

Searching for Great Falls' Biggest Trees

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Bob Vickers points out a green ash tree during the third annual Great Falls Big Tree Hike Saturday, May 12.

An Artist's Personal Search: Musing About Great Falls

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PHOTO BY ALEX McVEIGH/THE CONNECTION

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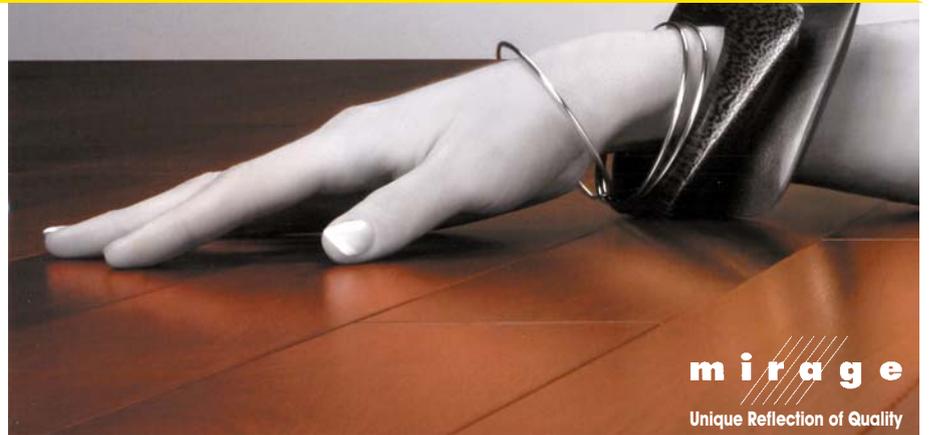
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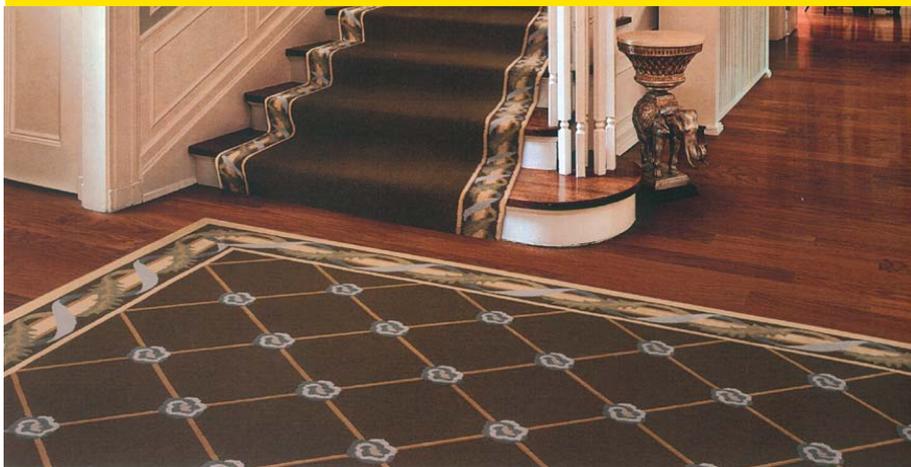
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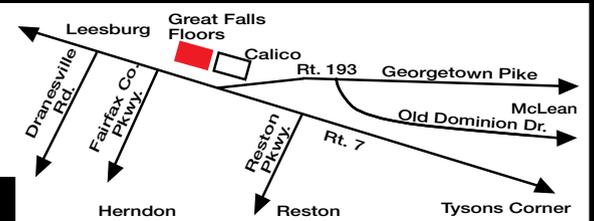
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Hikers make their way through Camp Fraser looking for large trees during the annual Great Falls Big Tree Hike Saturday, May 12.



PHOTOS BY
ALEX McVEIGH/
THE CONNECTION

Searching for Great Falls' Biggest Trees

Third annual Big Tree Hike features some of the largest trees in the state.

BY ALEX McVEIGH
THE CONNECTION

As part of a running group, Bob Vickers was familiar with the land along the Potomac River owned by the Potomac Conservatory. So when he heard about a contest looking for the biggest tree in Great Falls, he knew exactly where to look.

"From running in the area, I knew where to look, and I knew what I thought was a giant box elder tree," he said. "So I brought down a state forester, and while he told me it was actually an elm, it was one of the biggest trees around."

After that, Vickers began checking out trees, finding many "state champions," the biggest of their species in Virginia. On Saturday, May 12, he took a few dozen local residents on the third annual Big Tree Hike, where he showed off a few champions and other large trees.

Vickers, a resident of Great Falls since 1976, has found many state champions over the past few years.

"In 2006, there were five state champs in the county, now we've got about a dozen," he said.

Vickers said the reason Great Falls has so many champions is because people have taken the time to find them and get them verified online, through a database maintained by Virginia Tech. But he also said it's not a perfect process.

"I found a scarlet oak that I thought was the biggest, so I brought my wife out to take a look," he said. "When we were there, she pointed out another one and said 'that one looks a little bigger,' and sure enough it was, and it was the state champion for a while."

Hikers met at Camp Fraser and walked down to the flood plain of the Potomac. Along the way they

discovered many species of trees with a variety of uses.

White pines have one of the strongest strength to weight ratios, and were a prized commodity for British settlers to Virginia, because of their usefulness in ship's masts.

"I had no idea about the history of some of these trees, that they could be so useful for ships and other purposes," said Tom Simpson of Great Falls. "They told us that it was because of the white pine's abundance here, that Britain was able to dominate the seas for so long because they could build better ships."

While many of the trees on the tour were awe-inspiring in their sheer diameter and height, Vickers and others had just as many stories about trees that had been felled.

"I was really struck when they told us about the largest beech tree on the East Coast that was right here in Great Falls, but was cut down in 1968 to make a drainage culvert," said Amy Lincoln. "It's sort of sad to think about those majestic things being cut down for a drain for because someone wanted to be able to see the river while they ate breakfast."

More information about big trees in the state can be found at www.web2.cnre.vt.edu/4h/bigtree.



Bob Vickers points out one of the largest scarlet oak trees in the state during the annual Great Falls Big Tree Hike Saturday, May 12.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Second graders Anabeth Holsinger and Caitlyn Shumadine play home-made video games.

Science Night at Forestville

Science night at Forestville Elementary on April 26 began with after-school group Mad Science performing a forty-five minute show. The second half allowed students and families to experience science by visiting hands-on stations.

Displays included fifth grader Mandy Smith's balloon which filled with gas and then exploded. Other projects included Wiimote-controlled robotics, solar-powered vehicles, and home-made video games.



Fifth grader Mandy Smith prepares for her gas-filled balloon to explode.

WEEK IN GREAT FALLS

Great Falls to Mark Memorial Day

On Monday, May 28, at 11 a.m., the Great Falls Freedom Memorial Committee will hold its annual Memorial Day Ceremony at the site of the Freedom Memorial (behind the Great Falls Library at 9830 Georgetown Pike). The speaker at this year's ceremony will be LCDR John A. "Sandy" Pidgeon, a retired Navy SEAL Officer who served in Somalia, Haiti, and Iraq. Members of Boy Scout Troop 55 will raise the flags at the

conclusion of the ceremony.

This ceremony is open to all and ample parking is available in the Library parking lot. In case of rain, the ceremony will move into the Library's meeting room.

Analemma Society to Present Transit of Venus

The planet Venus passes in front of the sun only on very rare occasions. Seeing this is a once in a lifetime event, the next one

after this will not occur for 105 years. On Monday, June 4, at 7 p.m. at the Great Falls Library the Analemma Society will do a presentation on the Transit of Venus. Charles Olin and Jeff Kretsch will lead the discussion. The Transit will occur the following late afternoon/evening.

Members will describe the events to occur the following day, Tuesday, June 5 and plans to observe at Observatory Park and present a general history of the importance of the transit of Venus in history.

In the 18th and 19th centuries great in-

ternational scientific expeditions were launched across the world to observe the Transit because it provided a means to determine the actual scale of our solar system – how far earth actually is from the sun and other planets that orbit the sun with us. In addition to covering what transits are and the current importance to astronomy, as will cover safe means of viewing the upcoming transit.

SEE WEEK, PAGE 11

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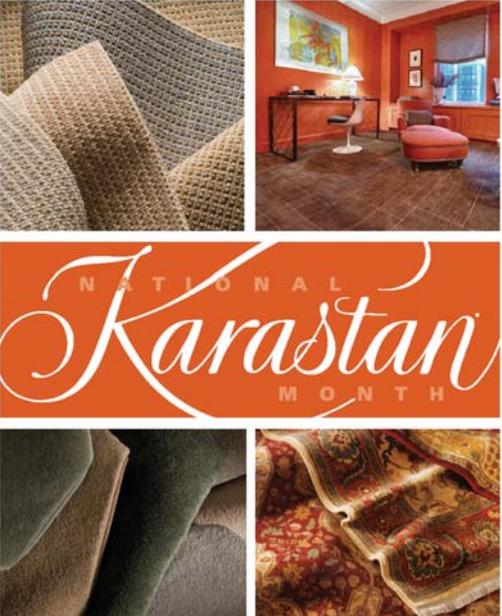


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THE COUNTY LINE

Housing Discrimination Alert

Officials step up education, outreach efforts to reach immigrant communities about “fair housing” rights.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

Housing discrimination cases have been on the rise in Fairfax County in the past few years. And the Office of Human Rights and Equity Programs (OHREP), the agency that enforces fair housing laws in the county, is shining a spotlight on the problem through seminars for housing providers, realtors, community groups and other interested parties.

“Sadly, housing discrimination is alive and well and we’ve seen an uptick in complaints during the past six years,” said Kenneth Saunders, executive director of OHREP.

In contrast to national trends, discrimination based on nationality made up 25.6 percent of complaints to the county from 2006 to 2010. In comparison, about nine percent of complaints to Housing and Urban Development (HUD) fall under this category.

Although discrimination based on race remains an issue, Saunders reports that in recent years he has seen an increase in the number of complaints received by his office that are related to national origin or involve disability-related issues.

“If you’re still thinking this is only about color and race, you’re way behind the curve...more recently, there has been an increase in discrimination cases involving national origin and disability related issues,” Saunders said.

DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS, Saunders said, are not filed by one particular group. “It runs the gamut. We have complaints from Latin Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, as well as individuals from the Continent of Africa.”

During the past decade, Fairfax County has become more diverse. Today, 48 percent of county residents are ethnic or racial minorities, and in 2009, one-third of new residents were immigrants.

“In Fairfax County we consider our diversity to be one of our greatest assets,” said Fairfax County Board of Supervisor’s Chairman Sharon Bulova (D-At-large). “It is so important for us to make sure the rights of our minority communities are respected.”

When it comes to complaints related to disabilities, the problem matches state trends. In Fairfax County, these complaints accounted for 28.4 percent of cases from 2006 to 2010. Similarly, disability-related discrimination comprised 27 percent of complaints to the Virginia Fair Housing Office in 2010.

