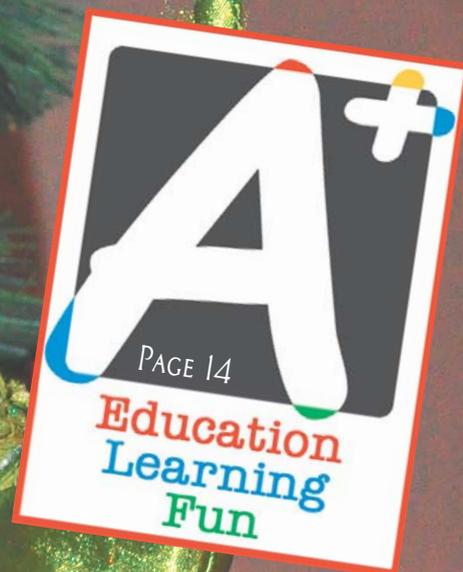


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Buying Gift
In Great Falls
HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE, PAGE 9



Holiday Gift & Entertainment Guide

PAGE 9

A Good Year
For Incumbents

ELECTIONS 2011, PAGE 3

Studio Performs
Holiday Show

NEWS, PAGE 6

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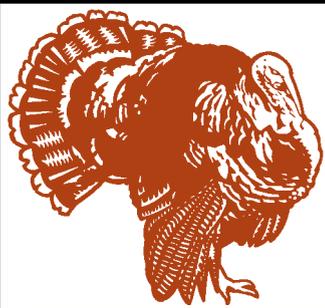
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OPINION 6 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 14 ♦ SPORTS, PAGE 16 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 17

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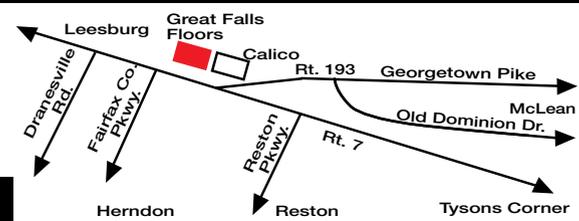
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U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11) watches election returns at the event sponsored by the Fairfax Democratic Party at The Waterford at Fair Oaks on Nov. 8.

PHOTO BY
DEB COBB/
THE CONNECTION



A Good Year for Incumbents

Democrats retain power in Fairfax County, GOP celebrates statewide gains.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

The anti-incumbent mood reflected in national polls did not express itself in Fairfax County when voters cast their ballots on Election Day.

With 99 candidates to pick from, and almost every state and local office up for reelection, voters overwhelmingly returned incumbents to office. And incumbent in Fairfax County typically means Democrat.

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors remains the same, with a 7-3 Democratic majority. Chairman Sharon Bulova (D-At-large) — who first won the at-large seat in a 2009 special election — cruised to victory with nearly 60 percent of the vote over her Republican opponent Michael “Spike” Williams. Supervisor John Cook (R) held on to his Braddock District seat by a razor-thin margin, after a scathing and closely-watched battle with his Democratic challenger, Janet Oleszek.

On the 12-member Fairfax County School Board, the race that generated the most heated speculation, voters returned every incumbent, and elected newcomers who, with one exception, identified themselves as Democrats.

Although Republican hopes for more of a foothold in Fairfax County failed, GOP gains in the rest of the state effectively transferred control of the state legislature to Republicans.

The state Senate, which had a Democratic edge of 22-18, is now evenly split 20-20 between Republicans and Democrats. Lt. Gov. Bill Bolling, a Republican who was not on this year’s ballot, now wields the power to cast any tie-breaking votes. The Republicans increased their majority in the House of Delegates from 61-39 to 68-32. Republicans now control both chambers of the General Assembly and the governor’s mansion for the second time since the Civil War.

Virginia General Assembly

As the campaign signs come down, and post-election navel-gazing goes up, the question of “who won?” shifts to “what does it all mean?”



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

State Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34) said he is concerned about the “inflammatory rhetoric” from state Republicans during an interview Friday in his Fairfax City law office. “The rhetoric from the Republicans right now is ‘we’re in full control.’ But the power should reflect the 20-20 split,” Petersen said.

“I think the real question is what the Republican gains in the state Senate will mean,” said Stephen Farnsworth, a Virginia political expert and professor at George Mason University. “It’s going to be a tough time for Northern Virginia, when you look at the make-up of who controls the levers of power in Richmond.”

Farnsworth said funding for transportation and education are key issues on the table. “There’s a pretty valid claim that even though [Northern Virginia] pays more than its fair share to Richmond, there’s not going to be any attempt to equalize the resources. When Virginia goes from Democratic to Republican, the power base moves south.”

Democrats say they are not just concerned with the shift in party, but with what they think may be a shift to more extreme views.

SEE GOP, PAGE 18

31st Senate District

Democrat Barbara Favola defeated Republican Caren Merrick for the open 31st district senate seat, which was vacated by the retiring Democratic incumbent Mary Margaret Whipple. Favola, a member of the Arlington County Board of Supervisors, won Arlington County 71 percent to 29 percent. Merrick won the parts of the 31st district in Fairfax and Loudoun County, by 53 percent to 47 percent and 55 percent to 45 percent, respectively.

Favola said that creating and maintaining job growth and an educated workforce “are the things I care about, and I want them to continue.”



Barbara Favola

34th Delegate district

Incumbent Barbara Comstock (R) won her first re-election bid over Democratic challenger Pamela Danner 55 percent to 45 percent. The district had a higher percentage turnout, 35 percent, than the 30 percent projected around the state.

Comstock says she hopes to build on the community relationships she’s developed over the last term, including working with groups such as the McLean Citizens Association and the Great Falls Citizens Association, on local issues such as the Leesburg Pike-Georgetown Pike intersection plan.

Comstock said that she hopes to take that same community-oriented approach to the Route 7 widening project.

“I’m committed to making sure Virginia stays number one in jobs, it’s going to be the main thing that provides the revenue for education and transportation re-investment,” she said. “As a government, we’re focusing on logical growth, and I plan to do everything in my power to make sure it happens.”



Barbara Comstock

Dranesville Supervisor

John Foust (D) won re-election to his second term, defeating Republican challenger Dennis Husch 61 percent to 39 percent. He won all 30 precincts in the district by 5,360 votes.

Foust said he planned to focus his next term on the widening of Route 7 from Tysons Corner to Reston, secure more funding for Tysons redevelopment and Dulles Metrorail Phase Two.

He said a priority would be to “find the right balance of infrastructure in Tysons,” because, along with Dulles Metro, it will serve as the economic engine of the region.

When it comes to funding Phase Two of the rail, Foust said he wants to look at funding sources that will not increase the burden on taxpayers who drive the Dulles Toll Road.

Foust also said it would be a “huge mistake” not to finish Phase Two of the Silver Line.



John Foust

Dranesville School Board

Janie Strauss won 21 of 30 precincts in the Dranesville District. Eighteen of the precincts were decided by less than 100 votes, with Strauss winning 12 of those. The Langley precinct, which Epstein took, was decided by only 25 votes.

Strauss says she intends to use future funding to buy down the class size in the Dranesville District, which are among the largest in the county. “As money becomes available, I would like to put those additional resources back into the schools with larger class sizes,” she said.

Strauss also said she hopes to move beyond standardized tests.

“We have to move away from the overemphasis of [Standards of Learning tests], we’ve got to get back to higher-level problem solving,” she said. “I believe we can create some engaging, wonderful problem solving projects for our 11th and 12th graders that will be interesting and appropriate for what parents are asking for.”



Janie Strauss

— ALEX McVEIGH



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PHOTOS BY ALEX MCVEIGH/THE CONNECTION

Students from the Village Green Day School lead the Pledge of Allegiance at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial Veterans Day ceremony.

Veterans Honored

Freedom Memorial hosts annual Veterans Day ceremony.

