

McLean CONNECTION

Reenacting Past in Alexandria

NEWS, PAGE 10

Alexa Tabackman reenacts the mid-wife and apothecary shop owner Margaret Morris. Saturday afternoon, students from McLean High School in the Historical Reenactment Society, Project Enlightenment, performed before audiences at the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Shop in Alexandria.

Extra Space Breaks Ground Downtown

NEWS, PAGE 3

Miss Virginia Comes to Longfellow Middle

NEWS, PAGE 19

Home Life Style

PAGE 11

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OPINION, PAGE 8 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 20 ♦ SPORTS, PAGE 18 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 22

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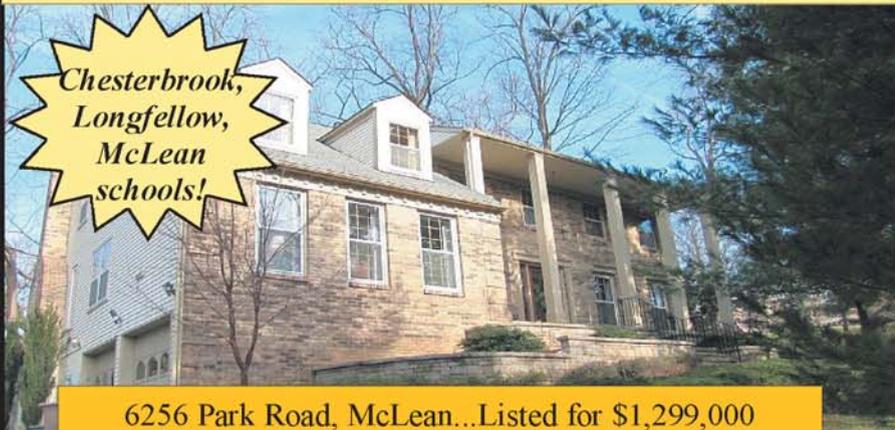
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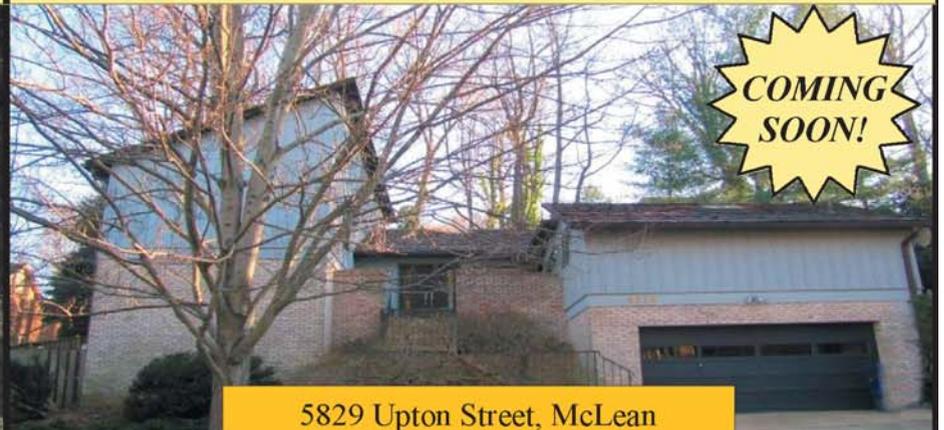


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PHOTO BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION

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 17

From left, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chair Sharon Bulova, Jack Wilbern of Butz-Wilbern and Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville) at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Extra Space Storage facility in downtown McLean Feb. 1.



PHOTO BY
ALEX MCVEIGH/
THE CONNECTION

Extra Space Breaks Ground Downtown

Personal storage facility will be in office-like building, will contribute to downtown revitalization.

BY ALEX MCVEIGH
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County officials joined with members of the Greater McLean Chamber of Commerce, the McLean Planning Committee and the McLean Revitalization Corporation to break ground on a new personal storage facility Wednesday, Feb. 1.

The Extra Space Storage building is expected to be complete in the next 12 months and will hold 544 units in an office-like building at 1320 Chain Bridge Road. The building marks a turning point in downtown redevelopment as well, as it will include a landscaped pedestrian walkway, brick and concrete sidewalks and the undergrounding of utilities along its frontage.