When it comes to disability-related issues, the county’s housing stock may contribute in part to the problem. Three-quarters of the county’s housing was built prior to 1990.



From left, Steven Paikin, a HUD official; Patricia Stephan-Fawcett, with the County’s Office of Human Rights and Equity Programs (OHREP); Kenneth Saunders, executive director of OHREP, and Ernest Dawson, a HUD official, attended a Fair Housing Conference/Training Session in April for housing providers, realtors and others providing housing-related services hosted by OHREP.

“If you’re still thinking this is only about color and race, you’re way behind the curve...more recently, there has been an increase in discrimination cases involving national origin and disability-related issues.”

**— Kenneth Saunders,
executive director of OHREP**

The Fair Housing Act was amended in 1988 to include disability as a protected class. Fair Housing Accessibility Requirements for new multi-family buildings did not go into effect until 1991, and many of the existing structures were not originally built to meet modern-day requirements.

Although many cases may go unreported, conservatively there are four million incidents of housing discrimination in the U.S. per year, according to estimates by the National Fair Housing Alliance.

In addition to its education and outreach activities, OHREP investigates and enforces fair housing laws through the Human Rights Commission. The agency also investigates complaints related to employment, public accommodations, education and credit.

Saunders said his staff does a significant amount of education and outreach to communities with limited English proficiency. Brochures detailing rights and how to file a complaint are published in six languages – Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Vietnam-



During a Fair Housing Conference last month, Kenneth Saunders (center), executive director of OHREP, presents Thomas Perez, Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights with U.S. Department of Justice, with a Fair Housing poster created by a Centreville High School student.

ese and Amharic, the second most-spoken Semitic language in the world, after Arabic, and the official language of Ethiopia.

“Some landlords are uninformed about relevant fair housing laws, which is why we have a proactive education and outreach program for both sides – leasing agents landlords, and prospective tenants,” Saunders said.

WHAT HAPPENS when the office receives a complaint?

OHREP has 11 full-time investigators, most of whom are attorneys who are juggling 35-45 cases at any given time. When someone makes a discrimination complaint, both parties are given the option to participate in mediation. If mediation doesn’t resolve the issue, the investigation continues.

County Ordinance

Under the County’s Human Rights Ordinance, it is illegal to discriminate and deny housing based on:

- ❖ Race
- ❖ Color
- ❖ National Origin
- ❖ Religion
- ❖ Sex
- ❖ Familial Status (families with children under the age of 18, or who are expecting a child)
- ❖ Disability (if you or someone close to you has a disability)
- ❖ Age (age 55 or older)
- ❖ Marital Status

For more information about how to file a complaint or to become educated about protections under the Fair Housing Act, contact the Office of Human Rights and Equity Programs at 703-324-2953, TTY 03-324-2900 or www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ohrep/hrd

“A large percentage of our cases are resolved through mediation and conciliation, where both parties agree to meet and settle complaints,” Saunders said. “It is very rare for one of our cases to go to court.” Saunders said there’s usually a paper trail to give investigators enough evidence to determine if a case has merit.

While some cases involve blatant discrimination, others are more nuanced, a matter of one or more parties not understanding the law.

For example, in April 2010, a Fairfax County woman filed a complaint with the OPEHR alleging discrimination based on her disability, which required a dog as an “emotional support animal.”

The property manager of the rental apartments where the woman lives told her that the association has a “no pets” rule. According to the property manager, the woman did not provide any details that showed the dog had been trained as a “service animal,” and asked her to leave within a month if the dog remained in the apartment.

However, there’s a crucial legal difference between animals governed under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which requires animals to be trained so they can be out in public - and animals governed by the Fair Housing Act (FHA), said Patricia S. Fawcett, a human rights specialist and attorney with OHREP.

“Under the Fair Housing Act, you have to demonstrate that you are disabled and that you have a need for an emotional support animal that’s connected to your disability,” Fawcett said, stressing that even if there is a “no pet” policy, a person still has a right to have an emotional support animal living with him or her under the FHA.

The confusion in this case is not uncommon among property managers.

“This was an opportunity for education... In fact, I was educated about this when the complaint was filed, and I contacted HUD for guidance,” she said. “There’s a lot of confusion out there with housing providers and the public about what’s protected and allowed under the Fair Housing Act, and what the ADA allows and requires.”

In this case, an OHREP fair housing outreach and education specialist provided free training to the property manager, and the woman was able to keep the dog in her apartment.

“The important point here is to know your rights under the Fair Housing Act,” Fawcett said.

McLean to Celebrate Hometown

McLean Day 2012: 'Celebrating Our Hometown' is on Saturday, May 19.

The McLean Community Center's (MCC) annual community festival McLean Day 2012: "Celebrating Our Hometown" is on Saturday, May 19. Area residents are invited to come out and bring every member of the family for a fun day of outdoor activities. The festival will be held from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road. Admission is free.

THE YOUNG AND THE YOUNG-AT-HEART will find lots of fun options this year. Games 2U of Huntingtown, Md., returns for a second year of field games, such as laser tag, archery tag and a cannon. Reithoffer Shows is bringing the Orbiter and a number of large carnival rides. Full Tilt, The Ring of Fire, Pharaoh's Fury, Starship 3000 and bumper car rides are also returning. Ticket sales for the large rides will begin at 10:30 a.m. and will end at 4 p.m. Tickets must be purchased with cash only. Most large rides cost \$4 (or two tickets). An unlimited ride bracelet can be purchased for \$20. Riders are encouraged to arrive early to get tickets as long lines develop. Other attractions include a rock climbing wall, carnival games, pony rides and face painting. A special area called the KidZone Midway features a variety of small, mechanical rides and bounces that toddlers and small children can enjoy.

Four new food vendors are coming to McLean Day

this year and they will expand the food offerings significantly on Eatery Row: Pepper Creek Shellfish Farm, Suya-to-Go and Dee's Concessions, along with the popular Tysons area food truck,

Something Stuffed (<http://www.somethingstuffed.com>) will join other favorites such as The Tender Rib (<http://www.thetenderrib.com>), Minute Man Kettlecorn, Brad's Concessions and Domino's Pizza. As always, bring your appetite to McLean Day.

The McLean Day Stage has something for everyone in the family.

PARKING is not available at Lewinsville Park on the day of the festival, so MCC strongly encourages participants to use its free shuttle service. Starting at 9:30 a.m. and continuing throughout the day, shuttle buses will run from the park to McLean Baptist Church, 1367 Chain Bridge Rd., Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, 1545 Chain Bridge Road, and MCC, 1234 Ingleside Avenue. Parking also is available at the Lewinsville Senior Center, 1609 Great Falls Street, and the Center will run airport-style shuttle carts from Evers Drive, located at the rear of the building, to the park all day.

For festival updates, driving directions, shuttle bus stop locations and a festival area map, visit: www.mcleancenter.org/special-events/mcleanday.asp or call the Center at 703-790-0123/TTY: 711. The Center's telephone will be answered from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the day of the festival.



Kayley McPhail

A Big Accomplishment

Kayley McPhail of Great Falls who is 11 years old and in 6th grade, recently scored 11th in the Nation on the High School National French Examination. Kayley has been attending the Edlin School for the Gifted in Reston until recently and has been taking an accelerated curriculum for several years. Kayley is now home-schooled with support from Dr. Linda Peterson at Peterson Academic in Reston. She will attend the National Awards ceremony in June in Alexandria.

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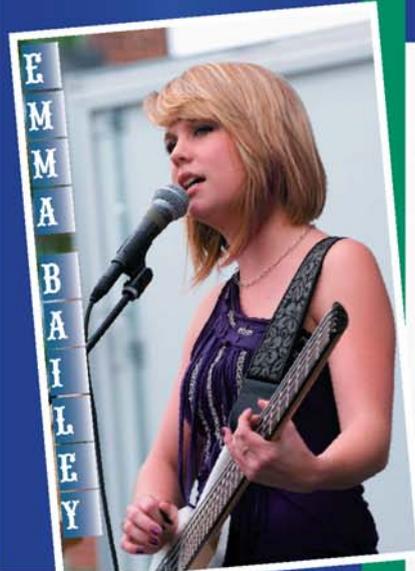


Summer Concerts on the Green

Sunday Evenings in June & July from 6pm to 8pm

Great Falls Village Centre Green at the Gazebo

Come out with your picnic baskets and chairs for an entertaining evening of live, free music.



June 3 ~ The Shields Brothers ~ 5pm to 7pm

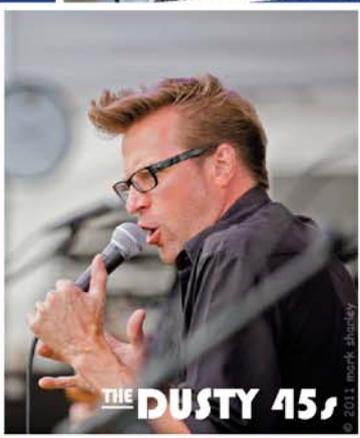
The Shields Brothers ~ as seen on NBC's The Voice. Rock n Roll at it's best. Please note this is a 5pm start.
Sponsored by The Celebrate Great Falls Foundation

June 10 ~ Mike Terpak

Experience Mike Terpak and the sounds of Blues Explosion
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June 17 ~ The Dusty 45s

Rousing horns, sizzling original numbers and genuine talent . . .
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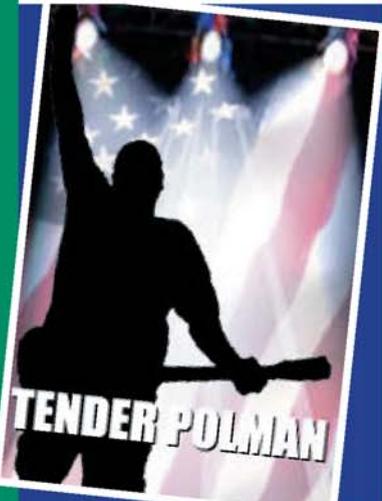


June 24 ~ Tom Principato

Guitarist combining rich blues with high-energy rock.
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July 1 ~ Tender Polman and The Magic Bus

Acoustic, solo rock with an upbeat, positive message.
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July 8 ~ Four Star Combo

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Rock band SRO with a hint of Emma Bailey country.

July 15 ~ SRO & Emma Bailey

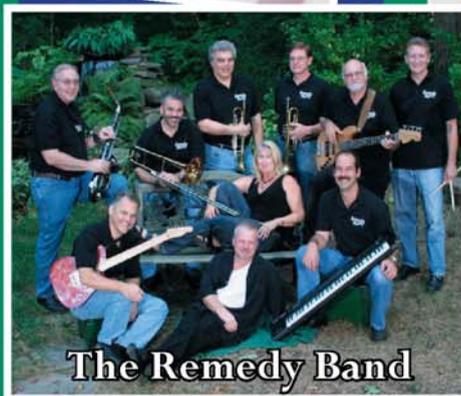
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July 22 ~ Daryl Davis

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OPINION

Most Endangered?

Potomac River has made great strides, has miles to go to save the Bay.

