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Lift Me Up! rider Jake Luoma, 17, and Radar, one of Lift Me Up's! 13 therapy horses, were champions in two divisions at the Therapeutic Riding Association of Virginia's statewide horse show in Lexington, Va. The nonprofit kicks off its Good Fences Make Good Neighbors fundraiser in Reston and Great Falls.

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Let Sun Shine on Virginia's Financial Disclosure Laws

State legislators turn attention to ethics in wake of McDonnell gift scandal.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

As members of the Virginia General Assembly convene for the first time since last February, legislators are stampeding to introduce ethics legislation in response to the gift scandal which engulfed then Gov. Robert F. McDonnell (R).

The revelations last spring about numerous undisclosed gifts and purported loans from businessman Jonnie Williams to McDonnell — including a \$6,500 Rolex watch engraved to the “71st Governor of Virginia” and \$35,000 in gifts and catering for his daughters’ weddings — shined a spotlight on Virginia’s porous financial disclosure laws.

McDonnell, who remains under federal investigation over his relationship with Williams, pointed to various loopholes in existing state law as reasons for not disclosing gifts, noting that state law requires only the disclosure of gifts directly to officeholders, and not their families.

Following the principle cited by Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis that “Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants,” state Sen. Chap Petersen (D-Fairfax) has introduced an ethics reform package which he says “makes the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) a centerpiece.”

PETERSEN’S BILLS would increase disclosure, limit contributions and gifts, prohibit the use of private law firms for state business, and create an ethics commission, ideally with subpoena power, to hold legislators accountable and increase transparency.

“The era of Rolexes, lake-house vacations, and \$150,000 loans must end,” Petersen said. “For far too long those of us who serve in Richmond have relied on super-sized political contributions to fund our campaigns. That is a part of our current flawed culture. Working Virginians don’t see campaign donations larger than their yearly incomes as ‘no strings attached.’ They see a transaction.”

Petersen’s package of ethical reform bills takes its place alongside several others announced last week, including a bipartisan reform package unveiled Tuesday, Jan. 7, by House Majority Leader M. Kirkland Cox (R-Colonial Heights) and House Minority Leader David J. Toscano (D-Charlottesville).

Under the Kirkland-Toscano bill, reforms include:

- ❖ A \$250 cap on tangible gifts to officials and their immediate family members



PHOTO BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION

Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34), sitting, confers with a colleague during last year’s General Assembly session. After the session ended in February, it was disclosed that federal and state authorities had launched an investigation regarding gifts given to then-Gov. Robert McDonnell (R) and his family. The investigation served to heighten public awareness of Virginia’s lax financial disclosure laws.

from lobbyists or people with business before the state.

- ❖ A ban on solicitation of those gifts.
- ❖ The requirement that family members’ finances and gifts be disclosed.
- ❖ The creation of an ethics commission that would serve as a resource, providing legislators guidance on issues that may pose a conflict of interest.

“What we have really tried to do here is take the best parts of our current system, which is fairly strict reporting accountability, and in targeted areas, we’ve really tried to beef that up and really get at some of the problems,” Cox said at a news conference in Richmond last week with Republican and Democratic leaders.

Petersen said his proposals differed significantly from the House bill.

“I’m not overly impressed by the ‘bipartisan compromise’ announced in the House this week. My package has teeth. My intention is to change the culture, not just close the loopholes,” Petersen said in an interview on Wednesday, Jan. 8.

“The other issue that’s part of my proposal is making FOIA the centerpiece,” Petersen said. “I think my FOIA bill is critical for bringing more transparency to this process. That’s a huge difference, because without that it’s really hard to know what’s going

on and it’s for people and the media to investigate.”

Petersen said he wants his ethics commission to have subpoena power, which would give the group the authority to compel lawmakers to testify and produce evidence, or face a penalty for failure to comply.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, more than 40 states have similar ethics commissions, most with subpoena power.

Petersen said he has long been bothered by the lack of financial transparency in Virginia, and the ensuing erosion of the public’s trust.

WHEN REPORTS ABOUT THE ROLEX surfaced last July, Petersen sent a letter to the governor asking him to “come clean on this matter” by explaining the gifts, denying the reports, or resigning from office. He became the first Virginia lawmaker to suggest McDonnell’s resignation in the wake of the deepening controversy over the lavish gifts.