"This facility will look nothing like any personal storage facility I've ever seen, it's office-like appearance will be very harmonious with future development," said Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville).

The project will also include what Foust called "a safe way to Safeway," a walkway from Beverly Road to Old Chain Bridge Road which will allow pedestrians to cross. The building will also be the first LEED Silver rated personal storage

facility in Virginia.

"Extra Space Storage has a long tradition of community service and this facility is very much part of what sort of local business this community can use," said Jack Wilbern of Butz-Wilbern, the architect for the project. "This has been many years in the making, and it's the start of some phenomenal improvements to this side of McLean."

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chair Sharon Bulova said she had high hopes for what the new facility means for the future of downtown McLean.

"I am so impressed with the artists renderings I've seen for what will replace a humble parking lot, and it's something that will pull proponents of this community together," she said. "It really sets the tone for private development here in downtown McLean."

The project's design is consistent with the revitalization efforts of groups like the McLean Revitalization Corporation, which aims to enhance downtown McLean's appearance, make it more pedestrian friendly and increase its economic significance by working with residents, landowners, business owners and local officials.

Three McLean Boy Scouts Earn Top Award

Langley High seniors earn Eagle Scout rank.

BY LORI BAKER
THE CONNECTION

Years of hard work paid off for three McLean Boy Scouts who were awarded their Eagle Scout rank last weekend. The boys, all seniors at Langley High School, are members of Boy Scout

Troop 869 of Trinity United Methodist Church.

Gus Newton, Braeden Sebastian, and Nate Webber were presented with an Eagle Scout medal and badge by their Scoutmaster, Tom Kiess and Troop Committee Chairman Jon Etherton. Nearly 30 friends and family members were also present at the Court of Honor ceremony, which was held at St. Thomas Episcopal Church on Sunday afternoon.

While it is widely understood that earn-

ing an Eagle Scout rank is a remarkable achievement, many do not realize how much work is required to earn the award. Years of badge work and leadership responsibilities must be completed before the scout can start work on his final Eagle project.

Joe Gibson, former Scoutmaster, and Eagle Scout Advisor to Boy Scout Troop 869 explained that only two percent of all Boy Scouts earn the Eagle Scout rank. "Earning the Eagle rank is one of the few things a boy can do before the age of 18 that is

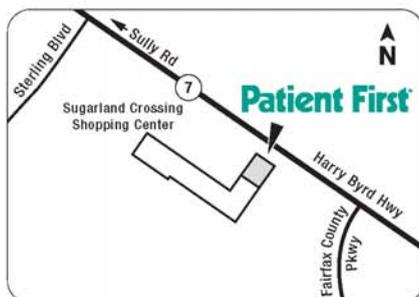
widely recognized as a major achievement. Earning the rank of Eagle is hard. It is not easy. That's why we do it," he said.

BEFORE BEGINNING the final Eagle project, the scout must accumulate 21 merit badges. "These merit badges give the boys life skills," said Gibson. "By that I mean skills that will last a lifetime; and skills that will equip him to save his own life or the life of another." The scout must also serve for at
SEE TROOP 869, PAGE 5

When a warm blanket just isn't enough.

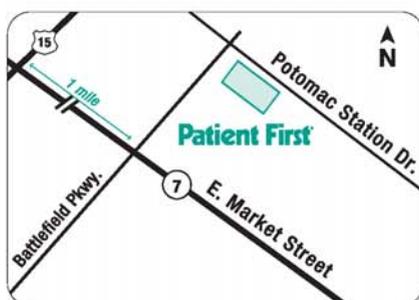


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Troop 869 Promotes Eagle Scouts

FROM PAGE 4

least six months in a leadership position for his troop, and he must plan, manage, and complete a significant final project that benefits the greater community. After what typically takes years to complete, the scout appears before a board of review comprising three to five adults to discuss his scouting career in detail.

For his Eagle Scout project, Gus Newton planned and constructed a monarch butterfly garden at Churchill Road Elementary School. Gus gathered and managed a large number of volunteers for his project. The school has incorporated his garden into the second grade science curriculum. In his remarks during the ceremony, Gus spoke of his pride for overcoming "one of the greatest challenges in my life. It was a hard journey," he said. And, he added, "Scouting is the best thing that I feel a young man can do...It changes you into a man." Gus will attend Christopher Newport University in the fall, and has been accepted into the Presidential Leadership Program.

