

Grange, Schoolhouse, Riverbend Debated

NEWS, PAGE 4

The Grange is a historic building in Great Falls and the subject of the next Great Falls Citizens Association Long Range Planning Committee's public meeting Feb. 27.

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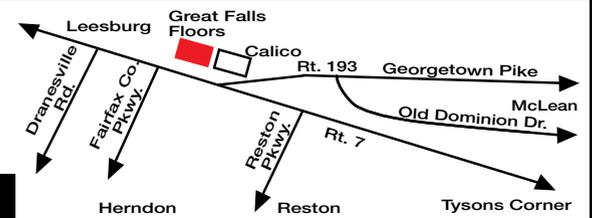




PHOTO BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION

President Barack Obama spoke at the James Lee Community Center in Falls Church on Wednesday, Feb. 1 about his plans to revitalize the stalled housing market. His speech was short and pointed.

President Announces Homeowners Bill of Rights

Local housing advocates say new rules give homeowners important safeguards. week to kick-start the stalled housing market.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County housing advocates applauded President Barack Obama's proposed Homeowner's Bill of Rights, saying it will give homeowners critical protection from predatory lenders and important safeguards when they purchase a home.

Calling the continuing depression in the housing market a "make-or-break" moment for the middle class, Obama told a crowd of about 350 people at the James Lee Community Center in Falls Church on Feb. 2, that he wants to see "a set of common-sense rules of the road that every family knows they can count on when they're shopping for a mortgage."

"No more hidden fees or conflicts of interest. No more getting the runaround when you call about your loan. No more fine print," the president said to loud applause. "New safeguards against inappropriate foreclosures. New options to avoid foreclosure if you've fallen on hardship or a run of bad luck. And a new, simple, clear form for new buyers of a home."

He addressed the local housing market: "Here in Falls Church, home values have fallen by about a quarter from their peak. In places like Las Vegas, more than half of all homeowners are underwater. More than half. So it's going to take a while for those prices to rise again," he said.

THE AUDIENCE, which included many local housing advocates, cheered when the President took Congress to task for dragging its feet on plans he announced during the State of the Union Address last

"I am sending Congress a plan that will give every responsible homeowner in America the chance to save about \$3,000 a year on their mortgage by refinancing at historically low rates... What this plan will do is help millions of responsible homeowners who make their payments on time but find themselves trapped under falling home values or wrapped up in red tape."

According to Kerri Wilson, CEO of Reston Interfaith, one of Northern Virginia's largest social services organizations, the nonprofit has received hundreds of calls since the recession from homeowners facing foreclosure or trying to get lenders' attention to reduce their mortgage payments.

"We've heard from those who have lost their jobs and are afraid of losing their homes and everything they've saved for their families. We all know that too many Americans did not fully understand the financial implications of taking out mortgages they could not afford," Wilson said. "Based on our experience then, the Homeowners Bill of Rights will address the issues surrounding foreclosure crisis and offer individuals the help they need to stabilize their budgets and families."

Paula Sampson, executive director of Fairfax County's Department of Housing and Community Development said the president's initiative refocuses attention on the still faltering real estate market and the many homeowners who are still struggling.

"A 'Homeowner's Bill of Rights' and the clarity and transparency it would bring to buying a home could be invaluable," Sampson said. "Just think of the thousands of homebuyers who might have avoided a predatory loan or unexpected rate swings, if the information had been clear and understandable at the closing table."

Sam Mayo, a 21-year-old graduate student from

SEE PRESIDENT, PAGE 7



JEAN JANOS/THE CONNECTION

Wayne Foley, chair of the Great Falls Citizens Association's Seniors Group, speaks at the group's first public meeting in April of last year. The group used information from that meeting to form their mission, and is looking for assistance from the community.

Seniors Group Seeks Input

Group looks for feedback from seniors with needs, interested volunteers.

BY ALEX MCVEIGH
THE CONNECTION

The Great Falls Citizens Association's Seniors Group is seeking input from the community's senior population, as well as those who might be interested in volunteering to provide services to seniors. The group, which hosted a town hall meeting last year, hopes to work with community organizations such as the Great Falls Ecumenical Council, Share, Inc and other nonprofits.

"We're looking to hear from all those who need services, or think they will need services, as well as anyone that would be interested in volunteering to help our seniors," said Bob Lundegard of the GFCA Senior Group.

The group took a formal survey at their 2011 meeting to gauge needs and expectations of the senior community. According to the results, there were three areas of strong interest.

Transportation for shopping, doctor's appointments and visiting friends, alternative housing for seniors with too much house or land to take care of and opportunities for regular companionship were the needs indicated in the survey.

The Seniors Group hopes to coordinate with churches and public facilities to provide activities and education to seniors, such as computer classes and trips.

"We're here to not only meet

the needs of seniors, but to provide an asset to the caregivers," said Wayne Foley, chair of the Seniors Group. "One of the greatest assets to them would be to provide seniors with a safe place to spend a few hours, which would give caregivers a break as well."

One of the group's goals is to pursue a "center without walls," which is a concept that would schedule various activities around the community, based off of the Burke-West Springfield Senior Center Without Walls, which provides residents with a wide variety of activities.

"We're here to not only meet the needs of seniors, but to provide an asset to the caregivers."

—Wayne Foley, chair of the GFCA Seniors Group

The group also hopes to join with Share, a McLean-based nonprofit that serves McLean and Great Falls, in their food and furniture drives, as well as coordinate with the county's Meals on Wheels program, to help provide transportation.

Feedback from seniors looking for services or those interested in volunteering can be given by contacting Sondra Taylor of the Seniors Group at staylor131@cox.net or 703-759-6204.

Great Falls Plans for Future of Resources

Grange, Forestville Schoolhouse, Riverbend Park to be discussed at meetings this month.

BY ALEX McVEIGH
THE CONNECTION

As Great Falls prepares for its future, two meetings this month will help the community decide what the next generation holds for several major landmarks.

The Great Falls Citizens Association is currently preparing a Long Range Plan, which they hope to present to Fairfax County in 2013 when they update the county-wide Comprehensive Plan. As they continue to seek feedback from the community, the GFCA will examine the future of the Grange and the Old Forestville Schoolhouse at a community meeting on Monday Feb. 27.

THE GRANGE is a public assembly hall built in 1929, and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The neighboring schoolhouse was built in 1889 as a one-room schoolhouse, and was



PHOTO BY ALEX McVEIGH/THE CONNECTION

The Old Forestville Schoolhouse is one of the local resources that the Great Falls Citizens Association Long Range Planning Committee hopes to incorporate in their upcoming draft master plan.

doubled in size in 1911. Both facilities are currently owned by the Fairfax County Park Authority.

The GFCA's Long Range Planning Committee aims to hear from

the community at the Feb. 27 meeting.

