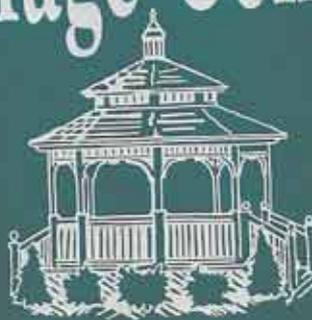


A group of Great Falls women launch an initiative to leave a portion of their holiday spending in their own backyard and in their hometown.

Promoting 'A Greater Falls'

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Great Falls
Village Centre



Shops, Offices and Restaurants

Langley High Choirs In Holiday Concert

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Dynamic and Diverse

FOCUS ON IMMIGRATION, PAGE 12

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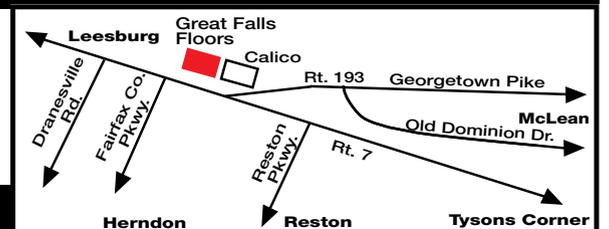
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'Jean' Therapy Helps Homeless

Fairfax County kicks off second annual Jeans Day on Dec. 14.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

Everyone knows that gene therapy can help scientists treat a number of debilitating diseases, but what about human "jean" therapy?

The homonyms might have more in common than you think, which is why the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors proclaimed Friday, Dec. 14 "Jeans Day," an innovative approach to alleviating chronic homelessness in Fairfax County.

On Jeans Day 2012, Fairfax County is asking businesses, schools and community residents to pull on a pair of their favorite jeans to demonstrate their support for ending homelessness.

The day of community give-back is hosted by The Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness, The Connection Newspapers and Apple Federal Credit Union.

A popular fundraiser for homelessness and other causes nationwide, Jeans Day is a relatively simple idea. Companies go casual for a cause, inviting employees to wear their jeans to work in exchange for a \$5 contribution to fight homelessness. Last year, more than 100 employers representing 3,000 employees participated in the initiative.

"We're proud to partner with the county, through the Office to Prevent & End Homelessness, The Connection Newspapers and Apple Credit Union to provide an opportunity for businesses and their employees to participate in the robust work to end homelessness going on in our community," said Fairfax Chamber President & CEO Jim Corcoran.

"Now, more than ever, we need you to get involved as we move forward with the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnership to Prevent and End



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY

The Board of Supervisors designated Dec. 14, 2012, as Jeans Day in Fairfax County at their Dec. 4 meeting. (Center) Jim Corcoran, president of The Fairfax Chamber of Commerce, holds the proclamation with Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova.

Homelessness. Everyone is in need of some type of help at one point in time or another," said Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova. "Now, we need your help and Jeans Day is a great way for you and your business to get involved to prevent and end homelessness in our community as we know it."

Nearly 3,000 children, women and men face homelessness and the threat of severe temperatures and hunger today in the Fairfax County-Falls Church community, according to Dean Klein, executive director of Fairfax County's Office to Prevent and End Homelessness (OPEH).

The majority of people without homes in our community are children and working families.

"In Fairfax County, it's easy to forget that there are homeless families here, homeless children in the schools, and that many people who are homeless here are actually working, but don't make nearly enough money to afford housing," said The Connection Publisher Mary Kimm. "The Connection is committed to raising awareness of homelessness and the need to provide permanent shelter, and to recognizing the good works of individuals and businesses in Northern Virginia."

"I'm excited because Jeans Day is an easy avenue to get employees and their companies, and people of all ages, involved in learning about the challenges and solutions in preventing and ending homelessness," Klein said.

Board Selects Appointees to Commission

Bi-partisan group will review election process.

On Tuesday, Dec. 4, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors appointed representatives to the Bi-partisan Election Process Improvement Commission, which was created by the board after long lines were reported across various voting precincts during the most recent election.

The list of appointees consists of two co-chairs; one appointee designated by each supervisor; two appointees designated by the chairman; chairs of both the Republican and Democratic Party of Fairfax County; and representatives from various Fairfax County organizations, including the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce, the League of Women Voters, the Fairfax Bar Association, Fairfax County Public Schools Administration, Federation of Citizen's

Association, and disability and minority community representatives.

The purpose of the commission is to review and make recommendations regarding Fairfax County's election process. The commission will concentrate on ways to improve the county's efficiency on Election Day, with a specific focus on addressing wait times, long lines and various voting issues.

"I am pleased to see that the commission is moving forward," Chairman Sharon Bulova said. "It is important that the county identify ways to reduce lines, decrease wait times, and streamline our election process. I am eager to find ways we can improve for future elections."

Bulova recommended the commission begin work in January 2013 after appointments have been made and that recommendations be presented to the Board of Supervisors in May of 2013.

—VICTORIA ROSS



Bella, a Sheshan, waits for the start of the 16th Annual Greater McLean Chamber of Commerce ReinDog Parade on Saturday morning, Dec. 1. Over 40 area dogs dressed in costume participated in the annual event.

PHOTOS BY
ROBBIE HAMMER/
THE CONNECTION

'Best Friends' Parade in McLean

Annual ReinDog Parade attracts hundreds to downtown McLean.



Alex Williams, 6, of McLean, takes pictures of the canine participants of the 16th Annual Greater McLean Chamber of Commerce ReinDog Parade on Saturday morning, Dec. 1.



Bern Knutsen waits with his two Bijon Frises, Koda and Rocket, on Saturday morning, Dec. 1, for the start of the 16th Annual Greater McLean Chamber of Commerce ReinDog Parade.



Annual Old Brogue Women's Holiday Luncheon turns into an initiative to support local businesses in Great Falls.



Great Falls women resolve to support "A Greater Falls."

Great Falls women resolve to leave a portion of their holiday spending in their own backyard and in their hometown.

Promoting 'A Greater Falls'

Great Falls women initiate an effort to support local businesses.

BY COLLEEN SHEEHY ORME
FOR THE CONNECTION

I once asked my uncle who was a priest in Washington, D.C. if there was a soup kitchen where I could volunteer.

"Colleen, do something in your own backyard," he said. There was a method to his madness. I somehow believed I needed to reach out in a grand manner. My uncle believed that while we may occasionally help a soup kitchen, we are much more likely to consistently help those that surround us.

I was chatting recently with a local merchant. We discussed the challenges facing many of our businesses. I returned home to finish my business column.

As I wrote my column that day, I became frustrated with myself. I love this town and I am incredibly loyal, yet even I fall into old routines and become forgetful. I then thought of the most significant advice I offer to small businesses. It is that "emotion drives consumer action."

If there is a neighbor in need then we are a town that is ready. There is something special about Great Falls and all of us that reside here live it and feel it.

On Dec. 7, we held our "Annual Old Brogue Women's Holiday Luncheon." It was originally started as a way to come together for a little candy cane cocktail fun and to cel-

ebate and remind us to shop our local merchants. It is a group of 50 to 60 women from the community.

"It's great to get together for the holidays at everyone's favorite local hangout," says Mary Jane Novak. "I especially love hearing about the local businesses and supporting them."

Ali Regen has been attending the event for years. "This is a luncheon I look forward to every year," says Regen. "I always meet new people and share lots of laughs with wonderful friends."

Susan Decker says it is "Wonderful to see women I don't have enough time to see."

Kaz Natal, another Great Falls resident, says, "Because of this luncheon I think we are more sensitive to supporting the local businesses rather than driving out of Great Falls. It brings it to the forefront of our minds. On top of that the food is great, the service is great and the camaraderie of the women is great."

As yummy Brogue fare delighted the crowd, I got up to speak. I didn't just speak about our merchants this year, but about how badly they truly need us. Many have seen the beautiful improvements that have been made to the Great Falls Shopping Center, but at some point it is likely those costs will be passed along to our merchants. There could be more Subways and Starbucks and less local,

homegrown small businesses. If we don't band together there could be a day that Great Falls is replaced with more chains and less organic movements. We have already lost many over the past few years.

I asked the women that day if they would join me in a movement for "A Greater Falls." To resolve to leave a portion of our holiday spending in our own backyard and in our hometown. The economy hasn't been easy on any of us, but I am reminded of that quote, "That none of us has it all together, but together we have it all."

I told them that I believe that with true heart and emotion for this place we call home we will make a huge difference. How? If we set personal goals and reverse our thinking and resolve to leave a percentage of what we spend here—in our town.

For me personally, once I shed my good intentioned thinking for an actual plan for "A Greater Falls," and made a personal goal I found myself spending the exact same money only here in town.

I have been by Maison Du Vin to buy my wine, I have stopped in Salud at Colvin Run for a few fresh market goodies, I bought my crazy, chocolate lab Hazel a few Christmas treats from Great Dogs and I bought a gorgeous gift for a friend at Maison et Jardin. I have made plans to meet friends for lunch at Brix, Dante's and Chez Francois. This is just the tip of the business iceberg this holiday season.

I may buy some personal training sessions as gifts from Elite Fitness or MAX Performance. I may

take my niece or nephews to lunch at The Tavern or The Brogue. I may order pizza from Romantica or Deli Italiano while I wrap presents. I may take my sisters for a manicure or pedicure, or to have their hair done at The Falls Salon or The Nail Place. I may stop in Adeler Jewelers for their fabulous 35 percent off December sale. I might even remember to stop by the firehouse and thank them with some home baked goodies like we did when I grew up here.

These are our business friends. It's Great Falls Cleaners who will rush some dry cleaning, Mr. Kim who will make that dress somehow fit me in a hurry, and Julie at The Nail Salon who will take me at the last minute.

How great would it be to see a holiday business miracle in our

small little town. The shops jammed with shoppers, shelves becoming bare, the restaurants packed with laughter in this always conscious and connected town.

There is one common vein that runs through the heart of this community. Our business neighbors need us, so I am hoping we band together in this great town, with a great heart and a great spirit towards "A Greater Falls."

I never made it to that soup kitchen, but I took my uncle's words to heart and I try to help in my own backyard whenever possible.

Please spread the word via e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, lunch, dinner and general conversation and make "A Greater Falls" go Great Falls Viral.