Braeden Sebastian worked with the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Agency and marked a number of local storm drains in order to remind neighbors of what they can do to help keep the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay clean. Braeden said that the most challenging part of his project was the bureaucracy. The project required a large amount of paperwork, and working with neighborhoods to mark the storm drains. "I got my first taste of true leadership through organizing my own service project," Braeden said. He also said that he made lifelong friends through scouting. Braeden will be attending Virginia Tech in the fall.

Nate Webber restored and improved two trails at



Braeden Sebastian, Gus Newton, and Nate Webber are joined by their parents at the Eagle Scout awards ceremony.

Great Falls National Park for his Eagle Scout project. In his remarks, Nate spoke of his grandfather, who always shared his stories of scouting and encouraged Nate to pursue his Eagle Scout award. His grandfather has since passed away, and Nate dedicated his scouting achievements to his grandfather. Nate is planning to attend college, but has not decided where yet. He is considering offers from two colleges.

IN CLOSING, Scoutmaster Tom Kiess reminded the boys that as they enter the next chapter of their lives, they will be held to a higher standard because they are Eagle Scouts. He also invited guests to take a look at letters that the three boys received upon earning their Eagle Scout awards. The congratulatory letters were from the President, Vice President, Admiral of the Coast Guard, the Pope, and a member of the House of Representatives and Senate, and were on display at a reception which followed the ceremony.

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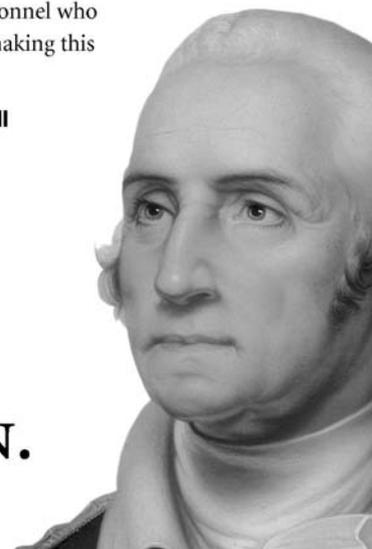
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THEATER



PHOTO COURTESY OF 1ST STAGE

Elliott Kashner and Jonathan Lee Taylor in the 1st Stage production of 'Almost, Maine.'

A Place of Love and Beauty

1st Stage presents 'Almost, Maine.'

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.

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 to give some savoring taste to the show.

Chamberlin envelopes 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, 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.

The overall effect is that off-center ways of the world can exhilarate or humiliate. There are spur of the moment kisses, humorous hugs within unexpected relationships, fixings of broken hearts, the return of love in enormous red garbage bags, too late apologizes and any number of life-lessons in how love can appear in the most unlikely of situations. It is not hair-splitting a reaction; the tales don't all hit their mark. Some are too long, others don't penetrate enough.

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WEEK IN MCLEAN

Charges Brought in McLean House Fire

Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department units responded to a house fire, Tuesday, Jan. 31, at approximately 12:55 p.m. in the McLean area of Fairfax County. The single-family home is located at 6941 Old Dominion Drive.

Firefighters encountered heavy smoke coming from the second floor and attic of the Cape Cod style home upon arrival. Fire crews conducted an aggressive fire attack using multiple hand lines, containing the fire to one room on the second floor and the attic area. The fire was brought under control in approximately five minutes. Smoke alarms provided early warning for the occupants. Four adults have been displaced. Red Cross is providing support to the family. There were no injuries.

Damage is estimated at \$20,000.

Fire investigators charged a 29-year-old resident of the 6900 block Old Dominion Drive, with the burning of an occupied dwelling. He was charged under Virginia Code, 18.2-77, a Class 3 felony and is being held at the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center.

FAITH NOTES

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.

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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.