"It will be a community brainstorming on ways the community of Great Falls can achieve greater

beneficial uses of the Grange and old schoolhouse," said Glen Sjoblom, co-chair of the committee. [It is] a longstanding issue since the Park Authority changed its policy several years ago, to charge for each use, by the hour. In the first 20-plus years after getting these facilities on behalf of the community, use to the community was at no charge, in light of the community raising the funds to purchase and renovate the old schoolhouse and facilitate a low purchase price for the Grange."

According to the current draft plan from the committee, one possibility identified by community leaders would be the creation of a "Consolidated Community Group" that would raise funds and possibly enter into a long term lease with the Park Authority that would make the facilities more readily available for community use.

"These really are some historic spaces, and every event I've attended at the Grange or the schoolhouse has been surrounded by these examples of our community's history," said Benny Ghassan of Great Falls. "I'm a relative newcomer here, but I've heard

about the conflicts regarding the two properties, and I'm all in favor of restoring more power to this community, I think they'll know best how to meet the needs of the people that come to these facilities."

More information on the draft master plan can be found at www.gfca.org.

RIVERBEND PARK is another signature location in Great Falls, with more than 400 acres of forest, 2.5 miles of trail along the Potomac River and habitats for a great variety of wildlife.

A master plan was created for the park in 1975, and it guided development for the last 47 years, and now the Fairfax County Park Authority is planning on updating the plan.

They will host the first public meeting on the master planning process at Riverbend Tuesday, Feb. 21 at the Grange at 7 p.m. The meeting will consist of an update on the park's current conditions and resources and a moderated discussion with the community to

SEE RIVERBEND, PAGE 5

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FAITH

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

St. Francis Episcopal Church, 9220 Georgetown Pike in Great Falls, offers three Sunday services and a host of musical, educational, outreach, and fellowship ministries to enrich spiritual growth. 7:45 a.m. Worship Service without music; 9 a.m. Worship Service, Children's Chapel and Children's Choirs; 10 a.m. Sunday School and Adult Forum; and 11 a.m. Worship Service with Adult Choir. 703-759-2082.

Trinity United Methodist Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean, Sunday worship services are at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday School for adults is at 9:30 a.m. and for children during the 10:30 a.m. worship service. Youth Group for grades 7-12 meets Sundays at 6 p.m. A 20-minute service of Holy Communion is held each Wednesday at 12 p.m. 703-356-3312 or umtrinity.org.

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.

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

Riverbend Future Discussed

FROM PAGE 4

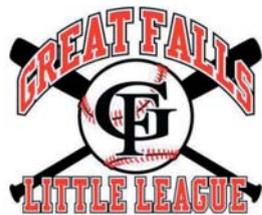
identify community concerns, answer questions and receive suggestions for future park features.

According to the Park Authority, Riverbend's core mission is to serve as "a nature preserve managed to protect the biological communities and cultural resources of the Potomac Gorge, while providing a natural space for education, research and outdoor recreation that is compatible with preservation goals."

The new master plan revision will center around that mission, as did the 1975 plan.

"I'm glad the Park Authority is taking the time to make sure that whatever happens at Riverbend, it will be properly vetted and planned for," said Stephanie Portway of Great Falls. "There's been some proposals as of late for some uses that didn't seem consistent with Riverbend, so hopefully our voice can be heard and be used to shape this park's future."

More information on the master planning process at Riverbend can be found at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/plandev/riverbend.htm.



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Great Falls Historical Society Celebrates Black History Month

BY KATHLEEN MURPHY
PRESIDENT, GREAT FALLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Great Falls Historical Society recently commissioned original historical research work by Tanya E. Beauchamp, Local Historian and Historic Preservation Consultant, to uncover the historical roots of the Salem Baptist Church on Georgetown Pike near Seneca Road,

an African-American church dating back to the early 1900s, and the community who worshipped there. The intention was to prepare a Preliminary Information Form (PIF) so as to nominate the Church to the National Register of Historic Places. The property has since collapsed and been demolished.

Beauchamp pursued the heritage of the church, attempting to work back to a previous century, only to find the stark reality: African-Americans were not recorded in

birth, marriage and death records, but rather, named as objects bought and sold in property transactions. The donors of the Church property, however, were black property owners – which added a surprising twist. Beauchamp will present her original research and revealing insights at the GFHS monthly meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 22, at the Great Falls Library Meeting Room at 7 p.m.

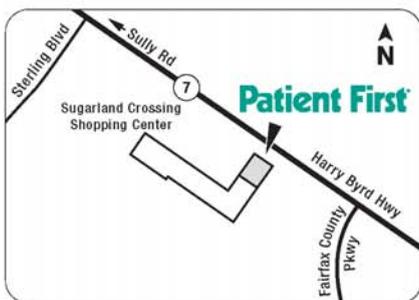
There is a memory of African-Americans in our community that resides in the memo-

ries, photos and stories of our residents. Members of the Salem Baptist Church have been unable to recover their photographic archives and we look to local residents to assist in whatever way possible. If you happen to recall the black community in Great Falls and have specific memories, photos, artifacts, or stories you would like to share, please join us at the “History Gathering” on Monday, Feb. 13, at the Great Falls Library Meeting Room between 1 and 5 p.m.

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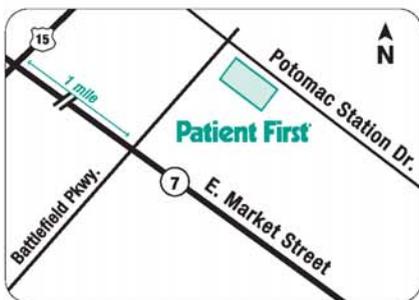


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President Comes to Area, Announces New Initiative

FROM PAGE 3

Herndon, said he hoped President Obama go another term to complete his plan.

"You just can't replace his energy. I woke up at 4 a.m., because I was really excited to see the president. My mother knows real estate, and I've seen these big empty houses all over Northern Virginia. It's scary to think about buying a home here," he said.

During his speech, Obama also blasted predatory lending practices, and vowed to tighten regulations.

"(The American people) were hurt. By lenders who sold loans to people who they knew couldn't afford the mortgages ... and banks that packaged those mortgages up and traded them to reap phantom profits, knowing that they were building a house of cards."

"It was wrong. It was wrong," the president said to nods and a buzz of agreement in the audience. "It triggered the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes. And it has been the single biggest drag on our recovery from a terrible recession. Crushing debt has kept millions of consumers from spending."

He said his plan will allow responsible homeowners to refinance at a lower rate, saving hundreds of dollars each month. "Or you can choose those savings to rebuild equity in your homes, which will help most underwater homeowners come back up for air more quickly," he said.

THE PRESIDENT made it clear that his "aggressive plan" was not designed for those who have been irresponsible.

