

Great Falls  
**CONNECTION**

# Playful Summer

News, Page 4



From left,  
Timmy Moran,  
16, Maria  
Berkowitz, 14  
and Tyler  
Ricchetti, 16,  
part of the cast  
of the McLean  
Summer Youth  
Theater's  
performance of  
"Eye Bye  
Birdie."

Wellbeing  
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Brightview  
Goes Through  
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Own Voice  
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PHOTO BY ALEX MCVEIGH/THE CONNECTION

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John Monsul of Great Falls, the creator and producer of Communicating Today, accepted the award on behalf of his program and his crew.

## County Board Honors Communicating Today

Tuesday morning, July 26, the television show Communicating Today was invited to the Fairfax County Government Center, by the Board of Supervisors, to receive a special award for producing their 600th program over a 22-year period on Channel 10, Fairfax Public Access cable TV. The award was also for "providing a worthwhile community service for the citizens of Fairfax County for many years".

John Monsul of Great Falls, the creator and producer of Communicating Today, accepted the award on behalf of his program and his crew. The 600th program was directed by Beth Olson and supported by Brad Tehaan, Peter Scheps, Jyothi Sunkari, Bron Gervais, Rafael Arancibia, Mary Hartzler, Stephanie Kercel and Frank Szumilo. Pamela Haines, producer of her own show on Channel 10, called Our Place, and Tom Fricke, edited the several musical video segments for the 600th "Musical Review" show.

In accepting the award, Monsul thanked his family for their support, especially his wife Dee Monsul, his brother Jim and Kathy Monsul, who came from Columbus, Ohio, to share the good news, and good friends Frank and Angela Szumilo and Pam and Rich Masaniello.

He also "shared" the award with Channel 10 and Cox Communications, represented by Executive Director, Chuck Pena and Mike Leone, Director of Public Affairs, respectively. Monsul said that "without these two organizations, producing 600 television programs over a 22-year period would not have been possible".

Monsul said he also wanted to share this award with the Military Order of The Purple Heart, who appeared on Communicating Today earlier this year. The MOPH was represented by Jack Leonard, National Adjutant and Lin Peacock, Director of Administration for MOPHSF. Tempie Thompson, of MOPH, provided much local support.



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# NEWS



PHOTO BY ALEX MCVEIGH/THE CONNECTION

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a special exception that allows a 52,000 square foot assisted living facility to be built on this property, located on Colvin Run Road.

## Brightview Goes Through

### Board of Supervisors grants special exception for 52,000 square foot facility.

BY ALEX MCVEIGH  
THE CONNECTION

**A**fter more than 18 months of planning, negotiating, protests and public meetings, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the special exception for the proposed Brightview Assisted Living facility July 26.

The property, located at the site of the former Thelma's on Colvin Run Road, is split zoned, with 1.44 acres zoned commercial and 2.12 zoned residential. The special exception was needed to build parts of the 52,000 square foot facility on the residential portion.

Supervisor John Foust (D-Darnesville) said he was prepared to defer the decision if any new information came to light at the July 26 public hearing.

"We have worked very, very hard to hear from everyone on this. The bottom line is that there are issues, I understand how strongly people feel about those issues, but we have had a chance to consider and evaluate them," he said. "Even after the Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval, I took the unusual step of scheduling two very well attended public meetings... Since the assisted living facility was first proposed, the applicant has made a significant number of revisions and agreed to numerous development conditions requested by the [Great Falls Citizens Association] and members of the community."

**FOUST CALLED** the facility an "appropriate transitional use from the Colvin Run/Walker Road area to the residential uses outside that area. The low intensity and visual appearance of the proposed use is

beneficial to this community. I also find that it is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the applicable zoning district regulations. In fact, this proposal is a vast improvement over the development that could occur on this site by right, with no input from the community, no review by this board and none of the many development conditions that are proposed."

Almost 30 people testified before the board of supervisors, with a little more than half of the comments not in favor of the development.

Kathleen Murphy, president of the Great Falls Historical Society, said it took a "long time to figure out" how she felt about the issue.

"It violates the culture of Great Falls," she said. "Colvin Run as a community is suffering, and actually needs the commercial activity at that site as a contribution."

Suresh Pandellapalli lives in the house that borders the northwest section of the proposed facility's property.

"Before we purchased our property, I was aware that the neighboring property was split zoned... I was confident that the county would keep the trust I bestowed on it, and preserve the [residential] part of the property for residential use, but I was sadly mistaken," he said. "The special exceptions are going to negatively impact my way of life, privacy and value of my property."

Joe Sartiano, who headed the No To Brightview group, which collected hundreds of community signatures from those who are against the facility, says he believes the supervisors' decision was inevitable.

"I think this was a done deal the second it got to the GFCA," Sartiano said. "And now we've got an artificial injection of an almost 53,000 square foot facility in Great Falls."

**DIANNE VAN VOLKENBURG**, co-chair of the GFCA's Land Use and Zoning committee, says she has worked with the applicant since April 2010, and

SEE SUPERVISORS, PAGE 12

GREAT FALLS CONNECTION EDITOR KEMAL KURSPAHIC  
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PHOTO BY ROBIN KENT

Art juror Joanne Bauer, a bird authority who is also Exhibitions Manager of the Greater Reston Art Center, poses with the winning artwork she selected in a Great Falls competition to pick a bluebird painting to hang in the library. The winning artist was Jennifer Duncan.

## Eastern Bluebirds Judged In Art Contest at Library

**Painting of new village symbol wins top honors, will hang in library.**

**G**reat Falls artists submitted 17 paintings or photographs of the eastern bluebird last week as part of an art competition associated with the election of the species as the new bird symbol of Great Falls. The winning artist was Jennifer Duncan.

Duncan's painting, called "Backyard Blues," is acrylic mixed-media on paper and depicts two of the birds near a nest box. "Mixed media" refers to non-paint components in the work, including collage, graphite and a wax crayon called coran d'ache. "I wanted to create a colorful rendition of bluebirds in the backyard," she said.

As the winner, Duncan receives a prize of \$500 from the arts group Great Falls Studios. Framing of the piece will be provided as a donation by Turner Framing, a frame shop at 125-J Seneca Road at Georgetown Pike. The piece will be presented to the library by Great Falls Studios in a ceremony in September. After going on display for a month at Turner Framing, it will hang permanently in the library.

The competition was judged by Joanne Bauer, Exhibitions Manager of the Greater Reston Arts Center (GRACE). Bauer was an ideal juror because she

knows both birds and art. In addition to her key role at one of the region's better-known arts groups, Bauer leads bird walks and monitors bluebird trails in Reston for a Virginia-based bluebird society. She picked Duncan's painting in part because of the joy and exuberance of the work, qualities she associates with bluebirds.

The election of a village symbol took place on line and was accompanied by various art and photo exhibitions earlier this year. This celebration of art, wildlife and parks in the village was organized by Great Falls Studios in partnership with the National Audubon Society, plus eight other local organizations and Forestville and Great Falls elementary schools.

In the election, the bluebird edged out the pileated woodpecker by a single vote. The other candidates were the American goldfinch, great blue heron, red shouldered hawk, ruby-throated hummingbird and wild turkey.

Duncan is one of 100 artist members of Great Falls Studios and paints in the Artists' Atelier, a group studio of 15 artists located near Dante Restaurant. Her works have been shown widely across the DC area.

## NEWS



PHOTOS BY ALEX MCVEIGH/THE CONNECTION

Students at the McLean Summer Youth Theater rehearse "Bye Bye Birdie" at Cooper Middle School Monday.



From left, Amelia Welch, 16, Sam Mayman, 16 and Sarah Salem, 15, part of the cast of the McLean Summer Youth Theater's performance of "Bye Bye Birdie."

# Youth Theater Heats Up Stage This Summer

**Local students at McLean Summer Youth Theater perform "Bye Bye Birdie."**

BY ALEX MCVEIGH  
THE CONNECTION

If putting together a full production of "Bye Bye Birdie" in four weeks wasn't enough of a challenge for the McLean Summer Youth Theater, they also had to deal with no air conditioning at Langley High School, their usual rehearsal place. But the group, made up of 40 students, parents and staff from local schools, went about their work undaunted, moving a few rehearsals to the smaller stage at Cooper Middle School.

This is the fourth year of the summer camp, which is directed by Cooper theater teacher Meg Baber. Students from around the area sign up for the camp early, and there is often a backup list of children who can't get in.

Amelia Welch, 16, who plays Rosie, says that Baber inspired her in her middle school days, which is why she keeps coming back to camp.

"Ms. Baber is one of those teachers whose love for theater just rubbed off on all of us," she said. "It might seem a bit unusual to some, but this is always the highlight of my summer."

**THIS YEAR'S PRODUCTION** was a challenge for the students, especially the younger ones, many of whom had never had training in musical choreography.



Natalie Harris, 14, and Tucker Reilly, 14, cast members in the McLean Summer Youth Theater's performance of "Bye Bye Birdie."

"Most of the students haven't been trained in movement before, some have had dance training, but this is a different challenge," said choreographer Cristi Goldberg. "While it's a challenge to teach them to dance without much experience, the kids make it fun and their attitudes are always wonderful."

Lori Taylor, who also accompanies the Langley High School during their performances, serves as musical director. She said the students have been very good about studying their material on their own time.

"They're good about going home and working on their music," she said. "It really helps, and they come in focused."



From left, Brendan Coffey, Alex Don, 16, Jenna Sander, 15, and Maria Berkowitz, 14, as the MacAfee family in the McLean Summer Youth Theater's performance of "Bye Bye Birdie."

Taylor, who has participated in all four years of the camp, says it's always rewarding to see a student finally pick something up after working at it so long.

"There was a student that was having trouble moving his voice from low to high notes, but he got it, and anytime you can see that light bulb go on, it's great," she said. "And these are all skills and concepts that will serve them well in the future."

Jenny Witzel, 14, used to live in McLean, and now she lives with her family in Mozambique, but she still made it back to participate in the camp for the first time.

