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Interfaith Service Brings Community Together

The Shepherd’s Center of Oakton-Vienna sponsors the annual interfaith worship.

By Andrea Worker
The Connection

“T
here’s room for all of us, and all of our faiths,” said Linnea Nelson. It’s a lesson she said she learned years ago as a substitute teacher on a Native American reservation. “I attended a funeral for a young man from the tribe. The service was a beautiful blend of a Catholic ceremony and tribal traditions.”

Nelson, director of Religious Exploration at the Universalist Unitarian Congregation of Fairfax, spoke at the 14th Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Worship, sponsored by The Shepherd’s Center of Oakton-Vienna (SCOA), hosted this year by Emmanuel Lutheran Church on Nov. 20th and attended by members of Methodist, Unitarian, Lutheran, Catholic, Baptist and other denominations.

THE CONGREGANTS were ushered in by members of Girl Scout Troop No. 1993 from Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church and took their seats to the celestial sounds of Columbus, Ohio Symphony Orchestra Principal Harpist Jude Mollenauer Duesterhaus. “Drumming in the Spirit,” Emmanuel Lutheran’s talented drumming group directed by Jack Layne, opened and closed the service. Rev. Beth Neubauer welcomed everyone to the church, decorated by members Kay Slade, Heather Lutz and crew with autumn accents and pumpkins donated by Roger and Jane Hortof. Rev. Neubauer offered her own words of thanksgiving to everyone who made the event possible and to all in attendance, finishing her opening remarks with an invitation. “Please,” she said, “stay for awhile after the service and have some pie. Have a chat, visit a bit. And have some more pie. Those of us at Emmanuel do not need a lot of leftover pie, so we are counting on you.”

The service continued with readings, reflections and prayers led by ministers and lay people representing each of the 11 congregations that participated in the gathering. In addition to the opening hark “Prelude” and the rousing drums, there were six choirs, including a children’s choir, and a number of musicians and soloists, again from the participating congregations and coordinated by Emmanuel Lutheran’s Music Director Aria Clapp.

Representing the various religious denominations that took part in the 14th Annual Thanksgiving Service, from left—Ralph Nider of St. Mark Catholic Church, Rev. Ray Brill, Wesley United Methodist, Shirley Elliott, Antioch Christian Church, Rev. Mary Katherine Morn, Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Rev. Ben Wagener, Vienna Baptist Church, Rev. Anne Swallow Gillis, Emmaus United Christian Church, Rev. Beth Neubauer, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Fr. William Metzger, Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church, Rev. Sandra Butler, Unity of Fairfax, and Rev. Mark Edwards, Emmanuel Lutheran. Not pictured, but representing their congregations were Rev. Ruth Burgess of Brune United Methodist Church, Linnea Nelson from Universalist Unitarian Congregation, and Mikang Kim from Wesley United Methodist Church.

From left—Richard Duesterhaus, chair of Shepherd’s Center of Oakton-Vienna board of directors, Board Member Julius Hankin, and Vice Chair William Kirby. Duesterhaus and Hankin were there at the beginning, two of the founders behind bringing the Shepherd’s Center to Virginia, officially in 1997. Kirby says his goal “is to ring the Beltway with Shepherd’s Centers.” He’s on his way. They have helped start up centers in Annandale/Springfield, Fairfax/Burke, and Mclean/Arlington/Falls Church.

So what brought all of these folks from so many different practicing faiths together on a chilly November night? Aside from the generous spirits of the attendees, Rev. Neubauer pointed to Julius Hankin and his wife, Mary Ann. Both Hankins are board members of The Shepherd’s Center of Oakton-Vienna. “My wife and I were at that first meeting in 1996, when a group decided to organize a Shepherd’s Center in our area.” The Hankins, along with board members John and Barbara Tate, and current Board Chair Richard Duesterhaus, have been the driving engines behind the success of this local chapter of the national organization. The Shepherd’s Centers of America is an interfaith network of community-based organizations dedicated to enriching the lives of adults over 50 by providing needed services, social and educational programs and the opportunity to share their knowledge, expertise and friendship through volunteerism. “Since our volunteers and the people we serve come from all of these faiths, it’s a wonderful thing to bring everyone together to support each other, to give thanks together, and to raise funds and awareness,” said Julius Hankin, who serves on the SCOA’s Congregational Advisory Council.