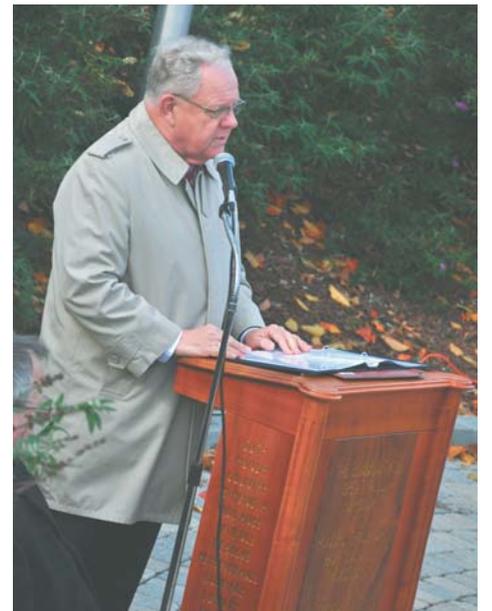
BY ALEX MCVEIGH
THE CONNECTION

Dozens of Great Falls residents attended the annual Veterans Day ceremony Friday, Nov. 11 at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial. Students from the Village Green Day School, Great Falls Elementary School and Langley High School were also in attendance.

The blustery day kept the flags flying throughout the ceremony, which began promptly on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

THE GUEST SPEAKER for the event was Great Falls resident Larry McKinley. He was commissioned a 2nd lieutenant in the Medical Service Corps in 1969, and flew helicopters in Vietnam as part of a medical evacuation unit.

McKinley also spent 20 years in the National Guard, and he deployed to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert



Larry McKinley, a Great Falls resident and veteran of the Vietnam War and Operation Desert Storm, speaks at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial Veterans Day ceremony Friday.

Storm, also as part of a medical evacuation unit. During his career, he saw more than 2,000 hours of combat time and evacuated

SEE GREAT FALLS, PAGE 5



Dozens of Great Falls residents gather at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial Friday for the community's annual Veterans Day ceremony.

Great Falls Pays Tribute To Veterans

FROM PAGE 4

more than 4,500 patients. McKinley spoke about the difference between the wars he participated in, and pointed to the adaptation of tactics as a crucial part of the military going forward.

"In Vietnam we had very young people, as a crew we thought we were going to live forever, but many of us died," he said. "In Desert Storm, all of us were older, had careers in many walks of life and families. Flying conditions were a heck of a lot worse, but no one died and all of the patients made it.

He also stressed the importance of teamwork, recalling the four members of his unit and their roles during night landings in the desert.

"My medic was dealing with the radar altimeter, telling us how high we were off the ground. The copilot was not on night vision goggles, he was on the controls ahead of the dust cloud as it was being kicked up. The crew chief was back there monitoring instruments, and would open the door 10 feet off the ground and I was flying the plane," he said. "It took a team, not just one particular individual. That's what our servicemen in Iraq and Afghanistan are doing every day."

McKinley is also a member of the Sons of the American Revolution, and has served as president of the organization's Virginia chapter, as well as the 2011 Fairfax County SAR Citizen of the Year.



The Langley High School Madrigals perform at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial Veterans Day ceremony Friday, Nov. 11.

Ed Heberg, president of the Friends of the Great Falls Freedom Memorial credited the community for coming out to support Veterans during the ceremony and said he was proud that Great Falls is one of many local communities to host such a ceremony.

"One of the things that we are also proud of is that Great Falls isn't the only location that has ceremonies on Veterans Day,"

he said.

The Village Green Day School children started the event off by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, and the Langley Madrigals performed the National Anthem, "America the Beautiful" and "God Bless America" during the ceremony.

Sara Hilgartner, who helped create the memorial along with her husband Pete, a Marine Corps Veteran, and Old Brogue owner Mike Kearney, said she was glad to see the increased number of students at the event. "It's always great to see the kids come out," she said. "That was one of the goals when we created the memorial, to get them here and to educate them about what our veterans have done."

McKinley said it was "great to see several generations here."

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NEWS

Students at the Margaret Haddad Studio of Classical Ballet in Great Falls will present their annual performance of "The Nutcracker" Nov. 26 and 27.

PHOTOS BY
ALEX McVEIGH/
THE CONNECTION



Alexie Tochilin, as the Nutcracker, holds Maggie Gates, 15, who plays Clara in the Margaret Haddad Studio of Classical Ballet's performance of "The Nutcracker."

Studio Performs Annual Holiday Show

Haddad Ballet Studio performs 'The Nutcracker' for the 20th year.

BY ALEX McVEIGH
THE CONNECTION

The Margaret Haddad Studio of Classical Ballet will perform "The Nutcracker" for the 20th year this holiday season. Haddad, who has performed and studied ballet around the world, has had her studio in Great Falls for 24 years.

"The cast features 81 people, most of them students, as well as guest artists and mothers and fathers for the party scene," Haddad said. "The perfor-

mance also requires more than 700 pieces of costume."

Cecile Tucci and Phillip Skaggs from the Richmond Ballet will be the featured artists.

Haddad said she was grateful for the support of the parents. The mothers helped prepare and iron the costumes, while the fathers helped build the scenery and work backstage.

"It's just me at the studio, and we simply couldn't put the show on without the kind of help they offer," she said.

"The Nutcracker" will be performed at the Madeira School, 8328 Georgetown Pike, in McLean. Show times will be Saturday Nov. 26 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. and Sunday, Nov. 27 at 4 p.m.

Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$22 for seniors, \$19 for students and \$16 for children, and can be purchased the day of the performances, or at the Haddad Studio, 9911 Georgetown Pike in Great Falls.

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

THURSDAY/NOV. 17

Design-Build Institute of America Mid-Atlantic Region Annual Dinner and Business Meeting. 5-9 p.m. Maggiano's Little Italy, Tysons Corner Galleria, 2001 International Drive, McLean. Annual business meeting, installation of officers and networking. \$75-\$115. dbia-mar@cox.net or 703-851-6393.

FRIDAY/NOV. 18

VTRCC Brown Bag University. 11:45 a.m. Fairfax County Economic Development Authority, 8300 Boone Blvd., Suite 450, Vienna. With Elisabeth Schuler Russell, the Founder of Patient Navigator LLC, a full-service patient advocacy firm based in Vienna. Register at www.vtrcc.org.
McLean Art Society Meeting. 10 a.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Watercolorist Peter Ulrich will demonstrate the use of acrylics. 703-790-0123.

SATURDAY/NOV. 19

Experience the joy of Yoga and learn about the ancient practice of Meditation at the Patrick Henry Library from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. The presenters have more than 30 years of practical experience in yoga and meditation. Free.
Open Season Workshop for Federal Employees and Retirees. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. Help navigating the changes in the 2012 Federal Employees Health Benefits plans, dental and vision insurance programs and flexible spending accounts. Representatives of various FEHB health plans and Medicare will be available. Sponsored by Congressman Gerry Connolly. Open Season is Nov. 14-Dec. 12. 703-256-3071 or www.opm.gov/insure/openseason/
The Smart Split: Legal Aspects of Separation and Divorce. 10 a.m. McLean Government Center, 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean. The rights and responsibilities involved in separation and divorce, how the legal process works and how to work with a lawyer. Support group available. \$55, \$45 members. 703-281-4928, ext. 276.

TUESDAY/NOV. 22

November Volunteers for Change Orientation. 6 p.m. Volunteer Fairfax Office, 10530 Page Ave., Fairfax. Choose from more than 50 community service projects, including planting trees, bagging food for homeless families, tutoring adult ESL students, playing bingo with the disabled, special community-wide events throughout the year and more. Reservations required at 703-246-3895 or jkivlin@vlunteerfairfax.org.

TUESDAY/NOV. 29

Vienna Tysons Regional Chamber of Commerce Holiday Mixer. 5:30-7:30 p.m. Hilton McLean Tysons Corner, 7920 Jones Branch Drive, Tysons Corner. Take a break for a festive holiday mixer evening. \$15-\$20. Register at www.vtrcc.org.
Be Clutter Free. 7 p.m. The Women's Center, 127 Park St., N.E., Vienna. A licensed, insured professional organizer with suggestions for downsizing and organizing. \$25-\$35. www.thewomenscenter.org.



