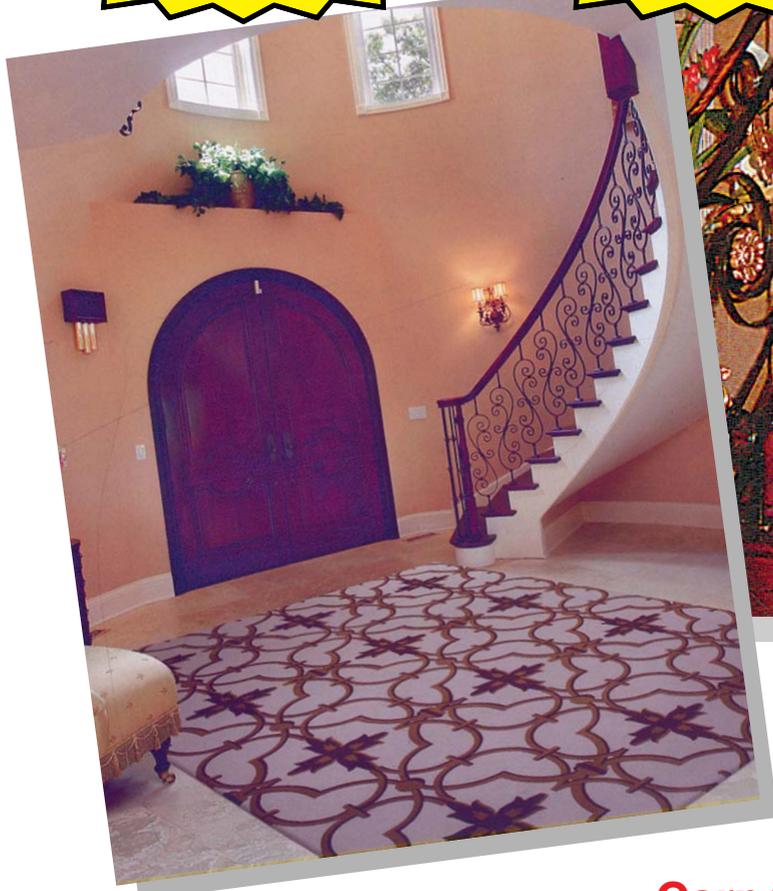
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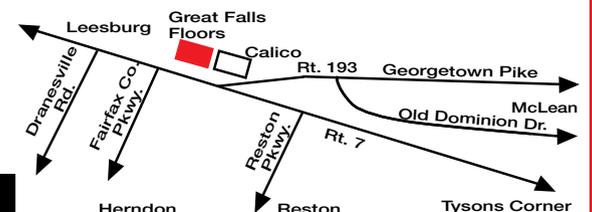
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PHOTOS BY ALEX MCVEIGH/THE CONNECTION

From left, Rich Curd, Mike Kearney, Candace Campbell, Joda Coolidge and Sandra Even, board members for Celebrate Great Falls, officially cut the ribbon for the new group. Celebrate Great Falls will be the managing organization for major community events throughout the year, and is designed to give residents a new vehicle to serve in the community.

## New Way to Celebrate Great Falls

Community group will manage major events throughout the year.

BY ALEX MCVEIGH  
THE CONNECTION

While annual events such as the Fourth of July Celebration and the Christmas Tree Lighting are staples of the Great Falls community, they are often the work of small organizations who shoulder much of the burden. It was with this in mind that groups from across Great Falls joined together to be a part of Celebrate Great Falls, which officially kicked off Friday, March 4 at the Colvin Run Schoolhouse.

"Smaller organizations can run out of steam or money, or people can get burned out. Now that all these organizations are under one umbrella, there won't be all these little organizations struggling to carry the weight," said Celebrate Great Falls Board Member Candace Campbell. "And there's no meetings, no joining another organization, no dues to pay. It's just a vehicle for more Great Falls residents to get involved."

The kickoff event was the culmination of a process that began in 1993, when Old Brogue owner Mike Kearney and four friends decided to raise money for another Brogue regular who was in the hospital. After working together, Kearney and the others found it a hard habit to break.

"We thought it was really enjoyable, so why not



Dan and Julie Maher of Great Falls share a dance during the kickoff of Celebrate Great Falls March 4 at the Colvin Run Schoolhouse.

of Celebrate Great Falls," she said. "I'm not sure yet where I'll volunteer, probably whichever one needs the help."

Celebrate Great Falls will help coordinate the five major events throughout the year: the Spring Festival, which takes place the first Sunday in May; the Golf Tournament, which takes place the first Monday in June; the Fourth of July Hometown Celebra-

keep doing it for others in the community?" Kearney said.

**BROGUE CHARITIES** was officially formed as a 501(c)3 in 1996, and has worked to keep Turner Farm open and the annual Fourth of July Fireworks firing, as well as helping to build the Great Falls Freedom Memorial. It eventually evolved into the Great Falls Charitable Foundation, which has raised over \$500,000 for local schools such as Great Falls Elementary.

"We felt that creating something like Celebrate Great Falls would breathe new life into the organization, because we all bring experience from the organizations we've worked with in the past," Kearney said. "We all bring a wealth of experience that will serve Great Falls well."

Laurie Bell, owner of the Great Falls Tea Garden, has lived in Great Falls for 28 years, and has served on the board of the Great Falls Friends and with other local organizations.