EDITORIALS

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



District Champions

McLean High School's forensics team won the VHSL Liberty District championship at Stone Bridge High School on Feb. 2. Eighteen students competed in various public speaking categories against seven other schools in the district. Nick Stone, Lexie Shoaibi, Julia Barton, Mary Smilak, Nancy Pruett, Cleo Allen-Mills, Polina Tamarina, Mererose Daniels, Sydney Lo, Siena Richardson, Max Johnson, and Damian Leverett all advanced to the Northern Regional competition on Feb. 15 at Westfield High School.

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Oakcrest School Presents Seussical

Oakcrest School, an independent school for girls grades 6-12, is showcasing its Upper School Show, Seussical, the Musical, in the G. Lloyd Bunting, Sr. Theatre at Oakcrest on Friday, March 2, at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, March 3, at 11:00 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Celebrating its 35th Anniversary this year, Oakcrest is continuing its tradition of promoting fine arts and creativity among its students and performing shows for the entire community, year after year. Oakcrest students are involved in the show as actresses, singers, dancers, set designers, lighting and sound crew, stage crew, and student mentors assisting with character development, dance captaining, and musical direction.

Seussical, the Musical, is directed by Oakcrest theatre arts director, Jessica Erin Carey, and

Oakcrest musical director, Anne Miller, with choreography by Kendra Slatt.

Seussical brings to life all of the favorite Dr. Seuss characters, including Horton the Elephant, The Cat in the Hat, Gertrude McFuzz, Lazy Mayzie, and Jojo, a little boy with a big imagination. Tickets for Friday and Saturday night are \$10 adult, \$5 student. For the Saturday matinee only, there will be a Family Special Rate of \$30 per family. Join the cast and crew for a talk-back after the Saturday matinee. Box office opens an hour before performances begin.

Oakcrest is located at 850 Balls Hill Road in McLean.

For more information about the school, contact the Admission Office at 703-790-5450.

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- Cindy and Glamour & Nails Staff

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From Forgotten to Forever



Kayvon Morbarakeh portrays Benjamin Rush, a physician from Philadelphia.



Nancy Hart appears as an American spy and herbalist from New Jersey.



Nadeem Bohsali demonstrates to the 2nd grade Brownies the wonders of the vacuum.

PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT/ THE CONNECTION



Mel McCalley as naturalist Lucy Say shows a group of children the workings of a beaver jawbone.

McLean High Project Enlightenment Visits Alexandria

Saturday afternoon, students from McLean High School in the Historical Reenactment Society, Project Enlightenment, performed before audiences at the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Shop in Alexandria. Each of the students has researched an 18th century person who worked in science. The Magical Science of the Vacuum by Dr. Mesmer was explained and demonstrated by senior Nadeem Bohsali; Margaret Morris, a midwife and owner of an apothecary shop was portrayed by Alexa Tabackman; Mel McCalley reenacted the study that the

naturalist Lucy Say of Connecticut worked on. A doctor, a spy and naturalist and others appeared throughout the afternoon. The students will return on Saturday, March 24, from 1 to 4 p.m. All 50 students in the program will be also performing at the Mount Vernon Estate over the Memorial Day weekend. A special event coinciding with the transit of Venus will take place at the Sully Plantation during the first week of June. The Project Enlightenment program was established in 1992, and is now a fully credited course within the Fairfax County Schools.

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Valentine's Day Décor

In honor of Cupid's day, 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."

There is an abundance of choices for even for the youngest celebrants. "Valentine's-themed cupcake liners are nice for children," said Phelps. The cupcakes can be displayed on a wide-rimmed, footed cake plate and tied with a colorful ribbon.

Some designers say no Valentine's Day is complete without candy, and it is possible to get creative with sweets. "There are heart-shaped candies made from marzipan or coated with a red-hued, white chocolate shell and filled with Calvados or raspberry ganache," said Philactos.



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

PHOTOS BY MARILYN CAMPBELL



Designers use Valentine's Day cards to make garland and ornaments creating a Cupid-worthy accent piece.

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Home Life Style

Remodeling: An Opportunity To Follow One's Passion

By JOSHUA BAKER
SPECIAL TO THE CONNECTION

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 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 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 specialty 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.



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.