'Tis the Season for Joyfulness

"Altar Boyz" at Tysons' 1st Stage.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

There is a joyful noise full of tight harmonies backed by spot-on keyboards and percussion with lyrics full of universal positive messages at 1st Stage. It is a boisterous, full-octane, musical concert called "Altar Boyz" about a heartthrob Christian boy band's struggles in their last "Raise the Praise" concert.

"Altar Boyz" is driven by the very capable tenor voices of five actors-singers who with extraordinary, non-stop kinetic energy, power through a score of 13 songs. There is also well-synchronized hip-hop style choreography devised by Jeremy McShan, that would tax the lungs of a marathon runner.

The five members of the ersatz Altar Boyz group are BJ Gruber (Matthew), Edward C. Nagel



PHOTO BY BRAD KALBEID

Cast of Altar Boyz, from left, Zack Powell as Abraham; Edward C. Nagel as Mark; Jonathan Walker as Juan; Derek Tatum as Luke; and BJ Gruber as Matthew.

(Mark), Derek Tatum (Luke), Jonathan Walker (Juan) and Zack Powell (Abraham). Yes, their names, except for one, are of the apostles, and they are spreading the good news message. They do so in their own non-preachy way.

Gruber is the handsome titular lead of the group and Nagel always has a sunny disposition even with some secrets of his own. Tatum is the "bad" boy with his baseball cap gently askew. Walker has a Latin-infused role and accent to match. Powell is the Jewish boy wondering how he ever got into

the group but readily fits in.

The production has a rock concert essence with pulsating lighting (David A. Sexton), sound (Derek V. Knoderer) and special effects (Zack Sanders) developed under Steven Royal, making his area directorial debut. Royal was also the set and costume designer.

The vigorous music under the direction of Walter Bobby McCoy and his four-piece band moves smoothly through the song-filled evening. Song titles give hints of the show's message including "I Believe," "Epiphany," "Something

Where and When

1st Stage production of "Altar Boyz" at 1524 Spring Hill Road, McLean. Performances now through Dec. 30. Performed Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets \$15-\$30. Call 703-854-1856 or visit www.1stStageTysons.org.

About You," and "Everybody Fits," to name a few.

With music and lyrics by Gary Adler and Michael Patrick Walker, and book by Kevin Del Aguila, the award winning "Altar Boyz" ran for 2,032 performances off-Broadway from 2005-2012. As the 1st Stage program notes indicate, the show "satirizes the phenomenon of boy bands and the popularity of Christian-themed music in contemporary America."

The show is cheerful and just this side of safely naughty, with its rock concert atmosphere. There are some saggy segments, especially those with lesser musical structure to fall back upon. The acting is not always subtle, and sometimes takes its over-the-top sensibilities too far, but so what. 'Tis the season for joyfulness.

FAITH NOTES

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

Great Falls United Methodist Church is providing an Advent sermon series called "A Different Kind of Christmas: Living and Giving Like Jesus," based on the book by Rev. Mike Slaughter. They will look at the celebration of Christmas and find ways to bring the focus of the season back to the reason we celebrate. Attendees will be encouraged to examine Christmas celebrations and to develop new Christmas traditions that focus on relationships and service. The series will be held on Sundays, Dec. 9, 16 and 23 at the 10 a.m. service held at 10100 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. 703-759-3705 or office@greatfallsumc.org.

St. John's Episcopal Church, 6715 Georgetown Pike, in McLean, holds a Festival of Lessons and Carols sung by the choirs of St. John's Church, accompanied by organist Dr. John C. Wulff and the Sunrise String Quartet with Teri Lazar and Osman Kivrak on Sunday, Dec. 16 at 9 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. 703-356-4902 or www.stjohnsmclean.org.

Redeemer Lutheran Church, 1545 Chain Bridge Road, McLean, at the intersection with Westmoreland Street has Sunday worship with Holy Communion at 8:30 a.m., traditional style worship; 9:45 a.m., contemporary style worship; and 11 a.m., traditional style worship. Sunday School and Adult Forum is at 9:45 a.m.

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PHOTOS BY JENNIFER BENITZ/THE CONNECTION

The carolers continue to sing as they walked to Senator Mark Warner's office on Monday, Dec. 10.

The carolers sang briefly near the Santa set in Tysons Corner Center before being asked by security to discontinue.

Making Their Voices Heard

Caroling about "fiscal cliff" at Tysons Corner Center.

JENNIFER BENITZ
THE CONNECTION

On Monday, Dec. 10, a group of 30-40 residents of Northern Virginia and beyond met by the entrance of California Pizza Kitchen in Tysons Corner Center in preparation to go caroling. Rather than singing holiday favorites, however, the group planned on singing about the fiscal cliff to spread awareness about ongoing federal budget concerns.

"[Caroling] ties into the Christmas season and it's fun and energizing for folks as opposed to just a normal rally," said Anna Scholl, the executive director at Progress Virginia and one of the coordinators for the event. "It was a fun way to get folks involved and have their voices literally heard."

As noon approached, the group of volunteers grew gradually as many practiced the lyrics to the carols and others talked amongst themselves before making their way through the mall. By 12:07 p.m., the group settled in front of the Santa set, located near Nordstrom, and began singing "Revenue! Revenue!" to the tune of "Jingle Bells." The musical rally was short-lived, however. Within only three minutes of starting, the group was told to stop by security personnel.

The carolers continued to sing as they made their way through Nordstrom and across the parking deck towards Senator Mark Warner's Vienna office, located

next to the mall, where they were met by Deputy State Director Ann Rust. Standing in the elevator lobby on the second floor of Senator Warner's office, volunteers listened as some took a few moments to share their personal stories with Rust.

"I think the folks here really felt they got the message to Senator Warner's staff in a creative, friendly way but made sure that they understand that middle class families have a lot at stake in these negotiations," said Scholl.

After traveling four hours from Norfolk to take part in the event, Julia Newtown was the first to share her story. She informed Rust about her 29-year-old son Antoan, his dependence on Medicaid and the devastation they would both face with even a 0.5 percent cut to Medicare's budget. Jameel Soni of McLean followed, talking about her urgency to protect social programs and sharing stories about loved ones and friends who depend on such programs.

Members of various organizations, including Progress Virginia, Service Employees International Unions, Move On, Virginia Organizing and Virginia AFL-CIO also took part in the caroling demonstration that took place not only in Vienna, but also across the state in Norfolk and Roanoke in the same day.

"We really want to make sure Senator Warner takes his constituents and middle class families into consideration in these negotiations," said Scholl, "to make sure that he protects middle class tax cuts, asks the wealthy to pay their fair share and protects the social safety net programs like Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security that a lot of people depend on. Cuts would be really devastating to a lot of the folks here today. It's important for middle class families to stand up and make their voices heard."

VIEWPOINTS

Why is this demonstration and being here today important to you?



Jalmeen Soni, McLean

"Today is important to me because I was working for Obama's campaign for the past 18 months. I believe strongly that this is the time we should raise our voice against GOP. They're out there to take care of the people who can take care of themselves, not for us. And that's why it's very important for me, that I have been doing the volunteer work for so long for this cause and this is the one day that I should be there to raise my voice that we are still out there to watch for the GOP. What the GOP is doing, they are not doing it for us. They are doing it for the interest of people who are giving them a lot of money to fight

for them. And we have only the voice to fight back because we are not loaded with the money. We have a voice to reach to them and to the public to stand up for our rights and for our demand."



Valorie Bachelor, Falls Church

"In July, my father who was 85 years old passed away. The last month or so of his life we had him in hospice care. That could've bankrupted my family and the fact that it was paid for fully by Medicare and we didn't have to deal with any of that was a huge help to my family. My mom and I were thinking about what we were going to do with the house, with the cars, and it would have literally bankrupted us. The same situation could happen to another family who would have to figure out how to get 30, 40 or \$50,000 to care for a loved one. It just kills me to think that something like that could happen. I just want to tell Senator Warner that these cuts are not right for Virginia residents."



Julia Newtown, Norfolk

"Any day that I have a chance to tell my story about my son and try to prevent any cuts to Medicaid is very important to me. Any time that I can talk to someone about the devastating cuts that Medicaid will have on me and my family, I feel that I have accomplished something. I hope that Mr. Warner sits down with fellow legislators that he will think about me, this mother, her son and her story and the devastating effects that any cuts to Medicaid will have on my family and families like mine."

—JENNIFER BENITZ

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bill Developers For Tysons Infrastructure

To the Editor:

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has just given the residents of Tysons Corner a lump of coal in their Christmas stockings. The Board of Supervisors is in the process of creating a special "service" tax district to pay for road and bridge improvements to support the creation of the new city of Tysons. The current residents of Tysons Corner will have their property taxes raised. Since estimates on large construction projects are usually underestimated, Tysons residents can reasonably expect that tax burden will increase over time.

Will this surcharge end after the roads are built? Here in Reston we are still paying a surcharge for the Reston Community Center and its bond was paid off some time ago. We paid off the Dulles Toll Road and instead of taking off the tolls, the road was given away to MWA, and we now face yearly tolls of \$2,000 to commute to our jobs.

Roads used to be funded by state and federal government and everyone shared in the cost. The

Board of Supervisors has decided that a small number of residents have to pay for the roads near them. It's a strange turn when local property taxes are used to fund large scale infrastructure projects. One would hope there would be a thorough judicial review.

Should homeowners in Reston be worried that their property taxes could be increased to pay for roads and bridges necessary for the density planned around the Silver Line Metro stations? They should. This is the mechanism the county intends to use to pay for Reston's redevelopment. It has been estimated that a bridge crossing every quarter mile across the Dulles Toll Road will be necessary to manage the increased commercial and residential units planned there. Those bridges run between \$100 and \$200 million each. An extensive new grid of streets in the Dulles Corridor will have to be built. Major arteries on both sides of the Dulles Toll Road will have to be widened.

Unlike the transportation tax district created to fund Phase I and II of the Silver Line, a "service" tax district requires no vote of those being taxed. The Board of Supervisors only has to hold a public hearing before taxing people. How much of Reston will be included

in this new tax district? Half of Reston? All of Reston?