"I've been volunteering for a long time, and I'm excited to be a part

SEE CELEBRATE, PAGE 7



PHOTO BY ALEX MCVEIGH/THE CONNECTION

Students from the Primary and Grade 2 class at the Margaret Haddad Studio of Classical Ballet prepare to take their Russian Ballet Society Exams. Tamara Chetwerikova-Moubayed, top left, runs a school in Kent, England and came to Great Falls to help Haddad, top right, with administering the exams.

## Light On Their Feet

Students take Russian Ballet exam.

BY ALEX MCVEIGH  
THE CONNECTION

Students at the Margaret Haddad Studio of Classical Ballet got the chance to show off their chops last weekend as they went through the Russian Ballet Society Exams. Students of all ages were tested on the Legat System, which is one of the most rigorous methods.

"Russian dance is one of the strongest forms in the world," Haddad said. "We give these exams once every two years so the students can get comfortable with their ability level and go for their certificate in the Legat system."

The Legat system was founded by Nicolai Legat in 1927, four years after he and his wife came to England. They became the first teachers to create a ballet board-

ing school in English. Haddad herself was the first child in England to receive a scholarship to study at the school, and she has taught the method

around the world, including in England, Lebanon and Kenya.

"She does a wonderful job giving the exam, and I think it helps provide direction and discipline for the students' lives, even if they do not go on to dance in the future," said Tamara Chetwerikova-Moubayed, who runs a ballet school in Kent, England, and traveled to Great Falls to help Haddad administer the exams. "I feel privileged to come help."

Haddad enjoys seeing her students work their way through different skill levels, not just during exams, but on a daily basis as well.

**"The students come in distressed from a long day at school, and then they start dancing, and they see themselves looking pretty and dancing well and it all sort of melts away."**

— Margaret Haddad

"The students come in distressed from a long day at school, and then they start dancing, and they see themselves looking pretty and dancing well and it all sort of melts away," Haddad said.

Sixty-seven students took the exams, and those that pass will receive certificates from the Russian Ballet Society at the Haddad Studio's May 7 performance of "Bambi."

## Note to Gov: Sign the Autism Bill

**Bipartisan effort supports early treatment.**

**A** new law to mandate very basic and limited insurance coverage for treating autism in young children awaits the signature of Gov. Bob McDonnell. The added coverage will be a lifeline to many families already coping with major challenges.

The bill passed by wide margins with wonderful bipartisan support (including all of our Northern Virginia legislators). It passed 29-8 in the Senate; 73-24 in the House of Delegates.

The governor is facing a major lobbying effort by some business and insurance company interests to veto the bill, and he has not yet said what his intentions are. The law would save money over time, because it will result in young adults with autism functioning at a higher level.

Contact him and urge him to sign this bill into law.

<http://www.governor.virginia.gov/contact.cfm>; (804) 786-2211.

### SB 1062/HB 2467 verbatim:

Health insurance; mandated coverage for autism spectrum disorder. Requires health insurers, health care subscription plans, and health maintenance organizations to provide coverage for the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and treatment for ASD in individuals from age two to six, subject to

an annual maximum benefit of \$35,000 of coverage for applied behavior analysis. This requirement does not apply to individual or small group policies, contracts, or plans. The mandate will also apply

EDITORIALS

## Safe for Saint Patrick's Day

**Plan ahead to get home safe after celebrations.**

**W**hile the City of Alexandria holds its Saint Patrick's Day parade early, that leaves that much more time for celebration on the day itself, March 17.

The Saint Patty's Day SoberRide program will offer 12 hours of safe passage from 4 p.m. on Thursday, March 17th until 4 a.m. the following day impaired drivers off the road during this traditionally high-risk holiday.

First, plan ahead to manage this yourself: leave your car at home, take public transportation, arrange for a designated driver, or choose to abstain if a designated driver isn't available.

But if you find yourself needing a ride, area residents 21 and over celebrating with alcohol can call the SoberRide phone number 1-800-200-TAXI for a free, safe way home (up to \$30 cab fare).

to the state employees' health insurance plan and to the local choice health program. This measure will not apply to an insurer, corporation, or health maintenance organization, or to government employee programs, if the costs associated with coverage exceed one percent of premiums charged over the experience period.

Last Saint Patrick's Day, 525 possibly impaired people used the SoberRide service rather than possibly driving home impaired. More than a third of traffic fatalities on Saint Patrick's Day and the early morning hours of the next day are alcohol related nationwide.

Sponsors of this year's Saint Patrick's Day SoberRide include the Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington, Volkswagen Group of America and the Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association, as well as some of the area's Irish restaurants, including Ireland's Four Provinces and Murphy's, Ri Ra and Sine Irish pubs.

Since 1993, this program on targeted holidays has provided 51,718 safe and free cab rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the area. See [www.soberride.com](http://www.soberride.com).

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## An Open Letter to To Gov. McDonnell

We write to urge you to veto SB 966, a bill, which would mandate 150 minutes per week for physical education to all students in grades K-8 during the regular school year by 2014. This legislation would represent the first time that the Standards of Quality would mandate a specific amount of time for any individual subject.

We appreciate the concerns about childhood obesity that were focused on in the debate on this bill. However, there are significant fiscal and instructional impacts from this bill that were not thoroughly vetted or considered during our General Assembly session. In addition, our school system in Fairfax County, quite frankly, dropped the ball in communicating their concerns and many of my colleagues were left unaware of the financial and instructional impacts of this bill. We did vote against the bill. However, a number of our Fairfax colleagues who voted for the bill told us that it was only after final passage that they ever heard anything from the

school system and they might have voted differently had they known of these concerns. We know that our Superintendent and School Board Chair have now communicated to you and to our colleagues in detail about their concerns and we endorse their efforts. However, this information was unknown by many of our colleagues when we voted on this measure.