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OPINION

Give Locally

The need has never been greater.

As the holidays approach, many nonprofits that provide holiday meals, food support and other services for people in need are reporting that they are overwhelmed.

More than 45,000 students in Fairfax County Public Schools are from families poor enough to qualify for free or reduced priced meals. That's more than 25 percent of students in the schools. In Arlington, 34 percent of students are poor enough to qualify for free or reduced meals. In the City of Alexandria, more than 54 percent of students are poor.

In Fairfax County, 46,000 live below the poverty line; more than 80,000 have no health insurance.

In Northern Virginia, thousands are unemployed and many more are underemployed. Among the homeless in Northern Virginia, many are working poor, families with at least one wage-earner who doesn't make enough to pay for housing for the family.

In this environment, more and more people are turning to food pantries for part of every month. And it's not surprising that many, many families will have little to offer in holiday cheer and holiday gifts for children without the help of organizations and individuals. It's hard to imagine, but there are hundreds of children in the area who would not receive a single holiday present without the help of a charitable organization.

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SHARE of McLean seeks donations of grocery gift cards. Gift cards can be dropped off at SHARE, c/o McLean Baptist Church, 1367 Chain Bridge Road on Wednesdays and Saturdays (except Thanksgiving week) between 9:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. Checks and gift cards can be sent to: Holiday Celebration, Share, Inc. PO Box 210, McLean, VA 22101. 703-284-2179. www.SHAREofMcLean.org

LINK, serving Herndon, Chantilly, Loudoun and more, needs contributions of food, coats and holiday toys for children, plus volunteers. Email Lisa Lombardo at LisaLombo@signaturecos.com. (703) 437-1776 www.linkagainsthunger.org

Herndon-Reston FISH (For Immediate Sympathetic Help), 703-391-0105

Northern Virginia Family Service, Oakton, 703-385-3267
 Food for Others, 2938 Prosperity Avenue, Fairfax, 22031, 703-207-9173

Ecumenical Community Helping Others (ECHO), 703-569-9160, www.echo-inc.org. Open to receive donations at 7205 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield

Lorton Community Action Center operates the Act II Thrift Shop at 9506 Richmond Highway, Lorton.

If you're reading this paper, chances are that you are among the people at the other end of the spectrum, trying to devise methods to keep the holidays more modest. One way to do this is to help your children understand how lucky they are with a glimpse at the needs of others right here.

There are many ways to give, with some local charities connecting the donor to a specific family to provide a holiday food basket and fulfill some wishes for gifts. Many organizations encourage the donation of gift cards. Every local group seeking to help the needy right now is facing extra demand and needs both volunteer and financial help.

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Sales from the shop generate funds for LCAC and clients also shop there. While donations are welcome during store hours, visitors are asked to call first at 703-339-8611 before dropping off donations. www.lortonaction.org

FACETS, 703-352-5090

National Capital Food Bank, 6833 Hill Park Drive, Lorton, serving all of Northern Virginia, 703-541-3063, www.capitalareafoodbank.org

Western Fairfax Christian Ministries, food pantry at 13981 Metrotech Drive in Chantilly (near Backyard Grill and Bar). For more information or to sponsor a family, call 703-988-9656, ext. 105. To mail gift cards or send donations by check, add a note saying "food basket program" and send them to: WFCM, P.O. Box 220802, Chantilly, VA 20153. 703-988-9656

Our Daily Bread, 10777 Main Street #320, Fairfax, 703-273-8829

Shelter House, www.shelterhouse.org, operates two homeless shelters in Fairfax County, in Centreville and Seven Corners. 571-522-6800

Committee for Helping Others (CHO), Vienna, 703-281-7614

Fairfax City Area FISH (For Immediate Sympathetic Help), 703-222-0880

Lamb Center, www.thelambcenter.org, Fairfax 703-691-3178

Where To Give

This is a partial list of charities helping those in need during the holidays and beyond. Let us know about other organization not listed here.

Additional nonprofits can be found listed on the local Catalogue for Philanthropy website, <http://www.catalogueforphilanthropy-dc.org>. Click on "how to give."

Habitat for Humanity of Northern Virginia, Arlington, 703-521-9890

Comfort for America's Uniformed Services (CAUSE), CAUSE ensures that recuperating service members have opportunities for recreation and social interaction and receive concrete signs of appreciation for all that they have done. 4114 Legato Road Suite B, Fairfax, VA 22033, 703-591-4968, cause-usa.org

Jeanie Schmidt Free Clinic, 13525 Dulles Technology Drive, Herndon, VA 20171, 571-235-3577, jsfreeclinic.org Last year 139 community volunteers — nurses, nurse practitioners and physicians — gave more than 1,300 hours of their time to see patients.

Alternative House - Abused and Homeless Children's Refuge, 2100 Gallows Road, Vienna, VA 22182,

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Facing Major Surgery

To the Editor:

Later this month, I am scheduled to be wheeled into the operating room for a major surgical procedure, the outcome of which is highly problematic. I have spoken at length with my surgeon and key members of his operating team and they have assured me that they are fully prepared to do whatever is necessary to bring about a successful outcome. I have read a number of articles about the procedure and have tried to educate myself as best I can although the terminology is a bit daunting.

The surgeon has assured me that the team members are highly credentialed and are strong believers in the Hippocratic Oath. I asked if any members of his team felt that they could not perform any parts of the surgery because of strong personal feelings or because they had signed an oath or taken a pledge to not do something. He assured me that once I am "on the

table all options are open" and that the team would be fully prepared to act in the best interest of the patient. He also said the recovery period would be lengthy and not without pain.

For the past several weeks the Congressional Super Committee has been in the operating room and later this month is expected to wheel out their plan, a plan that will lead the country back to a financial health, by cutting from the Federal Government budget and reducing the federal deficit. I want a plan to be implemented, I want it to be successful so the country will survive and ultimately thrive. However, our dysfunctional Congress must consider all the options and not place anything off limits. They must ignore the special interest calls coming from outside the operating room. Defense, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and all other elements of the budget must remain on the table and considered as part of the overall solution. And yes, if transfusions are required, then increases in taxes must be brought about either

through a major overhaul of the tax code or the elimination of deductions and increases in rates. If we are to survive the surgery and deal with the pain of healing, then the malignancy that has rendered our political system impotent and

guttured our tax system must be removed; otherwise, Washington, D.C. will become nothing more than an American Acropolis.

Walt Lawrence
 Great Falls

Call for Annual Children's (& Teens') Contributions

Every year Connection Newspapers dedicates one issue entirely to the imaginative works of our community children and teenagers. We publish artwork, essays, creative writing, opinion pieces, short stories and photographs.

We are now asking that all submissions be digital so they can be sent through email or on CD. Please provide the submissions no later than Thursday, Dec. 8. If you have any questions, please call Kemal Kurspahic at 703-778-9414 or email kemal@connectionnewspapers.com.

Images should be submitted as .jpg ATTACHMENTS to an email, not embedded in the body of the email. All submissions should include the child's first and last name, school, grade and/or age.

Submissions for our Vienna, McLean, Great Falls, Reston and Herndon editions should be e-mailed to ChildrensNorth@connectionnewspapers.com. Subject should be school name, town and teacher's last name (or for individuals or home schoolers, the child's last name and town).

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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

A Christmas display at Maison et Jardin in Great Falls, which features holiday gifts, decoration and other items.



PHOTO BY
ALEX McVEIGH/
THE CONNECTION

Buying Gifts in Great Falls

Maison et Jardin, Havana Vintage offer unique gifts.

BY ALEX McVEIGH
THE CONNECTION

When it comes to holiday shopping in Great Falls, Maison et Jardin has a few items that are big sellers.

“Our Tymes’ Fraser Fir reed dif-

fusers and candles are extremely popular,” said Mia Belotti, who works at the store. “And it’s easy to see why, it’s like having a Christmas tree in a jar.”