Unless your home is served by well water, you are almost certainly among the five million people in the Washington Metropolitan area who get their drinking water from the Potomac River.

This week, the organization American Rivers named the Potomac River as the most endangered river in the nation. The Potomac River is far cleaner than it was 40 years ago when the Clean Water Act was enacted.

"Before the Clean Water Act was enacted in 1972, the Potomac was a cesspool of sewage and industrial pollution," says American Rivers. "Thanks to the Clean Water Act, the Potomac and rivers across the country are cleaner and safer for drinking, boating, and fishing. But ... a University of Maryland report card has given the river a 'D' grade for water quality for the past two years."

Now it's safe for high school crew teams to take to the river by the dozens. Kayakers and paddle-boarders join them in intimate contact with the water. Motorboats, marinas and fish-

ermen all show the confidence we now have in the integrity of the Potomac River.

Still, after a rain, stormwater washes agricultural waste, suburban and urban runoff carrying loads of pollution into our area's small streams, into the Potomac River and on into the Chesapeake Bay. Bacteria in the river after big rainstorms, from dog waste in suburban areas, agricultural runoff in more rural areas, has led to the recommendation by some that people avoid contact with the river for two-to-three days.

Slowing stormwater runoff, limiting the amount of "nutrients" that are swept down the river into the Chesapeake Bay, and improvements in methods of treating sewage are all critical to the ongoing health of our water supply.

Fish in the Potomac River also continue to show symptoms of exposure to endocrine disruptors, with male bass carrying eggs and other signs. Scientists suspect variety of pharmaceuticals and chemicals are causing these abnormalities, and it is not known whether current water purification systems are removing those pollutants fully from the drinking water.

American Rivers called on Congress to kill any legislation that weakens the Clean Water Act or prevents the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from restoring protections for small streams

and wetlands under the Act. American Rivers also called on the Obama Administration to finalize guidance clarifying the scope of the Clean Water Act and issue a rule-making to ensure that all waters get the protections Americans expect and deserve.

The Potomac River continues to serve as the scenic backdrop to much of what we do here. Let's continue to push for improvements.

— MARY KIMM.

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Father's Day Photos

Every year at this time, the Connection puts out the call for photographs of fathers and their children, grandfathers and their children and grand children.

Father's Day is Sunday, June 17, 2012 and once again the Connection will publish a gallery of Father's Day photos.

Send in photos as soon as possible, including names of everyone in the picture, the date the picture was taken, the ages of the children and sentence or two about what is happening and where the photograph was taken. Be sure to include your town name and neighborhood. Photos are due by June 8.

You can submit your photos to greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com.

EDITORIALS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Another Look At 'Who Benefits'

To the Editor:

Your concerns about "who benefits and who pays" on funding this latest transportation project here in Northern Virginia are worth noting and appreciated [Editorial, "On Funding the Silver Line," Connection, April 11-17, 2012]. Previous surveys have shown the traffic congestion here in Virginia, especially for its citizens trying to commute from their homes in nearby communities to their jobs around the area, is one of the worst in the country. Previous road projects such as the "mixing bowl" here in Springfield, and now the construction of "hot lanes" around the beltway, are attempts to reduce travel time sitting in our cars in bumper to bumper traffic.

Before we can single out the funding of the silver metro line between Tysons and Dulles, we need to address the entire funding arrangements made by our elected officials both here in Northern Virginia and the State of Virginia. When our personal property taxes on our automobiles were reduced by 75 percent years

ago, the State of Virginia continues to reimburse the counties for their loss in collecting this tax revenue from its residents. These funds come from the State of Virginia's transportation trust fund. When states have large population growth centered around urban areas like Chicago in Illinois and St Louis in Missouri, the receipt of tax revenue and the return of their tax dollars to its citizens are unbalanced. Added to this fact, national surveys continue to highlight both Fairfax and Loudoun county residents are enjoying one of the richest per capital income in the United States, plus having the lowest unemployment rate as well. These facts alone help to attract people from other parts of the country to move here for jobs and to pursue the quality of life we enjoy. People living in less populated areas of the State of Virginia continue to have needs to be funded and mandated by passed state legislation.

Being homeless, without a job, and needing health care do not have a regional boundary. Over the years, some elected leaders here in the commonwealth have gone on public record lobbying their case as to why Northern Virginia shouldn't be a separate funding

entity, and/or should be given taxing authority like the state.

This approach only places an uncooperative wedge between political organization at the state and county levels. These feelings can only lead to a more dysfunctional form of government which is not good for its people.

Most state budgets in the United States do not even approach the size of the Fairfax County yearly budget. Most of our county citizens have been sheltered from the

pressures of what is happening to the rest of the residents in the state due to a weak economy. We seem to adopt the feeling we are entitled to be more privileged than others. Maybe the answer as to "who benefits and who pays" should be given a broader view as to who are more fortunate by having a better standard of living and able to pay than those who are less fortunate.

Ronald L. Baker
Springfield

Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors. Send to:

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Wounded Warrior Visits Langley School

Navy Lieutenant Brad Snyder shares a message about service and perseverance with middle-schoolers.

BY LORI BAKER
THE CONNECTION

Navy Lieutenant Bradley Snyder wasn't able to run the Marine Corps marathon with his friends last fall. He was recovering from wounds sustained while serving in Afghanistan. So while they ran it without him, wearing "Brad Snyder" t-shirts, he made a plan. He said, "well alright, next year I'm going to run with you guys."

Running a marathon is no easy task, but for Lt. Snyder, it will be extra challenging. Snyder is blind. He lost both eyes when he stepped on an explosive device in Afghanistan while

coming to the aid of a comrade last September. But while lying in the hospital during his recovery, he quickly made a decision to just move forward.

"I woke up in the hospital last September, and the doctor said well you're not going to be able to see anymore," he told middle school students at McLean's Langley School last week. "But I was able to really quickly just decide that, that wasn't going to be an impediment to me."

LT. SNYDER was invited to speak to middle school students at the Langley School as part of the school's service learning project. "Our big goal was for the students to recognize that service comes in all forms and fashions," said Ryan Jefferson, director of Student Life at the school. "And when you're dealt a pretty tough hand, what you do to persevere and overcome. It ultimately builds their character as citizens of Langley, and of our community."

The Langley School auditorium was uncharacteristically quiet for a room filled with nearly 140 sixth, seventh and eighth graders. They listened intently to Snyder's story.

Snyder told the students that the last thing he remembers seeing was his arms and legs. And before he lost his eyesight, he felt grateful that they were there. "If you decide to always put things into perspective, always maintain a positive attitude, there's no stopping you at all," he said.

Snyder, who currently lives and works in Baltimore, learned the meaning of service at a young age. His father would ask him to pick up trash off the ground that others had left behind. The lesson stuck. Years later he attended the U.S. Naval Academy. He graduated in 2006 and earned a billet to join special operations as an explosives ordinance officer. "We were constantly training," Snyder said. His team's job was to diffuse explosives. He deployed to Iraq. Then soon after returning, he de-



Students were impressed with Lt. Snyder's smart phone, which has many applications for the blind.

ployed to Afghanistan where he was wounded while on patrol.

He told the students about the day-to-day challenges of being blind, such as shopping, cooking, even combing his hair. And he recounted funny stories about the many adjustments he has had to make. But, he said, he is learning to overcome many of the challenges. "I went through a pretty significant life change," he told the students. "But it's easy to put that into perspective because I have friends who lost a leg, or got killed, period. Who never even made it back. So it's all about putting it into perspective. And it was easy to do."

Snyder is currently serving in an unpaid internship for a small technology firm in Baltimore, while waiting for his medical retirement to process. Red Owl Analytics is a data analysis firm in Baltimore that has hired several wounded warriors. "There are a lot of characteristics of a special operations person that make him valuable to a corporation," Snyder said.

PART OF HIS NEW JOB is to demonstrate the value of wounded warriors in the corporate world.

Snyder recently qualified for the Paralympic national swim team. And when he's not working, he is training for a spot on the Paralympic Swim Team for London 2012. After the swim season is over, Snyder is planning to start training for the Marine Corps marathon.

The Langley School students were inspired by his story, and by his determination. "He showed us that we should always be brave, and not give up on our dreams," said sixth grader, Caroline Garcia.

The middle school students have been raising money all year through their weekly snack bar to donate to the wounded warrior fund. And they were proud to present Lt. Snyder with a check for \$500 dollars for the fund.

POETRY

Big Box Bird

BY LYNN PETERSON MOBLEY

I could have been a builder of nests
like the oriole, hanging suspended
from the brittle branch of a Chinese elm
over a terrace and a black pool
full of piebald, cow-faced koi,
or a feared and terrible predator
believing my own press, some surly owl
picking off terrified moles and voles
from a private cavity high in a tree.
But me, one day I headed for
the garden center
and just kept going,
through the magic doors.
I was lucky, I guess, or not,
but here I dwell, perched in the struts,
watching the women at the paint chips
imagining a perfect life,
their men lusting over drills and radial saws.
Nesting is a breeze in the rolls of insulation;
bird seed spills abundantly on aisle eight;
it's like Mexico but without the sun.
Water can be a problem but that is a challenge,
everybody needs a challenge, especially here in
the big box.
It's just where I am, and if you ask
am I crying or singing? That
is the question for every bird,
I don't care how noble his profile,
how far he flies each fall.



Pictured from left: Langley Spanish Teacher Elena Meschieri, Dr. Goodall, and Head of School Doris Cottam.

Earth Day at the Langley School

On April 23, The Langley School welcomed world-renowned primatologist Dr. Jane Goodall to campus for the school's Earth Day assembly. Goodall, who previously visited Langley in spring 2005, spoke to students about the importance of caring for the Earth and its inhabitants. She also described some of her early experiences with animals and explained why she decided to travel to Tanzania in the 1960s to study wild chimpanzees. Goodall praised Langley for its many green initiatives and was thrilled by the enthusiasm of the students.

The Langley School is a coed independent school in McLean educating students in preschool through eighth grade.

Great Falls Talks Turf

The Leo Santaballa turf-field debate continues.

PHOTO BY MARY GRACE OAKES / THE CONNECTION



Leo Santaballa Park is located behind the Great Falls Library and serves as the home field for the Great Falls Lacrosse Association's programs.

BY MARY GRACE OAKES
THE CONNECTION

In a Great Falls Land Use and Zoning Committee (LUZ) meeting in October of 2010, the Great Falls Lacrosse Association (GFLA) announced plans to install a synthetic turf-field at Leo Santaballa Park. Their proposal was initially met with a mixed response, as some community members applauded the operational benefits of turf-fields, while others raised concerns about the adverse impacts such a field could have on public health and the local environment. Nearly two years later, the installation of a turf field at Leo Santaballa remains a divisive and highly contested issue within the Great Falls Community, with each side voicing their opinions in both community and online forums, and circulating petitions in opposition or support of the installation.