This bill is, first, an unfunded mandate that will cost Fairfax County schools, as well as others, millions of dollars. In Fairfax it is estimated that the additional costs for staffing alone will be between \$18-24 million. Second, this bill will crowd out other mandates and accountability requirements in academics. In science and math, we need to be increasing our time on task, not decreasing it. This bill would have the opposite impact and set us back academically. Given that there is no other subject where 150 minutes a week is mandated, it is illogical that physical education would get this kind of unique status over math, science, reading, or the humanities. Already we require physical education for the many of our students who participate in two or three sports outside school and would prefer more academic time instead.

And this bill does not allow recess to count as physical education time, so it is only academic time that can be depleted by this bill. If this bill goes into effect, after the 150 minutes of physical education is incorporated, there would be only 22 minutes of time left for all other activities such as art, music and the humanities.

Unlike many academic subjects that need class time, there are many other arenas where we can target help for overweight children without adding to deficits in their academics and providing a well-rounded education. After-school programs, targeted programs for particular populations at risk, or parent education programs through community, civil or church groups have all been addressing the threats of childhood obesity. We know the First Lady of Virginia has also joined with First Lady Michelle Obama in giv-

ing this issue public attention and we applaud their efforts. These private sector and public service education efforts can work on this issue instead of adding another "one size fits all" mandate to our schools.

Finally, since it is often low-income children who are most academically at risk, to take academic time away from them would do the most harm. While they can find other avenues for physical activity, they have fewer choices for academic challenges outside of the classroom.

For these reasons, and for the details outlined in the earlier letter you have received from Fairfax County school officials, we strongly urge you to VETO SB966.

**House Delegates Barbara Comstock (R-34), Dave Albo (R-42), Tom Rust (R-86) and Tim Hugo (R-40)**

### Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Send to: Letters to the Editor, The Connection, 1606 King St., Alexandria VA 22314. Call: 703-778-9410. By e-mail: [greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com)

## Bird-Election Preview: Meet the Candidates

Every state has an official bird, but few cities or towns have adopted bird symbols of their own. Now Great Falls is doing its bit to change all that. From now through June, the village will host a series of art and photography events leading up to the "election" of the Great Falls bird. You can vote for your choice between now and May 15 at the website of Great Falls Studios, [www.GreatFallsStudios.com](http://www.GreatFallsStudios.com).

In the interest of good civics, the Connection is profiling each of the seven nominated bird "candidates." This is the fifth of our profiles. The information comes from the website of the Great Falls Citizens Association.



**The Bluebird is a fist-sized, charming singer. This past winter many congregated at the backyard feeder of Great Falls resident Bill Garret, who photographed them on his deck.**

**EASTERN BLUEBIRD.** This charming cavity nester is a conservation success story. Its population plummeted in the early 1900s because of competition for nesting spaces from introduced species, such as the European Starling. Then people began orchestrating its comeback. They put out bluebird nest boxes, often in long sequences called "bluebird trails" (you can see such a grouping of these nifty structures in the upper meadow at Riverbend Park). The boxes are designed to attract Eastern Bluebirds while repelling competitors. As a result, the Bluebird has been on the comeback road since the 1960s and 70s, and can be seen in our back yards, particularly near meadows and fields.

A fist-sized creature, the Eastern

Bluebird is a bird-watcher's favorite, not just for its looks, but also for its song. Males are intensely blue, with deep, rust-colored breasts and throats. Females are more subdued in coloration. The melodious vocalization, a kind of soft warbling, is in several phrases each of 1-3 short notes, sometimes interspersed with whistles. For more information, go to: [www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Eastern\\_Bluebird/id](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Eastern_Bluebird/id).

Why it should be the Great Falls bird? Great Falls is a community of people who make a difference, and the conservation of this spe-

cies is a classic example of what can happen when human beings step up to make something good happen. Everyone can put out a bluebird nest box, as many Great Falls residents have already done. The species is also of beauty-pag-eant caliber. Not only is it a good looker (probably could win the swimming suit competition), but it has an accomplished singing talent and a chance to win the Miss (or Mr.) Congeniality award, although, in the interest of full disclosure, it should be noted that males will sometimes attack other species that threaten the nest site.

### Ambassador

**Laura Jameson of Great Falls has been named an Ambassador for Stanford University's EPGY Online High School. Laura enjoys high school with students from around the world and will serve as Ambassador with students from China, France and five U.S. States. She previously was involved in student government, creating the first yearbook and enjoying their first prom at Stanford. She also received the Stanford University EPGY OHS Leadership Award in June 2010.**



## Outdoor Painting Competition at Riverbend Park

Riverbend Park announced the start of a series of outdoor painting competitions, the first to be held Saturday, March 12. The competition is open to all painters in oil, watercolor, pastel, acrylic, pen and ink and pencil and charcoal.

The competition winner will receive a cash prize of \$100 and a gift certificate for \$100 thanks to the Old Brogue in Great Falls Village.

No preregistration is needed. Painters are invited to show up at the park between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. on the 12th, pay a \$10 entry fee and have their canvas officially stamped and numbered. No unstamped artwork will be eligible for judging. Artwork must be produced entirely on the day of the contest and must be submitted for judging no later than 12:30 p.m. Artwork must be produced on the grounds of Riverbend Park.