"This plan, like the other actions we've taken, will not help the neighbors down the street who bought a house they couldn't afford, and then walked away and left a foreclosed home behind...It's not going to help those who bought multiple homes just to speculate and flip the house and make a quick buck, but it can help those who've acted responsibly," he said.

He veered off script, and entertained the audience, when he recalled how confusing it was when he and First Lady Michelle Obama bought their first home.

"Now, think about it...How many of you have had to deal with overly complicated mortgage forms and hidden clauses and complex terms? I remember when Michelle and I bought our first condo — and we're both lawyers," he said, triggering laughter



PHOTOS BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION

Sam Mayo of Herndon said – as a future homebuyer – he was pleased to hear President Obama's plans for making the process simpler for responsible homebuyers.

from the audience. "And we're looking through the forms and kind of holding it up... reading it again... 'What does this phrase mean?' And that's for two trained lawyers."

The president then held up a single sheet of paper.

"So this is what a mortgage form should look like. This is it," he said to loud applause and cheers. "Now that our new consumer watchdog agency is finally running at full steam, now that Richard Cordray is in as the Director of the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau, they're moving forward on important protections like this new, shorter mortgage form. Simple, not complicated. Informative, not confusing. Terms are clear. Fees are transparent."

After a pause for effect, the president took another shot at Congress to cheers from the audience: "This, by the way, is what some of the folks in Congress are trying to roll back and prevent from happening."



Kerri Wilson, CEO of Reston Interfaith

He called the housing crisis "personal," saying it struck at the heart of what it means to be middle class in America. "Our homes, the place where we invest our nest egg, place where we raise our family, the place where we plant roots in a community, the place where we build memories," he said.

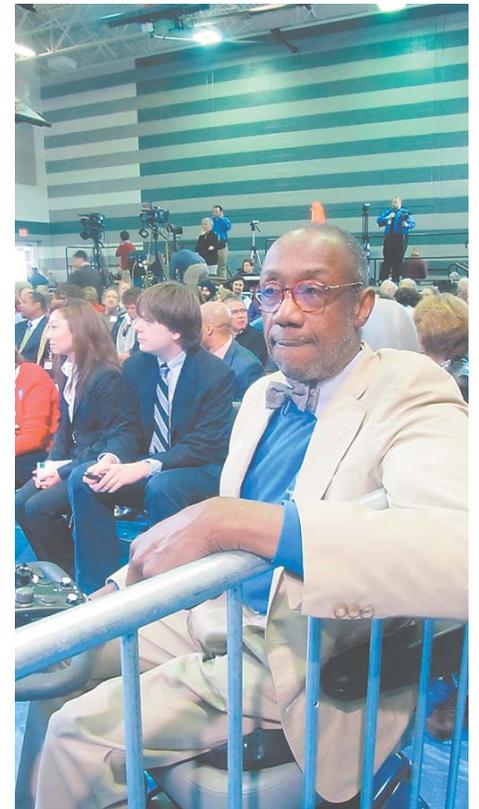
He ended his speech with an appeal to Congress. "I urge Congress to act. Pass this plan. Help more families keep their homes. Help more neighborhoods remain vibrant. Help keep more dreams defended and alive. And I promise you that I'll keep doing everything I can to make the future brighter for this community, for this commonwealth, for this country."

Quincy Springs, a Fairfax resident with the County's Department of Neighborhood and Community Services, said the president was presenting Americans with an "opportunity."

"So many people have experienced job loss, foreclosures and other hardships. He has the right plan, and he doesn't get the good credit he deserves," Springs said.

Claudia Lupoletti of Burke said she thought Obama struck the right tone in sending a serious message to lenders.

"I'm very happy to hear that he is going



Quincy Springs, with the Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services, said he thought President Obama does not get enough credit for his plans.

to hold lenders accountable and not just homeowners," Lupoletti said. "He's right about the paperwork. We bought our first home in New York City and it was an all-day process with hundreds of complex forms. I think this is long overdue," she said.

"It is inspiring to see the president move forward to implement a federal response to the mortgage and foreclosure crisis," said Dean Klein, Director of the County's Office to Prevent and End Homelessness, who attended the event with Pat Harrison, Fairfax County's Deputy Director. "(The crisis) has impacted so many individuals and families in our community and nationally."

Congressman Gerry Connolly (D-11) issued a brief statement after the president's speech: "I welcome President Obama back to Northern Virginia. His strong commitment to the economic recovery is obviously heartfelt and I proudly support him in that effort," Connolly said.

BULLETIN BOARD

THURSDAY/FEB. 9

The Great Falls Optimist Club monthly meeting. 6:30 p.m. at the Great Falls Library with the presentation from the DECCA students of the Dominion High School. At the regular meeting for March 8, presenters are the Langley High School robotics students. Visitors welcome.

What's Love Got To Do With It? Healthy Relationships and Dating. 7 p.m. McLean High School, 1633 Davidson Drive, McLean. In recognition of Teen Dating Violence Awareness & Prevention Month, Safe Community Coalition presents an educational program for parents and high school students. A live

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

presentation of "Remote Control" from Deana's Educational Theater will explore issues, attitudes and beliefs about relationships; Lynne Russell of Dating Abuse Stops Here will speak about her daughter's murder by her ex-boyfriend, and a clinical social worker and a trauma physician will explore healthy relationships. 703-795-6943 or www.safecommunitycoalition.net.

SATURDAY/FEB. 11

"An Indian Meal" Cooking Class. 10 a.m. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St., S.E., Vienna. Learn to make a simple and quick Indian meal including a Mixed Vegetable Pilaf, a Chicken Curry, a Bean Vegetable and

a Raita. \$45-\$56.25. Register at 703-255-6360 or www.viennava.gov.

McLean Branch of the American Association of University Women. 9:30 a.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Art Taylor, professor at GMU and book critic for the Washington Post, will talk about the process of reviewing books and discuss Laura Lippman's "I'd Know You Anywhere." 703-847-3195 or www.mcleanaauw.org.

SUNDAY/FEB. 12

Is Anything Wrong with the Scientific Method? 12:45 p.m. Fairfax Unitarian Church, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Scientists

don't really follow a rigid procedure-list called "The Scientific Method" in their daily work. The procedure-list is a myth spread by the education system and even some scientists have been taken in by it.

TUESDAY/FEB. 14

Tyson's Corner Kiwanis Club Meeting. 7:30 p.m. at George C. Marshall High School, Room 124, 7731 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Meeting is public and Individuals looking to volunteer in their community welcome. Meetings the second and fourth Tuesday of the month. www.tysonscornerkiwanis.org. **NARFE Meeting.** 1:30 p.m. Vienna

Community Center, 120 Cherry St., Vienna. With Jamie Grasso, who specializes in liquidating estate jewelry, gold, silver and coins. Open to all members and their guests. Free. 703-938-6580.