The burden of this infrastructure cost at Tysons should be the responsibility of the developers who will benefit from increased density, not local homeowners. Members of the Board of Supervisors who vote for this Tysons "service" district in January, Republican or Democrat, should be removed from office

Kathy Kaplan
Reston

Taking Chances On ExpressLanes

To The Editor:

The way the ExpressLanes system is set up at this time, there is no way that we can know the traffic conditions on Route 495 prior to entering the highway. This means that we must make an uninformed decision whether to use the ExpressLanes and pay the toll or take our chance taking the standard route. When one considers how technologically advanced we are in this area, one would think that having some informative signs prior to the entrances to Route 495 would be obvious. Without signs informing us what the traffic situation is

on 495, we are left without a chance to make an informed decision. This is simply wrong. We buy products and services every day for which there is enough information available to us that we can make intelligent and informed decisions whether to buy the product or service. In the case of the ExpressLanes, we have no information to help us make a decision. We simply must take our chances and sometimes spend money unnecessarily. I urge all readers to voice their concern over this issue to VDOT and your local representatives.

Robert Cox
McLean

Taxing 'Household' or Individual

To the Editor:

Joel Kanter of McLean wrote a letter to the editor commenting on Tax Cuts for the Wealthiest ["Tax Cuts for Wealthiest: Not Right and Not Smart," The Connection, December 5-11, 2012]. I don't disagree that we need to raise some taxes, especially on the wealthy. There is a problem with the cur-

rent proposal, however, and I believe that if implemented as stated by proposed legislation, it will overly impact not only married couples but the lesser salaried spouse. The legislation means a higher tax for "households" making more than \$250,000. I believe the word "household" should be "individual" as many columns and speeches indicate, knowing they mean "households." I am not opposed to individuals paying more when they make that kind of money. I am opposed, and voting with liberals usually, to penalizing married couples. The individuals are given a pass at \$200,000 and if two individuals live in the household they get a \$400,000 benefit. Do you see a need to penalize married couples? I would think someone has seen this issue. When a couple who is married and each makes a salary and it adds up to this \$250,000, that is a lot of individual work effort to get taxed at the proposed increased rate. I think this makes it unfair to married couples. Frankly in this area, a working couple each of who makes \$125,000, would hardly be considered "rich."

Nancy Appler
Vienna



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OPINION

Happy Hanukkah, Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas

Many religions enrich Northern Virginia; immigration will lead to the most growth in Catholicism.

We are a nation of immigrants, to invoke the title of John F. Kennedy's posthumously published book; undeniably a nation descended from immigrants and a nation greatly augmented by immigration.

From this perspective, with the first immigrants motivated by the search for religious freedom, even Christmas is a religious holiday of immigrants.

As this week's main story on immigrants and religion in Northern Virginia explains, the largest number of current immigrants are from Latin America, and they bring with them a

powerful commitment to Christmas through their Catholic faith. In 2010, Fairfax County's Catholic population numbered 184,183, while Protestant adherents numbered 205,556.

Christmas, celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ on Dec. 25, is one of the two most important Christian religious holidays, along with Easter.

Christmas is also a widely celebrated secular holiday and economic stimulus.

The Jewish holiday of Hanukkah is not one of the most important Jewish religious observances, but it is a celebration that gets added attention from timing. Hanukkah celebrates a great Jewish military victory and the miracle of a one day supply of oil for the temple lasting eight days. Happy Hanukkah to all who are enjoying this holiday, which lasts for eight days and this year began last Saturday evening.

Sikhs celebrated the birthday of their first guru at the end of November. The founder of the Sikh religion, Guru Nanak (1469-1539) preached that there is only One Universal Creator. Guru Nanak brought a message of love

and equality to his disciples, the Sikhs, (the word Sikh means a disciple or seeker of truth) and urged three things: always remember the creator God (Akaal Purkh), always live a honest life and earn a just living and always share your blessings with less fortunate ones (<http://www.sfova.org/sikhism>).

Buddhists celebrated the day of Buddha's enlightenment on Bodhi Day, Dec. 8 this year (<http://www.ekoji.org>).

Diwali, the major Hindu celebration, commemorated with lights welcoming a hero home, was in November this year. Hindu temples in Fairfax include the Durga Temple (<http://www.durgatemple.org>).

This of course is not an exhaustive list of other religions or of religious holidays in November and December. We welcome letters and comments. Share your religious and holiday traditions. You can submit a letter online at www.connectionnewspapers.com/contact/letter.

You can read the stories in our immigration series at www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/Immigration.

EDITORIAL

Celebrating Diversity Through Culture

BY KENWAL SACHDEVA

IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

When my brother got married, his wife came to our house. Ours was a joint family with my parents, grandparents, elder brother, his wife, and two sisters. My new sister-in-law was coming from a different state with different family traditions and way of life. Since she was the new member in our family, it was our job to make her feel at home, to help her settle down and become a part of the family, to give her love and affection so that she does not miss her family too much. And we all worked towards making it happen. In turn, she also adapted to our ways and became a lovable part of the family.



So, when people from different countries, diverse cultures, and dissimilar values migrate to United States, they try to adjust and adapt to the new culture. But the onus should also be on American people to welcome them, to make them

comfortable and feel at home.

What do we do to create awareness about different cultures? Unfortunately, I have not seen much effort on the part of the government. People can be so ignorant about different cultures, that they expect same kind of behavior from all in different situations. I would like to see some organizations stepping up and make deliberate efforts to make connections to diverse cultures.

People of different cultures also must advertise and organize events, and invite all to create cultural awareness.

The Sikh foundation of Virginia, the Sikh temple at Ox Road is committed to this cause. We organize a cultural program each year in which more than 100 children and adults participate and perform to

typical Punjabi folk music. We advertise the event in local newspapers and invite people from different faiths. This is an important event to make connections with our extended American family. We have found that many people are interested in learning about different cultures, but do not know where to go and whom to approach. This event generates enough interest and we do get interesting questions to understand our dances and music. Moreover, music knows no language barriers, and everyone enjoy the dances a lot. Cultural events could be a gateway to get to appreciate and celebrate diversity.

Kenwal Sachdeva of Fairfax Station is a Public Relations Officer for Sikh Foundation of Virginia.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Saving the World, or at Least Fairfax County

To the Editor:

I've lived here my entire life. I've ventured through trails all over Northern Virginia, I've gazed upon the majestic Blue Ridge Mountains, I've sat next to the awesome power that makes up the tidal region of the Potomac River, I've stalked trout lying in a stream bed, slowly making their way up to the surface and back down once again. But time and time again, I have seen people abuse our natural resources. The water that makes up our rivers

and streams is stained heavily with garbage. The forest floors are littered with beer cans, chip bags, those empty bottles no one wanted to carry to the trash bins. We have been given a great privilege; to be able to enjoy the beauty that is the nature which surrounds us. But with this, there has been an unimaginable amount of responsibility cast upon us. We have to, for lack of a better expression, enjoy responsibly. Although this might seem like a Herculean task, it's really

not. All our lives we have been taught to throw our trash into the proper reciprocals, and to dispose of waste correctly; why not take these lessons to the outdoors? If we don't start taking care of our world, the world will stop taking care of us.

I leave you with a quote from one of my best friends, Cecil, "If I can take it in full, I can bring it out empty."

Hameed Ali Talebian
Herndon

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.
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LETTERS

'The Money of Their Constituents'

To the Editor:

I congratulate Mr. Kanter ("Tax Cuts for Wealthiest: Not Right and Not Smart," The Connection, Dec. 5-11 issue) on being part of this country's 2 percent of highest earners, and want to commend his willingness to pay more taxes. I wish to point out to Mr. Kanter that there is a special section on his tax form that will allow him to contribute as much to the US Government as he wishes. There is no limit on contributions.

We hear from Mr. Kanter, who says that he has "skin in the game," that everyone needs to pay a "fair share." Since the top 1 percent of payers provide more than 35 percent of income taxes; the top 10 percent more than 70 percent, and the bottom 50 percent less than 3 percent of income taxes, I am wondering just what share Mr. Kanter feels is fair. Should the top 2 percent pay 50 percent; maybe 80 percent? How much skin do the bottom 50 percent have in the game?

The top 2 percent could pay 100 percent of their income into the US Treasury, and it would have very little effect on our growing deficit. Politicians talk about "cut-

ting spending," when what they really mean is "cut the rate of increase" in spending. We are not spending less; only less than someone proposed should be spent.

So, what is the point of those increases, if they will do almost nothing to solve our fiscal problems? Is it just to punish those who have done well? Could it be expressed as, "From each according to his abilities; to each according to his needs" (sounds familiar to me, has that system been tried anywhere)?

When a smaller and smaller portion of our citizens is paying more and more of the cost of government those citizens have less incentive to earn. Those not paying have less interest in reducing the size and cost of government. Why? Spending, or giving away, other people's money is always easier than giving away our own, especially if we are giving that money to ourselves.

I am a retired, federal civil servant (which means I am not in the top 2 percent) who has well over four decades of association with the federal government. Even when the government is performing functions that properly are the

role of the federal government, and cannot be done by any other organization, those functions cost the country by being done inefficiently. Government inefficiency is a cost that every country must bear. The inefficiency is exacerbated when the government has become bloated to the extent that it is reaching into the lives of every citizen in ways that the founders never imagined.

James Madison, Father of the Constitution, said it best: "I cannot undertake to lay my finger on that article of the Constitution which granted a right to Congress of expending, on objects of benevolence, the money of their constituents."

H. M. Padon
Great Falls

Write

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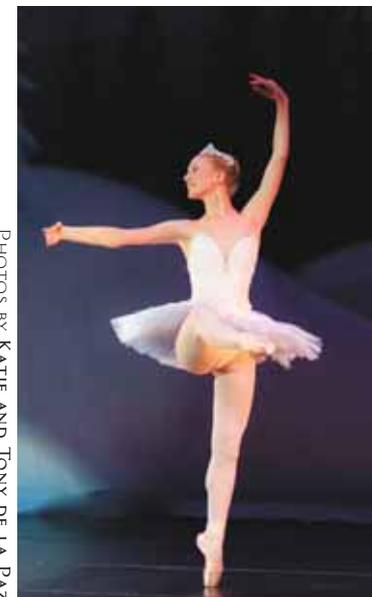
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NEWS



Kaley Thornton as a Mirli-ton.



Kristen Wolaver as the Snow Queen.

PHOTOS BY KATIE AND TONY DE LA PAZ

Performing The Nutcracker

Classical Ballet Theatre (CBT) congratulates its talented dancers on another outstanding Nutcracker production: pictured are seniors Kristen Wolaver of Langley High School and Kaley Thornton of Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology.