"The contest will be held rain or shine," says Artist-in-Residence Jack Warden. "Plein air painters can always find a place to set up and enjoy whatever weather Mother Nature chooses to dish out."

"Riverbend is replete with awesome beauty and seeing it through the eyes of 10 or 20 or 100 artists is a not-to-be-forgotten experience. We certainly encourage families to come out and bring the kids and see art on the making," says park manager Marty Smith.

"And if we have a big enough crowd," says assistant park manager John Callow, "we will conduct an on-the-spot wet-canvas auction, and that will be a chance for park visitors to take home some of that beauty at bargain prices."

More information is available by calling the park directly at 703-759-9018 or Jack Warden at 703-437-9681.



PHOTO BY ALEX MCVEIGH/THE CONNECTION

**Caroline and William Bean, (pictured with their dog Kooper), will be collecting used sporting goods at 9863 Walker Road in the Great Falls Shopping Center for the next four weekends. The equipment will help the more than 5,000 children served by the Washington, D.C. Parks and Recreation Department.**

## Second Chance For Sporting Goods

**Great Falls children to collect athletic equipment for D.C. Parks and Recreation.**

BY ALEX MCVEIGH  
THE CONNECTION

A few months ago, the Bean family of Great Falls was watching "60 Minutes" together and they came across the story of a boy who was collecting soccer gear to send to Haiti in the wake of last year's earthquake. Twins William and Caroline, 9, who attend Colvin Run Elementary School, are active in almost any sport they can sign up for, and decided to try and find a home for their garage full of equipment they've outgrown or no longer use.

They decided to call their effort 2<sup>nd</sup> Glance Gear, and for the next four weekends they will be collecting useable sporting goods to donate to the Washington, D.C. Parks and Recreation Department.

"We want to help the kids who can't afford to play sports," Caroline Bean said. "We want them to be able to play a lot of sports like we do."

D.C. Parks and Recreation serves about 5,000 children in the city, and tries to provide the sporting equipment because many of them can't afford it themselves.

"The kids we're donating to don't have equipment, that's who will be able to have fun with the stuff you don't use," William Bean said.

Starting Saturday, March 12, the sporting goods will be col-

lected at the newly christened "Kooper's Korner," which is next to the CVS Pharmacy in Great Falls, at 9863 Walker Road. William and Caroline named it for their dog Kooper, and because it is in the corner of the Great Falls Shopping Center.

The space, which used to be a Chevy Chase Bank, was donated for the weekends by the B.F. Saul Company, which owns the property.

The Beans are looking for equipment that can still be used - no bats with dents, cracked helmets or equipment missing straps will be taken. Needs include equipment for basketball, soccer, football, baseball, softball, track and field, cheerleading and boxing, as well as jerseys and hats. Equipment for other sports will also be taken.

"I know just in our garage there are piles of old cleats, pads and shin guards, and we can't be the only ones," said Laura Bean, William and Caroline's mother. "It's a great way to help out kids who need it, but also clear out some clutter."

Kooper's Korner will be open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays for the next four weekends, and after the goods are collected, the equipment will be cleaned if needed and then directly given to the D.C. Parks and Recreation Department.

# Fairfax County REAL ESTATE

## 2011 Assessments

Hunter Mill Supervisor **Cathy Hudgins (D)** saw her assessment stay flat this year, unlike most Reston households that saw a slight increase in their home values. Her 2011 assessment, the same as last year, was \$545,440



Dranesville District Supervisor **John Foust (D)** saw a 4.29% gain in his property value when compared to 2010. The county valued Foust's house at \$2,765,510 last year and \$2,884,060 this year. Most McLean homes saw a smaller bump in their home values.



Lee Supervisor **Jeff McKay (D)** saw a slight increase of .58% in his home assessment in 2011. Last year, his home was worth \$641,330 and this year it is valued at \$645,030. Most households in Alexandria ZIP codes saw a larger bump of 1.64% in their real estate assessments.