“For too long, we’ve said ‘hey, we’re honorable gentleman, we can police ourselves.’ Unfortunately, there have been too many recent incidents to contradict that,” Petersen said.

“That’s why I’ve introduced four bills that

What Petersen’s Ethics Package Would Do

- ❖ **SB212:** FOIA for General Assembly members and staff - SB212 removes the General Assembly’s exception from the Virginia FOIA act. This bill repeals the 2013 General Assembly FOIA exemption act (HB1639), patroned by Del. Tag Greason (R-Potomac Falls).
- ❖ **SB218:** Limits on Campaign Contributions and Gifts - SB218 Limits General Assembly members and Executives in the Commonwealth to a total of \$2,000 in gifts per year. All gifts over \$50 will continue to be itemized and reported. “Super-sized” campaign donations will be limited to \$20,000 per individual donor per candidate.
- ❖ **SB220:** Prohibiting the Use of Private Law Firms for State Business - SB220 requires the office of the Attorney General to contract local city or county attorneys, rather than private counsel, when it experiences a conflict of interest. This bill will remove the incentive for private law firms to exploit the current law and over-bill the state on a public matter. This bill was brought about due to the ongoing attorney’s fees charged by two firms employed by Attorney Gen. Ken Cuccinelli’s office to defend Gov. Bob McDonnell, reportedly more than \$780,000.
- ❖ **SB219:** Establishment of the Virginia Ethics Commission - SB219 requires that all loans, gifts, and statements of economic interests disclosures shall be filed with the Virginia Ethics Commission. Currently these disclosures are filed to the clerks of each house. The Virginia Ethics Commission will be a body independent of both houses, comprised of both former legislators and distinguished independent citizens whom have never held office. The commission will be able to make recommendations for disciplinary proceedings against legislators found in violation of disclosure laws to their respective house, where members will vote on any disciplinary action.

For more information on these bills, go to:

<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?141+sum+SB212>
SB220 (Petersen)
<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?141+sum+SB220>
HB1639: (Greason, 2013)
<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?131+sum+HB1639>
SB218 (Petersen)
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SB219 (Petersen)
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will increase the public’s right to know, limit campaign contributions to \$20K per candidate from a single donor, end the soaking of taxpayers by white-shoe law firms, and start a truly independent and distinguished ethics commission that includes everyday citizens to hold legislators accountable.”

But Del. Dave Albo (R-42) said he wasn’t overly impressed with Petersen’s bills, and he supports the bipartisan compromise.

“The bipartisan House proposal includes an ethics commission, so I don’t know why Senator Peterson thinks that his ethics commission is better,” Albo said Friday, adding that it’s unrealistic for state lawmakers to impose certain campaign contribution limits.

“If a bill could be crafted that would equally limit [all campaign contributions], then I would support it. But it has to be a level playing field,” Albo said.

“It takes a long time to start earning back the trust that you have lost, and as Virginians, and as public officials, we need to start now,” Petersen said.

Comstock Runs for Congress

Comstock will run against state Sen. Richard Black (R-13) and Richard Shickle (Frederick) for the Republican nomination.

BY ETHAN MCLEOD
THE CONNECTION

Virginia State Del. Barbara Comstock (R-34) will be running for the Republican nomination for Virginia's 10th Congressional District election in 2014. Comstock issued an official statement Jan. 7 about her decision to run, citing her past three terms as a delegate successfully working within the limits of Virginia's state budget as a primary reason behind her decision to run.

"I am running for Congress because I believe my strong record as a common sense conservative leader is what is needed in Congress," said Comstock in her statement. "Common sense isn't very common in Congress today, but in the state legislature, we have to operate within budget limits and produce results." Delegate Comstock represents Virginia's 34th district, which includes Great Falls, Vienna, and parts of McLean and Loudoun County extending toward Algonkian Park, and announced her campaign run one day before the start of this year's General Assembly session on Jan. 8. In an email exchange, Comstock highlighted job creation, repealing Obamacare, and continuing U.S. Rep. Frank R. Wolf's (R-10) tradition of protecting national security as several of her key priorities in this election.