Classical Ballet Theatre is a not-for-profit organization that is dedicated to providing education, performance and outreach opportunities in the art of dance to Northern Virginia and the surrounding communities. For more information, please visit www.cbtnva.org.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Pictured, from left, Diana Simione, a student from McLean's Oakcrest School, who assisted in the tour; Woman's Club member Cathy Kelly, McLean Chamber of Commerce Chairman Marcia Twomey, tour Co-Chairman Rosemarie Lazo, tour homeowner Bushra Sangid, Del. Comstock, tour Chairman Kathlyn Burnell, Woman's Club President Virginia Sandahl and Roger Kilton, a homes tour visitor and supporter.

McLean Woman's Club Homes Tour a Success

A ribbon-cutting ceremony kicked off last week's 46th annual Holiday Homes Tour sponsored by the Woman's Club of McLean. Virginia House Del. Barbara J. Comstock (R-34), honorary Homes Tour host, cut the ribbon to open the tour at the first home, which was located, along with three others, in the River Oaks section of McLean. After the tour, club

President Virginia Sandahl referred to it as "very successful," adding that she had heard only "rave reviews." Tour Chairman Kathlyn Burnell stated that the number attending the tour exceeded the numbers for several of the immediately preceding years.

—LAURA SHERIDAN,
WOMAN'S CLUB

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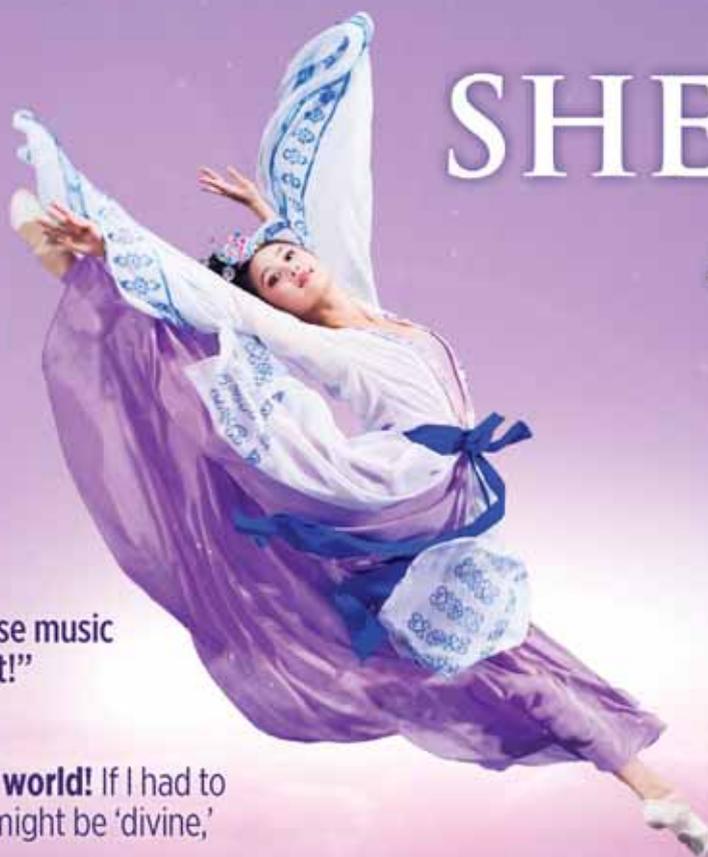


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Being Muslim in Fairfax County

Immigrants face the challenge of balancing Islamic faith and American culture.

By AMNA REHMATULLA
THE CONNECTION

Over the years, Muslims from different countries migrated and settled in the Fairfax County area; however, the children of immigrant parents often struggle the most because they have to balance their Islamic faith along with the influence of American culture.

Sarah Khan has lived in the Springfield area for the past 42 years after coming to America from Pakistan at the age of 11. "In the 1970s, there was one mosque: the Islamic Center in Washington, D.C. Everybody just went to that one. So, as Muslims we were very united.

Nobody fought with one another. There was like 50 to 60 families that used to come to the mosque and everybody got along well," Khan said. Now there are many mosques in the area such as Dar Al-Hijrah in Falls Church, Darul Huda in Springfield and ADAMS in Sterling, to name a few.

Back when Khan was growing up in the area, nobody knew what Muslims were. "The hardest part was when I was fasting as a young girl and my PE. teacher made me run. I told her I was fasting and she didn't realize what fasting was," Khan said. When Khan told her teacher she was Muslim, her teacher replied, "What is that?"

Khan admits that it is much easier being Muslim in today's society. "Everybody knows your religion. People respect it. You're free to do what you want. You don't have to pretend to be somebody you're not. You can still be yourself and be accepted," Khan added.

SOME MUSLIM PARENTS turn towards putting their children in Islamic schools to help them retain their Islamic identity. Al-Qalam Academy, located in Springfield, is an all-girls Islamic school from grades fifth through 12th. Girls at the school are taught the core subjects of math, science, English and history in addition to learning Islamic studies, Arabic and the holy Quran.

"It is hard to balance my life socially and religiously," Samira Sather, a seventh-grader at Al-Qalam Academy said. "I attend lectures in mosques and pray five times a day. Sometimes when I leave the house and one of our prayers pass by, I feel shy to pray in public because I already attract too much attention," Sather said.

Maryem Ahmed, an eighth-grader at Al-Qalam Academy, is a third generation American who was born in Fairfax County. "I don't generally call much attention to myself as a Muslim, but some people view me with their perceptions of what a Muslim is because I wear hijab [religious head covering]. And those perceptions are many times misconceptions of who I am," Ahmed said.

"Sometimes when I meet people for the first time, they seem shocked to hear me speak to them without a foreign accent. It's like, they see me wearing hijab, and immediately think I come from overseas," Ahmed said. "Not that there's anything



Imam Mohamed Magid, executive director of the All Dulles Area Muslim Society, speaks on the importance of faith in peace Feb. 3, 2011, during the ADAMS commemoration of World Interfaith Harmony Week.

wrong with coming from overseas, but it's just that they've already jumped to the conclusion that I'm not even from America, without even speaking to me," Ahmed said.

Sather looks up to her mother for wearing the hijab. "I think of my mother and wonder how she goes through it all. She looks different and speaks differently, in addition to being a Muslim. I admit it's hard to abide by all the rules Islam gives us. I strive to be like my mother because she doesn't care what anyone else judges her for; she is focused on what God will judge her on," Sather said.

Ahmed admires her father who works as an engineer at the Department of Defense. She said, "He served as the president of our neighborhood civic association and initiated several activities to make our neighborhood a better place to live," Ahmed said. She helped her father by handing out civic association newsletters and neighborhood watch schedules to inform her neighbors and help prevent neighborhood crime.

More than 11 years have passed since Sept. 11, 2001; however, Muslims continue to face prejudice. Ahmed experienced an act of injustice not too long ago. "My older sister and I were going to a local restaurant, and there was a man standing outside," Ahmed said. "As we passed him to go inside I saw him, out of the corner of my eye, spit in our direction, barely missing my shoes. I turned to look at him in surprise. Instead of apologizing, that person simply glared at me with a look of disgust on his face," Ahmed said.

Abdullah Malik, an African-American who grew up in the Northern Virginia area, was only 16 at the time of 9/11. His younger brother, 13 years old at the time, was framed by his peers at school, in a situation in which they illegally broke into his locker and placed a ticking device mimicking a bomb inside. "This caused the bomb squad to show up to our school, evacuate the entire building of 4,000 students, blow up his entire locker in front of his friends and then proceed to interrogate him for hours," Malik said.

Similarly, Khan's children were treated differently after 9/11 at school. People made fun of their names. People also made fun of their background

SEE REBUILDING. PAGE 16

FOCUS ON IMMIGRATION



The Durga Temple of Virginia, the largest Hindu structure in Northern Virginia, Maryland and Washington D.C.



The Ekoji Buddhist Temple in Fairfax Station.

Dynamic and Diverse

New immigrants bring religious diversity to Fairfax County.

By VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

Part four of an ongoing series.

The sight is striking. At the intersection of Hooes Road and Silverbrook Drive, on the dividing line between Lorton and Fairfax Station, is the largest Hindu structure in three states. The Durga Temple of Virginia—with its multi-tiered, bronze-tipped towers—punctuates the traditional suburban vista of neo-colonial homes and new shopping centers. On Ox Road, neatly tucked between acres of land and upscale neighborhoods, is a large golden dome mounted atop the sprawling gurdwara (place of worship) of the Sikh Foundation of Virginia.

A short distance away is the campus of the Ekoji Buddhist Temple, its clean architectural lines evocative of many Japanese structures. Near Walney Road in Chantilly, the circular dome and stylized arabesque arches of the Chantilly Mosque is home to the Ahmadiyya Muslim community.

The East Asian architecture is a powerful visual reminder that Fairfax County has changed.

Julie Knott of Burke, a member of the Accotink Unitarian congregation, said she welcomes the county's increasingly diverse houses of worship. "Our church is just a mile away from the Sikh temple. We stand for many of the same values. We need to support one another."

"How welcoming we are to this diversity will say much about how we grow and thrive in the future," said the Rev. Scott Sammler-

Michaels, senior minister of the Accotink Unitarian Universalist Church in Burke.

Immigration Brings Religious Diversity

In 1970, religious groups in Fairfax County mirrored its highly homogenous demographic composition. More than 93 percent of the county was white and middle-class, and for the most part, adherents of mainline Protestant, Catholic or evangelical Christian churches.

As immigrants flowed into Fairfax County from all parts of the globe in the past four decades, they brought not only cultural diversity but their diverse religious traditions.

A 2012 report on religion and international migration by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life—"Faith on the Move: The Religious Affiliation of International Migrants"—finds that the United States has been the world's number one destination for Christian immigrants. Of the 43 million foreign-born people living in the U.S. as of 2010, an estimated 32 million (74 percent) are Christian.

"Faith on the Move" draws on a new database created by the Pew Forum that combines hundreds of census, surveys and other sources to shed light on the origins, destinations and religious affiliations of international migrants, according to Jamila Woodson at the Pew Forum.

Other findings show that: Although Protestants currently

outnumber Catholics in the United States, new immigrants, especially those from Central and South America, are overwhelmingly Catholic, suggesting that America is close to becoming a minority Protestant country.