When the GFLA first proposed the conversion of Leo Santaballa to a crumb rubber infill turf field, it was with the conviction that the field would become a "community asset," as more than 400 Great Falls families are involved in GFLA programs (www.greatfallslacrosse.com). The GFLA maintains this position, and has since emphasized that the current level of use of Leo Santaballa necessitates the installation of a turf field: Leo Santaballa is currently played on seven days a week in both Spring and Fall Seasons, and this type of "heavy traffic" causes fields to "become uneven with potholes or just bare clay that is indigenous

to our area" says Richard Maresco of McLean.

SYNTHETIC TURF FIELDS, on the other hand, require no rest periods to prevent the formation of "unsafe, rock-hard, dirt fields" and can be played on for approximately "three times as many hours a year than natural grass fields" (www.syntheticurfCouncil.org). Moreover, these fields do not require the mowing, watering, or fertilizer treatments that are needed to maintain natural grass fields.

Yet, while the operational advantages of synthetic turf-fields are undeniable, many within the Great Falls community are worried that the disadvantages of synthetic turf fields are being overlooked.

The initial objection to the installation of a turf field at Leo Santaballa was on the grounds of potential environmental damage. "The substances used in the field, particularly the crumb rubber infill made of recycled tires, contain potentially hazardous chemicals and heavy metals that can leach into the water. These toxins will destroy our local aquatic ecosystem, possibly all the way from the Great Falls Library to the Potomac River" affirmed the Great Falls Clean Water Coalition, a group dedicated to "stop[ping] construction at Leo Santobella Field." For residents of nearby Innsbruck Avenue, many of which are on a well-water system, the effects of contaminated runoff from the field were especially concerning; Leo Santaballa's proximity to Innsbruck put it in a prime position to pollute Marmota Pond, a large pond located in the neighbor-

hood, which homeowners were in the process of restoring.

More recently, those who oppose the conversion of Leo Santaballa have also cited potential threats to public health. Although the GFLA asserts that a turfed Leo Santaballa would "provide a safe playing surface for our children," "tires were never meant for coming in contact with humans," insists Dr. Karen Michels, a PhD neurobiologist and founder of the Safe and Healthy Fields Coalition.

Dr. Michels explains that tires, which are the primary component of crumb-rubber infill, are approximately 30-60 percent Carbon Black, a "carcinogenic nano-particle small enough to enter the body, the lungs, the cells, and cause inflammation." She says that particulates "are becoming more and more of a concern," as the chronic inflammation they can create "is a major cause of degenerative diseases" such as Diabetes, Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's. While some argue that there is no evidence to suggest that turf-fields put players at risk of developing such diseases, Dr. Michels asserts that this is due to a lack of long-term studies. "Never in human history have we concentrated this level of toxins in one place...and not only are we concentrating them in one place, we're concentrating them in a place where children play," she warns.

OPponents OF THE INSTALLATION argue that potential exposure to toxic nano-particles is not the only human-health concern associated with synthetic turf fields.

What Makes a Synthetic Turf Field: The Logistics of Construction

Construction of synthetic turf fields involves the installation of "a drainage layer, a multi-layered backing system", and a layer of resilient "grass blades" that are "infilled with a granular filler to resemble natural turf." Most often (as is the case in all Fairfax County turf-fields), this "granular filler" comprises "granulated recycled tire rubber" to "provide the necessary stability, uniformity, and resiliency" (www.syntheticurfCouncil.org).

Although the cost of installing a turf-field at Leo Santaballa will be high, at approximately \$850,000, the GFLA has developed a plan by which these funds will be "secured through three sources: a Fairfax County grant (\$150,000); a short term construction-bridge loan from a community bank (\$450,000); and an initial capital outlay to start the project (\$250,000)".

Synthetic-turf runoff, which harms aquatic life, inevitably "impacts all living creatures...whether you're a human or a fish, it doesn't matter," says Stella Koch, Co-Chair of the Great Falls Environment Committee. Koch reasons that "anything in a tire that's potentially bad, like zinc and heavy metals" could end up in the water supply, and "when those things get into the food chain, they affect everything." Synthetic turf fields also pose a more immediate threat to the health of those who play on them, as according to a 2008 Crumb Rubber Fact Sheet produced by the New York State Department of Health, "synthetic turf fields absorb heat," resulting in surface temperatures that "may contribute to heat stress."

In response to community concern, the GFLA continues to assert that synthetic turf is safe from both an environmental and a public health standpoint, referencing a 2011 Montgomery County Study to support their position. The study, which compared the "impacts of artificial turf vis-à-vis natural grass fields," found that environmental and human health risks associated with synthetic turf fields are not of "levels of concern that warrant avoidance of the construction of new artificial turf fields with crumb rubber infill." And synthetic turf fields do offer some eco-friendly statistics; according to the Synthetic Turf Council, "more than 2.2 billion gallons of water are conserved nationwide annually" by the use of turf-fields, and "using crumb material...for sports infill has afforded the opportunity to recycle 25 million used auto tires per year" (<http://www.syntheticurfCouncil.org/>).

For the time being, the GFLA has continued to garner support for the installation through their "I'm Turfing Leo" campaign, and developed a plan to fund the project. While the GFLA leadership believes "a permanent turf field in the heart of Great Falls" will provide "immeasurable benefits to the children of our community for years to come," those who oppose the installation, such as Stella Koch, say the risks of artificial turf are "enough to give a parent pause."

WEEK IN GREAT FALLS

FROM PAGE 4

Great Falls Essay Contest

The Friends of the Great Falls Freedom Memorial invite rising 5th and 6th grade students in Great Falls to describe "A Virginia Hero!" Contestants must choose three words from the 31 words circling the Great Falls Freedom Memorial and explain how those words describe the characteristics of their hero. Entries may be brought or mailed to the Great Falls Library at 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, VA 22066-2634 and must be received by close of business Aug. 25, 2012.

A \$50 money card will be awarded for the best essay in each of these four student groups – Colvin Run Elementary School, Forestville Elementary School, Great Falls Elementary School, and rising 5th and 6th graders who are home-schooled or enrolled

in a private school. Entry forms are available at the Great Falls Library, 703-757-8560, as well as contest details and rules for those who have not received this information at school.

Winners will be contacted on Sept. 29, 2012 and an Essay Contest awards ceremony will be held on Oct. 6, 2012 at 2 p.m. in the Great Falls Library.

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Game On

George Mason University students develop video games aimed at curtailing gang recruitment in Virginia.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Law enforcement officials now have two unlikely weapons in the fight against gang activity in Virginia: video games and college students.

Students in the Computer Game Design program at George Mason University partnered with Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli's office to create video games designed to show children the consequences of joining a gang. The result of the collaboration is a series of interactive and educational computer games and mobile phone applications designed to reduce gang recruitment. The games were unveiled earlier this month on the George Mason campus in Fairfax.

"Gangs are constantly working to recruit new kids to replace those going to jail and getting killed. Their recruitment techniques are evolving, even to the point of using online gaming and other technologies. We have to work even harder to stop them," said Cuccinelli.

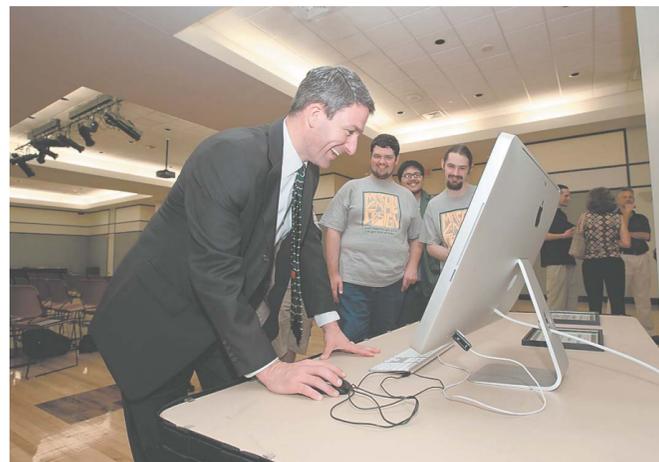
"The goal of this partnership with GMU is a novel approach in the war against gangs to beat them at their own game."

Students enrolled in the university's GAME 232 Online Gaming and Filesharing course presented game proposals to Cuccinelli's office. The attorney general's staff selected three:

♦ "A Second Family," created by Michael Katz, Romel Ramos and Brandon Miller. The game tells the story of Justin, who is trying to fit in at a new school and becomes involved with some questionable people. He is forced to rely on his friends and mentors to overcome these negative influences.

♦ "Influenced," created by Austin Fain, Tiffany Nguyen, Con Son and Lamesha Coley. In this game, the player chooses various scenarios in which he or she can either help or betray members of the local community, and influence the impact gangs have on the community.

♦ "New Kid on the Block," created by Stephen Berrigan,



Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli plays a game created by George Mason Game Design students in Dewberry Hall at Fairfax Campus. The students created interactive and educational games aimed at teaching kids about the risks of joining gangs.

Steven Fernandez, Devin Gibson, John Murphy and Daniel Paquette. In this game, the player has just moved to a new town and has to assimilate into a new school. He or she must make the right decisions and find a trustworthy group of friends.

THE GAMES ARE TARGETED at middle and high school students. "This is an attempt to reach kids using devices that they already have in their hands," said Arlington resident and George Mason adjunct professor Matt Randon. "The kids are already addicted to these devices so we have a better chance of reaching them with our message."



Seth Hudson, assistant director of the Computer Game Design Program at George Mason University, plays a game created by Mason Game Design students in Dewberry Hall at Fairfax Campus in Virginia. The students created interactive and educational games aimed at teaching kids about the risks of joining gangs.

"I wanted the game to be fun for the player while teaching them about gang violence and how it can be harmful."

— Daniel Paquette

PHOTOS BY
ALEXIS GLENN/
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

During the course, Randon, who also works as an English teacher in Manassas, taught students about the history, practice and design of online games and smartphone applications. Throughout the semester, the students developed written scripts and storyboards, art and sound design, programming, coding and musical compositions.

"I wanted the game to be fun for the player while teaching them about gang violence and how it can be harmful. Finding that balance wasn't easy, but ... we were able to create a game that's educational, but also fun to play," said Daniel Paquette, who helped design one of the games.

THE GAMES will be available for mobile download free of charge by summer 2012. The games will also be available on the attorney general's website, as well as the websites for George Mason University, the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, and Virginia Rules.

"Games have a pretty bad reputation in the media. What I hope this project shows people is that the greatest asset of games is that they make learning fun ... which is a talent school systems around the world should look into," said Stephen Berrigan, lead writer and narrative designer for "New Kid on the Block."

Langley High Orchestra Visits Nashville

The Langley High School Orchestra went to Nashville, Tenn. where they recorded in the RCA studio, participated in an orchestra clinic at Vanderbilt University, attended a performance at the Grand Ole Opry, and stayed in the renowned Gaylord Opryland Resort.



From Slime to Simple Machines

Great Falls Elementary kicks off new science enrichment program.

BY THE GREAT FALLS ELEMENTARY JOURNALISM CLUB

Great Falls Elementary School (GFES) is going where few elementary schools have gone before, into the exciting world of science enrichment.