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

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Home Life Style

The new Georgian style façade includes a brick surfaced porch, an Adam-style entry and a second level balcony with balustrades. Michael Nash resolved inherent site problems by deploying deep footings as foundation support, eliminating the need to excavate.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

House on a Hill

Contemporary in Oakton transformed into welcoming southern colonial.

BY JOHN BYRD
 SPECIAL TO THE CONNECTION

Hunstville, Ala. is a pretty small town—yet it has three historic districts and more homes in the national register than most places twice its size. Growing up in such a community, Gina Jones is understandably attracted to welcoming porches and grand foyers—hallmarks of the antebellum style.

Alas, when Jones, an Internet publisher, relocated to Northern Virginia ten years ago, the place that came closest to suiting her family's needs was an Oakton contemporary—one of four on a private drive at the top of a hill.

Jones adapted to her new setting just fine. But after occupying the house for a few years, certain shortcomings became apparent.

"I was looking for a larger master bedroom, a guest room... and I really wanted a front porch and a foyer," Jones recalls. "The foyer was important in my childhood home. It's where the house begins"

The practical problem with the last part of the vision, however, was the steeply sloping grade immediately outside the existing front door. The more Jones learned about her home's inherent site problems, in fact, the more the search for new square footage became concentrated on the rear elevation.

"We wanted to stick to our budget," Jones recalls "so the remodeling proposals we received were all focused on the back of the house."

It was at this juncture that Jones met Sonny Nazemian, president of Michael Nash Kitchens and Homes.

"Sonny plan's not only made our new façade feasible—but actually created more square footage than we'd thought we could afford," Jones explains. "Naturally, we were thrilled with that."

The existing front patio served as a 14-foot by 26-foot template for a two-level enclosure.

The lower level now accommodates a spacious foyer with ten foot ceilings, a first level guest room and a full bath. On the second level, the project co-

opted one of three existing bedrooms to form a substantially larger master bedroom suite.

Best yet, the new site plan permits a top item on the wish list: a 25-foot-long, two level front porch that, Jones says, evokes the graciously welcoming facade of her childhood home.

Inside, the new interior faithfully explores late 18th century decorum in detailing appropriate to several period collectibles and antiques.

Beginning with an Adam-style front door bordered by sidelights and a Palladium window, the foyer is embellished in hardwood flooring, crown molding and embossed knee high panels. Two Doric columns on either side of a stair accessing the main living area are both decorative and structural.

Adjacent to the foyer, the new first level addition provides for a home office that doubles as a guest suite with a private entrance. The suite includes a full bath finished in Brazilian slate-tile, granite countertops and cherry cabinetry.

Upstairs, the new front-facing master bedroom is more than double the size of its predecessor.

The master suite opens out onto the upstairs porch with a stunning view of wooded acreage abutting the property.

In a corner of the master suite, Nazemian installed a gas fireplace, elevating it for visibility from the bed.

"It's a Bed and Breakfast fireplace," Jones said, "and it's also an effective heat source."

The master bath features a double vanity and soaking tub, a walk-in shower and heated floors and towel racks. Structured porcelain covers the floors, shower and tub surrounds; the cherry cabinets have granite countertops.

Standard oak floors and wall-to-wall carpeting were replaced with a richly stained Brazilian woods.

"It's the details that make the whole house so cohesive," Jones said.

To give the eclectic architecture a unifying cast, the exterior elevations are clad in cedar shake and painted a vivid Wedgwood blue.

"It just works beautifully," Jones said. "And it feels like home."

Local REAL ESTATE

PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

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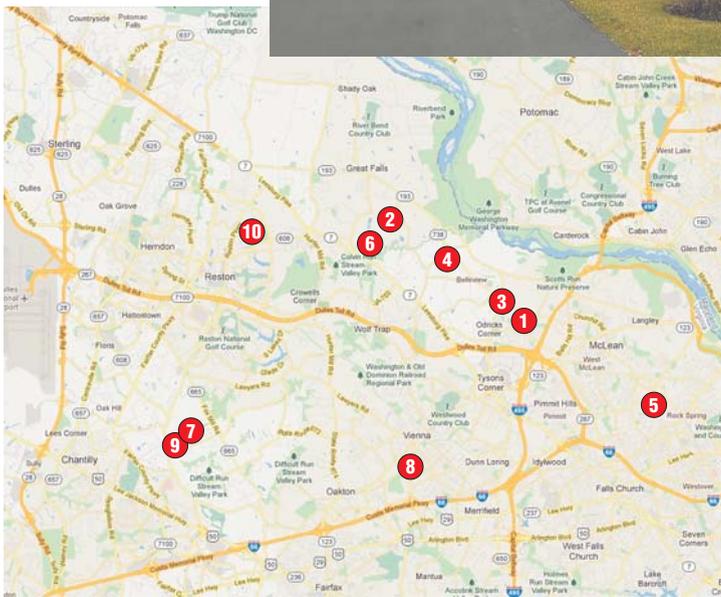