Fairfax County mirrors this national data. The Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA), a free source of online religious information housed at Pennsylvania State University, tracks such trends. According to the ARDA, in 2010 Fairfax County's Catholic population numbered 184,183 while mainline, evangelical and black protestant adherents numbered 205,556.

Immigration is leading to an increase in the number of Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims in the United States, according to the Pew report.

In Fairfax County, the ARDA reports about 11,000 adherents to Buddhism in 2010, the first decade in 30 years the ARDA captured that data. In 2010, the ARDA reports about 6,500 adherents to Hinduism in throughout the county.

According to a 2001 study by the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area Education Fund, surveys of numerous Fairfax County school population records indicate that about 400,000 Muslims live in the greater Washington metropolitan area, which extends from Richmond to Baltimore.

About 150,000 Muslims live in Fairfax, according to the study. Roughly half are native born and half are immigrants or refugees.

According to the league's report, there are several enclaves of Muslims in Fairfax, wealthy Iranians settled in Great Falls and middle-class Iranians, Pakistani, Afghani and Indians congregated in Springfield and Reston-Herndon. Recent refugees live



Statues of Radha Krishna—the supreme Hindu goddess—at the Durga Temple of Virginia in Fairfax Station.

mostly in the Baileys Crossroads area.

In addition to Muslims, Buddhists and other non-Christian religions, evangelical Christian churches are flourishing in Fairfax County's suburbs and appeal to many Korean, Chinese and Latino immigrants.

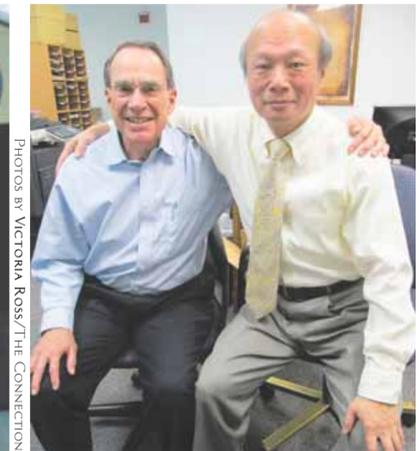
In Chantilly and Centreville, the vast majority of Korean and Chinese immigrants identify as Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist and Independent denominations.

Chantilly Bible Church, started in 1978 by Pastor Steve Austin, is "purposefully a diverse body of believers" that actively reaches out to immigrants in the community.

"In addition to English, the world's most spoken languages of Mandarin, Hindi and Spanish are integral parts of our ministry. The doors of Chantilly Bible Church are open to our changing society. We believe that racial and cultural harmony reveals the reality of new life and unity in Christ," Austin said.



Anna Song, a music student at George Mason University in Fairfax, plays the violin during Chantilly Bible Church's Sunday services.



Pastor Lew Whittle and Pastor Isaac Huang of the Chantilly Bible Church, who lead Hispanic and Chinese outreach ministries.

Bienvenido! Huan ying! Welcome!

Chantilly Bible Church thrives on diversity by providing outreach to immigrants.

By VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

Pastor Isaac Huang vividly remembers the day he landed in the United States from Taiwan. It was Jan. 7, 1982, and Huang, 25, was looking forward to studying computer science at Old Dominion University. But when he arrived at Norfolk airport, he got a shock.

"We landed during a huge snowstorm, and I had never seen snow before. Snow? What is snow?" Huang said, smiling at the memory. "Remember that Taiwan has a tropical climate, so I was not dressed at all for this cold weather."

Huang, who left his high-tech job for the seminary in 2000, is now an elder at Chantilly Bible Church, an evangelical Christian church that actively reaches out to Chinese, Latino and Indian immigrants.

BORN IN TAIWAN in the 1950s, during a time of brutal religious and political oppression, Huang said he desperately wanted to live in America. In 1949, the Nationalist government had imposed martial law. During nearly 40 years of what is known as "the White Terror," more than 140,000 Taiwanese were imprisoned and thousands executed for being perceived as anti-Kuomintang or pro-Communist.

"I wanted to live in America; everybody did. I thought it would give me a good future, which I could not have in Taiwan," Huang said. "I always admired the freedoms here and I appreciated the functioning of the American political system."

Huang said he grew up in a Christian family that took a "legalistic approach" to understanding the Bible, with many "shall nots."

"My childhood was filled with physical illnesses and emotional struggles. Even though I attended church every Sunday with my parents, I rarely pondered the meaning of salvation and I did not feel much of God's love," he said.

In his junior year of college at Old Dominion

University, that changed when he attended a campus evangelical fellowship meeting.

"During that meeting, I was deeply touched by the message and came to realize, for the first time, that I was a sinner, but Christ died for me and forgave my sin. As I put my trust in Jesus, my life was forever changed by God," Huang said.

"He and his wife Ramona demonstrate great compassion for Chinese people who need to know Christ," said Lewis Whittle, pastor to Hispanics and the church's English as a Second Language director. Whittle said that after 20 years of development, the Chantilly Bible Church's Chinese ministry now impacts every area of the church program and is the dominant minority in the 34-year-old church.

Since the 1990s, Huang said more than 150 Chinese have been baptized at Chantilly Bible Church. Some have returned to China, Taiwan or their other countries of origin, but many remain at the church.

The church leadership also wanted to have an outreach to the growing Latino community, which was finally launched in 2004 when the Whittles joined the church after serving Hispanics in Los Angeles. As a member of the pastoral staff, Whittle, along with his wife Dianne, has actively engaged the Latino community.

"Our experience in addressing immigrant needs and our progress in welcoming them at the church proves the benefit of diversity," said Whittle, who has lived in California, Central America and Spain.

In June 2007, Chantilly Bible Church began conversational English classes with volunteer teachers who speak Mandarin and Spanish. Their most recent term, Whittle said, included 128 students from 26 countries. A citizenship class is also part of the program.

Steve Austin, the senior pastor and founder of Chantilly Bible Church, said that the latest cross-cultural ministry to become part of the church focuses on the burgeoning Asian Indian population in Fairfax and Loudoun counties.

SEE CHURCH. PAGE 16

HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

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

THURSDAY/DEC. 13

The Sixth Annual Non-Profit

Forum. 8:15 a.m.-3 p.m., at the Gannett Conference Center, 7950 Jones Branch Drive, McLean. Networking opportunities, a keynote speech from ALSAC/St. Jude Children's Research Center, the second-largest health charity in the country, resources galore and lots of learning on the theme of "Telling Your Story to the Right People." Registration required. \$25, members; \$40, non-members. 703-356-5424 or www.mcleanchamber.org.

Mason Madrigals with Santa

Claus. 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., at the Tower Club's Fairfax Room, 8000 Towers Crescent Drive, No. 1700, Vienna. A seasonal musical performance from the Mason Madrigals and Madison High School warrant a special appearance from Santa. Bring an unwrapped toy for the Toys for Tots drive. www.vtrcc.org.

Alice in Winter Wonderland.

7 p.m., at Chesterbrook Elementary School, 1753 Kirby Road, McLean. McLean High School Theatre Company's traveling children's theatre production offers a new twist to an old tale for the holidays; donations support the McLean HS theatre program. www.mcleandrama@gmail.com.

FRIDAY/DEC. 14

Southern Comfort Dinner. 5:30-8 p.m., at the American Legion Post 180, 330 Center Street N., Vienna. Bring all your friends and family for shrimp or chicken creole, or red beans and rice with sausage. \$8-10 per plate. 703-938-9535.

Sounds of the Season Concert & Live Nativity.

6:30-8:30 p.m., at Redeemer Lutheran Church, 1545 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Uplifting music from bell and voice choirs and sing-along carols at the 7:30 p.m. concert, live baby animals including a donkey, sheep, goat, calf and bunnies at the live nativity; treats like hot chocolate and bake sale items available. 703-356-6537.

Concert and Living Nativity.

6:30-8:30 p.m., at Redeemer Lutheran Church, 1545 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. A live donkey and sheep join the nativity scene and enjoy the Sounds of the Season concert at 7:30 p.m. along with visitors—the bell and vocal choir invites the crowd to sing-along; hot chocolate and a bake sale benefit SHARE. 703-356-3346 or

www.redeemermclean.org.

Alice in Winter Wonderland.

7 p.m., at Kent Gardens Elementary School, 1717 Melbourne Drive, McLean. McLean High School Theatre Company's traveling children's theatre production offers a new twist to an old tale for the holidays; donations support the McLean HS theatre program. www.mcleandrama@gmail.com.

Altar Boyz.

8 p.m., at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. A cheeky, pop-rock musical comedy about a boy band of singing dancing heartthrobs from Ohio on the last night of their national tour. \$30; \$15, students. 703-854-1856 or www.1ststage Tysonson.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 15

The Nutcracker Tea.

10 a.m., 1 p.m., at the Ritz-Carlton Tysons Corner, 1700 Tysons Blvd., McLean. Enjoy the Nutcracker Ballet with afternoon tea and treats while members of the Creative Dance Center put a contemporary twist on the beloved classic and the pastry team tantalizes palates with tea sandwiches, pastries and sweets. \$75 (includes nutcracker doll for all children). www.ritzcarlton.com/tysons.

Gingerbread House Decorating

Class. 10 a.m., 1 p.m., at the Ritz-Carlton Tysons Corner, 1700 Tysons Blvd., McLean. Children ages 3-12 can explore the life-size gingerbread house at the hotel, then make their own sugary homes in a decorating class taught by the pastry chefs; includes all ingredients as well as a souvenir. \$70 per child. www.ritzcarlton.com/tysons.

Mr. and Mrs. Claus and the

World's Best Cheddar. 11 a.m.-4 p.m., at Balducci's, 6655 Old Dominion Drive, McLean. Cabot Creamery Cooperative's Mr. and Mrs. Cabot Claus stop in town on their way to the North Pole to hand out children's presents and pose for pictures. www.balduccis.com.

Altar Boyz.

2 p.m., 8 p.m., at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. A cheeky, pop-rock musical comedy about a boy band of singing dancing heartthrobs from Ohio on the last night of their national tour. \$30; \$15, students. 703-854-1856 or www.1ststage Tysonson.org.

Alice in Winter Wonderland.

7 p.m., at Colvin Run Elementary School, 1400 Trap Road, Vienna. McLean High School Theatre Company's traveling children's theatre production offers a new twist to an old tale for the holidays; donations support the McLean HS theatre program. www.mcleandrama@gmail.com.