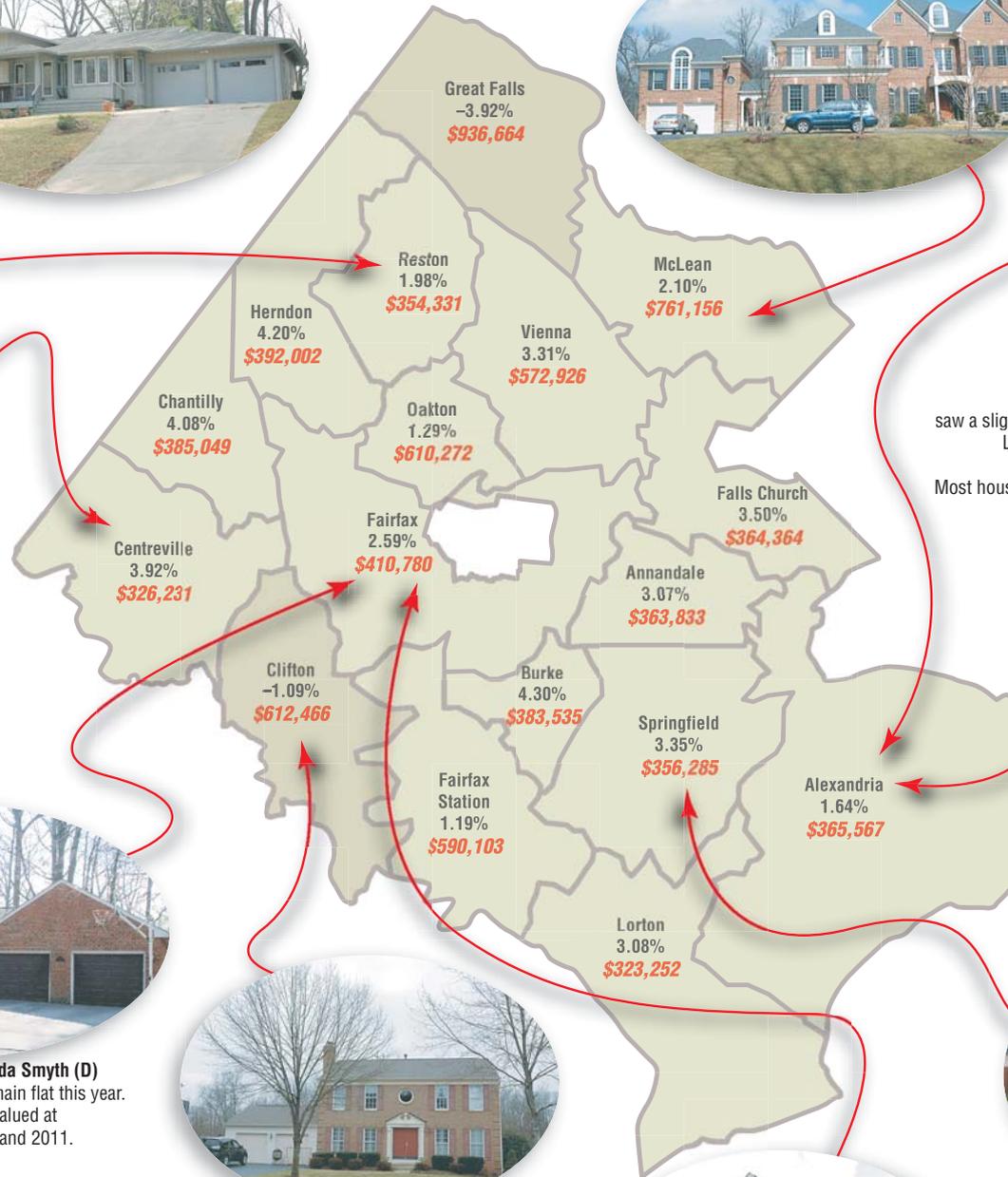
Mount Vernon Supervisor **Gerry Hyland (D)** was the only member of the Fairfax County board to see his assessment drop this year. Hyland lost .45% of his home value, taking him from \$402,810 to \$400,999.



Braddock Supervisor **John Cook (R)** saw a 6.1% increase in the value of his house when compared to last year. Cook's home was valued at \$381,570 in 2010 and \$404,860 in 2011. Cook's assessment increased more than most houses in his Springfield ZIP code.



Fairfax County Chairman **Sharon Bulova (D)** saw a much larger increase in her real estate assessment than most households in the county. Bulova's assessment went up 12.33% from \$526,990 in 2010 to \$591,990 in 2011.



Sully Supervisor **Michael Frey (R)** saw a 6.69% increase in the value of his home over the last year. Frey's home was assessed at \$195,410 in 2010 and \$208,480 in 2011. His home assessment increased more than most Centreville residences.



Providence Supervisor **Linda Smyth (D)** saw her home assessment remain flat this year. Smyth's house was valued at \$482,080 in both 2010 and 2011.



Springfield Supervisor **Patrick Herrity (R)** saw his home value remain flat this year. Herrity owns a house in Clifton assessed at \$525,750 in both 2010 and 2011.

**2011 County Average (Percent Change)**  
 Single Family Detached **\$535,298 (2.1%)**  
 Townhouse **\$318,614 (3.73%)**  
 Condos **\$211,281 (2.53%)**

ZIP CODE AREA	2010 MEAN	2011 MEAN	PERCENT CHANGE
Alexandria	359,674	365,567	1.64
Annandale	352,988	363,833	3.07
Burke	367,728	383,535	4.30
Centreville	313,922	326,231	3.92
Chantilly	369,952	385,049	4.08
Clifton	619,233	612,466	-1.09
Fairfax	400,391	410,780	2.59
Fairfax Station	583,177	590,103	1.19
Falls Church	352,035	364,364	3.50
Great Falls	974,906	936,664	-3.92
Herndon	376,196	392,002	4.20
Lorton	313,608	323,252	3.08
McLean	745,486	761,156	2.10
Oakton	602,520	610,272	1.29
Reston	347,456	354,331	1.98
Springfield	344,733	356,285	3.35
Vienna	554,550	572,926	3.31

### Changes in Real Estate Values Across the Region

Alexandria	0.46%
Arlington	1.4%
Fairfax	2.34%
Loudoun	2.45%
Prince William	5%

## Painting 'The Great in Great Falls'

The powerful wings of the Great Blue Heron in flight is a beautiful sight.

While this great bird lives here in our neighborhood, it is one of the main attractions for tourists who visit Great Falls Park trying to capture the best image of the bird as it soars over rapid waters. It is quite entertaining to see it fly so high up in the sky with its head tucked in and so low at times over turbulent waters. You can easily distinguish this massive bird from the other large birds as it always has its head tucked in. These birds in their natural habitat, that's here in the heart of Great Falls, can be seen feeding on small fish at inland ponds, lakes and wetlands.