COMSTOCK worked with Wolf both as a senior aide in his office from 1991-1995 and as a state delegate since 2009. "Having worked for over 25 years with Congressman Wolf as a volunteer, as a senior staffer and as a state legislator, I would hit the ground running with a great breadth and depth of experience already having worked on all of the key issues facing Northern Virginia," said Comstock. Wolf announced Dec. 17, 2013, that he would not seek re-election to his House of Representatives seat, and three weeks later Comstock was the first to officially announce she would run for the Republican nomination.



Del. Barbara Comstock (R-34) will seek the Republican Party nomination for the 2014 election for the 10th Congressional District seat.

"I am running for Congress because I believe my strong record as a common sense conservative leader is what is needed in Congress."

— Delegate Barbara Comstock (R-34)

PHOTO COURTESY OF COMSTOCK FOR CONGRESS

As of Jan. 13, Comstock's biggest competition appears to be from State Senator Richard Black (R-13), a social conservative who represents areas of Loudoun and Prince William counties. Black previously served from 1998 to 2006 in the House of Delegates and won the election for his current senate position in 2012.

Black confirmed Monday, Jan. 13, that he would be running for the Republican nomination. "I have represented all of Loudoun County at one time or another," said Black in an interview. "I am very concerned about the disarray in our foreign policy and can bring some strength to the foreign policy and military arenas." He is also concerned with helping the United States achieve energy independence.

Richard Shickle, chairman of the Frederick County Board of Supervisors, also intends to run for the Republican nomination. Shickle was first elected in 1996 to the board, whose territory includes Winchester and parts of Virginia extending toward the West Virginia border, and has served as chairman since 2004.

Artur Davis, a former Democratic U.S. representative from Alabama who moved to Northern Virginia, and state Del. Tim Hugo (R-40), whose district includes Centreville, Clifton and parts of Fairfax, were seen as potential candidates to seek the Republican nomination. However, both said in Dec. 2013 they would not be running.

AS FOR POTENTIAL DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES for the seat, Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville) announced Dec. 10, 2013, that he would seek the Democratic Party's nomination for the 10th congressional district election. Foust pointed to his own disappointment at the House's Republican-led shutdown of the federal government in Oct. 2013 as a primary reason he would run for congress. In addition to Foust, Leesburg architect Sam Kubba and Fairfax attorney Richard Bolger are also campaigning for the Democratic nomination, which will be decided by a primary.

The question of how the Republican Party will determine its nominee for the election is still on the table, with the options of choosing a candidate through either an open primary, in which both candidates will run publicly for the nomination, or a closed party convention. The 10th Congressional District Republican committee will decide on how to proceed with choosing its nomination on Wednesday, Jan. 23.

There'll be posters for buses, schools and other locations in support of Just Ask campaign.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

New Campaign Targets Teen Sex Trafficking

Officials from the Fairfax County Police, public schools, Office for Women & Domestic and Sexual Violence Services, and the Northern Virginia community gathered last Friday, Jan. 10, in Fairfax, to kick off a new education and prevention campaign on teen sex trafficking. Defined as "the act of manipulating or forcing anyone under the age of 18 to engage in a sex act in exchange for anything of value (money, drugs, shelter, food, clothes, etc.)," police identify an average of two new potential victims per week.

Many people believe teen sex trafficking only happens to runaways or in other more urban settings. But it's on the rise across Northern Virginia and teens are now being targeted in public venues — bus stops, walking down the street, parties, shopping malls, through social media outlets and more.

Sex traffickers don't discriminate; they recruit victims across ethnic, economic and gender strata. Most teens are unaware they're being drawn in and often don't recognize the signs of manipulation until it's too late. Traffickers aren't just gang members or criminals; they may be business professionals, family members, students and teens they know. The trafficker

may not be a stranger; rather it may be a friend or acquaintance from the classroom.

The Just Ask Prevention Project is a new public-awareness campaign addressing the increasing prevalence of teen sex trafficking in the region. The goal is to inspire residents to get involved with prevention and encourage them to learn more about spotting and reporting manipulative recruiters.