**"The feeling you get after putting so much into those four weeks is intense, but it's also a lot of fun."**

— Rachel Myers, 16,  
Langley High School

"My old neighbors told us all about it, and it's been great fun, the entire cast is wonderful," she said.

Alex Don, 16, who plays Mr. MacAfee, says the camp leaders make sure to include everyone as much as possible.

"All the smaller parts in the play had the lead parts in the one-act [plays] we did earlier," said Don, who attended Cooper but currently attends Gonzaga College High School. "In the major numbers they also make sure everyone is involved."

Sam Mayman, 16, a student at Langley High School, said "even if it's a small part, they always find a way for it to shine."

Rachel Myers, 16, who attends Langley High School, said the quick pace leaves all the students with a feeling of accomplishment at the end.

"The feeling you get after putting so much into those four weeks is intense, but it's also a lot of fun," she said.

Don agreed, "at the end of the camp, you feel like you can do anything."

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## PEOPLE

# Finding Her Own Voice

Great Falls native Caroline Dunigan participated in Brevard Music Center summer festival.

BY ALEX MCVEIGH  
THE CONNECTION

In 2006, Great Falls resident Caroline Dunigan began to find her voice. That's when, at the urging of a teacher, she participated in the Washington National Opera's Camp for Kids. Only 14 at the time, she had an experience during the camp that forever shaped her love of opera.

"After our final performance at the Kennedy Center, my mom and I met Placido Domingo," she said. "To be exposed to such at a young age was prolific to where I am in my career now and influenced me to pursue opera."

Five years later, Dunigan is still being heard loud and clear, this time at the Brevard Music Center Festival, where she is participating in multiple operas this summer.

Dunigan, who graduated from Langley High School in 2010, is studying Vocal Performance at the Manhattan School of Music. This summer, she was one of 36 students to participate in the Brevard festival, which takes place in western North Carolina.

Almost 400 singers audition for the eight-week Brevard program every year, either by DVD or at one of five live-audition sites. The program puts on five operas of varying styles, and students must also take classes in opera and movement every day.

David Gately, director of the opera program at the Brevard Music Center, says that Dunigan is the "baby" of the company this year, as she is the youngest member.

"I think she was a bit overwhelmed by the huge amount of talent we have here this year," he said. "The exciting thing is that she didn't let it deter her, she took it as a challenge, applied herself and has been a stand out in the 'most improved' category."

Dunigan's roles this summer are varied: she plays a prostitute in "The Threepenny Opera," the Dew Fairy in "Hansel and Gretel" and Giannetta in "The Elixir of Love."

"I think she has learned an amazing amount from each experience," Gately said. "She is a bit shy, and has had to come out of herself for each of these roles. Now, in our fifth opera, 'The Elixir,' she is acting like a pro. She easily keeps up with all the other more



Great Falls native Caroline Dunigan (far right) spent this summer at the Brevard Music Center Festival, learning opera techniques and performing in four different operas.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Great Falls resident Caroline Dunigan (third from right) spent this summer at the Brevard Music Center Festival in North Carolina. Dunigan, who is currently studying Vocal Performance at the Manhattan School of Music, said she had the "time of my life here."

experienced members of the cast."

**DUNIGAN CALLED THE EXPERIENCE** "the biggest challenge of my life," but says it has been very rewarding.

"Every opera has required me to transform into a completely different character and with little time between each opera, it has been a challenge," she said. "A typical day at Brevard begins at eight in the morning with movement class and ends at 10 at night after a long day of tedious staging rehearsals and vocal coachings, so I have had to pace myself vocally, physically and mentally. I fortunately had a few weeks before arriving in Brevard to learn and memorize all four roles, so once I arrived, all that was left was polishing and staging. The amount of work we do at Brevard is overwhelming, but not too difficult that we lose balance. I have had the time of my life here."

She credits the vocal coaches at Brevard for pushing her performing skills as far as they can go.

"I have learned to be a fully committed performer when I sing. The vocal coaches have polished my repertoire and the stage directors have helped me discover how my body moves on stage and in a certain character," Dunigan said. "This summer, I have learned to collaborate with an orchestra and conductor in an opera. I have absorbed a wealth of important information that pertains to me now and way down the road."

Gately says her commitment to the program has paid off.

"To watch Caroline's improvement over the summer has been just downright heartwarming," he said. "She has thrown herself into the process and just this morning she did an audition that she could never have done eight weeks ago.

It was sophisticated, charming and well done."

Gately also expressed his admiration at how Dunigan transforms after putting on the costume for a particular role, saying "she works really hard in rehearsal, but the character really comes together when she actually puts on the costume for a role."

While opera comes with any number of preconceptions, Dunigan says there are some that just aren't true.

"Opera should not be viewed as old, stuffy and serious. While going to the opera requires relatively formal dress attire, the experience is exciting and worthwhile, not straitlaced and serious," she said. "Many modern films are based off of operas, such as Moulin Rouge and 'La Traviata' by Verdi, and the musical 'Rent' and 'La Boheme' by Puccini."

Dunigan has also achieved recent acclaim performing at her school.

**IN MAY**, she was part of the music department's "Music of Armenia" concert. She performed Makar Yekmalian's "Ov, Hayots Ashkharh" (Oh, Land of Armenia), along with members from the choir. The Armenian Reporter, in reviewing the concert, credited Dunigan and her fellow singers for their performance.

"[The singers], none of whom [are] Armenian, showed that they had put much heart and soul into their preparation of Yekmalian's masterpiece," the review reads.

Dunigan says she hopes to continue singing and performing opera as long as she can. She hopes to graduate from the Manhattan School within the next three years, and then attend a graduate program at a musical conservatory, after which she hopes to apply to young artist programs around the country.

"I dream of performing in internationally renowned opera houses, such as the Metropolitan Opera in New York and the Royal Opera in London's Covent Garden," she said.

Gately says that Dunigan's progress this summer give her a very bright future.

"Caroline has a huge future in front of her," he said. "She's gifted with a wonderful voice, but that isn't the thing that will make her succeed. It's her amazing dedication for her craft, her thirst for knowledge about the business of singing and acting. She has made it clear that she's going to work hard. I so admire her for this."

## FAITH NOTES

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

**Eddy Bazin**, a missionary in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, will speak at **Antioch Christian Church**, 1860 Beulah Road in Vienna, on Sunday, Aug. 7 at 10 a.m. Bazin is a native Haitian who came to the U.S. for his education, then returned to Haiti to establish a church with a school, health clinic, feeding center and an orphanage. He will discuss the affects of the earthquake, the rebuilding effort and how to help. 703-938-6753 or [www.antiochdoc.org](http://www.antiochdoc.org).

**Alliance Church Centre**, 12113 Vale Road in Oakton, will hold its Vacation Bible School Aug. 24-26 from 8:45 a.m.-1 p.m. The Sonsurf Beach Bash will have Bible stories, crafts, skits, games, songs, snacks and more for nursery school-6th grade. 703-264-1273 or 703-795-8801.

**The Church of the Good Shepherd**, a United Methodist church at 2351 Hunter Mill Road in Vienna, will begin its "Champions of the Faith" series on Sunday, Aug. 28, in the 10 a.m. worship service. The "Champion the Dream" event will be on the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech, the same day the Martin Luther King Jr. National Memorial is to be unveiled. Wesley Theological Seminary Professor of Urban Ministry Fred D. Smith, PhD, will lead the 9 a.m. Sunday school class then deliver a sermon at 10 a.m. on the "Beloved Community," the Biblical theme adopted by the civil rights movement. [www.GoodShepherdVA.com](http://www.GoodShepherdVA.com).

**Epiphany United Methodist Church**, 1014 Country Club Drive in Vienna, will celebrate its 50th anniversary with a special worship service on Sunday, Sept. 25 at 11 a.m. [www.epiphanyumc.com](http://www.epiphanyumc.com) or 703-938-3494.

**The Jewish Social Services Agency (JSSA)** offers a wide variety of support groups for those with emotional, social, and physical challenges. [www.jssa.org/growth-learning](http://www.jssa.org/growth-learning).

**HAVEN of Northern Virginia** offers a variety of free bereavement support groups, meeting on a weekly basis. Contact 703-941-7000 or [www.havenofnova.org](http://www.havenofnova.org) for schedules and registration information.

**McLean Bible Church Fitness Class** at Body & Soul Fitness. Balance is key, energy is renewed and strength is gained. 9:45 a.m. Mondays and Fridays. Free childcare for registered students. [bodyandsoul@mcleanbible.org](mailto:bodyandsoul@mcleanbible.org).

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

# NEWS

## Slain Doctor Remembered as 'Facilitator'

**Dr. Mark Lawrence trained hundreds of therapists over several decades.**

BY ALEX MCVEIGH  
THE CONNECTION

**D**r. Mark Lawrence, 71, of McLean died July 22 of a gunshot wound in the home where he saw patients of his psychiatry practice. After gunshots were reported to Fairfax County Police, they arrived at approximately 4:15 p.m. and found the bodies of Lawrence and Barbara Newman, 62, of Vienna.

According to police, detectives have preliminarily determined that Newman, a patient of Lawrence's, shot Lawrence and then herself in an apparent murder-suicide.

Lawrence, who lived in McLean for more than 40 years, served as a teacher and mentor to hundreds of area psychologists. He was educated at Harvard Medical School and the Massachusetts Mental Health Center, and served as a faculty member at the Georgetown

University Medical School and St. Elizabeth's Hospital.

He also co-founded the Center for Healing and Imagery in 1984, which was dedicated to training mental health professionals. Lawrence was remembered by colleagues as a mentor who spent his life trying to hone his psychiatric technique, and who tried to pass his knowledge on to others.

**DR. CYNTHIA MARGOLIES** of the Center for Healing and Imagery remembers his positive attitude and generosity.

"He was so present when you sat with him, he was always interested in what you were saying, not distracted at all," Margolies said. "His presence was big, but he didn't take up space, he was just there to listen."