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4 8891 OLSON CT	5	..	5	.	2	MCLEAN	\$2,025,000	Detached	1.72	..	22102	BRYAN POND	12/27/11
5 1949 MASSACHUSETTS AVE	..	6	..	5	.	1	MC LEAN	Detached	0.50	..	22101	FRANKLIN PARK	12/14/11
6 1093 MILL FIELD CT	5	..	4	.	2	GREAT FALLS	\$1,612,500	Detached	0.83	..	22066	COLVIN MILL RUN	12/16/11
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
10 11510 HEMINGWAY DR	3	..	3	.	1	RESTON	\$925,000	Townhouse	..	0.05	..	20194	RESTON	12/08/11

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NEWS

Cranes begin lifting the 250-ton beam that will rest on two supporting structures over the inner loop of the Capital Beltway.

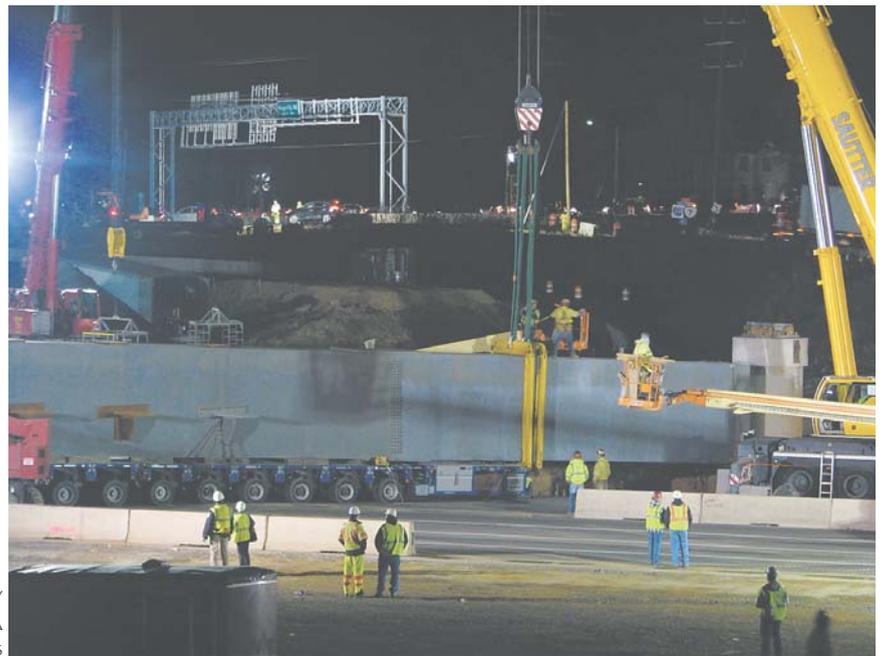


PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/
VDOT VIRGINIA
MEGAPROJECTS

VDOT Hoists Beam for 495 Express Lanes in Tysons Corner

VDOT and its construction partners Fluor-Lane erected the 495 Express Lanes Project's largest beam over the 495 north (inner loop) lanes on Friday night, Feb. 4. The beam is the main support structure for the express lanes ramp to Route 7, Leesburg Pike, when the new express lanes open by end of this year. A primary crane and support cranes hoisted and placed the 250-ton beam on top of two bridge piers over the Inner Loop lanes after midnight, requiring a full closure of all four northbound lanes, diverting traffic onto the Route 7 exit ramp and down a tem-

porary ramp back onto 495 north. The beam, known as a "box girder" in the highway engineering world, was built in Lancaster, Pa. and shipped on a special trailer to carry the massive 130-foot, 10-foot high and 6-foot wide beam. Box girders are used in this type of ramp design to span a distance between two piers without a land-based abutment. A similar beam will be used at the 495 Express Lanes ramp connecting to Braddock Road later this year. For more information on the 495 Express Lanes Project and all VDOT Megaprojects go to: www.Vamegaprojects.com.