The store also carries Mark Roberts fairies, a variety of Christmas figurines that adorn the store’s Christmas tree, but not always for long.

“They’ve got beautiful clothes, quirky faces and they make new ones every year,” Belotti said. “We order more and more every year, but they’re always gone by Christmas.”

The store also offers a number of items designed for those who

SEE GIFT IDEAS, PAGE 10

Free Remodeling & Design Seminars!

Sat., Nov. 19th — 10am-2pm

Where: 5795B Burke Centre Pkwy, Burke, VA 22015

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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

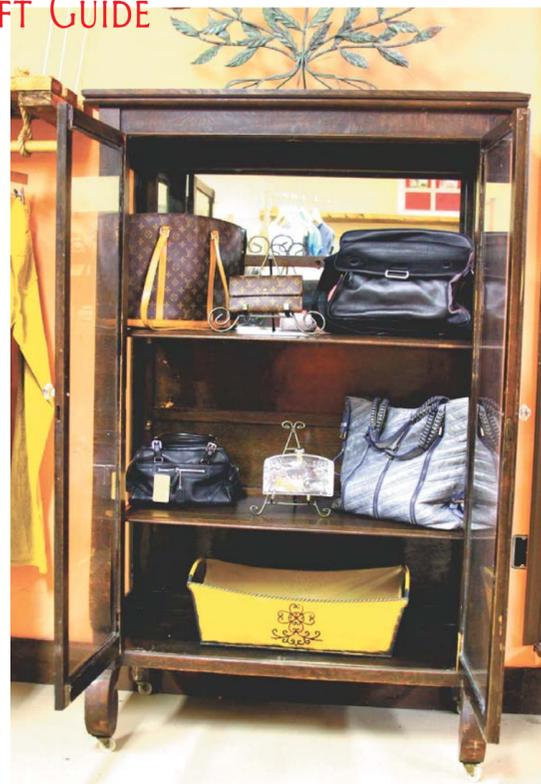
Gift Ideas in Great Falls

FROM PAGE 9

host events, like 100 percent recycled aluminum napkin holders, and custom wreaths and other arrangements. "It's one of my favorite stores in town, whether it's the holidays or not," said McKenzie Pietro of Great Falls. "During the year, they always have beautiful things for the house, but their holiday items and decorations always make for great gifts or decorations."

"It's one of my favorite stores in town, whether it's the holidays or not."

— McKenzie Pietro of Great Falls



Handbags on display at Havana Vintage in Great Falls.



PHOTOS BY KATELYNN DUNN



Havana Vintage owner Nolkis Roman with her husband Eli. Roman opened the store, a high-end women's consignment shop in Great Falls, last month.

things I can't use that could be exactly what somebody else wants," she said. "And I think there are a lot of people that feel that way."

While the store itself is decorated like a Cuban streetscape, with bright colors and items that remind Roman of her childhood, the clothing is carefully inspected to make sure it's in prime condition and properly labeled.

"I think it's a great opportunity to find some things that people on my list wouldn't otherwise get," said Erica Escobar of Reston. "I've always been sort of hesitant to buy people clothes, but the styles here are great, and I think my mother would really like it. I've just got to find a way to inconspicuously get her here and see what she likes."

Havana Vintage is located at the corner of Colvin Run Road and Walker Road, at 1137 Walker Road. They can be found on Facebook, or by calling 703-438-7770.

Havana Vintage in Great Falls offers high-end women's clothing, handmade jewelry and other gift items.

Maison et Jardin is located at 9867 Georgetown Pike, and can be found online at www.maisonetjardintltd.com.

The idea of a consignment shop, where people bring in their clothes and have a certain amount of time

more. ONE OF GREAT FALLS' newest additions is Havana Vintage, a high-end women's consignment shop with the flavor of owner Nolkis Roman's native Cuba. In addition to brand name women's clothing, the store also offers local handmade jewelry, organic soaps and candles and

"I think it's a great opportunity to find some things that people on my list wouldn't otherwise get."

— Erica Escobar of Reston

to sell it, splitting the sale price with the store, appeals to Roman's nature.

"I've always felt that there are

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At the end of the evening, the audience dubbed senior Danielle Wertz "McLean Idol."

Danielle Wertz Wins 'McLean Idol' Competition

McLean High School (MHS) students competed in McLean's own Burke Theatre, Oct. 27-29, in the first annual "McLean Idol." In a joint Drama Club and Choral Department production, Directors Amy Poe and Linda Martin presented this competition showcasing student talent and providing a means of funding club and departmental activities.

Prior to the competition, the department held auditions, scouring the school for the most distinguished vocal talent. After careful deliberation, 24 students were selected to perform, twelve each on Thursday, Oct. 27 and Friday, Oct. 28 with the top contestants from each night proceeding to the finals on Saturday, Oct. 29. Each student chose a song to best demonstrate his or her vocal capability and took the stage to give their chosen

song a unique twist. From Adele to Rick Astley songs, the student performances pleased both the audience and the guest judges, Karen MacNamera, Zach Roberts, Brent Stone and Lonnie Bickel. After audience voting over two nights, the final round on Saturday featured twelve finalists: junior Kate Lyn Broom, sophomore Sunny Dunn, junior Wolfe Glick, junior Max Johnson, junior Damian Leverett, freshman Lily Lord, junior Madelyn Paquette, sophomore Nancy Pruett, sophomore Cara Schaumberg, freshman Alex Stone, senior Nick Stone, senior Danielle Wertz. At the end of the evening, the audience dubbed senior Danielle Wertz "McLean Idol" with freshman Alex Stone recognized as first runner up and sophomore Nancy Pruett as second runner up.



First Runner-Up, freshman Alex Stone.

ENTERTAINMENT

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

THURSDAY/NOV. 17

Russell Brand. 8 p.m. George Mason University Patriot Center, 4500 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. Tickets \$25-\$45, available at www.ticketmaster.com or 703-573-SEAT. www.russellbrand.com or www.patriotcenter.com.

Ryan Montbleau Band and Sister Sparrow & The Dirty Birds. 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

Book Discussion Group. 7:30 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Call for title. Adults. 703-757-8560.

Melissa Manchester. 8 p.m. The Barns at Wolftrap, 1551 Trap Road, Vienna. Award-winning singer/songwriter. \$35. www.wolftrap.org.

Screenings of the Documentary "Happy." 12 p.m. and 6 p.m. George Mason University Johnson Center Cinema, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. A feature-length documentary in search of the keys to happiness and fundamental issues facing modern society. Free. cct.gmu.edu/events/happy.html.

FRIDAY/NOV. 18

Comedy Tonight! A Studio Rep Production. 8 p.m. Alden Theater, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. An evening of PG-13 comedy. \$12. sabrina.anwah@fairfaxcounty.gov.

"The How and the Why." 8 p.m. 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tyson's Corner. On the eve of a prestigious conference, an up-and-coming evolutionary biologist wrestles for the truth with an established leader in the field. Tickets \$25. www.1ststageysons.org or 703-854-1856.

Blackie and the Rodeo Kings at 7:30 p.m.; **The Bastard Sons, Murphy's Kids and Feed God Cabbage** at 10 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

Friday Afternoon Chess Group. 1 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Chess for all ages. Players of all levels welcome. No registration necessary. 703-757-8560.

Catie Curtis With Meg Hutchinson. 8 p.m. The Barns at Wolftrap, 1551 Trap Road, Vienna. Folk-rock. \$22. www.wolftrap.org.

National Acrobats of The People's Republic of China- Direct from Beijing. 8 p.m. George Mason University's Center for the Arts Concert Hall, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. \$24-\$48, youth through grade 12 half price when accompanied by adult. 1-888-945-2468.

SATURDAY/NOV. 19

An Evening with Andre Rieu. 8 p.m. George Mason University Patriot Center, 4500 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. Accompanied by the 60-piece Johann Strauss Orchestra. Tickets are \$49-\$143, available at www.ticketmaster.com or 703-573-SEAT. www.andrerieu.com.