THE OAKTON-VIENNA CHAPTER, housed in the Vienna Baptist Church on Marshall Road in Vienna, is a busy one. In 2011 they provided over 500 round-trip rides for medical appointments and prescription pick up. Volunteers gave rides to another 300 persons in need of transportation for non-medical errands. Handy Helper volunteers do minor home repairs to help older adults keep their homes safe and livable. There are support groups that give caregivers time to re-energize, and Friendly Visitors and Callers keep in contact with individuals who may feel isolated and just need someone to chat with. The SCOA reported a 68 percent increase in the hours contributed to this contact service from 2010 to 2011.

Programs organized by the SCOA include the popular Adventures in Learning, three eight-week sessions averaging 125 participants and covering topics as diverse as Tai Chi lessons to world and national affairs. There are quarterly luncheons, trips, fundraising events and community outreach activities. This year’s Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration collected almost $3000 to benefit two local organizations—Our Daily Bread of Fairfax, and Committee for Helping Others. According to SCOA Executive Director Michelle Scott, checks will be presented to the charities at a volunteer event in December. Scott and Hankin also noted that this year’s event was the largest to date.

“I could go on and on about the Shepherd’s Center,” said Julius Hankin, “and all the amazing people who donate their time and energy and spirit.” Hankin is already working with his cohorts on the 15th Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving service. In the mean time, information and volunteer opportunities are offered on their website at www.scoa.org.
Happy Hanukkah, Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas

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

W e are a nation of immigrants, to invoke the title of John F. Kennedy’s posthumously published book; undeniably a na- tion 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, 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 (Akal 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.ejoki.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 religious holidays in No- vember and December. We welcome letters and comments. Share your religious and holiday traditions. You can submit a letter online at www.connectionnewspapers.com/contact/

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

By Kenwal Sachdeva

Feeling so that she does not miss the family, to give her love and comfort 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 our 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 Sta- tion is a Public Relations Officer for Sikh Foundation of Virginia.

Celebrating Diversity Through Culture

By Kenwal Sachdeva

Immigration and Integration

W hen 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 make sure she feels comfortable, 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.

By Kenwal Sachdeva
Born and raised in the Washington D.C. area, John Eaton is a life-long music enthusiast who has been following his passion for over 40 years. He can be described as a pianist, educator, producer and music translator. On Saturday, Nov. 24, he took on the form of musician performing the music of George Gershwin and Harold Arlen at The Barns at Wolf Trap Performance Center, as a presentation of the CD series he has been producing on great American song writers.

Eaton proved to be a musician at heart from a young age. Although he did not start to formally study music until he was 24 years old, he began playing the piano at age 6 and expressed talent as he grew older. “I just started to play,” said Eaton. “I had no thought of doing it professionally.”

As a young adult, Eaton earned a bachelor's degree in English from Yale University and a master's degree from Georgetown University. Only after serving two terms in the U.S. Army did Eaton decide to give a career as a musician a try. “After two years of trying, I was hooked,” Eaton said. “I was doing some programs with Smithsonian Institution and nightly performances at lounges. It turned out to be a very good fit.”

His first performance took place at the Bayou Club in Georgetown in 1958 where he continued to play primarily jazz for many years. In 1978, Eaton teamed up with Smithsonian Institution where he lectured and performed for the next 25 years through various programs. “It gave me the opportunity to do performances and travel to performance arts centers in other cities,” Eaton said.