Ball in the House.

8 p.m., at the Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave.,

McLean. An indie band that sings a mix of classics and contemporary hits with a wide, eclectic range of influences from R&B to gospel. \$20, general; \$15w, MCC residents. www.mcleancenter.org.

SUNDAY/DEC. 16

Gingerbread House Decorating

Class. 10 a.m., 1 p.m., at the Ritz-Carlton Tysons Corner, 1700 Tysons Blvd., McLean. Children ages 3-12 can explore the life-size gingerbread house at the hotel, then make their own sugary homes in a decorating class taught by the pastry chefs; includes all ingredients as well as a souvenir. \$70 per child. www.ritzcarlton.com/tysons.

The Princess Tea.

11 a.m., 2 p.m., at the the Ritz-Carlton Tysons Corner, 1700 Tysons Blvd., McLean. Disney princesses, treats and a special teatime make it a magical day; holiday gift bag and photo with princesses included. \$75. www.ritzcarlton.com/tysons.

Altar Boyz.

2 p.m., 7 p.m., at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. A cheeky, pop-rock musical comedy about a boy band of singing dancing heartthrobs from Ohio on the last night of their national tour. \$30; \$15, students. 703-854-1856 or www.1ststage Tysonson.org.

The McLean Symphony and

Maestro Dingwall Fleary

Annual Holiday Concert. 3 p.m., at the McLean Community Center's Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. The 2012 concert features the Baltimore-based classical guitarist Benjamin Beirs and the Symphony Festival Singers in a musical celebration of the season. Children 12-and-under, free. 571-332-2944 or veronicaroyal@cox.net.

TUESDAY/DEC. 18

Langley Choral Holiday Winter

Concert. 7:30 p.m., in the auditorium at Langley High School, 6520 Georgetown Pike, McLean. All six of the high school choral departments, including the Madrigals, join to sing winter and holiday favorites. 703-283-1697.

Toys for Tots.

During the day, at the McLean Racquet & Health Club, 1472 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. A collection box for new, unwrapped toys is located in the club lobby. www.mcleanracquetandhealthclub.com.

THURSDAY/ DEC. 20

McLean High School Holiday

Ensemble Performance. 6-7:30 p.m. at the McLean Racquet & Health Club, 1472 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Players for this event are the members of the McLean High School Philharmonic orchestra, under the



The Langley Madrigals Choir

Langley Choirs to Perform Holiday Concert

All six choral departments at Langley High School, including the Women's Treble, Women's Select Treble, Concert Choir, Women's Chamber Choir, Voicemale and the award-winning Langley Madrigals, will sing winter and holiday favorites on Tuesday, Dec. 18 at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium at the high school, 6520 Georgetown Pike. Admission is free and the concert is open to the public.



The McLean Symphony during the 2011 Holiday Concert.

The McLean Symphony Holiday Concert

The McLean Symphony, together with Maestro Dingwall Fleary, will present their annual holiday concert at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 16 at the McLean Community Center's Alden Theatre. Go to www.mclean-symphony.org or visit the Alden Theatre box office for tickets. For additional information, call 571-332-2944 or e-mail veronicaroyal@cox.net.

direction of Mrs. Katie LaBrie. www.mcleanracquetandhealthclub.com.

about a boy band of singing dancing heartthrobs from Ohio on the last night of their national tour. \$30; \$15, students. 703-854-1856 or www.1ststage Tysonson.org.

FRIDAY/DEC. 21

Altar Boyz.

8 p.m., at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. A cheeky, pop-rock musical comedy

SEE HOLIDAY, PAGE 15

Just Like New Reopens Dec. 1st

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HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 14

SATURDAY/DEC. 22

Altar Boyz. 2 p.m., 8 p.m., at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. A cheeky, pop-rock musical comedy about a boy band of singing dancing heartthrobs from Ohio on the last night of their national tour. \$30; \$15, students. 703-854-1856 or www.1ststage Tysonson.org.

Welcome Yule! 4:30 p.m., at Vienna Baptist Church, 541 Marshall Road, Vienna. The Vienna Choral Society celebrates the season with traditional English carols in a wood-beamed church with hot cocoa and Christmas cookies to follow the concert. \$20, adults; \$15 over 64, under 18; and \$35 for families. www.ViennaChoralSociety.org.

SUNDAY/DEC. 23

Altar Boyz. 2 p.m., 7 p.m., at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. A cheeky, pop-rock musical comedy about a boy band of singing dancing heartthrobs from Ohio on the last night of their national tour. \$30; \$15, students. 703-854-1856 or www.1ststage Tysonson.org.

FRIDAY/DEC. 28

Altar Boyz. 8 p.m., at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. A cheeky, pop-rock musical comedy about a boy band of singing dancing heartthrobs from Ohio on the last night of their national tour. \$30; \$15, students. 703-854-1856 or www.1ststage Tysonson.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 29

Altar Boyz. 2 p.m., 8 p.m., at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. A cheeky, pop-rock musical comedy about a boy band of singing dancing heartthrobs from Ohio on the last night of their national tour. \$30; \$15, students. 703-854-1856 or www.1ststage Tysonson.org.

SUNDAY/DEC. 30

Altar Boyz. 2 p.m., 7 p.m., at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. A cheeky, pop-rock musical comedy about a boy band of singing dancing heartthrobs from Ohio on the last night of their national tour. \$30; \$15, students. 703-854-1856 or www.1ststage Tysonson.org.

MONDAY/DEC. 31

Watch Night. 7 p.m.-midnight at the crossroads of Broad and Washington Streets, Falls Church. Named after the ancient African tradition of watching in the New Year, the community comes together for small-town festivities including magicians, storytelling, face painting, karaoke, digital dance revolution, live music, restaurants and more. www.fallschurchva.gov.

Ballroom Dance: New Year's Eve "Ring The Bell." 8 p.m.-12:30 a.m., Colvin Run Schoolhouse, 10201 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Ring in 2013 with all your favorite dance styles; hors d'oeuvres included, black-tie optional. \$50 through Dec. 10; \$60 after Dec. 10. 703-759-2685 or www.colvinrun.com.

FRIDAY/JAN. 11

21st Annual Economic Conference. 7:15-11:45 a.m., at McLean Hilton Tysons Corner, 7920 Jones Branch Drive, McLean. Presented by Cardinal Bank and George Mason University. Free for 2012-2013 paid alumni members, LLP '12 and ELL/LFI '13 members. Register by Jan. 3 at Danielle@leadershipfairfax.org.



PHOTO BY KATHLYN BURNELL

Chorale of the Woman's Club of McLean

McLean Woman's Club Chorale Holiday Concert

The McLean Woman's Club Chorale presents a Holiday Concert at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 11, at Trinity United Methodist Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean. The 30-member group sings popular and semiclassical selections; free, reservations requested. 703-356-0089 or www.mcleanwc.org.

FRIDAY/FEB. 1

Next to Normal. 8 p.m., at McLean Community Center's Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. This ground-breaking musical shows how far two parents will go to keep themselves sane and their family's world intact. \$18; \$20. 866-811-4111 or www.mcleanplayers.org.

ONGOING:

Winter Wonders. 10 a.m.-4 p.m., at the Vienna Art Center, 115 Pleasant Street, NW, Vienna. From now until Dec. 29, Winter Wonders will be featuring affordable original artworks and handmade gift items by artists from Northern Virginia. Special hours during the holidays. 703-319-3971 or www.viennaartssociety.org.

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Closing Notice
MCC will be closed 12/24 and 12/25
for the Christmas holiday.

The McLean Community Center
www.mcleancenter.org
Home of the Alden Theatre
www.aldentheatre.org



1234 Ingleside Ave.,
McLean, VA 22101
703-790-0123, TTY: 711



FOCUS ON IMMIGRATION

A child and her parents during prayer services at the Sikh Foundation of Virginia in Fairfax Station on Thursday, Nov. 14. The Dias where Guru Granth Sahib (the Holy Book) is adorned is called Darbar Sahib (Holy Court).

PHOTO BY
ROBBIE HAMMER/
THE CONNECTION



Sikhs Bring Foundation of 'Service to Others'

Fairfax Station temple active in community outreach.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

On a recent Thursday evening, Ajaib Singh, 78, one of the founding members of the Sikh Foundation of Virginia, politely escorts a visitor to the area where one removes shoes and dons a headscarf.

In the background, the melodic vibrations of a harmonium blend with the sounds of men, women and children chatting as they sit together on mats on the floor. They are chopping large bowls of onions and other vegetables for a communal meal after an outreach service.

"You see, no one is more elevated than any other," said Singh, noting that everyone sits on the floor during communal meals and during worship service.

Singh said that equality and service to others are key tenets of Sikhism, a monotheistic faith. "I like to say we're a grassroots movement," Singh said, smiling.

Ajaib Singh came to the United States as a graduate student to University of California, at Davis, in August of 1958. After completing his Ph.D. studies in chemistry in 1961, he came to the east coast as a research fellow at Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass.

He and Majit Kaur consider themselves proud members of the SFV congregation and proud American citizens. Ajaib said he wants to share the SFV mission with others, to promote respect and understanding of Sikh values.

ON SATURDAY, NOV. 17, the Sikh Foundation hosted people from different faiths to share their thoughts on selfless service, what it means in their faith and how they personally pursue it in their lives. The panel included protestant missionaries and a Coptic Christian immigrant from Ethiopia. During the event, the Sikh community also collected dozens of boxes of winter clothes to send to those still suffering from the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy.

"This event will be marked as the beginning of a new era of interfaith efforts followed by many similar projects where the youth of different faiths will work collectively and help the needy," said Surinder Singh, an active member of the foundation.

Although Sikhs do not have a particular day of worship, the Fairfax Station temple holds services on Thursdays and Sundays. A formal gurdwara service includes the singing of hymns and recitations from the Guru Granth Sahib, Sikhism's Holy Scriptures.

The temple is a welcoming home to many immigrants from India as well as those born in the United States, Singh said.

The Fairfax Station gurdwara, like many around the world, includes classrooms, a Langer Hall for community meals, a sanctuary and a community center, which Singh said is a sign of the religion's values of service and equality.