Comedy Tonight! A Studio Rep Production. 8 p.m. Alden Theater, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. An evening of PG-13 comedy. \$12. sabrina.anwah@fairfaxcounty.gov.

"The How and the Why." 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tyson's Corner. On the eve of a prestigious conference, an up-and-coming evolutionary biologist



There will be an Artist's Reception on Nov. 26 from 2-4 p.m. at the Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike in Great Falls, for "Let it Flow," an exhibit of abstract acrylic paintings by Mary Ellen Moge. The exhibit will be on display through November. 703-785-5784 or www.maryellenmoge.com.

wrestles for the truth with an established leader in the field. Tickets \$25. www.1ststageysons.org or 703-854-1856.

Holiday Craft Boutique & Family Funfest. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. George Mason University Field House, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Craft vendors, entertainment, play zone, scavenger hunt, silent auction and more. Proceeds benefit Belvoir Officers' Spouses' Club programs and scholarships. \$4, \$6 families, age 6 and under free. Boscfundraiser@gmail.com or www.belvoirsc.org.

ASNV Bird Walk. 8 a.m. Riverbend Park, Jeffery Road, Great Falls. Sponsored by the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia. Check the for early waterfowl and winter residents. Meet at the boat ramp. Free. info@audubonva.org.

Action Item, Burnham, Megan & Liz and Hollywood Ending at 5:30 p.m.; **Beer N Black and DJ RBI** at 10 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

Northern Virginia Country Western Dance Association. Luther Jackson Middle School, 3020 Gallows Road, Falls Church. Line dance lesson at 7:30 p.m., couples dance lesson at 8 pm. Open dancing 8:30-11 p.m. Two step, waltz, line, swing, cha cha and more. Couples and singles welcome. Admission \$5-\$12. Snacks and drinks available. www.nvcwda.org or 703-860-4941.

National Acrobats of The People's Republic of China- Direct from Beijing. 8 p.m. George Mason University's Center for the Arts Concert Hall, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. \$24-\$48, youth through grade 12 half price when accompanied by adult. 1-888-945-2468.

Flutopia. 8 p.m. George Mason University Concert Hall, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. 703-993-1380 or www.music.gmu.edu.

English Country Dance. 7:30 p.m. St. Francis Episcopal Church Parish Hall, 9220 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. All dances are called, as in square dancing, to live music. Dances are taught, new dancers welcome. \$10 admission. TheLeesburgAssembly.org or 703-757-8648.

11th Annual Enchanted Forest Holiday Extravaganza. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. The Westin Tysons Corner, 7801 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Meet chef Lorraine Wallace, have cupcakes and cocoa with the Snow Fairy Princess or breakfast and a photo with Santa. Cooking demonstrations, children's crafts, gifts and decorations for purchase, silent

auction and evening gala celebration. Sponsored by the Junior League of Northern Virginia. Admission \$11. 703-442-4163 or www.jlnv.org.

SUNDAY/NOV. 20

Puppet State Theatre Company from Scotland: The Man Who Planted Trees. 3 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. \$10-\$15. www.mcleancenter.org.

"The How and the Why." 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tyson's Corner. On the eve of a prestigious conference, an up-and-coming evolutionary biologist wrestles for the truth with an established leader in the field. Tickets \$25. www.1ststageysons.org or 703-854-1856.

The Capitol Steps. 7 p.m. Langley High School Auditorium, 6520 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Proceeds benefit the graduating class of 2012's All Night Grad Party. \$30. www.fcps.edu/LangleyHS/assets/2011-2012/capitolSteps.pdf.

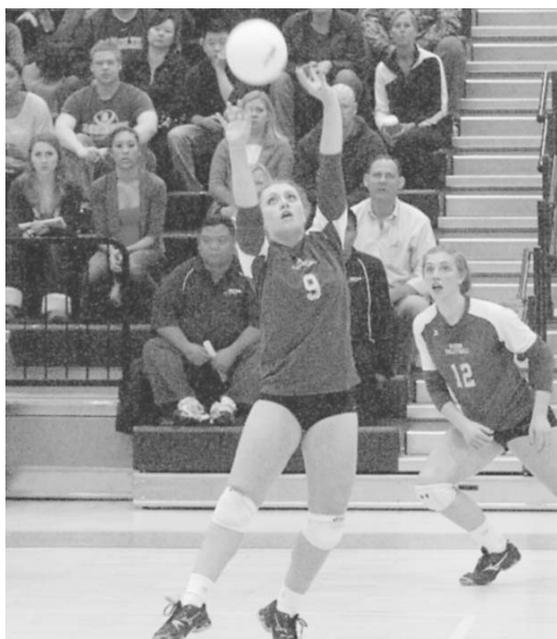
Bernardo Guitar Studio Concert Recital at 1:30 p.m.; **Kris Delmhorst and Little Silver (Steve Curtis of Hem)** at 7 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

Mill Run Dulcimer Band Thanksgiving/Christmas Concert and Holiday Party. 2-4 p.m. Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. 703-759-2771.

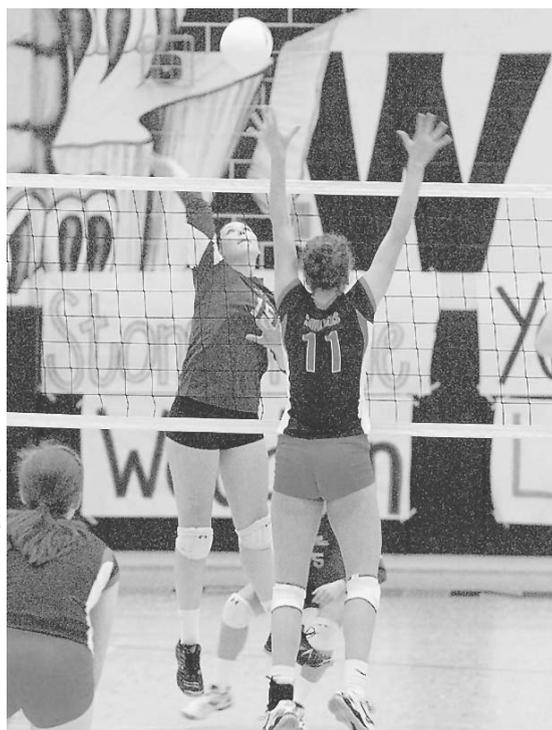
Iona CD Release: Silver. 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. The Snuggery of the Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760-C Walker Road, Great Falls. Pan-Celtic music. \$15. Reservations required at 703-759-3309. www.IonaMusic.com.

Chew the Fat: Participatory Event. 1-4 p.m. The Claude Moore Colonial Farm, 6310 Georgetown Pike, McLean. What can you do with fat? Help the farm family make soap, candles and even dubbin. \$3 adults; \$2 children and seniors. Complimentary admission with Farm membership. www.1771.org/directions.htm.

11th Annual Enchanted Forest Holiday Extravaganza. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. The Westin Tysons Corner, 7801 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Meet chef Lorraine Wallace, have cupcakes and cocoa with the Snow Fairy Princess or breakfast and a photo with Santa. Cooking demonstrations, children's crafts, gifts and decorations for purchase, silent auction and evening gala celebration. Sponsored by the Junior League of Northern Virginia. Admission \$11. 703-442-4163 or www.jlnv.org.



Jenna Dean (9), a junior setter for the Langley Saxons, prepares to set the ball during her team's region semifinals match versus W.T. Woodson on Nov. 10 at Centreville. No. 12, to the right for Langley is sophomore Alex Andrejev.



Langley's Maureen Marsh (15), a junior middle hitter, prepares to hit a winner versus the Cavaliers.

PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Saxons' Volleyball Just Misses State Playoff Berth

Langley makes strong region playoff run before losing to Cavaliers.

BY RICH SANDERS
THE CONNECTION

Langley High girls' volleyball coach Susan Shifflett was disappointed her Saxons did not play to the high level she has come to see from them when they squared off against Northern Region power Stone Bridge for the Liberty District tournament championship match earlier this month on Nov. 3.