While Eaton is a solo artist, he has had the opportunity to perform with artists like Clark Terry, Benny Carter and many others over the course of his career. “I was very fortunate,” said Eaton. “It was more of an instinct, a calling, than a conscious decision.”

Eaton’s first performance at The Barns through the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts was in 1988. Twenty-five years later, he continues at Wolf Trap as a performer and educator. “It’s not just about playing; it’s the connection with the audience,” Eaton said. “It’s the connection that is the most critical thing—it gives it all meaning. You feel a kind of magic, it’s wonderful.”

For more information on future performances and other services, visit www.wolftrap.org.
**WEDNESDAY/DEC. 12**

Vienna Bingo, 7 p.m. at the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department, 400 Center St. S. Vienna. Doons open at 4 p.m., sales begin at 5 p.m. and early birds, which take approximately 45 minutes, begin at 7 p.m. bingo@vvfd.org.

**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 ASLC/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 now open. $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 Towers Club Fairfax, 8000 Towers Crescent Drive, No. 1700, Vienna. A seasonal musical performance from the Mason Madrigals and Madison High School warrants a special appearance from Santa. Bring an unwrapped toy for the Toys for Tots drive. www.vzrc.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.mcleanandrama@gmail.com.

**FRIDAY/DEC. 14**

**Southern Comfort Dinner & Sounds of the Season Concert**

6:30-8:30 p.m., at Redemptor 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 Redemptor 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.redemptor-lease.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.mcleanandrama@gmail.com.

**SATURDAY/DEC. 15**

**Live Nativity**

7:30 p.m., at the Vienna 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.

**Holiday Entertainment**

For a complete listing of classes, tours, performances and events, pick up a free Program Guide at the Center.
Holiday Entertainment

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, 1224 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
Breakfast Buffet. 8 a.m.-noon, American Legion Post. 180, 330 Center Street N., Vienna. Scrambled eggs, omelets, blueberry pancakes, bacon and all the fixings in a breakfast open to the public. $8 adults; $4, children. 703-938-1379.

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 Ritz-Carlton Tysons Corner, 1700 Tysons Blvd., McLean. Disney princesses, treats and a special tea-time 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 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.1stagetysons.org.

Performing The Nutcracker

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.cbtvna.org.

TUESDAY/DEC. 18
Langley Choral Holiday Winter Concert. 7:30 p.m., in the auditorium at Langley High School, 5520 Georgetown Pike, McLean. All six of the high school choral departments, including the Madrigals, join to sing winter and holiday favorites. 703-283-1697.

Toy’s 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.mcleancenter.org.

THURSDAY/DEC. 20
McLean High School Holiday Ensemble Performance. 6-7:30 p.m., at the McLean Raquet & Health Club, 1472 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Players for this event are the members of the McLean High School Philharmonic orchestra, under the direction of Mrs. Katie LaBrie. www.mcleancenter.org.

FRIDAY/DEC. 21
Altar Boyz. 8 p.m., at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. A 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.1stagetysons.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 22
Altar Boyz. 2 p.m., 8 p.m., at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. A 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.1stagetysons.org.

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

By Anna Ross

In Fairfax County, some Muslims have to balance their Islamic faith alongside their individual American culture. While they are proud of their heritage and traditions, they also strive to be like their American counterparts.

Many Muslims in the area are finding ways to incorporate their faith into their daily lives, whether it's through prayer, community events, or simply by living according to Islamic principles. They are also finding ways to share their culture with others, such as through food or music, in order to break down stereotypes and promote understanding.

However, some Muslims face challenges when trying to balance their faith and American culture. They may encounter discrimination or intolerance, both in their personal lives and in public spaces. They may also feel pressure to conform to American norms, which can be difficult when trying to maintain their Islamic identity.

Despite these challenges, many Muslims in Fairfax County are finding ways to thrive in their new environment, while also staying connected to their heritage and traditions. They are working to create a space where they can feel welcomed and respected, and they are finding ways to share their culture with others in order to promote understanding and acceptance.