The campaign incorporates age-appropriate and illustrative new videos into the FCPS Health & PE. Family Life Education curriculum. There's an interactive Website, www.JustAskVA.org, plus a Just Ask Facebook page. There'll also be posters for buses, schools and other locations. Schools will create a plastic bracelet awareness campaign.

Additionally, the campaign partners with the Office for Women & Domestic and Sexual Violence Services which will fund several prevention and education programs to better prepare personnel on the front lines to respond to human trafficking victims and survivors. Parents, family, teachers and friends will learn how to recognize the signs and symptoms of teen sex trafficking situations and be urged to report suspicious activities to the FCPD Human Trafficking Unit.

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McLean Community Foundation February 1 Grant Request Deadline Approaching

The McLean Community Foundation is accepting proposals for its current grants cycle until February 1, 2014. Applications can be found on the MCF's Website at mcleancommunityfoundation.org

In 2013 the foundation funded projects as diverse as Share, Inc, a monument to honor victims of the Global War on Terrorism for American Legion Post 270 to medical care for the Children Partnership Foundation. 2013 grants totaled \$54,954.

The McLean Community Foundation (MCF) is a non-profit formed in 1980 by the McLean Citizen's Association to meet the philanthropic needs of a growing McLean community. Our focus is entirely and specifically on our McLean community and was established solely as a charitable foundation to benefit the residents of the McLean Planning District of Fairfax.



Be Part of The Pet Connection in February

Send Your Photos & Stories
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our online form at mcleanconnection.com

Be sure to include your name, address and phone number, and identify
all people and pets in photos. Submission deadline is February 20.

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- Cost of the clinics: FREE.
- Dates: Sunday, January 12, 1-3 & Sunday, January 19, 12-2
- Location: Nike 4 Field, Utterback Store Rd., Great Falls, VA
- Please register at www.greatfallslacrosse.com. Space/sticks are limited to 60 boys. Boys can attend both clinics. Please arrive at the field 15 minutes before the scheduled start time.
- We can only accommodate boys who fall under the Langley and McLean HS school pyramids.
- IMPORTANT – This clinic is for new players only.
- Weather Policy: Please check the Great Falls Lacrosse site to check for any scheduling changes.

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OPINION

From Late Night Comedy to Your Bedroom

Why the General Assembly matters more in Virginia than most states.

The Virginia General Assembly began its annual session last week on Jan. 8.

The actions of the Virginia General Assembly matter more to localities than it would in many other states. In Virginia, localities have only the power specifically granted by the General Assembly, the Dillon rule.

So, for example, Montgomery County and Prince Georges County in Maryland recently voted to increase the minimum wage in those localities. They didn't need permission from Maryland General Assembly to do so. Arlington and Alexandria might be inclined to follow suit (the District government also voted to increase the minimum wage) but do not have that power.

The General Assembly limits how localities can raise revenue, what kinds of traffic regulations they can implement, whether they can control where guns are allowed, whether school districts can begin classes before Labor Day, and much more.

Fairfax, Arlington and Alexandria sent their members of the Northern Virginia delegation of state senators, all Democrats, and delegates, overwhelmingly Democrats (13-5), to Richmond, where the House of Delegates is overwhelmingly Republican and control of the Senate is still up in the air pending special elections.

Del. Ken Plum (D-36) filed HB536 which would "increase the minimum wage from its current federally mandated level of \$7.25 per hour to \$8.25 per hour effective July 1, 2014, and to \$9.25 per hour effective July 1, 2015, unless a higher minimum wage is required by

the federal Fair Labor Standards Act." It isn't likely to see the light of day.

Anyone can watch the Virginia House of Delegates or Senate on streaming video when either is in session, and the Virginia General Assembly proved last year that it can be worthy of national attention for entertainment. It is in fact well worth tuning in once or twice or more. Visit <http://viriniageneralassembly.gov/> and click on "members and session," and see the "quick links" section for video links.

Legislators will consider literally thousands of bills between now and March 8.

Some quite random examples of proposed legislation from local delegates and senators:

❖ Del. Dave Albo (R-42): Driving while intoxicated; refusal of blood or breath tests. This bill would allow a person who has been arrested for driving while intoxicated and who has refused to submit to a blood or breath test be given another opportunity to consent to testing after the arresting officer has advised the person of the consequences of his refusal.