THURSDAY/FEB. 16

Vienna Theatre Company Auditions: "The Fantasticks." 7:30-9:30 p.m. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St. S.E., Vienna. Auditions consist of vocals and movements for all characters except the Mute, Mortimer, and Henry and cold readings from the script. The show is scheduled to open April 20. 703-255-6360 or www.viennatheatrecompany.org.

OPINION

Access for Home Schoolers to School Activities

Families who home-school their children in this area take a burden off crowded schools, and off taxpayers who pay on average between \$12,000 and \$16,000 per year per child in school depending on where in Northern Virginia.

There is no reason to deny students who live within a school's boundaries access to the extracurricular activities of that school. While a proposal making its way through the Virginia General Assembly would address home schoolers' access to sports, home schooled stu-

dents should also be able to take some classes in school without having to be enrolled as a full-time student.

There is good reason to change the "bright white line" of student or non-student in public schools, all or nothing. Students have a variety of educational needs. Students need flexibility and often need several different educational contexts to create success.

Of course these students should be subject to all the same requirements as any other student in trying out for a spot on a team or in

the school play or band.

Some local school officials have said it's not fair, homeschooled students don't have to work as hard at their studies as public school students, so they would have an unfair advantage in extracurriculars. First, many homeschoolers work harder than the average public school students. And second, by this reasoning, perhaps coaches should consider some sort of weighted assessment of course load when deciding who should be on the team.

Public schools should be committed to providing the best solutions for all students.

Suppressing the Vote And Other Action in Richmond

While all Fairfax, Arlington and Alexandria senators voted against a bill that forces voters to provide one of a short list of identification in order to vote, the bill passed 20-to-20. Here's how: 02/06/12 Passed Senate (20-Y 20-N); 02/06/12 Senate: Chair votes Yes

Senators George Barker, Adam Ebbin, Barbara Favola, Mark Herring, Janet Howell, Dave Marsden, Chap Petersen, Toddy Puller and Dick Saslaw voted against the bill, which "eliminates the provision that allows a voter to sign a sworn statement that he is the named registered voter he claims to be in lieu of showing identification." Instead such a voter must cast a provisional ballot if he cannot provide a required

form of identification, and provisional ballots are counted the next day when a committee determines eligibility.

A Commonwealth of Virginia voter registration card will no longer count as one of forms of identification that a voter can present to demonstrate that he is a qualified voter, but a separate bill would add concealed handgun permits to the list of acceptable forms of identification to vote

One Gun a Month Not Enough?

Virginia's long standing law restricting gun

purchases to one a month was overturned this week.

In the Senate, all Alexandria, Arlington and Fairfax senators voted against the repeal. In the House of Delegates, Barbara Comstock and Tim Hugo voted in favor of eliminating the restriction. Three Republicans joined all the Democrats from our area in voting against lifting the one-gun-a-month restriction: Dave Albo, Jim LeMunyon and Tom Rust voted against the repeal along with Bob Brink, David Bulova, David Englin, Eileen Filler-Corn, Mark Herring, Mark Keam, Ken Plum, Mark Sickles, Scott Surovell and Vivian Watts.

— MARY KIMM

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Keeping Dulles Rail On Track

To the Editor:

Henry Ford once said that you should not find fault, but find a remedy, because anyone can complain. I believe this principle describes our efforts over the last year to reduce the cost of Dulles Rail and keep it moving forward.

Opponents to this critical project continue to suggest we halt progress in order to study any possible effects. Doing so would not only delay the project but would end up costing Fairfax County taxpayers and Dulles Toll Road users

more in the long run, the very scenario these opponents use to justify their opposition. In order to protect taxpayers and commuters, I have worked with our County staff and our funding partners over the last year to successfully reduce the cost of Dulles Rail by over \$700 million all while keeping the project on track. We chose to find remedies instead of faults.

For example, in April I made the case for an aerial station at Dulles International Airport by "walking the walk" — showing people the

short distance between the proposed underground station and the aerial station. Moving the station above ground led to a cost savings of \$330 million. Our County staff worked with their counterparts in Loudoun County and officials from the state and federal government over the summer to identify over \$300 million in additional savings. Our work is consistent with Ford's principle.

Stopping the progress we have fought so hard to achieve also goes against our Board's stated commitment to "vigorously pursue economic development and revitaliza-

tion opportunities." Even the most vocal opponents of Dulles Rail cannot ignore its economic development potential.

Complete preliminary engineering estimates on Phase 2 are due out soon. When they are released, our Board will have 90 days to approve our continued commitment to this ambitious project. Rail to Dulles remains my number one transportation goal.

Sharon Bulova
Chairman
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

Support Funding Alzheimer's Project

To the Editor:

Today, 5.4 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease, including 130,000 Virginia residents. By 2050 as many as 16 million Americans will have this disease that slowly steals memories, independence, autonomy and so much more. Now the nation's sixth leading cause of death, Alzheimer's is unmatched in the scale of its devastating human and economic impact. There is no other chronic disease that affects so many without a way to cure, prevent or even slow its progression.

One in three Americans know someone with Alzheimer's. There are nearly 15 million family mem-

bers and friends providing care for a loved one with Alzheimer's and dementia, including more than 422,000 Virginians.

Beyond the sheer numbers of lives touched by the disease, the financial impact on our nation is staggering. Alzheimer's cost the nation \$183 billion today. That amount will soar to \$1 trillion by midcentury. Medicare costs will increase nearly 600 percent and Medicaid nearly 400 percent — if we do nothing.

The National Alzheimer's Project Act (NAPA), signed into law in January 2011, requires the creation of a national strategic plan to address the rapidly escalating Alzheimer's disease crisis and will

coordinate Alzheimer's disease efforts across the federal government. The Advisory Council on Alzheimer's Research, Care, and Services, created by NAPA to coordinate federal agencies conducting Alzheimer's-related care, services and research, met in mid-January to review the first draft framework of a National Alzheimer's Plan.

This is an historic moment. We need a meaningful allocation of resources in the President's upcoming budget if we are committed to finding a cure. Our nation's leaders must follow through and fulfill their commitment with a strong plan supported by the necessary resources to alter the course of Alzheimer's.

Alzheimer's won't wait. I invite you to take action today by sign-

ing our petition to President Obama at www.alz.org. Urge the President to take the next bold step forward in the fight against Alzheimer's and fulfill the promise of the National Alzheimer's Project Act passed unanimously by Congress more than a year ago. Tell him millions of families are counting on him to fulfill the potential of NAPA when he releases his upcoming Budget Request.

Now is the time to create a world without Alzheimer's. Families won't forget.

Susan Kudla Finn, PMP
President and CEO
Alzheimer's Association
National Capital Area Chapter
Fairfax

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Home Life Style

Accents for creating a festive atmosphere for children on Valentine's Day are plentiful.



PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Valentine's Day Décor

Share ideas for sweetening a home or dining table.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Whether planning a dinner party for friends, a romantic meal for two or a breakfast surprise for children, local designers say simple accents can create a festive atmosphere on Valentine's Day. First on the list of suggestions: originality.

"I feel that things like oversized balloons and little bears with stuffed hearts have been overdone so much that I would maybe stay away from those," said Angela Phelps of Le Village Marche in Arlington. "Look for things that are more creative."

One way to make guests or family feel special is with lightly scented conversation heart candles and soaps. "They're cute and quirky," said McLean resident Penelope Bell of the Dandelion Patch in Reston, Vienna, Leesburg and Washington, D.C. "I would put them in a powder room for guests if you're having a Valentine's Day gathering. You could display them in a small soap or cylindrical glass vase."

Designers say subtle home accents can be used to express affection. "You can display Valentine's-themed glass plates that can be used to hold candy or a little glass heart," said Judy Philactos of Periwinkle in Washington, D.C. Small glass hearts can be grouped or scattered on an accent table as an expression of love.

Phelps recommends Valentine-themed vintage postcards, which can be used for more than correspondence. "[These] glittering greetings are fun for decorating as well."

Philactos strings lace-trimmed, heart-shaped Valentine's Day cards

to make a garland that can be hung on a mantle to add burst of color. She also loops a ribbon through the cards and hangs them on a metal photo tree to create a Cupid-worthy accent piece.

Decorative candles can create an air of romance or festivity. "I've used pink, lightly scented bubbled glass candles," said Phelps. "If you put three or four of those together, I think they look really, really nice."

When it comes to the table, Phelps suggests moving beyond red.

"I think if you are decorating a table for a romantic dinner, you can never go wrong with candles or fresh flowers," said Phelps. "You can do a white theme with little bits of red. [Valentine's Day table settings] don't always have to be all red, and it doesn't always have to be roses."

Floral designer Gerry Rogers of Petal's Edge Floral Design in Alexandria says floral options are plentiful. "February is a great time of year for flowers. We're starting to get a lot of spring flowers back in," said Rogers "Things like anemone and tulips and sometimes even peonies and sweet pea. Gerbera daisies can be a playful or colorful choice, and orchids are great for someone who likes something a little more exotic."

Potomac-based floral designer Evelyn Kinville suggests looking to nature for inspiration. "You can create an arrangement that looks like you went out for a walk in a woody area and found some nice vines and grasses," said Kinville of Behnke's Florist in Potomac. "You can mix those with roses or hydrangeas. These arrangements make nice accents for end tables or coffee tables."

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Home Life Style

Remodeling: An Opportunity To Follow One's Passion

BY JOSHUA BAKER
SPECIAL TO THE CONNECTION



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Having remodeled thousands of projects over the past 25 years, our clients' reactions tell us that some of the most successful projects often address a specific passion or interest. Folks seem to be spending more and more time at home not only working, but also enriching their lives through personal interests. To that end, today's remodeling design often includes developing new areas for pursuing a variety of passions. Here are some local examples:

A breakfast room addition was carefully planned to also function as a bird watching area. The foundation was specially designed to allow the existing trees to remain in close proximity, and great care was taken to preserve the surroundings during construction. A professional arborist was engaged to manage the health of the trees in the six months prior to construction to ensure the addition had an almost treehouse feel.

There are a wide range of car enthusiasts each with his (or her) own specifications. Some garage additions, whether attached or

detached, are effectively museums. One such addition was designed as an antique car barn, including four-inch thick, rough wood floors, and individual bays for each piece of art. Other garage projects are focused on automobile maintenance and repair. These often have automatic lifts, similar to your local repair shop, which allow for easy access and even provide additional storage. One Great Falls garage was designed and built so that a father could share his knowledge and interest in cars with his sons.

Sports fanaticism often drives remodeling design. Sometimes, modestly designed trophy areas for displaying family victories are included. Other times, whole rooms pay homage to (most often out of town) favorite college or professional sports teams. Real stadium seats, painted murals of favorite scenes, and custom flooring made to look like ball fields are all a part of the fun.

Are salt-water aquariums your thing? While they aren't for everyone due to the significant maintenance, technology and



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The 7,000-gallon salt water aquarium in this BOWA renovation in McLean required extensive structural reinforcement and a crane to set it in place.

investment required, some homeowners find the colors and peaceful setting captivating. For one local enthusiast we installed a 7,000-gallon live coral reef. The weight of the aquarium required the floor be reinforced with steel beams, a crane was needed to set the glass tank, and a separate control/filter room was added.

Many designs incorporate a trend towards enjoying and collecting wine. A very efficient and relatively inexpensive approach is to purchase specialized wine refrigerators. These vary in size from small under-counter units, appropriate for a kitchen or bar area, to large full-size units most often installed in unfinished areas of the basement. For the wine aficionados, fully conditioned wine rooms with custom-made wood racking for storage have become common in luxury homes. And for a really nice touch, these rooms are designed to include a tasting area or even full-size dining areas, similar to many stylish restaurants.

Art collections, whether pop or classical, often drive remodeling design decisions. For example, hallways are widened to create galleries and sophisticated specialty lighting is installed, based upon the type of art work, natural light etc. One



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In this BOWA project in Great Falls, a gallery was designed to display the owner's extensive motion picture poster collection.

such project in Great Falls involved creating a generous gallery to feature original antique movie posters.

So the questions remains, what's your passion? By working closely with an experienced design build remodeler who has access to a whole host of spe-

cialty designers and experts, your dreams of an at-home museum, sanctuary, tasting room, etc. may well be within reach.

Joshua Baker is founder of Bowa Builders.

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10 11510 Hemingway Drive, Reston — \$925,000