Here is a painting of the Great Blue Heron on a sunny day by the water in Great Falls.

VOTE today at [www.GreatFallsStudios.com](http://www.GreatFallsStudios.com)

- LOCHINI JOHNSTON RUMBURG



'The Great in Great Falls.' This painting will be displayed at the Seneca Hill Animal hospital through May.

## NEWS

# Celebrate Great Falls Throughout the Year

FROM PAGE 3

tion; the Halloween Spooktacular and the Christmas Tree Lighting, which is the first Friday in December.

The Great Falls Friends, Optimist Club, Newcomers Club and Great Falls Charitable Foundation are just a few clubs that will combine their efforts into Celebrate Great Falls. Though the groups will still exist, the members believe that combining their strength will benefit everyone involved.

"It's going to do a lot to bring this community together," said T.R. Cook, president of the Great Falls Optimist Club. "We've been teaming up with other groups for 30 years, so it's nothing new. The bottom line is, we believe that by working together, we all make a better community."

**CELEBRATE GREAT FALLS'** logo is a stylized drawing of the Great Falls Village Centre gazebo that serves as the literal and figurative center of Great Falls. It was created by local designer Bev Lane, who beat out a handful of other artists for the logo.

"When I first started doing sketches, the natural thought was to look at the falls," she said. "But then I thought, 'what is the center of Great Falls?' and the gazebo came to mind. I did some sketches and submitted them, and they agreed it was a good choice."

More information on Celebrate Great Falls can be found at [www.celebrategreatfalls.org](http://www.celebrategreatfalls.org), which also includes a community calendar and information on local non-profits, schools, sports organizations and more.

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## COMMUNITY

# Bird-Art Exhibits Open in Real, Virtual Venues

Local creativity dovetails with Great Falls bird election.

The birds have arrived in Great Falls—in paint, ceramics, fabrics, wood, paper and prints.

Two new art exhibitions featuring the avian residents of the village opened March 1. One is on display in the expansive waiting rooms of the Seneca Hill Animal Hospital, Resort & Spa. The other is online in a new virtual gallery that has opened on the website of Great Falls Studios, a consortium of more than 90 local artists. Both are associated with a village-wide election to select a local bird as the official symbol of Great Falls.

"We're especially proud of these two shows because they illustrate the strong link between the Great Falls community and its large body of artists," said potter Laura Nichols, president of Great Falls Studios. "The Seneca Hill show is in the light and airy venue of one of many local businesses that help promote the arts in Great Falls. The online show illustrates how the artists have embraced new electronic media to serve the community."

Seneca Hill Animal Hospital, Resort & Spa is at 11415 Georgetown Pike at the foot of Seneca Road. Visitors are welcome to browse the facility's two waiting rooms during the company's business hours to see the art. In all, 21 artworks are on display in many art

media. They include at least one representation of each of the seven bird candidates that are finalists to become the Great Falls village symbol. "Seneca Hill has been our partner to display the work of local artists since 2007, but this is probably the most important of its many exhibits in terms of community service," said quilter Cindy Grisdela who organized the show on behalf of Great Falls Studios in support of the bird election.

The virtual gallery is on the Great Falls Studios website, www.GreatFallsStudios.com. Twenty images are on display, also including representatives of each of the seven Great Falls bird candidates. "The Internet is a great way to bring local art to Great Falls and beyond," said printmaker Will Tuthill, curator of the gallery. "With an exhibition every month, visitors to the site can see new artwork on a regular basis."

The Great Falls bird-art exhibitions are tied to the bird election, known as "Vote 2011: Wings Across Great Falls." This five-month-long event, which comprises various art and natural history activities, is a partnership of Great Falls Studios, the National Audubon Society, Forestville and Great Falls elementary schools, and eight other civic organizations or other local groups. It was set up by Great Falls Studios as a fun event for the village and a way to



"Blue Heron and Blue Boathouse," by Bob Gilbert, is watercolor and acrylic. The painting is on display at a new exhibition at the Seneca Hill Animal Hospital, Resort and Spa. The Great Blue Heron is one of the Great Falls bird candidates.

show that art can have a positive impact on a community's quality of life. It also recognizes a strong history in the United States of the use of art and photography as powerful tools to promote conservation of wildlife and wild lands.

Ornithology and art experts picked the seven bird finalists from 169 species known to have spent time here. Each bird uses different habitats in Great Falls, and the final seven also provide an interesting range of sizes and configurations to draw. The seven are the Pileated Woodpecker, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Eastern Bluebird, Great Blue Heron, American Goldfinch, Red-shouldered

Hawk and Wild Turkey.

Voting for elementary students at the two participating schools will take place in mid-May. All others can vote online from now through May 15. After you visit the new virtual gallery at www.GreatFallsStudios.com, take a minute to click on the voting-page link on the site's home page, where you can cast your ballot electronically. Voters picked at random will win prizes, including mugs made by local potters, gifts from Great Falls businesses and two \$25 gift certificates from The Bird Feeder, a store in Reston that sells bird food and other bird-related merchandise.

Symphony and movements 1-7 of Mozart's Requiem, with a full choir. Free and open to the public. www.studentsymphonicorchestra.com.