PHOTO BY LISA ENGLE

**Dr. Mark Lawrence, 71, died July 22 at his home in McLean.**

Margolies said Lawrence was constantly trying to stay on top of the latest research.

"His mind was so brilliant and clear, and he read voraciously to stay up to date on the latest cutting edge research in neuroscience," Margolies said. "That allowed his relationship with patients to be as effective as possible."

Janet Hyman, a social worker from Reston, took classes with Lawrence in the 1980s. She remembered learning things from Lawrence in the

'80s that science is only now coming up with explanations for.

"He was so far ahead of the curve. In 1988, when I took a class with him, he described brain functions in a way that neuroscience is only now figuring out," she said. "He just had an intuitive understanding, and he was able to explain it to someone who wasn't a medical doctor in a way that was clear and made sense."

Whether it was a patient or colleague, Margolies remembered Lawrence saw his role as a facilitator to everyone he worked with.

"His passion was helping people realize their own strengths," Margolies said. "Whether it was in training sessions, or with colleagues or patients, he had a way of always making you feel better," Margolies said. "And he helped a lot of other therapists do that better for 25 years."

She also remembers Lawrence constantly forming his own method after years and years of training.

"Even at 71, he was still as passionate as ever," she said. "Many therapists who knew him were inspired to do our best work to try and be as capable and compassionate as he was."

**LAWRENCE SEMI-RETIRIED** in 2003, continuing to see the majority of patients at his Tebbs Lane residence. A winding path would take clients around the house, past a koi pond surrounded by native plants and flowers. Though it was primarily his home, Hyman re-

members the house as a perfect setting for the kind of work Lawrence did there.

Hyman said she was shocked to hear the news of Lawrence's death.

"He was an incredibly brilliant and creative person, kindness and empathy exuded from him," Hyman said. "It's difficult to imagine anyone could be angry with him, let alone angry enough to take his life."

She said many of the therapists Lawrence trained throughout his decades of work have been connecting and sharing their memories and experiences.

"In speaking to colleagues in the days after his death, many of us wondered how he would have helped us deal with this tragedy," Hyman said. "He approached healing from the perspective of the total person, he wouldn't just say, 'Oh, you're feeling this way? Here's this pill.' He was always able to take people as a whole and see what would work best."

Lawrence is survived by his wife, daughter and granddaughter. A memorial service has been planned for early October.

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# OPINION

## Five Percent Off

Back-to-school sales tax holiday a reminder of other back-to-school rituals; buy extra supplies for needy students.

While some of us are not sure how it got to be August, never mind time to start thinking about going back to school, the first day of school is about a month away, Tuesday after Labor Day, Sept. 5.

Virginia families can take advantage of what amounts to a three-day coupon for 5 percent off on many back-to-school items. Sales tax is suspended for the coming weekend, Friday through Sunday, Aug. 5, 6 and 7 (restrictions apply).

During this three-day period, school supplies selling for \$20 or less per item, and clothing and footwear selling for \$100 or less per item will be exempt from sales tax.

The tax holiday should encourage more families to spend their back-to-school dollars in local stores rather than online. This is an excellent time to support local businesses, many suffering from the recession as well as competition from online businesses that offer tax-free shopping all the time. Local businesses that

don't get their money from the federal government need support from local shoppers now more than ever.

Also, remember that many families in the area are struggling. There are many options to help.

❖ FACETS in Fairfax, which provided more than 300 students with backpacks filled with supplies last year, is collecting school supplies until Aug. 12. Drop donations between 9-5, Monday-Friday, at 10640 Page Avenue, Suite 300, Fairfax. Volunteers will gather for Back to School parties to stuff their new backpacks with supplies. Go to <http://facetscares.org/donate/back-to-school-drive/> for a list of needed supplies or to make an online financial contribution. To help with a donation drive in your workplace or organization, contact Stacy Boden at 703-352-3268 or [sboden@facetscares.org](mailto:sboden@facetscares.org).

❖ Our Daily Bread's Back to School program will help more than 350 needy children in the Fairfax High School pyramid receive the sup-

plies they need.

In addition to financial contributions to purchase the supplies, Our Daily Bread is seeking donations of new teen-sized backpacks and scientific calculators. ODB will accept donations through Aug. 12. Contact Jennifer Rose at 703-273-8829 or [holiday@ODBFairfax.org](mailto:holiday@ODBFairfax.org) or visit [www.ODBFairfax.org](http://www.ODBFairfax.org).

❖ Arlington Doorways for Women and Families is collecting money, school supplies, winter coats and more for needy students. Contact Wyatt Schroeder at [w.schroeder@DoorwaysVA.org](mailto:w.schroeder@DoorwaysVA.org) or [www.doorwaysva.org/donate/seasonal-ways-to-give/backtoschool/](http://www.doorwaysva.org/donate/seasonal-ways-to-give/backtoschool/)

❖ United Community Ministries plans to raise \$10,000 and fill 1,000 backpacks this year. School supplies will be distributed to students in need on Aug. 25-26. Send donations to Attn: School Supplies, United Community Ministries, 7511 Fordson Rd., Alexandria, VA 22306. Contact Christine Fiske, 703-768-7106 ext. 328 or [christine.fiske@ucmagency.org](mailto:christine.fiske@ucmagency.org).

## August Sales Tax Holiday: School Supplies and Clothing

**When:** The 2011 holiday will take place on Aug. 5-7, 2011.

**What's exempt:** School supplies selling for \$20 or less per item, clothing and footwear selling for \$100 or less per item will be exempt from sales tax. See: [www.tax.virginia.gov](http://www.tax.virginia.gov)

Editorial

In addition to financial contributions to purchase the supplies, Our Daily Bread is seeking donations of new teen-sized backpacks and scientific calculators. ODB will accept donations through Aug. 12. Contact Jennifer Rose at 703-273-8829 or [holiday@ODBFairfax.org](mailto:holiday@ODBFairfax.org) or visit [www.ODBFairfax.org](http://www.ODBFairfax.org).

❖ Arlington Doorways for Women and Families is collecting money, school supplies, winter coats and more for needy students. Contact Wyatt Schroeder at [w.schroeder@DoorwaysVA.org](mailto:w.schroeder@DoorwaysVA.org) or [www.doorwaysva.org/donate/seasonal-ways-to-give/backtoschool/](http://www.doorwaysva.org/donate/seasonal-ways-to-give/backtoschool/)

❖ United Community Ministries plans to raise \$10,000 and fill 1,000 backpacks this year. School supplies will be distributed to students in need on Aug. 25-26. Send donations to Attn: School Supplies, United Community Ministries, 7511 Fordson Rd., Alexandria, VA 22306. Contact Christine Fiske, 703-768-7106 ext. 328 or [christine.fiske@ucmagency.org](mailto:christine.fiske@ucmagency.org).

Letters to the Editor

## Record Misrepresented

To the Editor:

Voters should expect a candidate for School Board to know how the School Board votes on motions. Certainly Louise Epstein, a candidate for School Board and a lawyer, should know that every member of the School Board voted to strengthen the parental notification requirements in our student disciplinary code. But instead of apologizing for misrepresenting Janie Strauss' vote on parental notification, Ms. Epstein continues to misrepresent the record.

On June 9, the School Board voted on revisions and changes to the Student Rights and Responsibilities, the code of student conduct. The "main motion" made a number of changes to the 2010-2011 document. One change added the following sentence: "The principal will make a reasonable effort to notify parents or guardians at the earliest opportunity regarding student disciplinary actions." That motion passed unanimously. (Minutes of June 9, 2011, pp. 8-9)

In a letter to the editor [“Voting Record,” Connection, July 27-Aug. 2, 2011], Ms. Epstein notes correctly that Ms. Strauss voted against two amendments that — in the judgment of many, includ-

ing me — would have jeopardized student safety and inhibited the efforts of administrators to maintain safe schools. But it is a flat out falsehood to claim that Ms. Strauss voted against strengthening the requirement that administrators notify parents when their children make mistakes at school — we all voted for that change. The citizens of Dranesville District deserve to know the truth about these votes, not some misrepresentation of the record by a candidate for office who, frankly, knows better.

Stu Gibson  
Reston

Author is a School Board Member from Hunter Mill District.

## Evidence of Quicker Parent Notification

To the Editor:

This spring two high schools, understanding the School Board's requirement to notify parents quickly when students are involved in serious misbehavior, called parents at the start of an investigation. To the relief of one parent who left work and rushed to school, he was told he could turn around and go home. His child, as it turned out, was not in-

volved. In another quick response episode, parents who were initially called but could not come to school were called back a bit later to say it was a false alarm; their child was not involved and their presence wasn't needed. I applaud the immediate calls to these parents and expect to see more of this in the next school year. I would much rather hear about calls going out somewhat prematurely than parents complaining that they were brought in too late.

Jane K Strauss  
Dranesville Representative  
Fairfax County School Board

## Disillusioned by Brightview Hearing

To the Editor:

I could not have felt more disillusioned after the Brightview hearing on July 26. Twenty-five people testified in front of a visibly bored Board of Supervisors; John Foust then read his multi-page decision in favor of Brightview which had been written prior to anyone giving any testimony. Supervisor Foust stated he'd seen or heard no new evidence which would change his mind. If he'd listened (or looked at some of the carefully-prepared handouts), he might

have changed his mind.

Granted, many of the people testifying presented the same old arguments, most notably representatives of the GFCA who, afraid of any other possible establishment in that space, continued to insist this was the best use of the land. As misguided as their attempts were, I genuinely believe most of them wanted to be able to help seniors residing in Great Falls.

Factual testimony presented on July 26, however, directly contradicted Brightview as a place for Great Falls seniors.