Thanks to the hard work and generosity of GFES parents, the school's PTA and community organizations, GFES has launched an in-school science lab that treats students to a monthly dose of hands-on learning. Students have had the opportunity to study subjects including sublimation, states of matter, magnification, weather, kinetic energy, laws of motion, animal life cycles and solar power. Sixth graders received a special introduction to biology through squid dissection.

In the spring, older students will even have the chance to build and launch rockets.

Students from all grades are enjoying the program.

According to one third grader, "I really liked looking through the microscopes. I've only ever seen them on TV. It was really neat to actually use one."

One fifth grader said, "the Science Enrichment Lab is such a cool way to learn. You actually get to do experiments and see science in action."

According to studies, it's just this type of excitement that drives future success in the field of science. The National Science Teachers Association and other science-fo-



Students at Great Falls Elementary School learn as part of the new science enrichment program at the school.

cused organizations feel that science activities in the early grades are what lay the groundwork for a love of science as students enter middle and high schools. They support the notion that inquiry science must be a basic in the daily curriculum of every elementary school student at every grade level.

THE SCIENCE LAB was conceptualized and developed by three GFES moms, Rachel Rothstein, Lisa Hodge and Marissa Fallon. Rothstein explains that she was inspired to start the program as she watched her own children crave opportunities in science.

"We want our kids to have the chance to learn in a 'lab' environment, where they can be exposed to science. It's one thing to learn about science through a textbook, it's entirely different to be able to touch and feel the science you are

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



A student at Great Falls Elementary School performs an experiment as part of their new science enrichment program.

expressed their appreciation for the opportunities the Science Lab provides. Parent and PTA-President Caroline Divone points out that, "as budgets are being scaled back in schools, it takes creative thinking and innovative programs to make sure that our students have great learning opportunities. The Great Falls Elementary School community really did a great job with this effort!"

The Science Enrichment Lab is fully funded by contributions from GFES families and local businesses. The program is taught by a former High School Science teacher and parent volunteers. All lessons are designed to reinforce scientific methodologies and vocabulary to help the children develop a familiarity with scientific principles.

LAB TOPICS were chosen by a panel of GFES teachers and supplemented the science curriculum being taught in the classroom. Based on its initial success and rave student reviews, it's a program that will continue at GFES for many years to come.

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COMMUNITY



PHOTO BY AL REITAN

Great Falls artist Jonathan Fisher builds wooden wall reliefs and sculptures in his backyard studio. He attributes creative successes to a welcoming environment for artists in Great Falls. An exhibit of Fisher's work has opened in Reston.



PHOTO BY MIKE McDERMOTT

Jonathan Fisher's art involves assembling painted sticks into a variety of wooden configurations, some shown here with him in his studio. His personal story as a budding artist late in life dovetails with opportunities for creative people in Great Falls, he says.

An Artist's Personal Search: Musing About Great Falls

What does an exhibition of wooden wall reliefs have to say about community?

BY JONATHAN FISHER

More than 100 artists are doing their thing in Great Falls, and I'm glad to say I'm one of them—for my own sake and the sake of the community.

Earlier in April, a solo exhibition of colorful wooden wall hangings that I've built opened at the Market Street Bar & Grill, a restaurant in the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Reston. It is curated by the Greater Reston Arts Center, better known as GRACE. The back story of this show, which runs until July 18, is a tribute to Great Falls and my fellow artists in the village, but it's also a tale of one person's search—my own—to find a creative voice.

Back in 2004, I noticed a commotion in the main conference room of the Great Falls Library. A sale was underway sponsored by an eclectic group of local artists. There were potters, painters, photographers and jewelry designers involved. At the time, I didn't know that Great Falls had an arts movement or that creative expression could even be an important part of life in a suburban community, of all places. I subsequently joined up with this same unlikely band of artsy souls. In the process, I began to think about the values to a community of harboring creative people, not to mention the value to me of being one of the harbored.

One artist's story

Let me tell my own story first. The early primary grades were impossible. I couldn't tell the difference between "was" and "saw," and my frustrated teachers struggled to imprint simple facts on my fragile brain—

one being the incomprehensible notion that $8 \times 8 = 64$, no matter how often you attempt to compute it. Faced with mild dyslexia and frustrations in the normal classroom, I found solace in the art room, where Mrs. Frasier, a bustling figure in a flowing smock, rescued me from the failures of regular academic pursuits to introduce me to a world of paint, prints made with potatoes, and slimy clay you could squish between your fingers. She even overlooked a few behavioral peccadillos, as when I splattered the guillotine-like blade of the art room paper cutter with crimson poster paint and writhed on the floor pretending I'd cut off my finger, which I'd also anointed with faux blood.

Creating things soon became a part of my life. In the seventh grade, my parents ignored common sense and presented me with a jig saw, which I operated almost continuously, without safety glasses, making everything from a small-scale reconstruction of Fort Ticonderoga to a 10-inch-long, Victorian-era carriage. Sawdust spewed out in the family kitchen, accompanied by unending, annoying buzzing noises. Upon occasion, I submitted the resulting wooden constructions as a substitute for written term papers, thanks to the collusion of teachers who took pity on me. There were no injuries, but a few close calls.

Fast forward to college, where I minored in studio art but miraculously also found that more conventional academic subjects could be appealing, too, especially if you actually worked at them. In a life-altering moment in my senior year, I asked my watercolor professor if he thought I should go on to art school. I could see the panic in his eyes, like a deer caught in the headlights.

His function was to encourage me but not at the expense of building false hopes about my limited talents. He gently suggested that some other vocational direction would be more sensible, especially if I wanted to make a living. I've been beholden to him ever since.

I went to journalism school instead, followed by a career editing magazines, which I think was reasonably successful. At very least, it did pay for diapers, insurance, green beans, gasoline and all those other things we need in order to subsist. This vocational direction brought me into touch with some of the world's greatest photographers and the intricacies of graphic design, among other advantages. And in the meantime, I continued dabbling at my avocation—creating things with that same old jig saw, most notably wooden prototypes for board games. With the coming of the Internet and non-print electronic ways to reach audiences, my last magazine, where I'd worked for 30-plus years covering the field of international wildlife, went belly up, and I "retired" a little earlier than normal.

A rich fabric of community

This gets me back to Great Falls and community. The group I joined is called Great Falls Studios, started by longtime Great Falls resident Laura Nichols, a potter, together with a handful of other local artists working in various media. One of its purposes was to help artists succeed. By last year, the number of its members had passed the 100 mark—which is astonishing for a village the size of Great Falls. That means that about 1.5 percent of our households are represented by a working artist of one stripe or another.

As I quickly discovered, these folks are exceptionally talented. They are juried into

prestigious national shows, sell works through galleries across the country, win prizes, teach art, and hold exhibitions throughout the DC area. One member is a household name in the wildly popular field of quilting. Another former member is now a leading jewelry designer in New York, having even created fashion-statement accessories for the First Lady. To be sure, the group also includes beginners, hobbyists and others just dipping toes into the creative stream, but that, I maintain, is a value to a community, especially since the expertise of more experienced artists rubs off on novices, such as myself.

I was also struck by the diversity in this group. You would expect that a bunch of artists of varying ages would have a wide range of outspoken views on all kinds of matters. And these do. But they also have a common passion that unites people of different backgrounds, cultures and religions—in turn, uniting the community. The local artists are Muslims, Jews, Sikhs, Hindus, Catholics, Protestants, Mormons and non-believers, among others. They came originally from Argentina, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, England, Canada, Iran, Israel, South Korea, Mexico, China, and numerous other countries, as well as from distant points within the US, each bringing a tradition from their cultures to share with the other artists.

What art means for all of us

As might be expected, national arts organizations, including the National Endowment for the Arts, make the case that such an infusion of art is good for a community. The arts, they maintain, are as important as parks, safety, places of worship, good

SEE COMMUNITY, PAGE 15

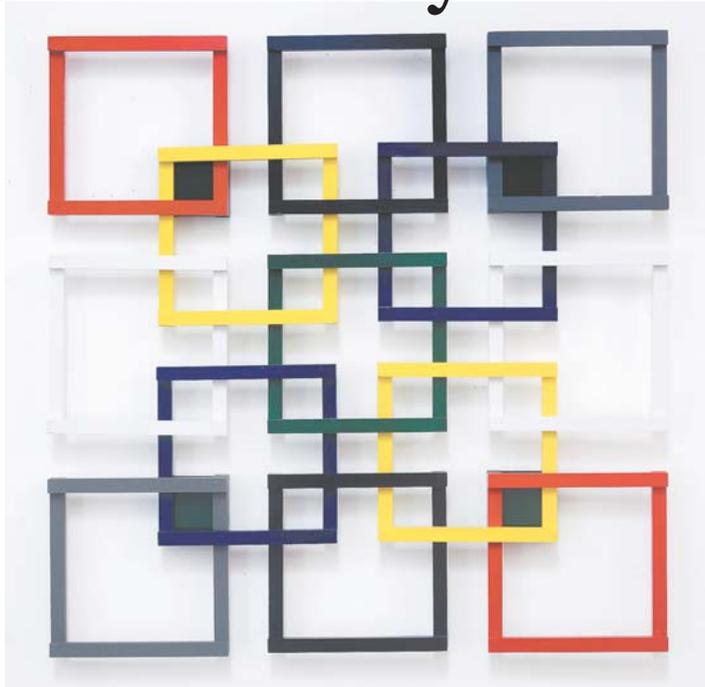
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A Sense of Community Colors Artist's Work

FROM PAGE 14

schools, ball fields, economic opportunities, housing and other measures in defining what makes a place desirable. They also say the arts spawn economic growth. It is very difficult to measure something like this, especially in a small bedroom community like ours. But intuitively, you have to think that it makes sense. If I were a realtor attempting to sell the virtues of Great Falls, I'd say that an artful community is an exceedingly good place to live.

There are other arguments for the arts, as well. One put forward by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, which comprises state government members such as the Virginia Commission for the Arts, is that children who are exposed to art in school actually perform better in basic subjects such as math and reading. The speculation is that this has something to do with the interaction of different parts of the brain. I can't vouch for this argument either nor for the science behind it, but I can



"Metro Routes," a collection of interlocking boxes, is typical of Jonathan Fisher's work. He is interested in patterns and textures that he sees in nature and the built environment, and his three-dimensional wood constructions often reflect ideas of geometric abstraction.

point to my own wobbly school experience as an example that art can, indeed, play a critical role in learning.

I would also postulate that in today's economy creative thinking is more important than ever. Whether you are a software designer or a cook, a soccer coach or a business entrepreneur, the ability to come up with new and creative solutions to problems is a competitive advantage. In what has been called the "creative economy," innovative thought processes of the sort spawned by painting or weaving or photography will be in increasing demand.