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The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor.

—Vincent Lombardi



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 mclean@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.



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.

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).

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, Abdehalim, 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.



Miss Virginia, Elizabeth Crot, addressed a group of seventh graders from Longfellow Middle School.



Seventh graders, Kim Schwadron, left, and Emily Swatt, right, were inspired by Miss Virginia's message.



Jamie Goodson auditions for *The Music Man* at Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater Dec. 10, 2011.

Miss Virginia Comes to Longfellow Middle

Elizabeth Crot addresses seventh and eighth graders, helps kick off anti-bullying week.

BY LORI BAKER
THE CONNECTION

A little more than ten years ago, Elizabeth Crot was the typical middle school student. She had all the ingredients of middle school life; lots of school work, friends, and, as Crot pointed out, doubts and insecurities. Elizabeth Crot was recently crowned Miss Virginia, and now spends her time talking to groups of middle school students across the state. "When I was your age I was picked on for having a crooked nose...and for caring about school. Never in a million years did I think when I was your age that I would be here in front of you."

Crot, who was crowned Miss Virginia over the summer, shared her message last Thursday with students from Longfellow Middle School. And as a young woman not far from their age, she made a strong connection with the seventh and eighth graders there. Crot covered topics that are sometimes discussed, sometimes avoided by middle school students, including alcohol abuse, bullying, stereotyping, and physical and emotional abuse.

The school invited Crot to visit in order to kick off its anti-bullying week, which begins on Feb. 13.

LONGFELLOW has several initiatives to empower the students, and to give them a vehicle to address bullying. School principal, Carole Kihm, said that their bullying report system, an anonymous system for reporting issues, has given the students a sense of power and ownership. The school also passes out what they call "Lancer bucks," for positive behavior. Kihm saw a



Elizabeth Crot, Miss Virginia, emphasized the importance of being yourself.

girl trip last week and drop her books, and when a boy stepped in to help her pick them up, Kihm gave him a "Lancer buck." Five Lancer bucks can be traded in for a cookie from the cafeteria.

When Kihm started at Longfellow four years ago, there were 220 referrals to the office in one semester. A year later, after implementing some of these initiatives, the referrals were down to 22 in a semester. "We have very few now," Kihm said. "The emphasis is on the positive, and trying to do the right thing, and everybody is on board, including the kids."

Crot, in her message to the students, pointed out that although bullying has been around for a long time, the arena has changed. When her parents were students, bullying occurred on the playground. Now, especially with the popularity of Facebook, bullying often occurs online. "Bullies are hiding behind a computer screen, and it's easier," she said. She, like many

others, has been a victim of online bullying. In fact, not long after being crowned Miss Virginia this summer, she had a rude remark posted on her Facebook page.

She shared her method for dealing with online bullying. Her advice to "stop, block, and tell," has a familiar ring, and, Crot is hoping, similar success. She coached the students to stop when they see something offensive online. There is a temptation to want to respond online, but putting a stop to it is the best tactic, she said. If it continues, she suggested blocking the person who is behind the comments. And finally, to tell somebody that they trust.

Crot told the students that everybody is embarrassed about something, and told them that she was always self-conscious about her nose. But she challenged them to be strong. "Being strong is staring at your insecurities in the face, and standing up to them. It's not letting your insecurities hold you back," she said.

Crot, who is sponsored by the Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC), discussed the topic of alcohol abuse with the students. As minors under the age of 21, Crot told them, their brains are not yet fully developed, which makes drinking a double hazard. It is not only illegal at their age, but it is dangerous. "As a recent graduate from JMU (James Madison University), I will never forget the amount of binge drinking I saw," she said. She told of a girl in her dorm that had to be rushed to the hospital with alcohol poisoning, and a boy that broke his leg after falling off of a low roof while drunk. She also told the audience about her good friend who was killed instantly in a car accident after being hit by a drunk driver.