Brightview insists they draw the vast majority of their residents from a 3-5 mile area around a facility. However, their Catonsville, Md. facility (with the same number of beds proposed for Great Falls) “serves Catonsville, Baltimore, Ellicott City, Arbutus and the surrounding area.” When I asked the senior-level managers of other assisted living facilities why they did not choose to build in Great Falls, they all said, “lack of density.” Great Falls’ density is 671.1; by way of comparison, Reston’s 22190’s density is 3847.9; and Catonsville’s is 2969.7. Even with the heavy density, Reston assisted living facility operators insisted their residents come from a considerably wider area than 3-5 miles; this didn’t even take into

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 9

## THE CONNECTION

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## LETTERS

FROM PAGE 8

account the numerous residents from 15-25 miles away whose adult children commute to work in Reston. Common sense tells us how very few people commute to Great Falls to work.

While 14.86 percent of Catonsville's population consists of women age 75+, only 2.93 percent of Great Falls' population does. There are similar statistics for each and every Brightview assisted living location.

The primary need for assisted living in Fairfax County is among low-income seniors. At a building cost alone of more than \$250,000 per resident, how many of our needy seniors can possibly benefit from this wrongly located facility?

**Karen S. Kennedy**  
Great Falls

## When No One Wins

To the Editor:

For the past decade, we have asked ourselves repeatedly: Why do they hate us? What can we do to alter that perception? What we learned was that many of our policies in the Third World caused over the decades very ugly hatreds. Sadly, many of those policies reflected our own arrogant attitude of "winning at any cost."

Yet in our own neighborhood a small group of people have forgotten the lessons learned. With regard Brightview, the GFCA Board and Mr. Foust pursued a strategy of winning at any cost, even if the losers will be our own neighbors.

Sadly, what the Brightview fight did for Great Falls was rip the cover off its bucolic façade to reveal an ugly truth. To a person, our neighbors whose property abuts the former Thelma's, are immigrants and all speak English as a second language. All they wanted was a piece of the American Dream. Instead they are getting a nightmare. They have been subjected to the very attitude of winner-take-all that causes people to hate us the world over and continues to stain the social fabric of the United States.

Incredible as it may seem our neighbors were given no indication the GFCA and Mr. Foust had been working behind the scenes with Brightview since 2009 to build within feet of their homes a 52,000 square foot medical facility (equivalent to three times the size of the new firehouse). All they knew was they purchased homes beside a small parcel of land on which would be built a modest commercial building on the C8

and some single-family homes on the R1.

Indeed, the GFCA and Mr. Foust expended significant energy keeping quiet their arrangements with Brightview, delineating the size and scope of the project, and calculating how Brightview's donation of \$90,000 would be paid in three installments to the Dranesville District. Mr. Foust even directed lined through in the County minutes the sentence describing his discretionary authority over the use of the money.

By the time our neighbors, who were three of only five homeowners to receive registered letters (the other 40 went to businesses at Leigh Corners), were finally informed of the project, Brightview was, as a member of the GFCA Board admitted, a "done deal."

When our neighbors began voicing objections, the GFCA responded, "they should not have purchased homes near C8 land". Yet that was the point: all purchased beside R1 land. The GFCA response when told our neighbors did not know about Brightview was, "they should have attended our meetings." Yet, why should anyone have to appeal to an interest group to ensure their property rights? The GFCA later added, besides, "only a small cul-de-sac of homes will be affected." Arguably, were the names of the homeowners in that cul-de-sac Jones, Smith, and Taylor, the GFCA's support for this would have been very different indeed.

To cover the lack of transparency, Mr. Foust hosted two public meetings but only after the Planning Board, that reports to the Board of Supervisors, voted to allow Brightview. At the meetings a great number of people voiced anger the project had been in the works for so long, emphatically stating they do not want it. Yet Mr. Foust and the GFCA did not listen to, or appear to care, what people were saying and refused to back down from their entrenched stance. Unfortunately, the fix had been in for a long time.

Verification of this hypothesis lies in the treatment of our neighbors at the Board of Supervisor's Public Hearing on 26 July. There, the lack of concern and regard for their objections became apparent when Mr. Foust read for almost 10 minutes his motion, obviously prepared before the hearing. Not only did he demonstrate complete disregard for their testimony but he did not even glance at their written submissions which detailed how Brightview will cause their home values to plummet and also

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 15

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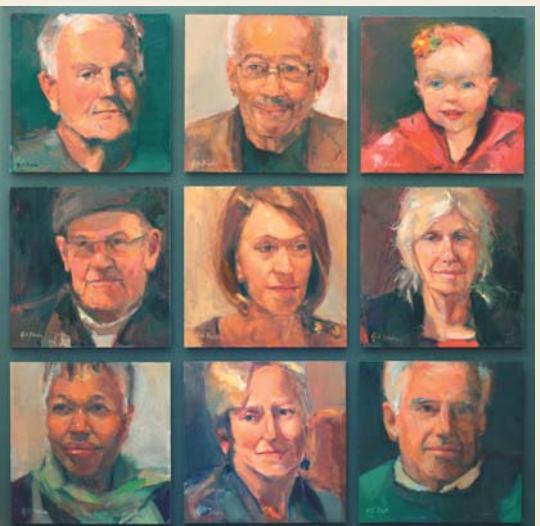
Jill Banks with 27 of her 100 Faces that are on exhibit Aug. 3 to Aug. 31 at the Artists' Atelier.

## Jill Banks Exhibits '100 Faces in 100 Days'

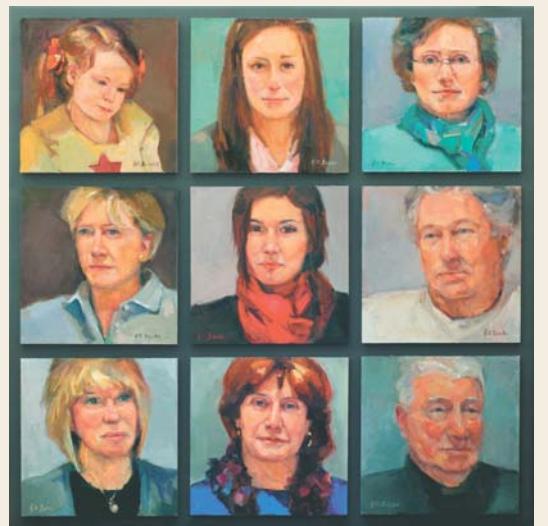
Jill Banks' "100 Faces in 100 Days" Project is on exhibit at the Artists' Atelier, 1144 Walker Road, Suite G in Great Falls from Aug. 3 through Aug. 31. The artist is hosting a reception on Friday, Aug. 12, 6-9 p.m. and an ice cream social on Saturday, Aug. 13, 2-4 p.m. RSVP to [jillbanks1@aol.com](mailto:jillbanks1@aol.com).

It all started with a New Year's resolution stated on artist's blog titled "What I Will Do in 2011." For the first 100 days of 2011, she painted friends, family, acquaintances and

strangers, one person every day. Banks' faces were of anyone who volunteered to sit, talk to her and be painted. Sitters ranged in age from 6-and-a-half-month old Bailey to Reston's founder, Bob Simon, who turned 97 on the day he became Banks' 100th face. This fascinating journey (for both the artist and volunteers) has turned into an intriguing exhibit. Open hours for August, as well as other info on the project, are posted on Banks' website: [www.JillBanks.com](http://www.JillBanks.com) and blog: [www.JillBanks.blogspot.com](http://www.JillBanks.blogspot.com).



Nine of Jill Banks' 100 Faces: (top row, left to right) 2-year-old Hannah, Meredith Gehrig, Cindy Banks (her sister-in-law); (middle row) Francie Johnson, Sarah Banks (her daughter), Frank Sagstetter; (bottom row) Shirley Nagelschmidt, Carol Howard, Stanley Miller. All paintings are 12" x 12", oil on panel.



Nine of Jill Banks' 100 Faces: (top row, left to right) Drate Banks (her father-in-law), Oscar Haynes, 6-and-a-half-month old Bailey; (middle row) Ken Johnson (her dad), Anne Guerin, Patti Chisholm; (bottom row) Joan Bell-Haynes (her parents' pastor), Judith St. Ledger-Roty (Banks' former studio mate), Jon Fisher. All paintings are 12" x 12", oil on panel.

## ENTERTAINMENT

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

### WEDNESDAY/AUG. 3

**California Tortilla Battle to Break Out:** Semi-Finals Round #1. 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave., Vienna. [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com). **Paint & Personalize a Mug:** 7 p.m. Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Presented by Clay Café Studios. Glazed and fired mugs will be returned to the library two weeks later. Age 12-18. 703-790-8088.

### THURSDAY/AUG. 4

**Folksinger John McCutcheon:** 7:30 p.m. Nottoway Park, 9537 Courthouse Road, Vienna. Free. 703-324-7469 or [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/) performances.

**Disney in Concert: Magical Music from the Movies:** 8:30 p.m. Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1624 Trap Road, Vienna. The National Symphony Orchestra, led by conductor Steven Reineke, present songs from *The Little Mermaid*, *The Lion King*, *Aladdin*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Beauty and the Beast* and more. Tickets \$20-\$52. [www.wolfttrap.org](http://www.wolfttrap.org).

### FRIDAY/AUG. 5

**Shakespeare in the Park:** 7 p.m. Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. The Traveling Players Ensemble performs Shakespeare's *"Romeo and Juliet."* Free. [www.travelingplayers.org](http://www.travelingplayers.org) or 703-987-1712.

**Deep River Summer Revival with Seth Glier:** 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave., Vienna. [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

**Tan Dun: Martial Arts Trilogy:** 8:30 p.m. Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1624 Trap Road, Vienna. National Symphony Orchestra, led by conductor Tan Dun, presents concertos based on the films *Hero*, *The Banquet*, and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. Tickets \$20-\$52. [www.wolfttrap.org](http://www.wolfttrap.org).

### SATURDAY/AUG. 6

**Jody Marshall & Friends:** 5 p.m. Palladium Civic Place Green, 1445 Laughlin Ave., McLean. Free. 703-288-9505.

**Book Sale:** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Books, magazines, media and more. [TysonsLibraryFriends@gmail.com](http://www.TysonsLibraryFriends@gmail.com) or 703-790-8088.