An outsized impact

The bottom line is that all those opportunities in Great Falls to meet other artists, explore creative expression and display art work in local venues has had a profound effect on me. I've fine-tuned my own particular artistic niche, often with the input of other artists. I've taken my chosen art form (which involves assembling painted sticks into three-dimensional wall hangings and sculptures) in new di-

rections, with new approaches and new insights. I've even won a grant from the Arts Council of Fairfax County, which encourages local talents.

In looking at one artist's work, you may not recognize how a sense of community plays into personal expression. But if you check out my show of wall reliefs, please keep it in mind. The exhibit (called "Flashpoints: A Celebration of Painted Wood") started on April 16 and will run until July 18, with a reception on Monday, June 11, from 5 to 7 p.m. Both the show and the reception are in the Market Street Bar & Grill in the Hyatt Regency, 1800 Presidents Street, in Reston.

I don't make much of a living at this second, late-in-life career of mine. Few artists do. And I give special credit to my wife Carol who now subsidizes my passion by working a grueling schedule in her own field to pay for the green beans and other amenities in life, including an outsized Great Falls mortgage. But I'm having a great time. And Great Falls' community preoccupation with creativity has something to do with that.

By the way, that original saw I received in the seventh grade finally went kaput six years ago. I bought a new one. And I use safety glasses now.

VOTE

Vote on McLean Day

McLean Community Center
Governing Board Election
Saturday, May 19, from 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road

Your Vote is Your Voice!

All qualified residents of Small District 1A Dranesville are encouraged to vote for members of the 2012-2013 MCC Governing Board.

- You need not be registered to vote in the general election
- Proof of residence, such as a driver's license, is required

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ENTERTAINMENT

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

THURSDAY/MAY 17

An Evening with Charlie Hunter. 8
p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave.
E., Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

**Chapter 227, Vietnam Veterans of
America Inc.** 7:30 p.m. Neighbor's
Restaurant, 262D Cedar Lane, Cedar
Lane Shopping Center, Vienna.
Including the presentation of awards
to the winners of the 12th Annual
Vince Kaspar Awards for Excellence
in the Arts, a community program
recognizes art and poetry talents of
local high school students. The
general public and all veterans are
invited. Free admission is free. 703-
255-0353 or
www.vva227.org.

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

FRIDAY/MAY 18

"Flora the Red Menace." 8 p.m. 1st
Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tyson's
Corner. A musical by John Kander
and Fred Ebb, set in the Great
Depression. \$15-\$30.
www.1ststage Tyson's.org.

**Friends of the Great Falls Library
Book Sale.** 10 a.m. Great Falls
Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike,
Great Falls. Spring used book sale.
703-757-8560.

Friday Flicks. 10:30 a.m. Tysons-
Pimmit Regional Library, 7584
Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Call for
movie title. All ages. 703-790-8088.

An Evening with John Fullbright at
7:30 p.m.; **FunkMnkyz, Feed God
Cabbage, Poor Man's Copyright
and Castro** at 10 p.m. Jammin'
Java, 227 Maple Ave. East, Vienna.
www.jamminjava.com.

"Sleuth." 7:30 p.m. James Lee
Community Center, 2855 Annandale
Road, Falls Church. Providence
Players in a whodunit classic. \$15-
\$18. 703-425-6782 or
www.providenceplayers.org.

SATURDAY/MAY 19

**McLean Day 2012: Celebrating
Our Hometown.** 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge
Road, McLean. Family fun day of
outdoor activities, including
amusement rides and stage
entertainment plus four new food
vendors. Free admission.

Colonial Spring Market Fair. 11
a.m.-4:30 p.m. Claude Moore
Colonial Farm, 6310 Georgetown
Pike, McLean. Period music, quilts
and other games, children's puppet
theater, farm animals. Fencing
lessons, blacksmith, herbs and
flowers, colonial market stands and
more. See Farm family and
community members in character
and costume. Refreshments available.
Adults \$6, age 3-12 and seniors \$3.
703-903-9330.

Children's Shows: Milkshake Trio.
11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Jammin' Java,
227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna.
www.jamminjava.com.

Flea Market & Yard Sale. 8 a.m.-2
p.m. Great Falls United Methodist
Church, 10100 Georgetown Pike,
Great Falls. Spaces available to rent,
\$20. 703-582-1640 or
c.wright@longandfoster.com.

Kintz-Mejia Academy of Ballet. 2
p.m. and 7 p.m. George Mason High
School, 7124 Leesburg Pike, Falls
Church. Two original one-act ballets:
Snow White and Alice in
Wonderland. \$30. 703-893-0404 or
www.kintzmejiaballet.com.

"Flora the Red Menace." 2 p.m. and



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**Musician Scott Ramminger and his band, the
Crawstickers, will perform at McLean Day 2012:
Celebrating Our Hometown. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. on Satur-
day, May 19, Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge
Road, McLean. Family fun day of outdoor activities,
including amusement rides and stage entertainment
plus four new food vendors. Free admission.**

8 p.m. 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill
Road, Tyson's Corner. A musical by
John Kander and Fred Ebb, set in the
Great Depression. \$15-\$30.
www.1ststage Tyson's.org.

Art Reception and Benefit Raffle. 4
p.m. The Vienna Arts Society, 115
Pleasant St. N.W., Vienna. A portion
of the proceeds will benefit the
American Legion's emergency fund
for military families in distress. 703-
319-3971 or
www.ViennaArtsSociety.org.

Korean Bell Garden Opening.
Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, 9750
Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna.
Marking the 25th anniversary of
Meadowlark's 1987 opening. 703-
255-3631.

Volksmarch. 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, 9750
Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna.
www.ava.org, event #92677.

**Friends of the Great Falls Library
Book Sale.** 10 a.m. Great Falls
Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike,
Great Falls. Spring used book sale.
703-757-8560.

**Plant Clinic hosted by the Master
Gardeners.** 10 a.m. Tysons-Pimmit
Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg
Pike, Falls Church. Answers to
gardening questions. Adults. 703-
790-8088.

**The Joy of Dance with Ballet &
Jazz.** 3 p.m. Tysons-Pimmit Regional
Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls
Church. The Adagio Dance Company
and Adagio Ballet's Advanced Jazz
students. All Ages. 703-790-8088.

Bach 2 Rock Music Teachers. 5
p.m. The Palladium Civic Place
Green, 1445 Laughlin Avenue,
McLean. Free. 703-288-9505.

Country Western Dance. Luther
Jackson Middle School, 3020 Gallows
Road, Falls Church. Line dance lesson
7:30 p.m., couples lesson 8 p.m.
Open dancing 8:30-11 p.m. \$5-\$12.
www.nvcwda.org or 703-860-4941.

Carsie Blanton and Dawn Landes
at 7:30 p.m.; **In The Lobby Bar
with Fight The Lion** at 10 p.m.
Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. East,
Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

**Seikilos to U2: A Tour Through
Music History.** 7:30 p.m. UUCF
2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. The
Vienna Choral Society presents a
concert to support arts education.
Pre-concert talk by Creative Director
Jennifer Rodgers Beach, 7 p.m. \$15-
\$20, families \$35.
www.viennachoralsociety.org.

City of Fairfax Antique Car Show.
10 a.m.-3 p.m. City Hall, 10455
Armstrong St, Fairfax. See a Model-T
Ford reassembled in 15 minutes.
Antique cars and live bluegrass

music. Food available for purchase.
Presented by the Northern Virginia
Regional Group of the Early Ford V-
08 Club, the City of Fairfax and
others. A portion of the proceeds
benefit the Armed Forces Retirement
Home in Washington D.C.
www.nvrg.org or info@nvrg.org.

**Wine down with the Ques Wine
Tasting Fundraiser.** 1 p.m. The
Tasting Room of Maison du Vin, 7
756 Walker Road, Suite D, Great
Falls. Wine tasting, hot hors
d'oeuvres and live jazz music. \$45,
age 21 and up. Proceeds benefit the
scholarship program. info@OKK-QUES.org or okk-ques.org/winetasting.

**Benefit Yard Sale for Hartwood
Foundation and Relay for Life.**
8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. 608 Plum St.,
Vienna. Hosted by the Vienna
Woman's Club.
pegpuhl@cardinalsfc.com.

Community Cookout. 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Loebig Chiropractic and Rehab, 754
Walker Road, Great Falls. Free
adjustments for existing patients,
seated massages and more. Hot dogs,
face painting and moon bounce. 703-
757-5817 or
www.loebigchiropractic.com.

"Sleuth." 7:30 p.m. James Lee
Community Center, 2855 Annandale
Road, Falls Church. Providence
Players in a whodunit classic. \$15-
\$18. 703-425-6782 or
www.providenceplayers.org.

SUNDAY/MAY 20

Mosaic Harmony Choir. 4 p.m.
Unitarian Universalist Church of
Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road,
Oakton. Silent auction beginning at
3:30 p.m. \$25-\$30, under age 12
free. www.mosaic Harmony.org or
703-764-8061.

Kintz-Mejia Academy of Ballet. 2
p.m. George Mason High School,
7124 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church.
Two original one-act ballets: Snow
White and Alice in Wonderland. \$30.
703-893-0404 or
www.kintzmejiaballet.com.

**City of Fairfax Band: Rite of
Spring.** 3 p.m. Oakton High School,
2900 Sutton Road, Vienna. Northern
Virginia Youth Winds, the official
youth ensemble of the City of Fairfax
Band Association, comprised of high
school woodwind, brass and
percussion students. \$5, students
free. christinarbianchi@gmail.com.

"Flora the Red Menace." 2 p.m. and
7 p.m. 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill
Road, Tyson's Corner. A musical by

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 17

THIS IS "GRETCHEN"



After raising 4 of her own kittens
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**MCC Governing
Board Elections**
10:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

The McLean Community Center
703-790-0123/TTY: 711
www.mcleancenter.org

ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 16

John Kander and Fred Ebb, set in the Great Depression. \$15-\$30. www.1ststageysons.org.

Mill Run Dulcimer Band Concert. 2 p.m. Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, McLean. Old-time tunes. Free. 703-759-2771.

Wagon Ride to Poohsticks Bridge. 10 a.m. Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. For age 2 and up, accompanied by register adult. Listen to Pooh's story. \$5. Register at 703-759-9018.

Colonial Spring Market Fair. 11 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Claude Moore Colonial Farm, 6310 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Period music, quilts and other games, children's puppet theater, farm animals. Fencing lessons, blacksmith, herbs and flowers, colonial market stands and more. See Farm family and community members in character and costume. Refreshments available. Adults \$6, age 3-12 and seniors \$3. 703-903-9330.

Gardening with Deer. 2 p.m. Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. Tips on how to plan your garden with deer in mind. \$5. Reservations required at 703-255-3631.

Half Brother and The Jefferson Davis Highway String Band at 1 p.m.; **William Beckett (formerly of The Academy Is...)** and **Mansions** at 7:30 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. www.janminjava.com.

Words&Music, Inc. American Composer Series. 7 p.m. St. Francis Episcopal Church, at 9220 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Pre-concert discussion at 6:15 p.m. The area premiere of Tom Cipullo's "Insomnia" and a new version of

Howard Frazin's "The Voice of Isaac." Featuring baritone Steven Combs. Reception to follow. \$25 adults, \$18 students and seniors. info@wordsmusic.org or 202-643-7282.