### FRIDAY/MARCH 11

#### Celtic Woman: Songs from the Heart.

8 p.m. at George Mason University Patriot Center, 4500 Patriot Drive, Fairfax. Irish classics, contemporary covers and original compositions. Tickets \$34-\$79, available at www.ticketmaster.com or 703-573-SEAT.

Jennifer L. Nelson's "24, 7, 365." 8 p.m. George Mason University Harris Theatre, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Attitudes about race, class and social activism are put under a humorous microscope. \$25. cfa.gmu.edu.

Northern Virginia's Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra. 8 p.m. George Mason University Center for the Arts Concert Hall, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Directed by Jim Carroll, with percussionist Joe McCarthy, percussionist Roberto Quintero and jazz vocalist Sara Jones. Brazilian bossa nova, Argentine tango, Afro-Cuban beats from Harlem and more. \$20-\$40. Tickets are half price for youth through grade 12 when accompanied by an adult. Charge at 888-945-2468 or cfa.gmu.edu.

### SATURDAY/MARCH 12

Student Symphonic Orchestra of Fairfax. 7:30 p.m. Redeemer Lutheran Church, 1545 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. With the brass faculty quintet from Shenandoah Conservatory. The orchestra will perform the first and fourth movements of Beethoven's Fifth



Iona will perform on Sunday, March 13, 4 p.m., 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. at the Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760-C Walker Road, Great Falls. Pan-Celtic music. \$15. 703-759-3309 or www.ionamusic.com/brogue.shtml.

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The Connection Newspapers is looking for one or two writers to cover one or two news stories a week. Work with award-winning editor. On-the-beat training, nominal pay per story. Please send resume, letter of interest to Kemal Kurspahic, [kemal@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:kemal@connectionnewspapers.com).



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**ROCKIN' INTO SPRING!**  
Friday, March 18, 8-11 p.m.

Advance: \$20/\$10 McLean district residents  
Friends of MCC: \$5

Join the Friends of McLean Community Center and the MCC at this co-sponsored casual evening event of dancing to the sounds of some of your favorite "oldies but goodies"! Live music provided by **The Fabulous Hubcaps** ([www.thehubcaps.com](http://www.thehubcaps.com)). There will be refreshments, appetizers and a cash wine bar. \*Registration is required.

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PHOTO COURTESY/CF SELECT

**The 5th grade girls Great Falls select basketball team finished second at the recent Fairfax County Youth Basketball League tournament. Back row, left to right: Sareena Dhillon, Rana Azad, Alyssa Glusica, Jaya Matteis, and Coach Scott Patton. Front Row: Jordyn Callaghan, Amelia Patton, Carly Britt, Aby Kontzias, and Caroline Britt.**

## SPORTS ROUNDUPS

**The Langley Saxons ice hockey club** concluded their 2010-11 season with a tough 4-1 loss to Stone Bridge (Ashburn), who went on to beat both Oakton and McLean to win the NVSHL Championship. A goal by Evan Sterling was not enough to get the Saxons past Stone Bridge, which fielded an experienced and skilled lineup made up of mostly seniors and juniors. Langley had advanced to the quarterfinals with a 3-0 first round playoff win over Forest Park. Ian Schneider had two goals and Derick Paxton put the finishing touches on a great team effort with an empty netter behind a shutout by senior Brendan Mullen.

"We had a great season," said Langley coach Rob Faktorow. "The team got stronger as the season went on, but Stone Bridge was a tough draw in the quarterfinals. I'm proud of the players on this team and I expect them to be one of the top teams in the NVSHL next season. The future is very bright for this group of players."

Langley's hockey team was mostly comprised of sophomores and freshman this season, due to the graduation last year of half the team. Sophomores Evan Sterling (13 goals and 22 points) and Grant Grieco (9 goals and 12 points), along with freshmen Ian (8 goals and 17 points) and Drew Schneider (4 goals and 7 points), led the team in scoring and should be even more

of a force in future years.

Langley, in a late regular season contest, beat No. 9-ranked Briar Woods (Ashburn) 6-4 behind four goals by Sterling, one of the league leaders in points and goals. He sealed the win with an empty netter with 1 minute remaining. Langley had over 40 shots on goal and the defense came up big again in holding Briar Woods to 20 shots. The other Langley goals were scored by Zach Shames and Colin Framinan, while assists were recorded by Ian Schneider (2), Drew Schneider (2), Mikey Adams, Kevin Diner, Chris Diner, Grant Grieco and Zach Shames.

**The Great Falls Girls U-11 select basketball team**, a member of the Fairfax County Youth Basketball League (FCYBL), earned Div. 2 co-champion accolades as a result of their 23-22 win over Southwestern (Centreville), in a game played at Jefferson High. It was the final regular season contest for both Great Falls and Southwestern (11-3).

Great Falls, nicknamed the Saxons, and another league team, Chantilly A, both had identical league records of 13-1, earning co-champion status.

In the win over Southwestern, Great Falls' Lexi Abravanel - off a pass from teammate Merrill Wheeler - hit a pressure jump shot with five seconds remaining to

provide the margin of victory for her squad. Outstanding defensive efforts in the win came from Rachel Dunie, Sarah Van Houten, Grace Hardardt, Lexi Abravanel, Merrill Wheeler, Jada Massey Cole, Caylee Cuppernull, Abbie Crowley, and Caroline Cumby. The high-scoring Southwestern team was held to its lowest point total of the season.

Congratulations to Great Falls Head Coach Stuart Van Houten and his Saxons on another fine season.