Langley, a team which continually improved throughout the fall season, had defeated Jefferson, 3-1, and McLean, 3-0, to reach the finals against the Bulldogs. But in that title match, Stone Bridge, playing on its home floor, came away with a 3-0 win.

"We showed our improvement against McLean, but just didn't have enough for Stone Bridge," said Shifflett.

Langley's lone district loss of the regular season had also come to Stone Bridge, 0-3, in the regular season final on Oct. 27 in Ashburn. So over the course of the regular season, the Saxons had gone 15-6 overall and 6-1 in district play to earn the No. 2-seed for the district tournament.

Langley expected to and did ultimately meet up with the top seed Stone Bridge team in the district finals. And while there was natural disappointment at having fallen to the Bulldogs there, the Saxons were still confident and poised to make a strong showing at the following week's Northern Region

Tournament.

Langley did just that, defeating both Edison and West Springfield by 3-0 scores to advance to the region semifinals of the 16-team tournament. But the Saxons then saw their season end with a round of fours loss to W.T. Woodson, 2-3, on Nov. 10 at Centreville High School. The Cavaliers, members of the Patriot District, trailed the match at certain points but ultimately prevailed in comeback fashion.

The loss for Langley was naturally disheartening because it not only prevented the Saxons from moving on to the region championship match but it also kept them out of the following week's Virginia State AAA playoffs. Only the two region finalists — Woodson and Stone Bridge — qualified for states.

Going into regionals, Shifflett knew anything was possible for her talented, hard-working team.

"We showed our improvement against McLean, but just didn't have enough for Stone Bridge."

—Langley coach Susan Shifflett

"There is a lot of parity in the region," she said. "We could go out early, or make it to the finals — which would probably mean another date with Stone Bridge. I'm optimistic, but we have to play like we played versus McLean [at the district semifinals] and not like we did with Stone Bridge."

In fact, Langley played well at regionals, reaching the final four and nearly going further only to

fall victim to a solid Woodson squad. Nevertheless, it was quite a good season for the Saxons, who finished with a 19-8 record.

This year's Langley squad consisted of: senior Maddie Kotority, senior Christy Meyer, senior Kendall Shafran, senior Julia Weeks, junior Catherine Baek, junior Hoai Nam Bui, junior Jenna Dean, junior Maureen Marsh, junior Madeline Osburn, sophomore Alex Andrejev, sophomore Lexy Donaldson, freshman Rachel Andrejev, junior Erin Long, and junior Kaelin Testa.

SPORTS BRIEFS



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

The Langley and McLean High football teams, shown here in their regular season finale against one another two weeks ago, both lost their Div. 5 Northern Region quarterfinals playoff games last week. Langley, against top-seeded Stone Bridge, lost 35-0 in Ashburn. The Saxons finished with an overall record of 5-6 this season. McLean, meanwhile, lost its game at Yorktown, 20-6, to finish with a 6-5 record.

McLean High School's first-ever Athletic Hall of Fame class was announced during halftime ceremonies of the McLean versus Langley football game on Nov. 4.

McLean High, which opened in 1955, has never had a Hall of Fame for athletes, coaches, administrators, and contributors.

Fourteen individuals and one team were inducted:

- ♦ Roger Cole — assistant football, baseball, basketball coach 1955-1959; head football coach, 1969-1972; athletic director 1972-1986; won two district football titles at McLean in the 1960s.

- ♦ Cricket Call — coach and administrator, 1967-1989; helped start several girls' sports programs; long-time overseer of girls sports at McLean.

- ♦ Marsha Ehrsam — 1979 graduate and head field hockey coach, 1986-1997; first-ever coach at McLean to win a state championship.

- ♦ Jason Johnson — 1993 graduate; two-time state wrestling champion; led McLean to first-ever playoff football win in 1993; standout baseball player who helped McLean to 1993 district title.

- ♦ Ellen Fox — 1983 graduate; only female to win state title at McLean in track and field event in the high jump; also high jump winner at Penn Relays; competed at UVA; still holds McLean record for high jump and 100-meters dash.

- ♦ Warren Harvey — community contributor who was official basketball scorekeeper for 30 years; ran football chain gang for all three teams for 30 years; overall, worked more than 1,000 games lifetime — all as a volunteer; also helped construct first permanent snack bar in football stadium.

- ♦ 1986 State AAA Championship Field Hockey Team — first state champion in school history; the only other McLean High teams to win state titles were the 2010 girls' softball team and the 2011 girls' soccer team.

- ♦ Craig Fielder — 1984 graduate; Ironman Award named for him at McLean for athletes who earn nine varsity letters; one of the best athletes in history of McLean; dominant

four-sport athlete who played football at UVA; football standout; soccer goal-keeping standout; two-year basketball starter; shares high jump record at McLean; succumbed to cancer in 1987 during college football career; UVA award named after him to the Cavalier athlete who best overcomes adversity.

- ♦ Ted Pease — winningest coach in McLean High history; 27-year soccer career, 26 winning seasons; also, top-notch wrestling coach; high school state champion wrestler and a member of the Fairfax High School Hall of Fame; All-American wrestler at East Stroudsburg University.

- ♦ Mary Lou Carroll — longtime championship field hockey coach from 1955-1985; also won district titles as girls' basketball coach; long-time softball coach; a member of the James Madison University Hall of Fame as an athlete.

- ♦ Ed Ryan — 1971 graduate; two-time state wrestling champion; wrestled at Indiana State; helped start youth wrestling in McLean; still coaching today at both McLean High and with the local youth program.

- ♦ Eric Dorsey — 1982 graduate; most dominant McLean football defensive player in history; four-year starter at Notre Dame; first-round pick of the New York Giants in 1986; part of two winning Super Bowl teams with the Giants; holds McLean High track and field records in shot put and discus.

- ♦ Marcia McDermott — 1983 graduate; soccer, field hockey, and basketball standout at McLean; won three NCAA soccer titles at University of North Carolina, where she was an All-American; longtime head college coach at several programs including Maryland, Illinois and Arkansas; General Manager and Executive with Chicago franchise of the WUSA; assistant coach on 2011 World Cup soccer team.

- ♦ Seth Greisinger — 1993 graduate; second winningest pitcher in McLean baseball history; All-American at UVA; first-round draft pick of the Detroit Tigers in 1996; pitched in Major Leagues with Detroit, Atlanta, and Minnesota; current standout pitcher in Tokyo.

- ♦ Nate Friends — 1991 graduate; basketball and soccer standout; All-Met soccer player for the Highlanders; played at UVA, where he won four NCAA titles; featured in Sports Illustrated; member of U.S. Junior National Soccer Team.

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Every year between Christmas and New Year's, The Great Falls Connection turns its pages over to the contributions of local students. We are seeking artwork, photography, poetry, opinions, short stories and reflections. We welcome contributions from public schools, private schools and students who are home schooled.

E-mail to: ChildrensNorth@connectionnewspapers.com, or mail (.jpg and text files on disc only) by Nov. 30, to 1606 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314. Please be sure to include the student's name, age, grade, school and town of residence along with each submission. For information, call 703-778-9410.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

Students study at George Mason University's Arlington Campus. Many professional master's degree programs are structured to meet the needs of working adults.

Where Science and Business Collide

New master's degree programs address employer demand for more science and math knowledge.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Some call it the new MBA. Others say it is one of the keys to employability in a difficult economic environment. Meet the professional science master's degree, a relatively new, two-year graduate degree that combines advanced training in science or math with business skills often desired by employers.

Professional science master's degrees are designed to address what forecasters say is a future of economic growth and job creation driven by advances in science, bringing a new emphasis in science, technology, engineering and mathematics [STEM] education at many levels.

"A master's degree in a STEM field often offers a clear pathway to professional employment and career success — even in a difficult job market," said Debra Stewart, president of the Council of Graduate Schools. The Council of Graduate Schools conducted a study of graduates with professional science master's degrees and found that 82 percent were employed. More than 55 percent of those were earning \$50,000 or more.