2 9695 Mill Ridge Lane, Great Falls — \$3,106,367

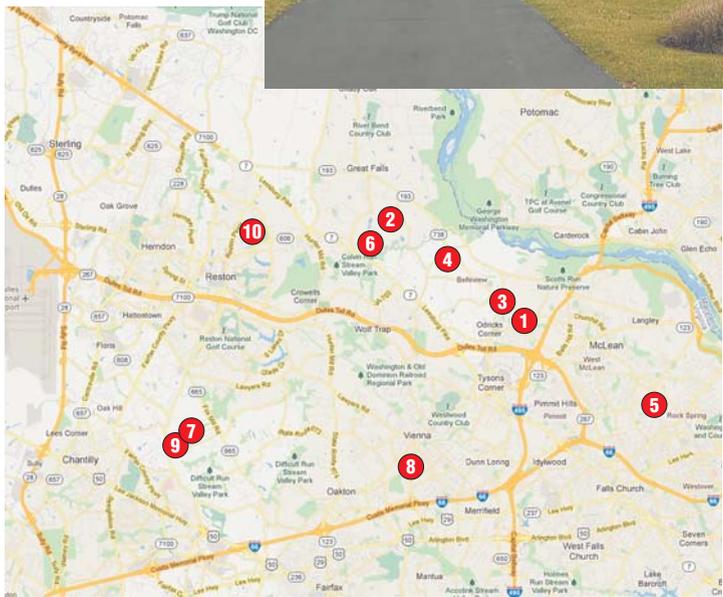


3 8100 Spring Hill Farm Drive, McLean — \$3,000,000

4 8891 Olson Court, McLean — \$2,025,000



8 504 Stephen Circle, Vienna — \$1,216,500



Address	BR	FB	HB	Postal City	Sold Price	Type	Lot AC	Postal Code	Subdivision	Date Sold
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2 9695 MILL RIDGE LN	5	..	5	. 1	GREAT FALLS	\$3,106,367	Detached	2.02	22066	THE LANE AT FOUR STAIRS	12/21/11
3 8100 SPRING HILL FARM DR	5	..	5	. 3	MCLEAN	\$3,000,000	Detached	0.84	22102	SPRING HILL FARM	12/30/11
4 8891 OLSON CT	5	..	5	. 2	MCLEAN	\$2,025,000	Detached	1.72	22102	BRYAN POND	12/27/11
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7 12312 WESTWOOD HILLS DR	4	..	4	. 1	OAK HILL	\$1,240,410	Detached	1.00	20171	RESERVE AT OAKTON	12/09/11
8 504 STEPHEN CIR	5	..	4	. 1	VIENNA	\$1,216,500	Detached	0.30	22180	VIENNA WOODS	12/30/11
9 12315 WESTWOOD HILLS DR	4	..	3	. 1	HERNDON	\$1,172,249	Detached	1.35	20171	RESERVE AT OAKTON	12/28/11
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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/FEB. 9

Author Richard E. Hyman. 7 p.m. Dolley Madison Library, 6649-A Old Dominion Drive, McLean. The author of "Frogmen: The True Story of My Journeys With Captain Jacques-Yves Cousteau and the Crew of Calypso," will discuss his personal account of expeditions with legendary French explorer Jacques Cousteau. Book signing to follow. Admission free, registration suggested. www.richardehyman.com.

"Three Bears." 12 noon. 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. A brand-new play with a comedic twist on the classic fairy tale sends the Three Bears and a golden-haired friend on an a cappella musical adventure. For age 5 and up. Tickets \$15 at www.1ststage.com or 703-854-1856.

Mountain Heart. 8 p.m. The Barns at Wolftrap, 1551 Trap Road, Vienna. Bluegrass with rock, gospel, jazz, R&B and blues. \$22. www.wolftrap.org.

McLean Historical Society. 7:30 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Carole Herrick, local author and Dranesville representative on the Fairfax County History Commission, will discuss the Battle of Lewinsville. Refreshments provided. 703-980-0885 or paulkohl@msn.com.

FRIDAY/FEB. 10

Virginia Opera: Orphée. 8 p.m.



Jonathan Blalock and Heather Burk in Virginia Opera production of Orphée. The Virginia Opera will present "Orphée" on Feb. 10 and Feb. 12 at 8 p.m. George Mason University's Center for the Arts Concert Hall, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Sung in French with English supertitles. Tickets are \$44-\$86, available at 888-945-2468 or www.gmu.edu.

George Mason University's Center for the Arts Concert Hall, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. The Virginia Premiere of Philip Glass's Orphée, based on Jean Cocteau's reimagining of the myth of Orpheus and Euridice. Sung in French with English supertitles. \$44-\$86. 888-945-2468 or www.gmu.edu.

"Man of La Mancha." 8 p.m. McLean Community Center Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Inspired by Don Quixote, suitable for age 16 and older. Tickets \$18-\$20. 703-790-9223 or www.mcleanplayers.org.

Family Skate Night. 6:30-8 p.m. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St., Vienna. Admission \$1. Bring your own roller skates or inline skates (no scooters) and safety equipment. Parents required to stay with their children. 703-255-6360 or www.viennava.com.

"Almost, Maine." 8 p.m. 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. A series of whimsical love stories. Tickets \$25. www.1ststage.com or 703-854-1856.

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 14

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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 13

Rocknocos Happy Family Hour at 7 p.m.; **Big O and Dukes Live** at 9:30 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave E Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

The Vagina Monologues. 8 p.m. GMU Harris Theatre, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Proceeds will benefit the Mason Victims of Violence fund and Dating Abuse Stops Here (DASH). \$25 at <http://cfa.gmu.edu/calendar/867>. 703-993-8892 or sas.gmu.edu.

Chicago City Limits. 8 p.m. The Barns at Wolftrap, 1551 Trap Road, Vienna. Improvisational comedy. \$24. www.wolftrap.org.

Friday Afternoon Chess Group. 1 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Players of all ages and skill levels welcome. 703-757-8560.

The Vagina Monologues. 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. GMU Harris Theatre, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Proceeds will benefit the Mason Victims of Violence fund and Dating Abuse Stops Here (DASH). \$25 at <http://cfa.gmu.edu/calendar/867>. 703-993-8892 or sas.gmu.edu.

"Three Bears." 12 p.m. 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. A brand-new play with a comedic twist on the classic fairy tale sends the Three Bears and a golden-haired friend on a cappella musical adventure. Fast-paced fun for age 5 and up. Tickets \$15 at www.1ststage Tysons.org or 703-854-1856.

Coffee Table Book Sale. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Thomas Jefferson Library, 7415 Arlington Boulevard, Falls Church. 703-573-1060, TTY 711.

Langley HS Fashion Show: Walk Into The Wild. 7 p.m. Langley High School, 6520 Georgetown Pike, McLean. All outfits are designed, sewn, and modeled by Langley students, and represent a variety of styles reflecting students' creative and artistic skills. \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door. Tricia.Poythress@fcps.edu.

A Night at the Opera. 8 p.m. Oakcrest School, 850 Balls Hill Road, McLean. With Maestra Miriam Burns, soprano Michelle Jennings and tenor Antonio Giuliano. Selections from Puccini, Verdi, Bizet and Leonard Bernstein's West Side Story. Cake and champagne reception to follow. www.mclean-orchestra.org/tickets.htm

Eric Energy's Science Spectacular. 10:30 a.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. A wild and wacky scientist will educate and entertain with his eye-catching experiments. 703-757-8560.

SATURDAY/FEB. 11

"Man of La Mancha." 8 p.m. McLean Community Center Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Inspired by Don Quixote, suitable for age 16 and older. Tickets \$18-\$20. 703-790-9223 or www.mcleanplayers.org.

Jimmy Lange Boxing. 7 p.m. George Mason University Patriot Center, 4500 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. Tickets \$35-\$500, available at www.ticketmaster.com and 703-573-SEAT. Accessible seating is available at 703-993-3035. www.jimmylangeboxing.com or www.patriotcenter.com.