❖ Del. David Bulova (D-37): One bill would allow the employment of lights for the observation of deer (spotlighting) for certain activities authorized by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. Another would provide that property used in connection with certain crimes associated with human trafficking is subject to forfeiture to the Commonwealth.

❖ Del. Scott Surovell (D-44) has propose the repeal of last year's hybrid tax, plus a bill that would place a cap on the compensation that may be paid to a special counsel appointed to handle certain legal matters where it would be improper or uneconomical for the Attorney

See for Yourself

Visit <http://viriniageneralassembly.gov/> and click on "members and session," and see the "quick links" section for live video links, information on who your legislators are and how to track bills. Every resident is represented by one state delegate and one state senator; look up your and email to be placed on their mailing lists. Consider attending their local meetings.

General, or the Attorney General is unable, to handle such matters. That cap would be the same as allowed for a court appointed attorney, a very small amount.

❖ Del Barbara Comstock (R-34) proposes to allow local school districts to set their own calendars. Another bill would include non-motor vehicles including bicycles among vehicles that any driver must not tailgate. Another would require most state colleges and universities to allocate 75 percent of their slots for in-state students by 2019-2020 school year.

❖ Del. Patrick Hope (D-47) proposes to prohibit firearms on the floor of the House of Delegates. Another bill would require public institutions of higher learning in Virginia to provide a dedicated page on its website to information on mental health resources available to students.

❖ Del. Mark Sickles (D-43) proposes to create the Virginia Health Benefit Exchange, which will be established and operated by a new division within the State Corporation Commission.

❖ Sen. Dave Marsden (D-37) would make it a Class 1 misdemeanor for the owner of a website to both post an arrest photo and solicit, request, or accept money for removing the photograph.

❖ Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34) proposes to require drivers and passengers to wait for a reasonable opportunity to open vehicle doors on the side adjacent to moving traffic, an effort to prevent the "dooring" of bicyclists.

EDITORIAL

Five Million Dollars a Day

BY KENNETH R. "KEN"
PLUM
STATE DELEGATE (D-36)



Virginia taxpayer dollars not returned to them has amounted to five million dollars each day since Jan. 1, and will continue at that rate each day that Virginia refuses to expand its Medicaid program. In addition, at least 400,000 working Virginians will continue to be uninsured.

The 2013 session of the General Assembly created the Medicaid Innovation and Reform Commission (MIRC) to consider whether reforms to Virginia's Medicaid program were sufficient to allow Virginia to proceed with some form of coverage expansion through the Affordable Care Act. MIRC members have been assured by staff that all requested reforms have

been made, but the Commission members from the House of Delegates have refused to acknowledge the reforms and continue along with the Speaker of the House of Delegates to oppose expansion of Medicaid. For otherwise fiscal conservatives to turn down five million dollars of Virginia taxpayer dollars being returned to them to pay the full cost of Medicaid expansion shows the continued animosity that some Republicans have toward the Affordable Care Act that they refer to as Obamacare. To the concern that the federal government will not be able to continue funding the program into the future, Virginia could make a decision to withdraw at that time.

At the same time, the Virginia Chamber of Commerce business plan for the Commonwealth, "Blue-

print for Virginia," supports the Medicaid reforms that have been made and recommends Medicaid expansion. Chamber leadership has termed Medicaid expansion to be both an economic development as well as a workforce issue. Most of Virginia's one million uninsured residents are employed. It is projected that the expansion would create an estimated 33,000 jobs and bring \$21 billion dollars back to the Commonwealth.

Governor Terry McAuliffe is a staunch supporter of Medicaid expansion. As he stated to the Chamber, "Let me be clear on one point. If Medicaid expansion is not the business community's number one priority in your communication with the General Assembly, it will not happen." He calls for "coming together, putting old ideological differences aside and focusing on what makes sense from a

business perspective."

The case for Medicaid expansion goes beyond the strong business case; it is also a humanitarian cause. Social justice organizations, faith communities, and individuals need also to give priority to making their views known to legislators. Give priority to writing or calling House and Senate leadership and members of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees and ask them to approve the expansion of Medicaid. Contact information is available at <http://viriniageneralassembly.gov/membersAndSession.php?seid=1&activeSec=0#!hb=1&mainContentTabs=0>.