Like many other professional master's degree programs, PSMs are structured to meet the needs of working adults.

"Most of our graduate students are part-time students," said Michelle Marks, associate provost of Graduate Education for George Mason University, and an Oakton resident. "There is a market of students who are interested in graduate school — and are working full time and don't want take a break in their careers to go to graduate school."

Graduate Open Houses

Learn more about professional studies programs at one of the following information sessions. Reservations are required.

George Mason University Graduate Admissions session and tour, Sunday, Nov. 20, Presentation at noon (Johnson Center Bistro, lower level); followed by tour at 1 p.m.; <http://admissions.gmu.edu>, click on Graduate and Schedule a Visit.

Wednesday, Dec. 14, Tour at 6 p.m.; followed by presentation at 7 p.m. (Johnson Center Cinema, lower level).

Thursday, Jan. 5, 2012 Presentation at 1 p.m. (Johnson Center Cinema, lower level); followed by tour at 2 p.m.

George Washington University Arlington Campus

Saturday, Nov. 19, 2-4 p.m. Arlington Education Center, 950 North Glebe Road, 6th Floor, Arlington.

George Washington University Virginia Science and Technology Campus

Engineering Management, Accelerated M.S. Tuesday, Nov. 21 or Dec. 6, 6:30 p.m. Exploration Hall, 20101 Academic Way, Ashburn, Call 703-726-8253 .

Electrical Engineering, M.S.E.E. (Thursday, Nov. 17, 6:30 p.m. Exploration Hall, 20101 Academic Way, Ashburn, Call 703-726-8253.

The concept of designing graduate degrees around needs of working professionals is not new. "The motivation for a lot of these programs is access," said Carol B. Lynch, senior project director, Professional Master's Programs Council of Graduate Schools. "When you look at the ads that you see on the Metro and in the newspapers, they are really targeting people who are working and want to advance but don't have the luxury to take time off to go to a more traditional program."

According to the National Professional Science Master's Association (NPSMA), schools in the Washington, D.C., region offering PSM degrees are George Washington University, University of the District of Columbia, American University and University of

SEE RETHINKING SCIENCE, PAGE 15

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Rethinking Science

FROM PAGE 14

Maryland University College, Georgetown University and Virginia Tech formed a partnership and created a PSM program in Biomedical Technology Development and Management.

“[George Mason] is currently developing programs that will likely be PSMs that combine science courses with management [and] workplace skills,” said Marks.

PSM programs, which often include internships and training in workplace skills, are generally developed in coordination with employers, including nonprofit organizations, businesses and government agencies. Both George Mason University and George Washington University offer professional studies classes at their Arlington campuses.

“We do a lot of market research, and we also have advisory boards and professional groups that we talk to about what is actually needed [in the workplace],” said Kathleen Burke, Ph.D., dean of the College of Professional Studies at George Washington University. “Then we can create programs based on what we know are specific needs.”

Unlike traditional graduate science programs, PSM programs are generally terminal; they do not lead to a Ph.D.

“[Part-time] programs are really geared towards people achieving a breadth of business knowledge and then moving into the workforce,” said Marks, “as opposed to a more traditional master’s program where people may very well move onto a Ph.D.”

Are professional degrees like the PSM less rigorous than their traditional counterparts? Just because the courses are offered nights and weekends doesn’t mean that the program is less strenuous, university officials said.

“Our programs are very high quality. They are selective,” said Burke. “They have admissions requirements and standards that are very comparable to other graduate programs. We don’t admit very many students into our programs.”

While the overall enrollment of new students at U.S. graduate schools fell 1.1 percent in 2010, according to the annual CGS Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees, the number of students entering science and engineering programs grew as much as 8.6 percent.

Marks adds, “I don’t think there is a rigor difference, certainly not at George Mason, between [traditional] programs [and those] that are offered on the weekends or evenings or in a format that appeals to students who have full-time jobs.”

Call for Annual Children’s (& Teens’) Connection Contributions

Every year Connection Newspapers dedicates one issue entirely to the imaginative works of our community children and teenagers. We publish artwork, essays, creative writing, opinion pieces, short stories and photographs.

We are now asking that all submissions be digital so they can be sent through email or on CD. Please provide the submissions no later than Thursday, Dec. 8. If you have any questions, please call Kemal Kurspahic at 703-778-9414 or email kemal@connectionnewspapers.com.

Some suggestions for submissions:

- ❖ Drawings, paintings, photographs or 2-D and 3-D artwork that have been digitally photographed.
- ❖ Short stories, poetry, essays, class-wide prompt writings.

❖ Opinion pieces about family, friends, traffic, sports, food, video games, toys, trends, etc. Images should be submitted as .jpg ATTACHMENTS to an email, not embedded in the body of the email.

All submissions should include the child’s first and last name, school, grade and/or age.

Submissions for our Vienna, McLean, Great Falls, Reston and Herndon editions should be e-mailed to ChildrensNorth@connectionnewspapers.com. Subject should be school name, town and teacher’s last name (or for individuals or home schoolers, the child’s last name and town).

The issue will be published the week of the Christmas holiday. We will publish as many submissions as possible.

SCHOOL NOTES

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

Joseph Oleniacz of Great Falls has received the Dean’s Scholarship from York College of Pennsylvania. Oleniacz is a graduate of Langley High School.

Tarun Sharma of Great Falls has been elected to serve as a freshman representative to the Student Senate at Hampden-Sydney College. The graduate of Langley High School is the son of Dr. and Mrs. Srinivas K. Sharma.

Navy Lt. **Kathryn E. Buikema**, a 1995 graduate of The Madeira School in Great Falls, recently checked into the Navy Information Operations Command (NOIC), Ft. Meade, Md. Buikema will fill the position of NOIC’s general manager officer.

Caitlin Leigh Sheldon of Great Falls has received a bachelor of science in animal science from Cornell University. Sheldon is the daughter of Ray

and Sharon Sheldon.

Candice Ray Sheldon of Great Falls has received an MD degree from Brown Medical School, and is in a pediatrics residency. Sheldon is the daughter of Ray and Sharon Sheldon.

James McGrath of McLean has been selected to be a McDonough Scholar at Marietta College this fall. The program helps students gain a deeper understanding of leadership, practice leadership skills and grow as engaged leaders.

Ten Langley High School students have been named as 2011 National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists: **Allison S. Brady, Saba Eskandarian, Jimmy J. Fang, Jamison G. Fox-Canning, Nathaniel C. Howe, Dylan J. Kriz, Debbie R. Pan, Spencer C. Shabshab, Holliday L. Shuler** and **Andrew J. Stewart**.



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A Predicament



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Not that I'm stressing about having cancer – too much (really?), but I wish there were an off switch. A figurative button to press that would stop the flow of cancer-induced, cancer-related cancer consumables: information, concern, anxiety, focus, orientation, predisposition, etc. And if I were to attempt to delude myself into saying that I don't think about having cancer all the time – consciously, then I suppose I would admit to it being top of mind (bottom of mind, too) sub-consciously, whether I like it or not – and of course this column is about not liking it.

But as Popeye the Sailor Man so often said: "I yam what I yam." And what I am is a cancer survivor, still surviving 32 months post-diagnosis, after being given a "13-month to two-year" prognosis back in late Feb., 2009. And as much as I want to look forward – and presumably it is much healthier, anecdotally speaking to do so, it is difficult – for me, to not consider the past as some sort of prologue, with a premature end hopefully not in sight, and one whose epilogue has yet to be determined. This preordained time line, indeterminate though it may actually be, wears on me. Not that I want to know what the future holds, but something inside me almost needs to know. Unfortunately, if I were to be realistic though, given my diagnosis, the future is not exactly my oyster. Certainly it's there for the taking, it's simply impossible to know if I'll be alive for the receiving.