**Deep River Summer Revival with Larkin Poe:** 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave., Vienna. [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

**Arlo Guthrie & Time for Three:** 8:15 p.m. Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1624 Trap Road, Vienna. Arlo Guthrie, Time for Three and the National Symphony Orchestra present an evening of folk and classical music collaborations. \$20-\$52. [www.wolfttrap.org](http://www.wolfttrap.org).

**Fairfax County Master Gardeners Association, Inc.:** 10 a.m.-1 p.m. City of Fairfax Regional Library, 10360 North St., Fairfax. Horticultural tips, information, techniques and advice. 703-293-6227.

**Reptile Wonders:** 2:30 p.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave., McLean. See fog rings, bubbling potions, a voice changer and more with wacky scientist Eric Energy. Age 6-12. 703-356-0770.

**Friends of the Tysons-Pimmit Library Book Sale:** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. All sales go to the library. Age 6-12. 703-790-8088.

**"Old Coffee Pot," oil painting by Jean Johnston.** Johnston is the featured artist at the Vienna Arts Society Gallery, 513 Maple Ave. West in Vienna, through Sept. 3. Her oil paintings often showcase antique vessels. Gallery hours are 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Tuesdays-Saturdays. 703-319-3220 or [www.ViennaArtsSociety.org](http://www.ViennaArtsSociety.org).

**Plant Clinic:** 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Masters Gardeners from the Fairfax County Cooperative Extension answer your gardening questions. Adults. 703-790-8088.

### SUNDAY/AUG. 7

**Summer Tour of the Potomac Valley Native Plant Collection:** 2 p.m. Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. Enjoy Eupatorium, sunflowers, Liatris, milkweed, obedient plant, purple coneflower and more. Free and open to the public. 703-293-3971 or [www.ViennaArtsSociety.org](http://www.ViennaArtsSociety.org).

### FRIDAY/AUG. 12

**Dan Navarro:** 7 p.m., followed by **Tyler Bryant:** 10 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

**Book Sale:** 1-4 p.m. Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Books, magazines, media and more. [TysonsLibraryFriends@gmail.com](mailto:TysonsLibraryFriends@gmail.com) or 703-790-8088.

**Alison Krauss & Union Station:** 8 p.m. Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1624 Trap Road, Vienna. Bluegrass music. With dobro player Jerry Douglas and folk-rock band Dawes. \$30-\$48. [www.wolfttrap.org](http://www.wolfttrap.org).

**Friends of the Library Book Sale:** 1 p.m. Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. The Friends of the Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library offer a "Books by the Bag" special, \$6 per bag. 703-790-8088.

### MONDAY/AUG. 8

**Introducing Beans-N-Frank:** 2:30 p.m. Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Sing, dance, and just have fun with rap duo Beans-N-Frank. All ages. 703-790-8088.

### TUESDAY/AUG. 9

**Personalized Internet Training:** 2:30 p.m. Tyson-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. A 45-minute training session with a technology volunteer. Call for appointment. Adults. 703-790-8088.

### WEDNESDAY/AUG. 10

**Cash Cash, Breathe Electric, For the Foxes and The Baby Grand:** 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

**Science Spectacular:** 2:30 p.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave., McLean. See fog rings, bubbling potions, a voice changer and more with wacky scientist Eric Energy. Age 6-12. 703-356-0770.

**Wild Tails:** 10:30 a.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Wildlife Ambassadors bring animal guests to explore how these animals use their tails to communicate, climb, protect themselves and more. Age 6-12. 703-757-8560.

**Friends of the Tysons-Pimmit Library Book Sale:** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. All sales go to the library. Age 6-12. 703-790-8088.



Nick Dunie (front) and the patrol from Troop 55 on the Frundenhutte Glacier in Switzerland.



From left, Matt Dunie, Corey Hodge, Cameron Hodge, Andrew Phillips, Phil Nesbitt, Brad Hodge, Ron Hodge, Stephen Pepper, and (front) Nick Dunie and Chris Nesbitt displaying the beauty of the Swiss Alps.

**Vienna Arts Society's General Membership Meeting:** 7:30 p.m. Vienna Art Center, 115 Pleasant St., N.W., Vienna. Artist Gwen Bragg will explain her technique of using transparent watercolors in "Shadows on White." Free and open to the public. 703-319-3971 or [www.ViennaArtsSociety.org](http://www.ViennaArtsSociety.org).

### THURSDAY/AUG. 11

**Vienna Arts Society's General Membership Meeting:** 7:30 p.m. Vienna Art Center, 115 Pleasant St., N.W., Vienna. Artist Gwen Bragg will explain her technique of using transparent watercolors in "Shadows on White." Free and open to the public. 703-319-3971 or [www.ViennaArtsSociety.org](http://www.ViennaArtsSociety.org).

### FRIDAY/AUG. 12

**Dan Navarro:** 7 p.m., followed by **Tyler Bryant:** 10 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

**VVFD Scrapbooking Weekend:** 6 p.m.-12 a.m. Vienna Volunteer Fire Department, 400 Center St. South, Vienna. Food available for purchase. Admission \$35. 703-981-4504 or [lisaemerson3@verizon.net](mailto:lisaemerson3@verizon.net).

**The Magic of Hans Christian Andersen:** 2:30 p.m. City of Fairfax Regional Library, 10360 North St., Fairfax. Applause Unlimited presents "The Ugly Duckling," "Thumbelina," and "The Emperor's New Clothes" told with puppets and masks. All ages. 703-293-6227.

**English Conversation Group:** 10 a.m. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. English conversation group. Adults. 703-938-0405.

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

**Writing Group:** 11 a.m. Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Freewriting. 703-790-8088.

**Friday Flicks:** 11:30 a.m. Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Bring lunch and enjoy a movie. Call for ticket. Ages 1-6 with adult. 703-790-8088.

**TUESDAY/AUG. 9**

**Personalized Internet Training:** 2:30 p.m. Tyson-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. A 45-minute training session with a technology volunteer. Call for appointment. Adults. 703-790-8088.

### WEDNESDAY/AUG. 10

**Cash Cash, Breathe Electric, For the Foxes and The Baby Grand:** 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

**Science Spectacular:** 2:30 p.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave., McLean. See fog rings, bubbling potions, a voice changer and more with wacky scientist Eric Energy. Age 6-12. 703-356-0770.

**Wild Tails:** 10:30 a.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Wildlife Ambassadors bring animal guests to explore how these animals use their tails to communicate, climb, protect themselves and more. Age 6-12. 703-757-8560.

**Friends of the Tysons-Pimmit Library Book Sale:** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. All sales go to the library. Age 6-12. 703-790-8088.

BY ERIN HODGE  
THE CONNECTION

**L**ean back, arms crossed, knees bent. One last check of the helmet, one last look at the swirling water below. One by one each scout threw himself into the river, emerging seconds later stumbling on the rocky bottom and grinning from ear to ear. Canyoning, it was called — just day seven at Kandersteg International Scout Center in the Swiss Alps.

Great Falls Boy Scout Troop 55 sent a contingent across the Atlantic on June 14 to test out the scout center, an opportunity the boys and the adults that accompanied them took advantage of. This was the first group from Great Falls to venture to Kandersteg, Switzerland for two weeks of high adventure.

"Everything was so different," said 15-year-old Andrew Phillips of Troop 55. "We could talk to people with different cultures and trade new stories every day." But no matter where each group was

from, every scout was there for the same reason: adventure. Kandersteg, Switzerland is uniquely situated roughly 1,200 meters above sea level, making base camp higher than the tip of Old Rag Mountain in Sperryville, Va., a popular destination for local hikers. Clouds roll in at eye level, and the views of the valleys are nothing short of spectacular.

"Pictures don't do it justice," said Matt Dunie, an adult leader accompanying his son. But even his

hikes were steeper than I expected," admitted 14-year-old Chris Nesbitt. And indeed the group seemed to spend more time above the clouds than beneath them, the increasing altitude no doubt causing a shortage of breath. But every day for two weeks they got up to go out and do it again.

Despite the physically grueling nature of their experience, or maybe in some ways because of it, the boys and their leaders got exactly what they went to Kandersteg for. Asked to put it in one word, Nick Dunie quickly replied, "amazing."

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# BULLETIN BOARD

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

## MONDAY/AUG. 8

### Concussion Prevention Workshop.

1 p.m. Inova Fairfax Hospital, 3300 Gallows Road, Falls Church. With former WWE wrestler Chris Nowinski, known in the wrestling world as "Chris Harvard," co-founder of the Sports Legacy Institute. This free workshop is geared toward coaches, healthcare personnel, athletic trainers and parents, and will

help participants gain information and learn skills in the detection, management and prevention of concussions. Register at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/QT6SV53](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/QT6SV53). 804-864-7738.

## WEDNESDAY/AUG. 10

### Virginia Chronic Pain Support Group Meeting.

1:30 p.m. at Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine, 6829 Elm St., Suite 300, McLean. Group leader, Jodi Brayton, LCSW. 703-532-4892.

### Pauline Shirley Toastmasters Club Meeting.

6:45 p.m. McLean



## Correction

In the report titled "Career Day at Langley High" [Great Falls Connection, July 27-Aug. 2, 2011, Page 13] the caption under this photo should have read: Tom Klein, M.D. talking about careers in Orthopedic Surgery.

Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Meets second and fourth Wednesdays of the month. 703-893-5506 or [paulineshirley.freetoasthost.info](http://paulineshirley.freetoasthost.info).

### Multiple Sclerosis Support Group.

7 p.m. Vienna Presbyterian Church, 124 Park St., NE, Vienna, VA. A group for anyone with multiple sclerosis, their family and friends. Sponsored by the National Capital Chapter of the MS Society. The group meets the 2nd Wednesday of every month. Free. 703-768-4841.