"Sleuth." 2 p.m. James Lee Community Center, 2855 Annandale Road, Falls Church. Providence Players in a whodunit classic. \$15-\$18. 703-425-6782 or www.providenceplayers.org.

MONDAY/MAY 21

Tiny Tot Time. 10:30 a.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave., McLean. Songs, rhymes and activities. Age 13-23 months. 703-356-0770.

Preschool Storytime. 10:30 a.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Stories, songs and activities. Age 3-5 with adult. 703-757-8560.

Lukas Nelson & Promise of the Real and Spirit Family Reunion. 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. www.janminjava.com.

TUESDAY/MAY 22

Tuesday Storytime. 10:30 a.m. Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Stories, songs, and activities. Ages 1-2 with caregiver. 703-790-8088.

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

Our Vintage Film, Bonaventure, The Offset and Money Cannot Be Eaten. 7 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. www.janminjava.com.

Forestville Presents Musical

Last weekend, Forestville Elementary School performed the musical, "Wonka," about a children's contest at a fantastical chocolate factory.

Actors auditioned in January and had been rehearsing for months in preparation. Under the direction of Dodgeball Theatre director Haley Murphy, and with the choreography of Heide Zufall and Music Direction of Irena Chklovskii, the 47 young actors created an evening of wild and fanciful characters, locations, dances, and songs. "This has been an amazing group of young actors who put on an incredible performance," Murphy said.

Based on the original book "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" by Roald Dahl, "Wonka" tells the familiar tale of the enigmatic Willy Wonka as he leads five very special golden ticket winners and their parents on a tour of his factory. Familiar scenes include children falling into a chocolate river, blowing up into a blueberry, falling into an incinerator, and being



From left, Violet played by Angelina Paul, Mrs. Beauregard played by Deidre Price, Willy Wonka played by Erica Barton, Augustus Gloop played by Haley Lobsenz, and Candy Kid played by Nadia Eghbali.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Veruca Salt, center, played by Holly Waters; Oompa Loompas to her left and right: Taelor Oey and Maia Spoto.

shrunk into a six-inch boy. Cynthia Adler and set by Jan Rossberg. The production was a visual delight, with the fanciful costumes by

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703-757-0877

Vienna Baptist Church ...
703-281-4400

New Union Baptist Church...
703-281-2556

Buddhist
Vajrayogini Buddhist Center...
202-331-2122

Church of the Brethern
Oakton Church of the Brethern ...
703-281-4411

Catholic
Our Lady of Good Counsel ...
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St. Athanasius Catholic Church
...703-759-4555
St. Mark's Catholic Church ... 703-281-9100

Charismatic
Christian Assembly ... 703-698-9777

Church of Christ
Berea Church of Christ ... 703-893-7040

Disciples of Christ
Antioch Christian Church ... 703-938-6753

Episcopal
Church of the Holy Comforter
...703-938-6521

Church of the Holy Cross ... 703-698-6991
St. Francis Episcopal ... 703-759-2082

Jehovah's Witness
Jehovah's Witnesses ... 703-759-1579

Lutheran
Emmanuel Lutheran Church ...703-938-2119
Christ The King Lutheran Church
...703-759-6068

St. Athanasius Lutheran Church... 703-455-4003

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Church of the Good Shepherd
...703-281-3987

Charles Wesley United Methodist Church
...703-356-6336

The Vine Methodist Church ... 703-573-5336

Ephiphany United Methodist
...703-938-3494

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Unity of Fairfax ... 703-281-1767

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...703-759-3705

Oakton United Methodist
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Smith Chapel United Methodist
... 571-434-9680

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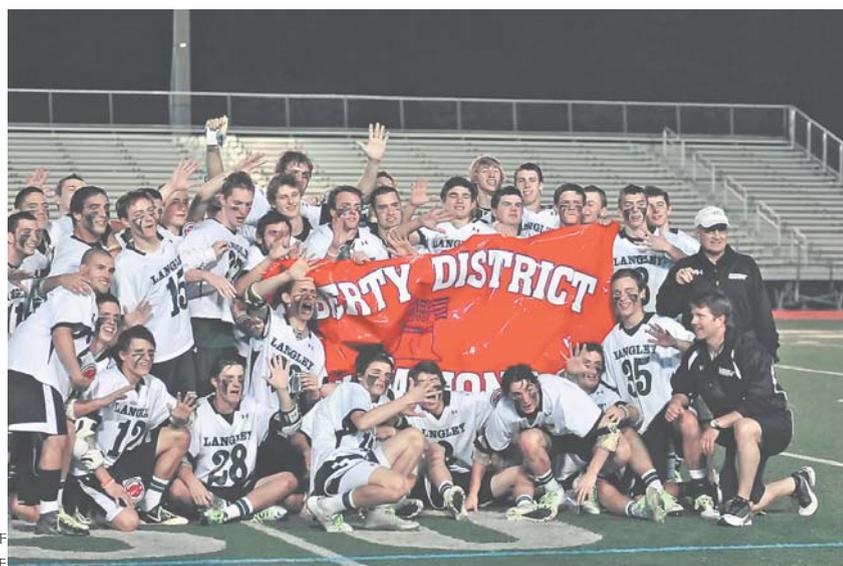
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The Saxons celebrate their Liberty District boys' lacrosse finals win over Madison last Friday night. The contest took place at Marshall High School.



PHOTO/COURTESY OF
LANGLEY BOYS LACROSSE

Langley Boys Lacrosse Edges Madison in Liberty Finals

Ahearn's 5 goals, 4 assists lead Saxons to fifth consecutive district crown.

The Langley High Saxons captured their fifth Liberty District tournament title in as many years last Friday, May 11 in a riveting boys lacrosse contest at Marshall High School. The Saxons defeated a tenacious Madison Warhawk side that pushed the Saxons to the brink before they were able to secure a 13-12, smash-and-grab finals win for the district title.

A pair of Langley man-advantage goals - a game-tying score by senior Sean Ahearn, and the winner from senior Mike Adams - deep into the fourth quarter ultimately made the difference between the long-time Liberty team rivals who battled to the end with the prospect of overtime looming as the final horn approached.

By building an 8-5 halftime lead and scoring the opening goal of the second half to make it 9-5, the Saxons looked to be settling into a steady stride to the evening's finish line. But the Warhawks had other ideas, and exploded for six goals in six minutes that tipped the scales in their favor by two goals early in the final period.

What seemed to be an imminent shift in Liberty supremacy was put on hold, however, when strikes from Saxon senior Josh Sibio and then Ahearn erased the deficit in a two-minute span, leaving final resolution in some doubt with an 11-11 score with eight minutes remaining in regulation time. Senior Connor Strock nudged Madison ahead once again, only to see Ahearn supply his fifth goal of the game - the Langley attacker also had four assists - to tie the score at 12 apiece at 3 minutes, 47 seconds showing on the clock. The game-tying score came early in an extra-man opportunity that came out of a slashing infraction during a dangerous build-up by the Saxons on the counter-attack.

Warhawk junior Kyle Rowe, who excelled in the center spot re-starts throughout the night, thought he had given his side the lead again right out of the ensuing face-off. But the apparent goal was nullified when the middle was judged to have entered the crease area before the ball had gone into the net.

However, Madison had a one-minute man advantage

at the 1:31 mark due to an illegal body check call on Langley. But the Saxon defenders kept their composure and limited their opponent to a single shot attempt during their man-down situation.

An off-sides infraction yielded a 30-second power play for Langley, although only 19 seconds were needed for Adams to snap in a score from eight yards, allowing the Saxons to go ahead 13-12 in what would prove to be the game-winner.

The Warhawks generated one last good look in their bid to level matters but the goal-bound shot by junior middle Matthew Arndt was kept out by Langley senior goalie Andrew Spivey. The Saxons then literally ran out the clock with controlled possession during the remaining time.

IN ADDITION TO AHEARN'S five goals and the Sibio score, Langley got four goals from Adams and solo strikes from senior middies Slater Howell and Clay Rivers, and from sophomore attack/middle J. T. Meyer.

Strock joined attackers Kyle Mancini, a junior, and Brett Simeck, a sophomore, in supplying single goals for Madison, which also had junior goalie Matt Hayden providing one of his own late in the opening quarter. Junior attacker Nick Gabriel and junior middle Ian Cooke did much of the heavy lifting on the Warhawks' offense with each delivering a hat-trick to go with a pair from senior attacker Kellen Schmitz.

Rowe claimed 24 of 29 face-offs in a productive performance at the center that was the engine of the Madison outburst early in second half play and an imposing threat had the battle extended past regulation time.

Spivey was credited with 11 saves while Hayden turned back eight Saxon goal-bound attempts. The netminders were sharp at important moments but the two were just as busy picking the ball out of their respective cages as both offenses had their shooting sticks in prime form for the district title encounter.

On Tuesday, May 15 of this week, Madison head coach Rich Hodge was set to lead his Warhawks (12-5 overall, 7-3 district) against 11-5 Westfield (Concorde District) in a first round game of the 16-team Northern Region tournament. Langley head coach Earl Brewer, meanwhile, was to see his top-seeded Saxons (15-2, 10-0) from the Liberty entertain Concord No. 4-seed Robinson (7-6, 4-3), also on Tuesday.



PHOTO/COURTESY OF LANGLEY SOFTBALL

Saxons Celebrate Senior Night

On Tuesday, May 8, Langley High's four softball seniors - Lauren Mensing, Hope Albers, Julia Weeks and Jenna Dunn (all four towards the right) - were honored during Senior Night celebration ceremonies. On top of it being Senior Night, with the four 12th grade ball players being honored on their outstanding careers with the program, the evening was extra special as the Saxons celebrated Great Falls Little League Night as well. The Little League players were out in full force and treated the Saxon seniors as true stars. In the Liberty District game itself, the Saxons were victorious over opponent Jefferson.

SPORTS ROUNDUPS

Great Falls Soccer Club travel soccer tryouts for rising U9 boys' and girls' teams will continue this Sunday, May 20. The tryouts are for players born on or after Aug. 1, 2003. Registration will be completed at the field so youngsters should be accompanied by an adult to provide necessary information.

Tryout dates, times and locations: Sunday, May 20, 6-7:30 p.m., at Lockmeade Park; Sunday, June 10, 6-7:30 p.m., at Lockmeade Park.

The rain date, if needed, will be Friday, June 15 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Lockmeade Park.

Lockmeade Park is located at 1050 Riva Ridge Drive in Great Falls.

All Players should wear plain white T-Shirts (undershirt) to tryouts. Tryout officials will write a number in permanent marker on the shirts. The t-shirts should be worn each day of tryouts.