The journey of being Muslim in Fairfax County is one of balance and adjustment, but it is also one of growth and resilience. As they continue to navigate this complex landscape, Muslims in the area are finding ways to stay true to their values and identities, while also embracing the opportunities that come with life in America.
Sikhs Bring Foundation of ‘Service to Others’

Fairfax Station temple active in community outreach.

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 turban, 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.

Rebuilding the Trust

“Since the arrival and membership of several Indian families in 2007, key leaders like Manoj Mathai and Sujoy 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.

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 open to all 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.

“This is 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.

Church Attracts Chinese Immigrants

**FROM PAGE 9**

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Church Attracts Chinese Immigrants

**FROM PAGE 8**

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 Pakistanis-Americans, but that’s where the challenge came after 9/11. The kids asked, ‘Are we America or are we Pakistani? What are we?’ So that was a big thing, a big challenge that came,” Khan said.

KHA’N’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 interfait 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 base both,” Khan said.
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 feels 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 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 transformations... 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 every 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.”
### Local REAL ESTATE

**October, 2012**

**Top Sales in Great Falls, McLean, Reston, Oakton and Vienna**

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<tr>
<th>Address</th>
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Sports

Marshall Places Third At McLean 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 (139.55-141.35), it was still a thrilling competition.

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.

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

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

The girls also won all three relays. First-place finishers for the girls’ team were: Laura Sullivan (200 freestyle and 100 breast), Mallory Dyson (200 IM), Ali Queen (100 fly and 100 breast), Sidney Sullivan (200 free and 100 back), Mallory Dyson (200 IM) and Wakefield High School failed

Madison Wrestling Finished 18th at NOVA Classic

The Madison wrestling team had three grapplers place in the top eight of their respective weight classes and the Warhawks finished 18th out of 32 teams at the 2012 FinalAutoPrice.Com NOVA Classic Dec. 7 and 8 at Fairfax High School.

Madison’s Connor Eckhardt took fifth in the 138-pound division 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.

First-place boys’ finishers were: Connor Simon (100 free), Ian Russiello (200 IM and 500 free), Grayson Campbell, a freshman diving at his first meet, broke the Madison High School record with six dives and a score of 271.40.

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Caleb Strum via 12-0 major decision in the 106-pound third-place match. McLean’s Forrest Stiegl 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.

First-place boys’ finishers were: Connor Simon (200 free), Ian Russiello (200 IM and 500 free), Grayson Campbell, a freshman diving at his first meet, broke the Madison High School record with six dives and a score of 271.40.

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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 Alps slithering below on the floor of the tomb he and "Indy" had just uncovered.

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 feeling "shocking" and "amazingly fortunate," with which I am amazingly fortunate. However, those feelings seem to sometimes have a mind of their own, and according to tend to take over and rewrite one’s brain (literally speaking). Moreover, thoughts, actions and behaviors change, and not always for the better, according to the best, most likely a direct result of the cancer’s emotional wallop. Thoughts you don’t want/never had seen despite your best attempts at minding them. Behaviors previously uncharacteristic manage to exert more control than you ever imagined. Actions previously untamable 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 University of Nebraska College of Medicine, about cancer: “What a terrible thing it is to lose one’s mind.” Still, it certainly applies.

Another thing to do with specific events scheduled in the future, a future whose guarantee—for me, has been invalidated. I’m watching the clock during the remaining time of 2013, and I see ads for Downey 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 Intercounty Connector in Maryland (a cross-county highway), I had to be stuck in the project’s related road traffic hours. Call 703-778-9431 for details.

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 have been invited to attend and/or speak. My cancer columns (and on whose Web site my cancer columns have been invited to attend and/or speak. My cancer columns will be stuck in the project’s related road traffic hours. Call 703-778-9431 for details.

By KENNETH L. LOURIE

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