"Sikhism was founded in an area and in a time in which inequality was rampant," said Navdeep Singh, assistant executive director at the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund and a member of the Fairfax Station Temple his entire life. "If you were a woman, you were less than a man. If you were poor you were less than a rich person. Based on what caste you were, that defined your entire life. Sikhism was a rejection of those ideas."

SINCE THE 9/11 TERRORIST ATTACKS by Islamic extremists, Sikhs sometimes have been mistaken for Muslims, because of their beards and turbans, and have been the target of hate crimes and discrimination. Many American Sikh women dress like other Westerners or wear the salwar kameez, a colorful north Indian garment of a long shirt and loose-fitting pants.

Gurpreet Singh, a member of the Fairfax Station Temple, said most men wearing turbans are Sikhs, not Muslims.

"I remember the bumper stickers that appeared on cars after 9/11. 'I am Sikh. I am American.' But it shouldn't matter whether it's a mosque or a temple. Hate is hate, and it's wrong."

Navdeep Singh said the Sikh community in Fairfax Station was profoundly touched by the outpouring of support from neighboring churches in the wake of the deadly attack on the Wisconsin Sikh Temple on Aug. 5, when a gunman shot and killed six followers. During a candlelight vigil held at the temple, more than 300 people of all faiths gathered for an evening of unity, resilience and hope.

Politicians and police officers, Muslims and Jews, children and seniors stood side by side on the grounds of the temple, holding up candles, murmuring prayers of peace and listening quietly as community leaders promised solidarity with the Sikh community and reflected on the violence in Wisconsin.

"One might say our community should retreat and live in fear," Singh said, "but Sikhs will keep the doors of the gurdwaras open."

For more information on Sikhism, contact Dr. Ajaib Singh of the Sikh Foundation of Virginia at 540-720-5755 or visit www.sfova.org.

Church Attracts Chinese Immigrants

FROM PAGE 13

"Since the arrival and membership of several Indian families in 2007, key leaders like Manoj Mathai and Sujay Phillips have made Chantilly Bible Church the base for a creative outreach to this community. It even touches India through frequent visits that include evangelism and Bible distribution," Austin said.

Whittle said all three of the ministries are an integral part of Chantilly Bible Church, and none plan to become separate churches.

"Chinese, Hispanics and Indians serve alongside North Americans at every level of the church. The children and youth programs are fully integrated. There are immense benefits for these second and third generations. Bicultural couples are comfortable at Chantilly Bible Church, and, as you would expect, mixed marriages are on the rise," Whittle said.

IN FACT, THE CHURCH ATTRACTS so many immigrants that they offer headsets during worship services so those who speak limited English can listen to sermons

interpreted in Mandarin or Spanish. And the songs are projected in English with Mandarin translations.

"Being bicultural and bilingual gives you a special joy in life," Whittle said.

Huang said the language outreach is especially critical for older Chinese immigrants.

"As first generation immigrants, we hold on to our Chinese identity. Chinese is still the mother language," he said.

Huang also said there's a more profound reason for interpreting sermons into Mandarin.

"The older Chinese, like me," he said, smiling, "they need to hear the scripture in Mandarin, so it can enter their heart."

Huang said his greatest joy is baptizing fellow Chinese immigrants. "For Chinese immigrants, wherever they come from, church becomes an attraction. They are longing for something they can't have in their homeland. It's a very special moment. This is something people are afraid to do in Hong Kong or Taiwan. . . . I can't express how happy I feel during a baptism," he said.

Rebuilding the Trust

FROM PAGE 12

even though they had never even been to Pakistan. Some children said, "Oh, you are hiding in the mountains!"

Khan raised her children with the intent that America is their home.

"We are Americans, we are Pakistani-Americans, but that's where the challenge came after 9/11. The kids asked, 'Are we American or are we Pakistani? What are we?' So that was a big thing, a big challenge that came," Khan said.

KHAN'S NEIGHBOR, who she had been living next door to for the past 20 years, stopped speaking to her the day after 9/11. Prior to that, the two friends would exchange Christmas and Mother's Day presents. "We basically watched each other's kids," Khan said. However, it took a long time before Khan's neighbor came around and started speaking to her again.

Another thing that came out of 9/11 was that both Muslims and non-Muslims were hurt. "That trust was gone and it takes time

to rebuild that trust. But one good thing that came out of 9/11 was that the younger generation of Muslims started getting very involved politically and socially," Khan said.

Five months after 9/11, Malik started an interfaith dialogue program with a local synagogue and church. "I worked on educating people about our religion and the peace it teaches," Malik said.

Sather has noticed that over the years, people have treated Muslims a little better. "When I attempt to wear the head scarf, people treat me with more respect than when I don't wear it," she said. "Also, as I get older, I realize there is absolutely nothing to be ashamed of."

Khan hopes that her future generations take the good from her background as well as their American background and blend the two. "Some of the good things of American culture are honesty, respect, and tolerance for others. Some of the good things of my culture are religion, family values and traditions. The biggest challenge is to make sure that the generations to come have both," Khan said.

Instincts...



By **KENNETH B. LOURIE**

...related to having been diagnosed with stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer, the terminal/"incurable, but treatable" kind, according to my oncologist. The kind whose median life expectancy at diagnosis is eight months. The kind that John Rhys Davis as Sallah from the 1981 movie "Raiders of the Lost Ark" might have described as "very bad," just as he had described the asps slithering below on the floor of the tomb he and "Indy" had just unearthed. So the news I received in late February, 2009 – such as it was, was never very good. In fact, for an asymptomatic, non-smoking, 54-and-half-year-old male with an immediate-family history of NO cancer, it was, well, "shocking" barely scratches the emotional surface of what I was feeling.

Forty-five months later, I am still dealing with feelings – as in still living, for which I am amazingly fortunate. However, those feelings seem to sometimes have a mind of their own, and accordingly tend to take over and rewrite one's brain (figuratively speaking). Moreover, thoughts, actions and behaviors change, and not always for the better, and rarely for the best; most likely a direct result of the cancer's emotional wallop. Thoughts you don't want/never had seep in despite your best attempts at minding them. Behaviors previously uncharacteristic manage to exert more control than you ever imagined. Actions previously unfamiliar cause one to wonder if who you were – pre-cancer, you will ever be again. You don't want to lose yourself inside the whole cancer culture, but being told you're going to die prematurely: in "13 months to two years," has a way of rewriting your record books, whether you intended to or not. Not giving in to this cancer consequence has been my greatest struggle.

Early on, I remember asking my oncologist: "Is it OK to still buy in bulk?" For all you know, based on much of what your doctor is saying, and what you are sensing, your future is tenuous and extremely unpredictable (a version of the humorous advisory to "not buy green bananas"). I mean, the diagnosis is terminal cancer; "HELLO." What are you supposed to think? This is how your mind takes over and you sort of lose it/lose control of it. As former Vice President "Dan" Quayle said in a speech to the United Negro College Fund (not about cancer), "What a terrible thing it is to lose one's mind." Still, it certainly applies.

Another brain drain has to do with specific events scheduled in the future, a future whose guarantee – for me, has been invalidated. I'm watching television during the summer of 2012 and I see ads for Downton Abbey's third season premiere in January, 2013, and instinctively I wonder, will I be alive to see it?

Road projects are another example. At the beginning of the construction of the Intercountry Connector in Maryland (a cross-county highway being built near my house), regularly I would be stuck in the project's related road closures/redesigns and bridge-type flyovers and I would always think to myself: "Am I going to be alive when this project is finished or am I just going to suffer its building pains?"

Next May, the LUNGeVity Foundation (www.LUNGeVity.org), the largest foundation in the country dedicated to lung cancer research (and on whose Web site my cancer columns are now being posted) will be hosting their annual "Hope Summit" in Washington, D.C. I have been invited to attend and/or speak. My first thought upon receiving the invite: "Am I going to still be alive in May?"

I want to be positive. I am positive. But cancer is a huge negative. It's a constant battle of good versus evil. Sort of like the Indiana Jones movies. But this isn't the movies. This is real. This is cancer, the true definition of "very bad."

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

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Preparing Your Home for Holiday Guests

Experts offer checklist for getting a house in tip-top shape.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

In addition to shopping, decorating and attending parties, many are making a mad dash to get their homes ready for the holiday visitors. Take a deep breath: local experts have developed a checklist for creating a guest-ready home.

"Many people feel better about their home when everything is in order and in place," said Steve Magill, a remodeling consultant with Fred, the home repair division of Case Design/Remodeling, Inc., and an Oak Hill resident. "It makes the homeowner feel more at ease when minor details are taken care of."

The kitchen is one of the most important rooms in a home, especially during the holiday season. Experts say to make sure your microwave oven, toaster and coffeemaker are in top working condition, or to replace them if necessary.

For extra storage space for cookware, experts suggest installing a pot rack. Also, consider adding extra stools or chairs for guests who like to gather in the kitchen.

Next, survey the living or family room. Experts suggest cleaning carpets or area rugs so that they are free of signs of foot traffic. Consider updating the room with holiday home accents or adding new items, as well as accessorizing sofas and chairs with holiday pillows and throws.

"Take a magic eraser to clean up small smudges on walls like around light switches," said Magill, whose firm developed a holiday readiness checklist.

If guests are staying overnight, experts say to make space in a closet or drawer so visitors have a place to put their clothing. Since not everyone falls asleep at the same time, a bedside clock and reading lamp are helpful accessories.

"Your guest room should be warm and inviting and make your visitors feel as if they are at home," said Magill.

MAKE A GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION by ensuring that all outdoor lighting, including holiday lights, is functioning properly



Experts suggest cleaning carpets and area rugs in a home's family or living room before holiday guests arrive.

and turned on when it is dark. Outdoor lighting is a key to ensuring safety during the holidays.

Check the front door for signs of wear and consider giving old doors a new coat of paint. "Some of the most impact transforma-

tions . . . are projects like painting," Paul Zuch of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry said in a statement. In addition, polish and tighten door hardware and oil hinges to prevent squeaking.

Considering adding a small rug or welcome mat to the entryway. Establish a place in your home's entrance to collect coats, hats, boots and gloves. Make sure there is extra space and hangers in your coat closet.

"Make sure you think about ev-



When preparing your home for holiday guests, make sure there is a space near the entrance to collect coats, hats and boots.

ery room in your home when preparing for the holidays," said Tom Dodd, another Fred remodeling consultant. "Thinking about these things ahead of time will help make for an enjoyable and relaxing holiday season."