For more information, contact Great Falls Soccer's Sam Bader at hussam81@hotmail.com

Great Falls Everton rising U12 boys soccer teams will hold tryouts on the following dates: Wednesday, June 6, from 5-6:30

p.m. at Nike Park Field 7; Tuesday, June 12 and Thursday, June 14, from 5-6:30 p.m. at Lake Fairfax No. 4.

Great Falls Summer Camp registration is open. The full day camp sessions will run June 18-22, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Soccer will be the focus of the camp in the morning sessions, and the afternoon sessions will focus on other games and sports, including kick ball, frisbee, dodge ball, volleyball and other fun sports events.

The half day morning sessions for soccer will run from 9 a.m. to noon on the following weeks: June 18-22; July 23-27; Aug. 13-17. These sessions are designed for soccer players who are looking for additional technical skills training, but in a less competitive and less intense environment than travel training.

The training programs will be age-group appropriate. Players will emerge from the training camp with a greater love and understanding of soccer. It is not a requirement to have played soccer, or to have played soccer within the Great Falls Soccer Club programs.

For more information go to administrator@greatfallssoccer.com

Members of the Old Brogue Hockey winter 2012 championship team, consisting of several Langley High School alumni.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Old Brogue Hockey Skates Away with Fifth Title

Inline hockey team wins third straight championship.

BY ALEX McVEIGH
THE CONNECTION

Chris Bass is no stranger to the Old Brogue. As a young man he was there on opening day in 1981 and hasn't strayed too far since. In fact, now he wears a jersey with the bar's name on it, as a member of the Old Brogue inline hockey team.

Bass, a Langley High School graduate who currently teaches at Langley and owns Langley Real Estate serves as captain, coach and player for the team, which also features a number of Langley alumni.

"I started teaching at Langley 13 years ago and began coaching an inline hockey team," he said. "It grew pretty quick from about 10 kids playing after school with a folding goal, and soon we formed a team."

The team plays at the Dulles SportsPlex in Sterling. They play a four-on-four game, wearing hip, shin and kneepads as well as gloves. The games are serious, as the cast on Bass's right wrist can attest, he was injured in the team's most recent semifinals win.

"The game is a little bit faster, and with a lot more scoring," Bass said.

Games are on Thursdays and Sundays, and the team doesn't get much chance to practice together besides game days.

"We have about five minutes before games to warm up, and then we're playing," said Rob McMains, Langley Class of 2003. "But I think we've gotten a good feel for what everybody does, and we're all pretty responsive and talkative as the game is going on. We're able to communicate pretty well."

AT ONE POINT in the early 2000s they had enough people to field three teams, two "junior varsity" and one "varsity." During their first iteration the team won championships in the winter of 2003 and 2004, but after a while the team drifted apart.

Recently they re-formed and picked up their success right where they left off, winning three championships in a row, the most recent being a few weeks ago. During this current run, they posted a 14-1 regular season record and a 3-0 postseason record, scoring 123 goals and only allowing 42.

"We were able to win the last three seasons, which we didn't necessarily expect going in," McMains said. "An inline place closed last year so we added a few teams, and it was really competitive last season, and it's only going to get more so."

The current team is made up of mostly Langley alumni, ranging from 1993 to 2009.

Jason Zuccari, a member of Langley's Class of 2006, was a player under Bass at Langley. He's played inline and ice hockey.

"It's been nice reconnecting to people I haven't seen in a while," he said. "A lot of the guys on the team were seniors when I was a

freshman, guys I hadn't seen in 10 years, so it's cool to see how everyone's life has brought them back to the area."

Bass says the team is on a good run now, and he hopes it continues.

"This is our longest streak of playing together and it's been a lot of fun," Bass said. "We lost a few players last season, but we were able to replace them, and now I think we have enough guys interested to feed the system."

There are three seasons per year, summer, fall and winter, and the summer 2011, fall 2011 and winter 2012 seasons all resulted in championships for Old Brogue Hockey.

"Hopefully the summer 2012 trophy will have our names on it as well," Bass said.

THE TEAM'S REACH has extended literally around the globe, with jersey sales coming from around the country and even Germany. Bass says the jerseys can regularly be found at Capitals games and even recalls one instance where a friend of his saw a jersey in Sonoma, Calif.

The summer season began May 3. More information can be found on Facebook under "Old Brogue Hockey."



The trophy for the Old Brogue inline hockey team, commemorating their five championships.

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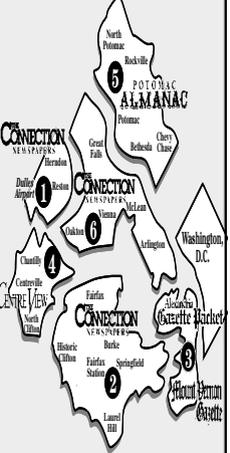
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NEWSPAPERS

"Psycho-not-so-matic" Anymore



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Whatever I thought was only happening in my head – or not, or was really happening physically – or not, is the muddled description of the thoughts and emotions that this cancer survivor/cancer patient-still-receiving-treatment feels every time I make a 24/7 self assessment (which is often). An assessment that seems to have a mind of its own, and one which is mostly beyond my control to prevent/manage its ugly head from rearing whenever it pleases. As much as I pretend, as much as I deny, as much as I compartmentalize, any and every thing that happens to me happens in the context of having cancer. Any misstep, physically or emotionally, real or imagined always brings me back to the elephant in every room in every house; in fact, that metaphorical elephant is in every closet, every drawer, on every television channel and radio station; home or on the road; everywhere; especially and of course predominantly, in my head, and originally in my lungs and mediastinum, where it still remains, "stable," for the moment.

Whatever strategy I have employed in an attempt to manipulate my circumstances, to prevent cancer from getting the best of me emotionally, always suffers a setback after a visit to my oncologist. As much as I've tried to make light of these appointments over the last three years, having heart-to-heart, life-and-death conversations with YOUR cancer doctor, one who has already told you that he "can't cure you, that he can only treat you," is unsettling at best and downright depressing and mind-numbing at worst. Facing one's own mortality at age 57 conjures two quotes from Curly Howard of The Three Stooges, a famous one and a funny one: "I'm a victim of soy-cumstance," and "I'm too young to die, too handsome; well, too young, anyway."

Laughing in the face of adversity has been an ongoing and overriding pursuit of mine since being diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer in February, 2009. Not that my circumstances are anything to laugh about but, oddly enough, crying about them or "woeing" is me about them is a bit of a tired pursuit – for me. Sure I've cried and been curious why a lifelong non-smoker with no immediate family history of cancer could be diagnosed with a terminal disease at age 54, a mere eight weeks after burying my widowed mother. Nevertheless, life goes on, and it has, as I've now outlived my original prognosis by years, causing my oncologist to say to me at the end of my most recent appointment (and the one I may be overreacting to in this column): "It's been a privilege treating you." Words, as I say, "to live by."

Where I'm going in this column is a place I've never been: a new phase in my treatment, with new medications, new side effects, new consequences and new worries; all of which are unknown and unfamiliar to me. Presumably all of the above are simply more of the same – only different, if you know what I mean – (things I can handle, just calling them different things) meaning my concerns are more in my head than they are in my body. But I really won't know until I've lived it. For the moment, I can only anticipate it. Knowing what I knew is much preferred to not knowing what's new. And what lies ahead is definitely new. I can't say anymore: "been there and done that" – I can only say that I'm glad – and privileged, to still be doing anything.

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

NEWS

The Fun Run Draws All Ages

Just up the street from 1400 Trap Road, neighbors and tiny tots were up and about at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, May 5. Some were walking; others were running.

A young teenage girl and a parent stood at the entrance of a trail leading to a parkland. They ranged in age from 3-year olds to middle-aged men and women. They were all participating in the Sixth Annual Colvin Run Elementary School Fun Run.

Mary Wells, who was accompanied by her two children and her dog, had completed seven laps when she paused for a photograph. Given that the fun run has been dubbed as the "fund run" in the past, most participants were walking or running for a cause. "We haven't picked a charity yet," said Mary as she added that maybe the Fun Run organizers have a charity picked out for them.

Mary K and her daughter Katherine, who attends Colvin Run Elementary had just completed a lap each and were planning to give the funds they raised to an adoption charity or to the American Heritage Girls.

Emmy Brilliant and Grace Riihimaki had to be beckoned away from the refreshment



PHOTOS BY SANGEETA KUMAR

Maria Wells of Vienna, with her sons Emrik and Oskar. Each of the Wells did seven laps, except for the Golden Doodle who dropped out after three laps.

stand by their parents to answer the question of the day: "So how many laps did you do?" A parent asked. Both girls flashed four fingers to indicate four laps a piece. The rubber band bucket was getting depleted of rubber bands at a fast rate. The bands were in a bucket that was attended to by a Joyce Kilmer student, Olivia Marcantonio, who once attended Colvin Run Elementary.

She was accompanied by a parent who gave her name as Shan Shan and kept a close tally of the rubber bands leaving the bucket.

The Sixth Annual Colvin Run Elementary School Fun Run was marketed as a "super event that provides exercise to participants and financial support to charitable organizations," Matt Kingsley said via email.

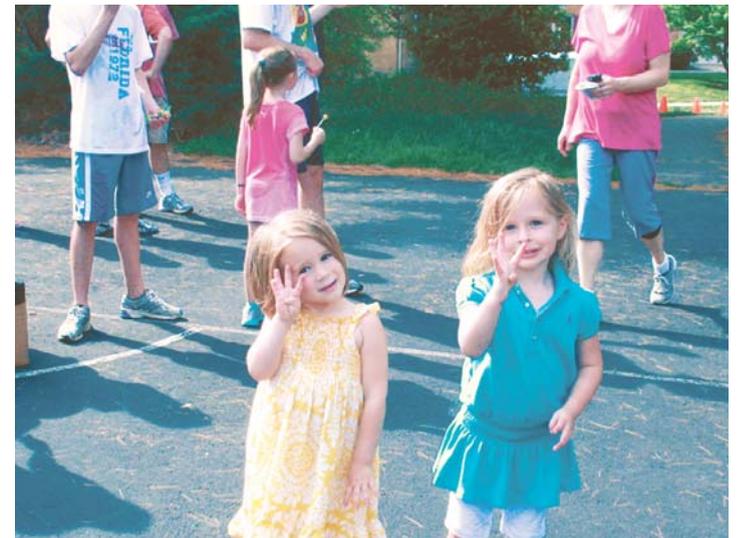
— SANGEETA KUMAR



Kathryn K, a 10-year-old at Colvin Run writes her family's name on the Healing Table after completing one lap. Her mother, who wished to be identified just as Mary K. said they hadn't decided on a charity yet but would likely give to The American Heritage Girls—a faith-based charity.



Sydney, a first grader at Colvin Run Elementary, writes her name on the Healing Table. She did two laps.



Two 3-year-olds, Emmy Brilliant and Grace Riihimaki. hold up four fingers when asked how many laps each of them did.



Olivia Marcantonio, a 13-year-old student at Joyce Kilmer Middle School and alumni of Colvin Run Elementary and Shan Shan—both volunteer at the rubber band stand at the Fun Run.

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