Arlo Guthrie: Boys' Night Out. 8 p.m. George Mason Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. With his son Abe Guthrie, his grandson Krisha Guthrie, and longtime collaborator Terry a la Berry. Tickets \$24-\$48 at 888-945-2468 or cfa.gmu.edu.

"Almost, Maine." 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. A series of whimsical love stories. Tickets \$25. www.1ststage Tysons.org or 703-854-1856.

An Evening with Willie Nile at 7 p.m.; **Passafire and Dub City Renegades** at 10 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave E Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

Lions Club 49th Annual Bland Music Competition. 12:30 p.m. Assembly of God Church, 100 Ayr Hill Ave., Vienna. Local students through 12th grade can compete in the competition, with winners moving on to district, region and state competition in vocal and instrumental categories. Deadline for applications is Feb. 4. 703-938-7716 or n.volpe8@verizon.net.

Chicago City Limits. 7:30 p.m. The Barns at Wolftrap, 1551 Trap Road, Vienna. Improvisational comedy. \$24. www.wolftrap.org.

SUNDAY/FEB. 12

Virginia Opera: Orphée. 8 p.m. George Mason University's Center for the Arts Concert Hall, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. The Virginia Premiere of Philip Glass's Orphée, based on Jean Cocteau's reimagining of the myth of Orpheus and Euridice. Sung in French with English supertitles. \$44-\$86. 888-945-2468 or www.gmu.edu.

Old Dominion Chrysanthemum Society. 2:30 p.m. Falls Church Community Center, 223 Little Falls St., Falls Church. "The Botany, Horticultural History and Future of Chrysanthemums," with Todd Brethauer. Open to the public, free admission and refreshments. 703-560-8776.

"Almost, Maine." 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. A series of whimsical love stories. Tickets \$25. www.1ststage Tysons.org or 703-854-1856.



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A Place of Love and Beauty

1st Stage presents
'Almost, Maine.'

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

Smitten you can become with the delightful, upside-down quirkiness at the heart of "Almost, Maine" the current 1st Stage production. In overlapping vignettes that flow gently into each other, the complexities of love pile up as physical manifestations; sometimes whimsical, sometimes heart-breaking tales of love found and sometimes misplaced.

Under director Michael Chamberlin's creative guidance, this is an evening full of charm and appealing eccentricities. Chamberlin gives three dimensions to what "Almost, Maine" playwright John Cariani called "a play about people who are normally very grounded, but who have become very excited by love...and other extraordinary occurrences." There are also plenty of knotty and thorny relationships



PHOTO COURTESY OF 1ST STAGE

Jessica Shearer and Elliott Kashner in the 1st Stage production of 'Almost, Maine.'

to give some savoring taste to the show.

Chamberlin envelops the audience into the proceedings. With a charming set design by Steven Royal and lighting by Brian S. Allard, the audience enters the set, yes enters the set, as participants living as the towns-folk of "Almost,

Where and When

1st Stage Theater, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. Performances through Feb. 26. Fridays 8 p.m., Saturdays 2&8 p.m., Sunday's 2&7 p.m. Tickets: \$15-\$25. Call 703-854-1856 or log on: www.boxoffice@1stStageTysons.org.

Maine." It is an intimate, upside-down, snow-globe world of hushed blue-white-grey winter tones, falling snow, northern lights and rich imagination. Derek Knoderer's piano-laden sound design; the costume design by LeVonne Lindsay all of plaids, cords, flannels, and down jackets, and appropriate boots exude the cold in a very small space. Props by Debra Cerie and Kay Rzasa are an unpredictable lark.

Four actors - Megan Dominy, Elliott Kashner, Jessica Shearer and Jonathan Lee Taylor - play 19 of "Almost, Maine" residents in nine vignettes over two acts. Dominy has a fine range for comic physicality, Shearer a lovely sense of how to use her beauty in scenes. Kashner gets quickly to the essence of his characters while Taylor possesses a gutsy flair for the unexpected.

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Calendar Listings

The Connection Newspapers contain a Calendar of Upcoming Events every week. While we cannot guarantee that every event we receive information about will be listed, here is the information we need for your upcoming event to be considered for the Calendar. We welcome photographs of similar events held previously, which sometimes appear with Calendar items.

Name of Event:

Day of the Week, Date and Time:

Name of the Place Event will Be Held:

Address of the Place Event Will Be Held:

Name and Phone Number for More Information:

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Please submit your calendar information at least two weeks before your event. Clear photographs from similar previous events are always welcome. All events should be open to the public. We give first priority to free events. E-mail listings to:

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SPORTS

Oakton Sweeps at Swim Championships

BY RICH SANDERS
THE CONNECTION

The Northern Region swim and dive championships concluded this past Saturday night at the Oak Marr Recreation Center. Oakton High captured both the boys' and girls' team titles.

On the girls' side, the Cougars, in the 24-team field, finished first with 245 points. West Potomac (190) and Langley High Schools (181) finished second and third overall. Rounding out the top five teams were Madison High (162) and Lake Braddock Secondary (155.5).

Other local schools competing on the girls' side included South Lakes (11th place), McLean High (15th), and Herndon (19th).

First place individual girls' finishers included: Langley's Abi Speers (50-freestyle); Jefferson's Emily Saitta (dive);

Oakton's Laura Branton (100-butterfly); Oakton's Janet Hu (100-free and 100-back); and Herndon's Jenna Van Camp (100-breaststroke).

OAKTON WON the boys' team title with 281.5 points, besting runner-up Woodson (250) and third place Madison High (217). Jefferson and West Springfield finished fourth and fifth. In all 24 teams competed in the region boys' championships.

Other competing schools included 10th place Marshall High (91 points), 11th place Langley (88), 14th place Herndon (69), and 15th place McLean (47).

Individual first place finishers included: Marshall's Cyrus Hashemi (200-free and 100-free); Jefferson's Andrew Seliskar (200-IM and 100-fly); Madison's Evan Owens (50-free); Jefferson's Stephen Seliskar (100-back).



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Saxons Maintain a Perfect Record

Entering the final week of the regular season, the Langley High boys' basketball team, under head coach Travis Hess (pictured), was unbeaten in Liberty District play with a perfect 12-0 record. The Saxons, last Friday night, edged Madison 38-37. This week, they were scheduled to host Marshall on Tuesday, Feb. 7 before concluding the schedule with a road game this Friday night at rival McLean.

District Indoor Track and Field Championships Completed

South Lakes boys win Liberty ahead of second place Langley; Oakton girls capture Concorde crown.

BY RICH SANDERS
THE CONNECTION

The South Lakes High indoor track and field teams were victorious on both the boys' and girls' sides at the recent Liberty District championships, held over two days at the Prince George's County Sportsplex in Maryland. The first day of postseason competition took place on Friday, Jan. 27. The second and final day of action was held last Thursday, Feb. 2.