## SATURDAY/AUG. 13

### The Smart Split: Legal Aspects of Separation and Divorce.

10 a.m. McLean Government Center, 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean. Learn the rights and responsibilities in separation and divorce, how the legal process works in the Virginia courts and how to work with your lawyer. Support group available. \$45-\$55. Register at [www.thewomenscenter.org](http://www.thewomenscenter.org).

## MONDAY/AUG. 15

### Workshop Registration Deadline.

Vienna Art Center, 115 Pleasant St., N.W., Vienna. Register for a two-day

still life oil painting workshop with Jonathan Linton, to be held Friday and Saturday, Aug. 26-27. \$125. Vienna Arts Society members, \$160 non-members. Reserve at 703-938-8539 or 703-319-3971. [www.jonathanlinton.com](http://www.jonathanlinton.com).

# Supervisors Approve Brightview Exception

FROM PAGE 3

was pleased with their level of commitment to maintaining the nature of Great Falls.

"This applicant, unlike so many others, has been what we call a good neighbor. Many applicants provide lip service, they seek our input, only to implement the minimum requirements set by the county. This applicant has sought community input and has written that input into enforceable development conditions."

Van Volkenburg recalled visiting the Brightview facility in Catonsville, Md., which is the same size of the proposed Great Falls facility, and located in a historic district.

"Brightview did a terrific job in constructing a facility that was in keeping with the surrounding historic buildings. It was a contentious application,"

she said. "Today Brightview is warmly received by the community. Local schools perform community service hours there, young dance studios perform their dress rehearsals for the residents, this is just to name a few. We envision the same kinds of community outreach once this is built in Great Falls."

Robin Rentsch, who has lived in Great Falls since 1971, and is currently the co-chair of the GFCA's Environmental committee, says she is glad to have the option of such a facility in this community.

"I am vested in this community. I have spent years of my life working for things that I can value in this community," she said. "I'm 73, my husband is 83, and we want the option of remaining in Great Falls."

Sartiano says he's not sure what the No To Brightview group's next move is, he said they plan to consult with their legal council to determine their appropriate next step.

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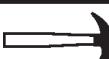
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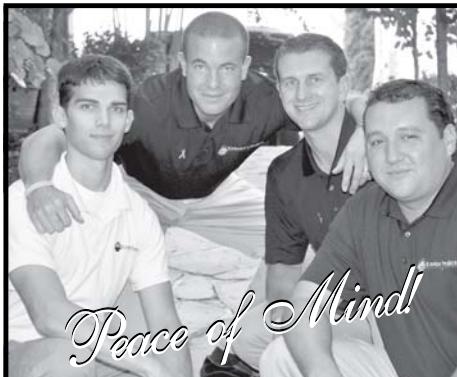
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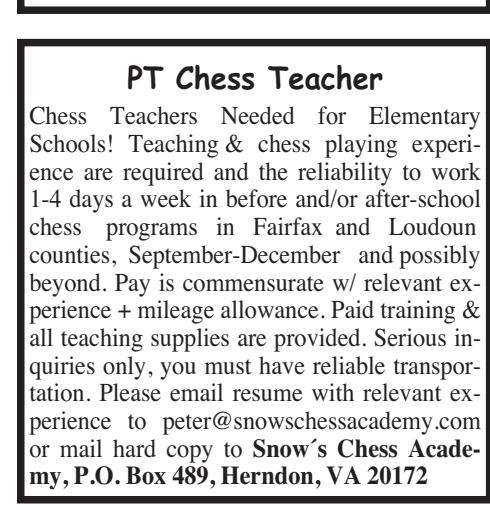
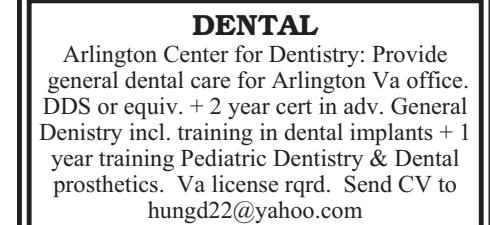
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## LETTERS

# Planning for Our Common Good

## Hearings highlight deeply divided testimony on Brightview.

BY KATHLEEN MURPHY

We, residents of Great Falls, believe — and trust — that our vision of sustaining a semi-rural community, as has been articulated in The Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan for the Upper Potomac District through decades of consensus building by local residents, will be honored, in spite of the commitment of surrounding communities to become urban centers.

The two recent local public hearings conducted by John Foust, District Supervisor, and the one county public hearing before the Board of Supervisors at which 26 Great Falls residents provided deeply divided testimony about the Brightview application for Special Exception provide cause for alarm. The application reached the Board of Supervisors without a single effort to list the points of difference, share specific opposing evidence, arguments and interpretations in a live meeting format, or make efforts during or after those meetings to reconcile points of divergence. (As a point of clarification, although individual members of the Great Falls Historical Society were asked their opinion on certain matters, and may have signed up and spoken as individuals, the organization has never taken a vote on any matter pertaining to Brightview, as may have been inferred in GFCA's Brightview literature.)

The Great Falls Citizens Association and its Land Use and Zoning Committee were simultaneously attacked by nearby residents and praised by the District Supervisor — evidence of a serious disconnect. Further, the Board of Supervisors concurred with the Supervisor, stating that the recommendations of local citizens' associations overrode the views of individual residents or neighborhood associations or other stakeholders, as the BOS must rely on volunteer groups to decipher the numerous issues before them.

Our community needs to adopt certain planning principles, processes, and practices if we are to reach a unity of community voice and will and clarity about our common good going forward, avoiding the pitting of neighbor against neighbor, as was demonstrated over the past month. Good land use discovery and review should include:

♦ Sending "certified return receipt" notification that an application for special exception is underway. Commentary about newsletters, website postings, newspaper articles, etc. are interesting but unacceptable substitutes.

♦ Including all stakeholders in the deliberation from the outset. In the case of Brightview, stakeholders include owners of

properties that touch the Brightview property; The Colvin Run Citizens Association, an active community organization across the street from the proposed facility; the nearby neighborhood association(s), other neighborhood-serving businesses may provide helpful perspectives; senior residents of Great Falls who are over 80 years of age and their children, as they are members of the target demographic; the seven churches in Great Falls who minister to the over 80-years population; and all residents of Great Falls become stakeholders if any land use action might set a precedent that could potentially impact future land use in the entire community.

♦ Facilitating community discussions in a non-partisan way in search of the aspects of community interest accruing to a common good. GFCA's Land Use and Zoning Committee provides "a public advocacy service to examine, review and recommend appropriate action on land use matters and articulate Association objectives." The purpose of this non-profit, non-partisan Association (i.e. GFCA) is to serve as a community organization to promote all aspects of community interest accruing to a common good and to preserve the historic, low density, semi-rural character of Great Falls and its natural resources. The operative words are "non-partisan" and "promoting all aspects of community interest accruing to a common good" and "to preserve the historic, low-density, semi-rural character."

What is the common good is a question best answered by stakeholders through broad and deep, well-facilitated, and well-documented conversations over many meetings.

♦ Understanding and enforcing the intent of the "neighborhood serving" in UP3 Hickory Community Planning Sector in the Comprehensive Plan: "Commercial uses should be 'neighborhood-serving' in nature and should be restricted to the existing commercially-zoned parcels." Neighborhood-serving is a zoning law that can prevent "the arrival of national chain stores that often drive up commercial rents, forcing out small, locally owned businesses that serve the everyday needs of the surrounding neighborhood...Enacting a neighborhood serving zone law can prevent this by requiring that new retail stores demonstrate that a majority of their sales will be derived from the surrounding neighborhood." (<http://newrules.org/retail/rules/neighborhood-serving-zones>) (Note: This metric was not applied to Brightview. According to Brightview, they draw from an area of three to five miles around the location of the facility, and within that area,

there are not 5,000, as is typical, but 5,800 potential customers. In fact, within the neighborhood of UP3 in the Hickory Community Planning Sector, there are fewer than 5,000 residents in total. Thus, the boundaries of the target market extend way beyond the neighborhood, with a majority of customers coming from outside the neighborhood. Further, traffic has been decidedly underestimated, as all residents will have visitors who drive. If it is argued that the occupants will be living at Brightview and therefore will be living in the neighborhood, then we have just permitted a high-density residential unit within the UP3 Hickory Community Planning Sector, which could be considered a violation of the "low-density character of the area" as stated in the Comprehensive Plan.)

♦ Achieving consensus among all stakeholders as we endeavor to translate our planning ideal of "semi-rural, low-density" into application decisions that promote the common good. If the bottom line of the entire application evaluation process was "consensus," we would have seen a very different level and type of dialogue. Notes would have been taken and transcripts posted. Supporting data, analysis and alternative interpretations would have been publicly presented and discussed. Challenges would have been taken on one by one and given credence or rebuttal. We would not have had homeowners going before the Board of Supervisors with anger, frustration, and despair; nor would we have been witness to our BOS disregarding the testimony of neighbors as irrelevant. Please refer to Judith E. Innes, "Planning through Consensus Building: A New View of the Comprehensive Planning Ideal," APA Journal, Autumn 1996, pages 460 to 470 for further elaboration of the value of consensus. "One can make a good case that consensus building, properly designed, can produce decisions that approximate public interest."

A collaborative team of diverse local stakeholders working with the local citizen's association, the planning commission and the supervisor's office can interpret the applicant's request against the Comprehensive Plan for our time in our day that is harmonious and in keeping with a well-articulated notion of the common good.

The principle lesson: Our Comprehensive Plan matters, yet it requires the active participation of committed residents to evaluate and interpret at each decision point along the way. Without each of us stepping forward to participate in the discovery process, the accomplishment of our ideal will remain elusive.

they are immigrants to our country. We should all be standing up for their rights as if our own were being eroded; to do anything less only diminishes us all.

**Dr. Kim Thachuk**  
Great Falls

what our neighbors have worked their entire lives to achieve.