**Langley High's Caroline Craver** has signed a National Letter of Intent to play NCAA Div. 1 women's soccer for Lafayette College (Easton, Pa.). Craver is currently a member of the Langley Saxons' varsity team under the direction of head coach Ken Savittiere. In addition to playing soccer at Langley, Craver plays on the Herndon Arsenal RFC U18 club team. As a center defender, she has helped her club team win numerous tournaments over the years. Last November, the Arsenal were champions of the Premier Division in the Bethesda Thanksgiving Day tournament. Craver is also a member of both the Spanish Honor Society and the National Honor Society. For her senior service project, she has been placing recycling bins around the Great Falls soccer fields



CONTRIBUTED

**Michaela Strizencova, 10, of Great Falls, pictured at the Southern Alpine Racing Association (SARA) Championship held last weekend.**

## Great Falls Fifth Grader Wins Skiing Medals

**M**ichaela Strizencova, a ten-year-old fifth grader from Great Falls Elementary School, had a successful weekend at the Southern Alpine Racing Association (SARA) Championship held last weekend (March 5 and 6) at Massanutten Resort near Harrisonburg, Va.

Four Giant Slalom (GS) runs were held on Saturday where Michaela won two second-place and two third-place medals. On Sunday, despite the heavy rain and icy conditions, the Championship continued its second day with two Slalom races. Michaela won a first and second place finishes for the two Slalom runs giving her enough total points to secure a second place position on the SARA State Team for J5 Girls (9 to 11 years old) category. There were 20 racers competing in the J5 Girls category at the Champion-

ship. As a SARA State Team member, Michaela will go on to compete at the Francis Piche Invitational at Gunstock, N. H. on March 18 and 19.

SARA is made up of eight ski race teams from clubs across West Virginia, Virginia and North Carolina. Michaela is a member of the Timberline Race Team in West Virginia where she trains every weekend from December to March. She also practices at Liberty Mountain Resort after school on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Michaela has been ski racing since she was six and she dreams of being in the Olympics someday.

Her brother Alex also raced in the older Category J4 Boys (12-13 years old) and he placed 6th in the Championship winning third and fifth places in the two Slalom runs in a field of 25 competitors. He is a 7th grader at Cooper Middle School.



**Alex Strizenec, a 7th grader at Cooper Middle School placed 6th in the Championship.**

# SCHOOLS

## Langley Senior Receives Leadership Award

Parnia Zahedi was recently awarded the Harry F. Byrd Jr. Leadership Award for 2011, a \$10,000 grant extracted from former Senator Harry Byrd's endowment. Parnia was one of only 11 students in the Commonwealth of Virginia to be awarded the scholarship. Every high school in Virginia nominated one qualified senior for the scholarship, to which the student then submitted an application of six essays, a letter of endorsement from the principal and a transcript; finalists from each congressional district were then selected to be interviewed by the Trustees of the Fund.

This interview consisted of a panel interview with all 11 people from the panel at the Virginia Supreme court.

Parnia has attended Langley for all four years of her high school career, maintaining a 4.4 GPA, while taking 10 AP classes. Furthermore Parnia is the Editor-In-Chief of the Saxon Scope, President of the National Honor Society, and a varsity tennis captain. As Editor-In-Chief, Parnia has not only tried to lead the newspaper staff, but also tried to be a leader throughout the school. As president of the National Honor Society, Parnia is working with other officers to

start a volunteer program at a nursing home and planning to end the year with a senior citizens dance. In these two capacities, Parnia has been able to combine the love of leading with her desire to give back to the community.

The Harry F. Byrd Award represents the two most important areas of Parnia's life—academics and leadership. She is truly grateful for all the opportunities that she has had during her years at Langley. Although many of her peers deserve this type of recognition, she believes it is an honor to have represented Langley in the competition process.



Parnia Zahedi pictured with Justice David W. Lemons.

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FROM PAGE 9

Church St. N.W., Suite C, Vienna. Oil paintings of landscapes ranging from abstract to realism. Refreshments served. [info@applegateframing.com](mailto:info@applegateframing.com).

**Deep River Concert and After-Party.** 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. [jamminjava.com](http://jamminjava.com).

**Bluegrass Marathon Jam Session.** 12 p.m.-12 a.m. McLean VFW Post 8241, 1051 Spring Hill Road, McLean. An all-day bluegrass marathon from noon until midnight. Come to perform or enjoy the entertainment. Sponsored by Fisher House, providing a "home away from home" for military families to be close to a loved one during hospitalization. 703-883-9250 or [www.fisherhouse.org](http://www.fisherhouse.org).

**Claude Moore Spring Estate Sale.** 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Claude Moore Colonial Farm, 6310 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Local living history museum spring estate sale. Jewelry, vintage clothing, linens, gemology, costume books and more. [www.1771.org/directions.htm](http://www.1771.org/directions.htm).

**Basics for Bird Artists.** 10 a.m. Artists' Atelier, 1144 Walker Rd, Suite G, Great Falls. An introduction to birds, behavior and habitats. Bring sketchbook and sketching materials plus a light folding chair. Free. Reserve at 703-438-6008 or [info@audubonva.org](mailto:info@audubonva.org).

**The Second City: Fair & Unbalanced.** 7:30 p.m. Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1624 Trap Road, Vienna. Improv comedy. \$24. [www.wolftrap.org](http://www.wolftrap.org).

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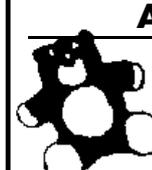
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