She reminded the students that alcohol use under the age of 21 will not only affect your body and your mind. Additionally, "It can close doors to the future," including getting a driver's license, getting into college, or getting a job.

HER ADVICE to combat bullying, the pressures of drinking, and just the general social pressures that come with being a teenager or young adult, is to "find what you like to do. Your life will get better," she told them. "There are so many people that care about you, and you guys will find what you love to do, and then nothing else matters." For Crot, that was singing. And she shared her soprano version of the operatic piece, "Sempre Libera."

After her presentation, seventh grader, Kim Schwadron said, "She told us how important it is to believe in yourself and not really give up. It's good because a lot of kids don't take bullying seriously. And I think people need to realize that that's actually really important."

"She was really cool and down to earth," added Emily Swatt. "It's important to be yourself and don't let anybody stand in your way."

McLean Resident Will Perform at Arena Stage

During an all-day casting call at Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater in December, 120 young hopefuls from the D.C.-metro area turned up to audition for Meredith Willson's *The Music Man*, which runs May 11-July 22, 2012 in the Fichandler Stage, directed by Molly Smith. From the open auditions, 19 talented young actors were invited back by Smith, one of them being a McLean resident Jamie Goodson, plays Gracie Shinn, the mayor's youngest daughter, and is a seventh-grader at Cooper Middle School (Ford's Theatre's *A Christmas Carol*, The Kennedy Center's *Ragtime*).

Goodson is a 13-year-old D.C. native who has been acting, singing, dancing, and playing the piano since age five. Her local credits include *Ragtime* at the Kennedy Center, *A Christmas Carol* at Ford's Theatre, and *101 Dalmatians* at Way Off Broadway Dinner Theatre. The past four summers, Jamie attended French Woods Festival of the Performing Arts in Hancock, N.Y., where she performed such roles as Clio/Kira in *Xanadu*, Mary in *The Secret Garden*, Pocahontas in *Pocahontas*, and Nala in *The Lion King*. Goodson attends Cooper Middle School in McLean, where she regularly performs the national anthem at local sports events.

For more information about *The Music Man*, visit arenastage.org/shows-tickets/the-season/productions/the-music-man/.

ENTERTAINMENT

Send announcements to mclean@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.1ststagetysons.org 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.1ststagetysons.org or 703-854-1856.

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.

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.1ststagetysons.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.volve8@verizon.net.

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

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 an a cappella musical adventure. Fast-paced fun for age 5 and up. Tickets \$15 at www.1ststagetysons.org or 703-854-1856.

Coffee Table Book Sale. 10 a.m.-1 SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 21

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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 20

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.

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.

Rosi Golan and Cassidy. 7 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave E Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

The Annapolis Bluegrass Band. 1:30 p.m. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St., S.E., Vienna. Free admission, seating available on a first-come-first-serve basis. 703-255-6360.

"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 an a cappella musical adventure. Fast-paced fun for age 5 and up. Tickets \$15 at

www.1ststage tysons.org or 703-854-1856.

Al Petteway & Amy White. 4 p.m., 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. The Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760-C Walker Road, Great Falls. Traditional and original Celtic and Appalachian music. \$15. 703-759-3309 or www.oldbrogue.com.

National Symphony Orchestra Chamber Ensemble. 3 p.m. Alden Theatre, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Sponsored by the Music Friends of the Fairfax County Public Library, the concert will feature music for violin, bassoon, bass, alto trombone and horn. Free. 703-620-9535 or 703-324-8344.



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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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The Fairfax Station/Clifton/Lorton Connection
Zone 3: The Alexandria Gazette Packet
The Mount Vernon Gazette
Zone 4: Centre View North
Centre View South
Zone 5: The Potomac Almanac
Zone 6: The Arlington Connection
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-Werner Heisenberg

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14154-C Willard Rd.

FAIRFAX CITY.....703-978-4500
(Economy Auto Parts) 3855 Pickett Rd.

FALLS CHURCH.....703-534-1200
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(near intersection of Lee Hwy. & Rt. 7)

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23070 Oak Grove Rd. #100
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