Unfortunately the way our neighbors were treated amounts to another sad chapter in the last place I ever thought to see this: our own neighborhood. Our neighbors' dreams are not expendable just because

# Concussions: More Than a Headache

**More sports-related concussions reported in Fairfax high schools.**

BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE  
THE CONNECTION

**J**im McLaughlin knows he had at least one concussion while playing football at Woodson High School in the 1980s. At the time, coaches and players thought it was simply a matter of “shaking it off” before getting back in the game.

Over two decades later, Woodson’s cavalier attitude toward concussions has evaporated. Fairfax County Public Schools now has a stringent protocol for concussion treatment. Any student suspected of sustaining a concussion is prohibited from returning to sports games or practice on the day the injury took place.

McLaughlin, for one, is grateful for the more conservative approach. He will have two sons participating in the Woodson’s football program this fall and is a former assistant football coach with the Braddock Road Youth Club.

“One of the things that impressed me last year about Fairfax County Public Schools was that there was a real emphasis on educating parents and players about concussions,” said McLaughlin, whose sons also play lacrosse.

**ACROSS THE COUNTRY**, concussions have come a frontline concern at all levels of athletics, from youth leagues to professional sports. Boston University is currently studying the brains of professional athletes to determine the impact of concussions and repeated blows to the head on long-term cognitive functioning and emotional well-being.

Just this year, a few high-profile incidents brought a new level of attention to concussion treatment.

The star of the National Hockey League, the Pittsburgh Penguins’ Sidney Crosby, has not been able to resume playing since he sustained a concussion in early January.

Dave Duerson, who played professional football, committed suicide this winter. He had requested that his brain be examined for a degenerative disease that is caused by repeated blows to the head and linked to depression and dementia.

Virginia implemented new concussion policies for high school sports programs on July 1. The commonwealth’s General Assembly unanimously passed a bill to strengthen concussion guidelines last year.

Sen. Ralph Northam (D-6), the bill’s chief sponsor, is a child neurologist and faculty member at the Eastern Virginia Medical School.

Among other things, the Virginia Board of Education now recommends that students get a written medical release from a licensed health care professional before re-



PHOTO BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE/THE CONNECTION

**A George Mason University professor found more than half of the sports-related concussions in Fairfax County Public Schools occurred during football.**

**In the 11 years tracked by Caswell, 231 athletes in Fairfax schools suffered two concussions and 26 athletes had three or more concussions.**

turning to team practices or games if they are suspected of having a concussion.

It is also suggested that parents and students participating in high school sports programs be required to review information about concussions on an annual basis.

Most of the policies drawn up by the Virginia School Board have already been in place in Fairfax County for several years.

“We have been ramping up our process for several years now,” said Jon Almquist, who oversees the Fairfax school system’s athletic trainers.

Fairfax has had a certified athletic trainer,

## Fairfax County Public Schools Concussion Data

George Mason University professor Shane Caswell studied trends in sports-related concussions by examining 12 high school sports programs in Fairfax County Public Schools from the 1997-1998 school year to the 2007-2008 school year.

The following is data on the number of concussions Fairfax students sustained while playing each high school sport over that time period. The information is taken from Caswell’s study published in the American Journal of Sports Medicine last January.

The professor only examined concussions reported in the following sports programs: football, boys lacrosse, boys soccer, wrestling, boys basketball, baseball, girls soccer, girls lacrosse, girls basketball, field hockey, softball and cheerleading.

Sport	Number of Concussions (Percentage of Total)	Number of “Exposures” to Concussions (Percentage of Total)	Rate per 1,000 Athletic Exposures*
All Athletes	2,651 (100%)	10,926,892 (100%)	0.24
All Boys Sports	1,986 (74.9%)	5,833,723 (53.4%)	0.34
All Girls Sports	665 (25.1%)	5,093,169 (46.6%)	0.13
Football	1,407 (53.1%)	2,335,666 (21.4%)	0.60
Girls Soccer	195 (7.4%)	554,500 (5.1%)	0.35
Boys Lacrosse	244 (9.2%)	800,085 (7.3%)	0.30
Girls Lacrosse	114 (4.3%)	559,295 (5.1%)	0.20
Boys Soccer	103 (3.9%)	606,100 (5.5%)	0.17
Wrestling	123 (4.6%)	724,430 (6.6%)	0.17
Girls Basketball	120 (4.5%)	730,876 (6.7%)	0.16
Softball	47 (1.8%)	439,175 (4.0%)	0.11
Boys Basketball	77 (2.9%)	788,022 (7.2%)	0.10
Field Hockey	58 (2.2%)	588,456 (5.4%)	0.10
Baseball	32 (1.2%)	579,420 (5.3%)	0.06
Cheerleading	131 (4.9%)	2,220,967 (20.3%)	0.06

\*A higher rate indicates that concussions occurred more frequently.

who can help monitor concussion treatment, on every high school campus since 1983. The school system increased the number of athletic training positions at each school from two part-time slots to one full-time slot and a part-time slot in 2005.

“Our athletic trainers are available to assess the athletes every day. No child is going to go back to a sport team unless they can get through a rigorous workout without the return of symptoms. And you have to make sure that they get not only physical rest but also cognitive rest,” said Almquist.

**STUDENTS** with concussions typically have to take a hiatus from doing any type of physical activity and may have to refrain from cognitive activities — including reading, writing and completing math problems — for several weeks. They also must return to their normal exercise and academic routines slowly, with a gradual increase in rigor drawn out over several weeks, according to the National Children’s Medical Center in Washington D.C.

Though his children haven’t had concussions, McLaughlin said he knows many of their classmates have. According to McLaughlin, Fairfax’s coaches appear to have been supportive of long-term treatment plans for students. Teachers have also been understanding and willing to adjust academic workloads.

“There is no way on the front end of things that we can tell how long the healing process is going to take. A concussion is more of a software injury than a hardware injury,” said Almquist.

An academic study suggests that the frequency of concussions in contact sports might be on the rise in Fairfax County Public Schools.

George Mason University professor Shane Caswell examined concussion data collected for 12 contact sports programs in 25 Fairfax County high schools from 1997 to 2008.

According to Caswell, the frequency of

## Signs and Symptoms Of a Concussion

This following list was compiled by Children’s National Medical Center. These signs may not appear directly after a blow to the head and adults should be on the look out for concussion symptoms several days after an incident.

### SIGNS OBSERVED BY PARENTS/TEACHERS/COACHES:

- ❖ Student appears dazed or stunned
- ❖ Student is confused about events
- ❖ Student answers questions slowly
- ❖ Student repeats questions
- ❖ Student cannot recall events prior to the hit, bump or fall
- ❖ Student cannot recall events after the hit, bump or fall
- ❖ Student loses consciousness (even briefly)
- ❖ Student shows behavior or personality changes
- ❖ Student forgets class schedule or assignments

### SYMPOTMS REPORTED BY STUDENT:

- ❖ Student has difficulty thinking clearly
- ❖ Student has difficulty remembering or concentrating
- ❖ Student is feeling more slowed down
- ❖ Student is feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy
- ❖ Student has headache or pressure in the head
- ❖ Student is vomiting or experiencing nausea
- ❖ Student has balance problems or dizziness
- ❖ Student feels fatigued or tired
- ❖ Student has blurry or double vision
- ❖ Student has sensitivity to light or noise
- ❖ Student has numbness or tingling
- ❖ Student is irritable, sad, nervous or more emotional than usual
- ❖ Student is drowsy or has trouble with sleep
- ❖ Student is sleeping too much

sports-related concussions in Fairfax schools’ sports programs grew four times as great over that 11-year stretch. Caswell admitted that this could be, in part, because Fairfax improved its detection and reporting process for concussions during that time.

The rate of concussion was rising in all the sports studied. Approximately 11 percent of the 2,651 concussions tracked during that time period were “repeat” concussions, where one student suffered a head injury more than once. In the 11 years tracked by Caswell, 231 athletes in Fairfax schools suffered two concussions and 26 athletes had three or more concussions.

“If you put them back in the classroom or on the field too soon, it is just going to delay the healing process,” said Almquist.

Caswell found concussion rates across all 12 sports to be on the rise and concluded it was important to monitor concussions across many athletic programs in Fairfax.

“The high-participation collision sports of football and boys’ lacrosse warrant continued vigilance, but the findings suggest that focus on concussion detection, treatment and prevention should not be limited to those sports traditionally associated with concussion risk,” he wrote.

Indeed, South Lakes parent John Farrell said three of his four children suffered from sports related concussions, though they were all in sports where concussions are not nearly as frequent. One daughter got repeat concussions after being hit in the head during a basketball game. A son had a concussion after he was hit in the head with a baseball and another daughter had a cheerleading accident, he said.

## Looking for Improved Fitness — How About Tennis?

**Sport combines fun, good exercise, and social interaction.**

BY RICH SANDERS  
THE CONNECTION

**L**ike the perfect service point that produces an ace and a match victory, the sport of tennis, while its overall popularity over the years has gone through its highs and lows in the United States, is an absolute winner when it comes to its fitness and enjoyment benefits.

For those, from youngsters to young adults to the middle-aged and beyond, looking to improve their physical conditioning as well as taking up a fulfilling sport, recreation or competitive tennis is almost a perfect solution. The enjoyment of successfully volleying the ball back and forth with a partner is a sort of athletic exhilaration, an instant gratification that if learned to achieve consistently can grow towards passion and perhaps a deep love for the sport.

"I think one of the things that draws people to tennis is that one can get a real good workout in an hour playing a game of singles with one other person," said Hank Harris, director of the Hank Harris Tennis Academy, a summer program for youngsters ages 7 to 18 at Episcopal High School in Alexandria, where Harris serves as the head boys' tennis coach during the school year. "It's a sport that's all you — you can out-think your opponent [in a match] or [simply] work on your game."

Harris, a former University of Virginia men's tennis standout who went on to coach former women's professional star Pam Shriver, said the fitness benefits of the game are a natural byproduct of tennis if one is taught how to play the game the right way.