Next up are the Northern Region boys' and girls' championships, set to take place next week on Saturday, Feb. 18 at Wakefield High School in Arlington. The Virginia State AAA championships are scheduled for Feb. 24-25 at Bethel High School in Hampton.

At districts, the South Lakes boys, the dominant Northern Region program over the years in both indoor and outdoor (spring season) track, won the meet with 144 points, well ahead of second place Langley (66 points) and third place McLean (65). Rounding out the district field were

Jefferson (63), Marshall (53), Madison (45), and Fairfax (29).

South Lakes individual champions were: Armando Drain (both the 300 and 500 dash events), Jacob Grundahl (1000), Rashaan Jones (both the high jump and long jump events), and Corey Gilmore (triple jump).

The Seahawks' 4x200-meter relay team of Zac Parker, Brian Brinson, Aeron Thai, and Connor Metcalf finished in first place.

Other first place winners at the meet were: Kenneth Bowden of Madison (55 dash); Haight Mackenzie of Marshall, who won both the 1600 and 3200 running events; Ed Cai of Jefferson (55-hurdles); Logan Besougloff of Langley (pole vault); and Scott Lafoon of McLean (shot put).

The Madison 4x400 relay team of William Doran, Austin Kolko, Bowden, and Joaquin Alzola finished in first place.

The Jefferson 4x800 relay of Michael Wattendorf, Kyler Blodgett, Andrew O'Shea, and Jacob Zucker finished first as well.

ON THE GIRLS' SIDE, South Lakes won the Liberty team title with 142 points, finishing ahead of second place Madison

(82.33) and third place Langley (70). The fourth through seventh place team finishers were Jefferson (63.50), McLean (59.83), Marshall (25.33), and Fairfax (22).

South Lakes' Danielle Hale had a spectacular meet, winning four events - the 55 dash, high jump, triple jump, and long jump events. Other first place Seahawks were: Naimah Coleman (300); Aya Abdelhalim (55-hurdles); and Sumiya Yates (shot put).

The South Lakes' 4x200 relay team of Coleman, Kristin Tran, Abdelhalim, and Danielle Hale finished in first place. Also, the Seahawks' 4x400 relay of Coleman, Haley Vaughn, Claire Nieuwsma, and Grace Gillen took first place.

Other individual district girls' champions were: McLean High's Hannah Dimmick (500); Jefferson's Katherine Sheridan (both the 1000 and 3200 events); McLean's Madalyn Harper (1600); and Langley's Meigan McNanus (pole vault).

McLean's 4x800 relay team of Madalyn Harper, Alexa Tabackman, Megan McCormack, and Hannah Dimmick took first place.

THE CONCORDE DISTRICT indoor championships took place over two days (Thursday, Jan. 26 and Thursday, Feb. 2) at Prince George's County Sportsplex.

On the girls' side, the Oakton High team captured the district crown with 149 points, finishing ahead of second place Robinson (119) and third place Herndon (64). Rounding out the six-team field were Chantilly (57), Westfield (42), and Centreville (31).

Individual first place finishers for the champion Oakton team were Allie Klimkiewicz (1600 and 3200 races) and Meghan Jean-baptiste (55-hurdles and high jump).

The Oakton girls' 4x200 relay team of Annachristina Clements, Christianne Butters, Danielle Fitzgerald, and Meghan Jean-baptiste finished in first place.

Herndon High's Carina Peter won three events - the 55 dash, long jump, and triple jump.

ON THE BOYS' SIDE at the Concorde championships, Westfield, which began second day action in third place, came through to capture the team title with 117 points, edging second place Chantilly (113). Oakton (92) garnered third place, while the fourth through sixth finishers were Robinson (55), Herndon (46), and Centreville (42).

Oakton's Michael McNamee won the 1000 race and was second in the 1600. Herndon's Austin Miller was first in pole vault.

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Back On The Juice...



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

The chemotherapy juice, that is. Going forward now, every three weeks until I've completed six infusions, finishing sometime around mid May barring any foreseen – and previously experienced blips (meaning delays): levels, counts, readings, etc., that would compel my oncologist to stop the treatment and await results of a retest. If past is at all prologue, inevitably, one of the required pre-chemotherapy blood and urine labs will indicate that my body needs a little "R and R:" recuperation and regeneration of something or other that the chemotherapy destroyed on its way to attacking and hopefully shrinking the tumors. As a result, I will be off schedule to allow my body to settle back to reasonably abnormal (given the severity of the treatment, "normal" is hardly in play anymore). However, it's a process – of fits and starts – one with which I'm familiar so I'm not too concerned about it. Otherwise, I'll be reclining in a Barcalounger at The Infusion Center watching the I.V. drip its cancer-fighting poison into my arm.

However, since this six-time infusion is a repeat performance, I wonder if "reasonably normal" is somehow more problematic the second time around. My oncologist agreed with our decision to re-start because he said/recommended it by saying: "Since it worked so well the first time, we'll probably just do the same thing." "Worked so well" means the tumors shrank and my body tolerated the treatment (not a guarantee, however; one time, I witnessed another chemotherapy patient have a seizure because his body couldn't handle the drug with which he was being infused so they had to stop his treatment). So I'm not taking anything for granted. Nor am I particularly eager or excited. I am however, cautiously optimistic that once again I can survive the ordeal, and make no mistake about it, chemotherapy can be an ordeal.

Certainly knowing what to expect is a big help. Originally, the anxiety of all the treatments, all the appointments, all the pills and all the potential side effects; not to mention the emotional disruptions an out-of-the-blue terminal diagnosis can cause, created a sense of foreboding and negativity that took a little (make that a lot) of time and effort to navigate. But we did, and as we prepare to climb this emotional and physical (not literal) mountain once again, the experience we gained from the initial treatment three years ago has led to significantly less stress for this round (round two).

As with round one, there are no guarantees. I will be "CT-Scanned" in mid February – after two infusions, to assess the effect of the first two chemotherapy treatments. No doubt, waiting for those results will be stressful. However, I'm not sure if indications after only two infusions are significant – good or bad, it's simply prudent at that juncture. Still, we will be hanging on the oncologist's every word, every inflection on every syllable, when he tells us the results – trying to interpret and discern the true meaning of his doctor-speak. Having endured this process many times over the past three years certainly will help us now. However, given the seriousness and life-changing (you'll note I didn't say "life-ending") nature of the conversation, there's only so much one can do to prepare. It's really more about bracing yourself. It's a difficult and emotional moment, almost akin to an out-of-body experience, if there is such a thing.

And after three years of being treated for, and living with, a terminal diagnosis (stage IV lung cancer; there is no stage V), I sort of recognize the various crossroads when I approach them. All you can do is whatever you need to do to get through it. At that moment, there are no rules; it's just instinct and self-preservation. Be true to yourself. It's your life (or death, to be honest); go live it, in health and especially in sickness.

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

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