Considering that I'm a planner and that I live today for tomorrow instead of living today like there's no tomorrow (ironic given my diagnosis/prognosis), I'm always thinking about what's next and what I have to do to get from point "A" to point "B." Being diagnosed and "prognosed" as I have, my thought processes have been turned upside-down and inside-out. I still know my left from my right, but so many other presumptions about life/the future are no longer what I thought they were or anticipated they would be. If I had to hazard a guess/offer an explanation about the topsy-turvy world in which I now try to exist – normally, I would rationalize it and say: a terminal diagnosis will do that to you.

But I don't want it to do it to me. Yet it does. It's almost as if I've been rewired. All the connections, all the pathways, all the familiar/functioning routes that I understood/took to get through the past, present and future are all jumbled up and not nearly as clear as one would have lived 57 years expecting them to be. All bets are off, as they say. From now on, my life is one big gamble, a risk few players would likely take.

But if I don't take any risks, I may very well succumb to that what ails me. Living like I don't have a future is probably the surest way to not have one. For me to do so, however requires a complete reversal of who I am, how I think. The problem is, I like who I am, who I've become. Nevertheless, continuing to be this person, living and thinking as I do, might be counter-productive (counter-intuitive for sure) to fending off my cancer.

Whatever I decide to do, however I'm able to change, being unhappy and negative about the choices that I make is also counter-productive. I don't exactly want to die young and leave a good-looking corpse (as James Dean is alleged to have said – or a derivation thereof), but nor do I want to be miserable for the rest of my life. I need to find a compromise somewhere/somewhat, some way to live for today – and tomorrow.

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

GOP Celebrates Statewide Gains

FROM PAGE 3

"Arizona, Mississippi, and Wisconsin will be pushed off the front pages of national newspapers as Virginia takes leadership with right-wing legislation," said Del. Ken Plum (D-36), who was first elected to Richmond in 1978 and serves as the chairman of the House Democratic Caucus.

Issues that concern Democrats include reductions in public education funding resulting from resources being diverted to charter schools, restrictions on abortion, immigration enforcement, and weakening health and safety regulations.

"The Senate of Virginia will no longer be the safeguard that it has been for the past several years to stop wacky legislation," said Plum.

"When you look at the legislative agenda, a lot of the more polarizing social issues were killed because of the Senate," Farnsworth said. "There will probably be more of these issues moving forward now."

Democratic Senators are also not willing to concede full control to the GOP. "The rhetoric from the Republicans right now is 'we're in full control.' But the power should reflect the 20-20 split," said state Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34), referring to control of the chamber's floor sessions and committees. "Democrats need to make sure our funding for education and transportation doesn't drop off."

But Del. Dave Albo (R-42), who was first elected in 1994 and is Northern Virginia's most senior member of the House, said the alarmist rhetoric is just party politics.

"Everybody needs to take a chill-pill," Albo said. "[Democrats] are all crying like babies about [the election]. They try to scare people into thinking that suddenly there's going to be all this wacky legislation out of Richmond. The immigration bills are not wacky at all. We allowed police officers to detain someone as an illegal alien when they get a hit on their car. We require businesses to use E-Verify. When they say it's wacky, I want to say, specifically, tell me which bill you're worried about. We are not going to be doing anything out of the ordinary," Albo said.

Albo said revenue for some transportation projects, such as road maintenance, may increase with the GOP in control.

"One of the good-news things of Republicans in the Senate is that we should be able to get something passed for more money for secondary road maintenance and improvements," Albo said. "The Democrats have never wanted to use the General Fund for revenue to pay for the roads."

Even though Republicans now reign south of the Rappahannock, Fairfax County is likely to remain blue.

"You had an optimal environment for Republicans this year. There was a lot of money sloshing around...and they just can't close the deal in this part of the state," Farnsworth said.

"I was disappointed countywide," Albo said. "I doubt that Republicans will ever gain a foothold when [Republican] candidates like Bill Cooper, who was running for

sheriff, or Lolita Manchino-Smoak, who was running for the School Board, can't win...Slowly but surely, Fairfax County is becoming Alexandria and Arlington."

Fairfax County School Board

The Fairfax County School Board race was the one to watch this year. It was the most talked-about, blogged-about, debated and partisan-fueled race in the board's 19-year history.

Political insiders predicted that parental anger over discipline, boundaries, class size and grading policies would sweep out incumbents and usher in a slate of candidates running as "reformers" and endorsed by Republicans.

The predictions proved wrong.

Voters returned six incumbents to the 12-member board and handed the three at-large seats to the Democrat-endorsed candidates. Elizabeth Schultz, in the Springfield District, was the only Republican-endorsed candidate to win a district seat.

"Voters didn't reject 'reform,' this was a partisan victory for the Democrats pure and simple," said Sheree Brown Kaplan, who lost her bid for an at-large seat.

But Ted Velkoff, a former PTA president from Rocky Run who won an at-large seat, said the message voters sent on Election Day was more nuanced than partisan politics.

"I don't think it was a rejection of reform, or embracing of the status quo," Velkoff said. "In the end, I think people in Fairfax County are generally happy with the schools. They said, on balance, that the school system is being run well, and voters manifested their diverse spectrum of views about issues by electing a diverse group of people."

"What the voters have rejected," said Ilryong Moon, who retained his at-large seat, "is the oversimplification of complexity of governance of our school system and efforts to meet needs of all students with a few sound bites or campaign slogans."

Moon, who will be serving a fourth term on the board, said the six new board members will be facing several challenges when they meet in January, including a tight budget climate and the selection of a new superintendent.

Fairfax County Superintendent Jack D. Dale, who steered the 175,000-student system for seven years, announced in September that he will retire when his contract ends in June 2013.

"Voters want us to continue staying on the current path, and maintain the quality of our top performing school system," Moon said.

"While voters in this election expressed satisfaction that the Democratic leadership provides good stewardship over our high-ranking public school system, I think voters also made it clear that they expect the school board to spend more time listening to parent and community concerns," said Rex Simmons, chair of the Fairfax County Democratic Committee (FCDC).

Ryan McElveen, who also won an at-large

seat, said he wants the School Board to be more responsive to stakeholders.

"I hope parents, teachers, school employees of all stripes, and especially students, will get in touch and share their concerns and ideas. I'm excited for the road ahead," McElveen said.

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

With the exception of the scorched-earth battle for the Braddock District seat — which Republican Supervisor John Cook won by just 327 votes — the nine other incumbents on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors retained their seats with fairly wide margins of victory.

"With the Board of Supervisors, we're looking at a situation where the voters were less angry than in other parts of Virginia. There wasn't much voter dissatisfaction with the current board," Farnsworth said.

"The Board of Supervisors has the turnover rate of the Supreme Soviets; they only leave by death or indictment," quipped state Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34), who endorsed Democrat Janet Oleszek in the race to unseat incumbent John Cook in the Braddock district.

Three of the 10 supervisors were unopposed — Pat Herrity (R-Springfield), Jeff McKay (D-Lee) and Cathy Hudgins (D-Hunter Mill) — while Michael Frey (R-Sully), Gerry Hyland (D-Mount Vernon), Penny Gross (D-Mason), John W. Foust (D-Dranesville) and Linda Smyth (D-Providence) faced nominal opposition and ran relatively quiet campaigns.

Chairman Sharon Bulova (D-At-large) easily won her bid for a second term, running on a solid record of accomplishments as leader of the most powerful governing body in the county. The only nail-biter was in the Braddock District, where Cook was narrowly reelected after a contentious 10-week battle with his Democratic challenger, Janet Oleszek, a former School Board member.

"I was very pleased with the win by my colleague John Cook in the Braddock District. This was a race that the Democrats made a priority and put a lot of time, energy and resources into," Herrity said.

Rex Simmons, chair of the FCDC, said voters sent a message that they were pleased with the county's quality of life, strong fiscal management and sound governance in returning incumbents to the board.

"Fairfax County has weathered the worst recession since the Great Depression with few service cuts and minimal tax increases," Simmons said. "We have great schools, major transportation improvements underway, excellent environmental protection programs, a modest affordable housing program, and well maintained parks and recreation centers... Even in tough economic times, Fairfax County has remained an economic engine for Virginia."

One critical decision facing the returning board is the hiring of a new county executive.

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