Harris explained that a good tennis player is constantly moving his or her feet and body during a volley, anticipating where an opponent might hit the ball, getting into position to put forth a fluent swing on the ball, and always being prepared to move forward or backward, left or right in readiness to how an opponent might react and where the ball might be headed. For beginners, recreation players, or competitive players, the sound principle of constantly being in position to move and go after the ball is a key principle for any tennis player.

"If you're playing good tennis, you're always moving," said Harris. "At no point should you not be moving. It's a game of movement, stopping and starting."

**PEOPLE LOVE TENNIS** for the physical conditioning benefits, the social aspect of going out and hitting the ball around with a friend, the whole idea of improving one's game, and the opportunity of competing against another person in a match.

"Tennis keeps you moving and engaged and having a good time," said John Kratzke,



PHOTO COURTESY/CHANTILLY INTERNATIONAL TENNIS

**Coach Doug Kegerreis (front, right) spends a moment with young tennis camper Annabel Hoyes of Oakton at the recent Chantilly Chargers' Tennis Camp.**

tennis director of the Highlands Swim and Tennis Club in McLean. "It doesn't matter if you're 5 or a 55-year-old."

Kratzke, a former player at William & Mary College, has been a full-time tennis instructor throughout Northern Virginia for the past 12 years. At Highlands, he oversees a tennis program of which 175 youth and 100 adults are participants.

"People enjoy competing and that side of it, and others love learning something new and adding to their skill set," he said, of the different mindsets his students have in regards to the sport.

He said he does not have one set teaching formula for all of his players or students, but instead tries to help individuals learn strategies and playing techniques best suited for their temperament, skill level, and goals in the sport.

"Having it being fun and fast-paced is what gets people interested in tennis," said Kratzke.

Most seasoned tennis professionals or teachers believe it is imperative that individuals desiring to take up the game take lessons from a tennis professional at a local club or tennis academy.

"I would highly recommend taking a few lessons," said Doug Kegerreis, president of Chantilly International Tennis (CIT), a tennis management service that helps create and provide tennis programs for clubs, youth organizations, and neighborhood associations.

Kegerreis, a physical education teacher at Oakton Elementary School in Fairfax County and the head tennis coach, along with his wife Karen, of both the Chantilly High boys' and girls' spring season teams, gives a tennis lesson through a media venue on YouTube. Individuals, after getting an idea for his teaching methods upon viewing the YouTube program, will sometimes call Kegerreis for personal tennis instruction.

"Tennis is a skilled sport but can be very difficult if you don't have guidance," said Kegerreis, who said the primary goal of CIT is to give students a desire to play the sport throughout their lives. "If you go out and spend most of your time chasing balls two courts over, it's frustrating. I feel like you



PHOTO COURTESY OF HANK HARRIS ACADEMY

**A young girl works on a shot during tennis at the Hank Harris Academy.**

need some basic guidance. For some people that's all they need and want. They don't want to be tournament players."

He said one of the first elements he teaches newcomers to the sport, both younger and older students, is to learn how to successfully volley or rally — hitting the tennis ball back and forth over the net with a partner. He said a key to good rallying back and forth is for players to execute easy, fluent swings and not try to hit the ball too hard.

"I don't care how much power you have, you have to learn to control your swing speed," said Kegerreis, who believes consistent seven or eight hit rallies can develop good physical workouts for players.

He recommends that someone new to the sport purchase a mass merchandise tennis racquet at a place such as Wal-Mart for between \$19 and \$40. A more experienced player, or someone who plays 10 or more times a year, should look for performance rackets which, at close-out sales, can be as inexpensive as between \$70 and \$90.

**GLENN ADAMS**, the boys' tennis coach at Madison High for the past 10 years, tries to create in all of his team members — whether they are standout players on the Warhawks' squad or backup team members — a will to play tennis for years to come. He said he often, when talking to prospective Madison players coming out of junior high schools, notices a lack of true love for the sport. Adams believes youngsters who are taught tennis at a young age develop a lifetime love for the sport. For those youngsters who take it up during, say, their teen years, there is not that immediate passion.

"It just doesn't develop on its own or spontaneously," said Adams, of rising ninth graders developing a bond with tennis. "When I talk to rising freshmen from [Madison feeder schools] Thoreau or Kilmer I don't sense tennis has become a passion in their lives. They have to be afforded a few lessons to develop a passion."

Adams keeps a large Madison team roster during the spring season in hopes that his players will catch tennis fever for life. The benefits, he said, are so rewarding. A runner/jogger of 40 years, Adams said he

much prefers the fitness routine of tennis to that of running, which to him is quite grueling.

"Tennis is a great cardio activity," said Adams. "In tennis you get to exercise without the pain and torture of running. I always tell the guys to stick with the sport through the [beginner] frustration level."

"Tennis only requires one hour for a good workout for a singles game and, if you're playing doubles, an hour-and-a-half," he said. "You can play a tennis game during a work break or in the middle of a work day."

Adams said the first 6 months of playing tennis could be frustrating as one learns how to consistently hit the ball over the net.

"But get that first six months in and you'll definitely start to land those shots, whether they are lucky shots or not," he said, with a laugh.

Harris, the Alexandria area tennis pro, is trying to spread the word about the sport he loves in Alexandria. He had two daughters who were a part of the T.C. Williams High girls' tennis team this past spring. While thrilled to have had his daughters a part of the Titans' program, he and others are disappointed that the school, despite massive upgrades and renovations to the campus in recent years, did not include outdoor tennis courts on the campus. As a result, the Titans play their home matches at Wakefield Park in Arlington or elsewhere.

Harris, at his summer camps and over the course of the year when he is teaching and working with young people and adults in the sport, makes it a priority to emphasize that first and foremost, tennis should be a fun endeavor.

"If it isn't fun, you shouldn't play," said Harris. "We try to make it fun. You try to be encouraging to kids whether they make contact with the ball or not. You can't be disappointed with them but positive."

Harris, like his colleagues, stresses lessons for newcomers to tennis. Some early success can breed confidence and the sky is the limit from there.

"Like anything in life, if you can do something on a pretty good level it improves your self confidence," he said. "And the more steady and consistent you get, the more exercise you get playing."

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## SPORTS



The Force under-11 rugby team of Great Falls has competed this summer against clubs from Vienna, Alexandria, and Springfield.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE FORCE

## Grassroots Rugby Hits Great Falls With Force

New youth team competes first summer of play.

BY THERESA COETZEE  
SPECIAL TO THE CONNECTION

This Spring the signs were all over the area: "PLAY RUGBY, RugbyVa.org." They were probably ignored by many. They probably did not catch the eyes of those involved in youth soccer or lacrosse, the established local youth leagues, or those not interested in a foreign and 'dangerous' sport. But this writer's family noticed, and so did quite a few others. Rugby was born to Great Falls.

The man behind the signs is Buzz McClain, a rugby enthusiast and columnist for NBC-Universal and Rugby Magazine USA. With his initiative, 'The Force,' Great Falls' most recent, grassroots youth athletic team was born of passion for a sport that the former member of the USA Rugby board has played, championed and refereed since 1981. In September, McClain will travel to New Zealand for the Rugby World Cup with plans to report on 10 different matches.

Thanks to McClain, Gary Coetzee, a volunteer parent and former South African and French club rugby player, and other supportive parents, including Jim Dallas, who shows up to every practice despite being a novice to the sport, a team was born.

The Force now competes against other Northern Virginia area teams from Alexandria, Springfield, and Vienna as well as others that are affiliated with known adult rugby clubs. The little known, well-organized, coed summer league concluded last weekend with a 36-team tournament held on Springfield's home pitch, Hooes Road Park.

For those fearing for the safety of youngsters taking part in the sport, there need be no concern — the under-11 division of players do not yet participate in the tackle version of rugby. Instead, they compete in touch rugby. A two-hand touch allows a player to make two steps to pass the ball, and after a few minutes of their first practice, the kids are hooked.

**THE FORCE TEAM** is small and growing. Able to field a full under-9 squad, it hopes to build its un-

der-11 and under-13 ranks. Perhaps in time, the metropolitan area's growing prep school rugby presence, U.S. participation in the Rugby World Cup, and the addition of '7s Rugby' to the Olympic Games in 2016 will help fill in the ranks. Coach McLain has a vision for the team.

"I coached Great Falls baseball for six years and thought I was through," said McCain. "When I put up the 18 yard [rugby] signs around Great Falls I was hoping to tap into the football, lacrosse and soccer kids who might be under 17 and eager for a contact sport."

"So imagine my surprise when the vast majority of our players were under 11," he said. "I had to change my mindset to cultivating a team that will grow into rugby. The Springfield coach told me he started the same way and now he has 120 players and they are hard-core rugby players, with a U11 program that continues to feed the bigger, contact teams."

**SO, HOW HAVE** Great Falls' newest representatives fared so far? Early in the summer it felt a bit like 'The Bad News Bears.' But, just as in the iconic 1970s movie about a makeshift youth baseball team, The Force has pulled together. The team won a match and saw its passing line spread out and work together more consistently each week.

Coetzee calls rugby "The School of Life." The sport teaches the values of camaraderie and teamwork. There is little place for individualism. Without working together, success is not achieved. In fact, when a receiver is ready to catch the ball he calls out, "With you, with you!" That is why McClain named the team 'The Force' — because it is with you!

The Force practices on Tuesdays and Thursday from 6 p.m. until dusk throughout the summer. The league tries to purposefully schedule practices and games when children involved with other area sports are free.

Coaches Coetzee, McClain, and Dallas look for continued interest and support for their team next summer. For more information, visit [www.rugbyva.org](http://www.rugbyva.org) or write to Buzz McClain at [RugbyBuzz@gmail.com](mailto:RugbyBuzz@gmail.com). Follow his exploits in New Zealand at [www.UniversalSports.com](http://www.UniversalSports.com).

Theresa Coetzee is an attorney at Marriott International, a Great Falls resident and, most importantly, a "Rugby Mom."

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