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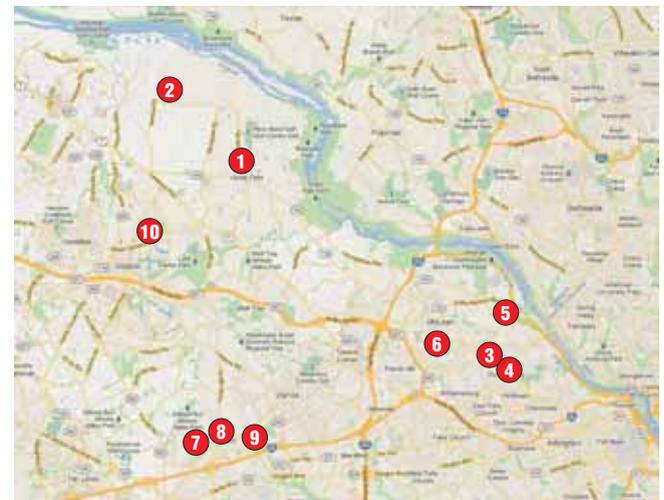


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PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE PICKET FENCE

When trimming a tree, Courtney Thomas of The Picket Fence in Burke suggests nestling “large ornaments deeper in the tree to fill in any holes. Then use smaller decorations on the outer branches.”

Decking the Halls

Local designers share holiday decorating suggestions

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Looking for inspiration for decking the halls this season? Three local home design experts offer doable tips for capturing the magic of the holidays.

Courtney Thomas, of The Picket Fence in Burke, believes that the secret to a beautiful Christmas tree is layering: “If using a garland, put that on first,” she said. “You can get creative with [garland]. Besides the traditional ribbon, we’ve used newspaper chains, twig garlands, felt shapes strung together and burlap. Nestle large ornaments deeper in the tree to fill in any holes. Then use smaller decorations on the outer branches.”

Consider forgoing store-bought ornaments. “Take old holiday cards and repurpose them as thoughtful ornaments,” said designer Allie Mann of Arlington. “Change the tree topper this year. It doesn’t have to be a traditional star or angel. Go for something different like a monogrammed letter for your family.”

Incorporate tradition into holiday decorations. “Use ornaments handmade by your children through the years, the nativity set that has been in the family for generations or a new treasure that’s on its way to becoming a family heirloom. [These] are just as beau-



Designers tout the versatility of mercury glass holiday decorations: “Whether your decor is traditional or contemporary, a few mercury glass pieces will add some shine,” said Courtney Thomas of The Picket Fence in Burke.

tiful as anything in the decor magazines and will definitely be more meaningful to your family,” said Thomas. “It’s always fun to unwrap those special pieces year after year.”

When it comes to holiday décor, Angela Phelps, owner of Le Village Marché in Arlington says that mercury glass is popular this year. “The good thing about mercury glass is that you can use it at other times of the year too, especially for New Years,” she said.

Thomas adds, “Mercury glass also blends well with many decorating styles. Whether your decor is traditional or contemporary, a few mercury glass pieces will add some shine.”

Greenery can be used during the holiday season and beyond. “A lot



Designers say those on a budget can create holiday decorations with greenery.

of boxwood topiaries and wreaths can be used throughout the year,” said Phelps. “You can prolong the life by just changing out the ribbon and using them in the spring.”

For those on a budget, Phelps suggests “going out and find[ing] greenery in your own yard or the woods. You can do a lot with red ribbon.”

Combine old and new. “Place a tabletop tree in a vintage urn,” said Thomas. “Fill a wooden tool caddy with some greenery and vintage ornaments to make a unique centerpiece.”

Think beyond red and green. “There is no rule that says you can’t use other colors in your holiday decorating,” said Thomas. “You’ll also get a richer look by adding various shades of colors. If you like red and green, mixing in some burgundy or lime green will add another dimension to your decor. But don’t mix too many different colors. It will look more cohesive if you stick to a couple dominant colors in varying tones.”

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PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBTZEL/THE CONNECTION

The Marshall gymnastics team placed third at a meet on Dec. 10 at McLean High School.

Washington-Lee Gymnastics Team Sets Bar High

Generals beat McLean, Marshall, Lee, Wakefield at Monday meet.

BY ALEX VAN REES
FOR THE CONNECTION

In a rematch from February's Northern Region championship meet, the Washington-Lee Generals again defeated the McLean Highlanders in a girls' gymnastics meet on Monday, Nov. 10 at McLean High School.

About 10 months ago, the Highlanders and the Generals battled each other down to the wire with a region championship on the line. W-L was able to squeak past McLean by less than four-tenths of a point (145.191-144.851) to take home the title. Although it was not as close on Monday night (139.55 to 131.35), it was still a thrilling competition.

"I'm getting used to this over the last three years or so," Washington-Lee Head Coach Joe D'Emidio said. "This is our fourth year going undefeated. So, the team I have is great and I'm savoring the moment. It seems like we're always very close with McLean. I'm enjoying the ride because things will change next year."

MOST OF THE GIRLS are seniors on the team, and D'Emidio is referring to the notion that much of the team will be headed off to college; he will have almost an entirely new squad on the mats come next winter.

Senior Kylie Auble finished second individually in the all-around with a score of 36.5, two points behind the winner, senior Morgan Stahl of Marshall High School.

"I think we did really well as a team out there tonight," Auble said. "We've practiced really hard and put everything together. There wasn't that much pressure on us. It's more of something fun to do. I wanted



The McLean gymnastics team placed second at a home meet on Dec. 10.

to enjoy myself, but at the same time win."

Although the Highlanders were not able to win on their home turf, it was a strong start to the season.

"The girls were a little nervous this evening because it was their first meet of the season and it was at home," McLean Head Coach Courtney Lesson said. "We didn't care too much about the competition. We mainly just wanted to focus on hitting our routines and doing what we have been practicing. We need to continue to grow and work as a team."

McLean and Washington-Lee could end up having another showdown at regionals.

"Washington-Lee was definitely our biggest competition coming into the meet tonight," McLean sophomore Madi Schuman said. "Although they are not in our division, we are looking forward to competing with them at regionals and this gives us something to work on throughout the season."

Lesson was very pleased with the outcome and she has an idea of what the team needs to work on in order to improve for the next meet.

"We are definitely going to go through the score sheets and check out the bonuses to see what we need to work on specifically," Lesson said. "We're going to focus on another strong lineup next time out."

Although the battle between the Highlanders and the Generals was the meet's main focus, Stahl stole the show in her own respect.

THE MARSHALL GYMNAST scored 38.55 points by winning each of the four events during the meet (vault, bars, beam and floors). Although she performed well, it was not enough to help Marshall push past McLean as the Statesmen finished the meet in third place with 122.9 points.

Both Robert E. Lee High School and Wakefield High School failed to break 100 points. The Lee Lancers finished in fourth place with a score of 96.5, edging the Warriors, who collected 95.5 points to round out the event in fifth place.

SPORTS ROUNDUPS

Langley Hockey Starts Season With Win

If Nov. 30 was any predictor of success for Langley hockey, this should be a great season for the club.

Coming off an opening night 7-0 win against Madison a few weeks ago, Langley was up against Broad Run, one of the top teams in the Northern Virginia Scholastic Hockey League. Langley shot out to a strong 3-0 lead by the end of the second period and never looked back, despite a furious attempt at a comeback by Broad Run, which ultimately fell to the Saxons by a 4-3 margin. Kevin Diner had two goals with the other goals scored by Drew Schneider and Derick Paxton. Evan Sterling had two assists, along with Drew Schneider and Sam LaFuria, and Ryan Framinan played a strong game in goal.

Langley has high expectations for this season. The club is coached by Rob Faktorow, who is in his 12th season, and is anchored by a very strong senior class made up of captain Evan Sterling, assistant captains Kevin Diner and Logan Pontell, Peter Nam, Derick Paxton and Zach Shames.

Last year, they lost in the NVSHL semifinals in a tough overtime contest against eventual state champion Stone Bridge and have the experienced offense, defense and goaltending necessary to again contend for a state title this season.

In the Madison 7-0 victory, Schneider had a hat trick and other goals were scored by Jeremy Kim (2), Kevin Diner and Sterling.

Diner added three assists with other assists coming from Shames, Sam LaFuria and Colin Dibble.

Madison Swim and Dive Beats Marshall

The Madison swim and dive team defeated Marshall on Nov. 30 in the first Liberty District meet of the season. The Madison boys' team won, 222-93, and the Madison girls' team won, 209-106.

First-place boys' finishers were: Connor Simon (200 free), Ian Russiello (200 IM and 500 free), Grayson Smith (100 free and 100 back) and Evan Owens (50 free and 100 breast). The boys also won all three relays: the 200 medley and both 200 and 400 freestyles.

First-place finishers for the girls' team were: Laura Sullivan (200 free and 100 back), Mallory Dyson (200 IM), Ali Queen (100 fly and 100 breast), Sidney Owens (100 free) and Laura Kellan (500 free).

The girls also won all three relays.

Grayson Campbell, a freshman diving at his first meet, broke the Madison High School record with six dives and a score of 271.40.

McLean Wrestling Places Eighth, Marshall 26th at NOVA Classic

The McLean wrestling team finished eighth at the 32-team 2012 FinalAutoPrice.Com NOVA Classic Dec. 7 and 8 at Fairfax High School.

The Highlanders had three grapplers place third in their respective weight classes. One Highlander finished fifth and one placed eighth.

McLean's Conor Grammes defeated Fauquier's Caleb Strum via 12-0 major decision in the 106-pound third-place match. McLean's Forrest Stieg placed third in the 152-pound bracket with a 7-2 decision against Centreville's Will Fulton and Bryson Davis pinned Thomas Jefferson's Paul Bentz to win the 182-pound title.

McLean's Adilet Uspeev finished fifth in the 145-pound bracket with an injury win against Fauquier's Michael Villalobos. Gabe Sutherland finished eighth in the 170-pound division.

McLean finished with 115.5 points. Battlefield won the event with 194.5 points. Centreville and Fauquier tied for second with 180 points, followed by Paul VI (fourth, 154.5), Lake Braddock (151.5), Mount Vernon (135) and Annandale (131.5).

Marshall finished tied with Bishop O'Connell for 26th with 46.5 points. Christian Valencia was Marshall's top finisher, placing third in the 120-pound division.

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