Five million dollars a day is a lot of money. It is too much to turn down, especially when it can improve the health and well-being of Virginians. Please make sure your voice is heard on this issue.

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Foust Addresses 'Good Morning McLean' Meeting

Supervisor meets local business leaders, discusses county budget, arrival of metro and McLean projects.

BY ETHAN MCLEOD
THE CONNECTION



PHOTO BY ETHAN MCLEOD/THE CONNECTION

Supervisor Foust (D-Dranesville) answered questions from board members after addressing his key issues for 2014.

The Greater McLean Chamber of Commerce met Thursday, Jan. 9, for a break fast sponsored by Middleburg Bank at J. Gilbert's in McLean to discuss the major issues facing the town in 2014. Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville) addressed the chamber's board of directors and spoke about a variety of issues, including the county budget for Fiscal Year 2015, the ongoing transformation of Tyson's Corner and potential projects for local parks in McLean.

One of the topics on Foust's agenda was funding for schools. The Board of Supervisors transfers about 53 percent of the county's general fund budget to Fairfax County Public Schools, and increased its yearly School Bond capital program to \$155 million in fiscal year 2014. However, schools will likely need about \$140 million more this year for that bond program for improving school infrastructures alone. "The schools have demonstrated, in my opinion, that they need that money just to keep up with growth and get rid of the trailers and renovate the schools that are 50 years old or older," said Foust.

REGARDING THE SILVER LINE, Foust explained several new transportation options to come with the opening of the McLean Metro Station, still scheduled to open in March or April this year. In addition to a 711-space commuter parking lot, approved by the Board of Supervisors in July 2013 to serve as a 10-year "bridge solution" to full parking availability, property owners in Tysons Corner are exploring ways they can provide additional parking from partially-used garages around the station. Foust also noted that three new bus lines will open the same day the McLean Metro Station begins running. The buses will circulate every 30 minutes during rush hour to residential areas on nearby Fleetwood Road, Elm Street and Beverly Road.

Foust also pointed to major park projects in the year ahead, including Spring Hill Recreation Center, McLean Central Park and a land swap with the National Park Service for Langley Fork Park as big steps for the town in 2014. Spring Hill Recreation Center will be receiving an additional \$25 million to build a brand new 12,500 square-foot gymnasium, as well as a two-story, 15,000 square-foot fitness center, and construction could begin as soon as winter of 2014. For McLean Central Park, Foust said that the board has received a proposition to build a new amphitheater, though it has not appropriated money for the project yet. "It's tough to find places in McLean where you can say, 'this is where the community gathers,' and I think we need that to be a real community," said Foust.

THE COUNTY is still discussing a land swap for 54 acres owned by the National Park Service at Langley Fork Park. The swap would be for other land in McLean not being used by the town currently for park space.

Raj Mehra, who serves on the Chamber's Board of Directors and is also Chief Financial Officer of Middleburg Bank in McLean, said that Supervisor Foust has been very accessible for McLean business leaders and the Chamber. "I can say personally as a McLean resident that Supervisor Foust is very accessible," said Mehra.

The Fiscal Year 2015 Advertised Budget for Fairfax County will be released on Feb. 25 and go to the Board of Supervisors for review, after which there will be two months to factor in public opinion on what to change before officially approving it in April.

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Lift Me Up! Shares History of Secretariat

The nonprofit kicks off its Good Fences Make Good Neighbors fundraiser in Reston and Great Falls.

BY ETHAN MCLEOD
THE CONNECTION

Many know the story of Secretariat, a thoroughbred horse who overcame great physical limitations to win the 1973 Triple Crown, taking home wins at the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness Stakes and the Belmont Stakes. However, many may not be aware of Northern Virginia's historical ties to Secretariat's owner, Penny Chenery, who rode for the equestrian team for the Madeira School in McLean before graduating in 1939.

During January and February 2014, Great Falls nonprofit Lift Me Up! will share Secretariat's story with Great Falls and Reston residents in a film screening of Disney's Secretariat, as well as a book signing featuring Chenery's daughter, Kate Tweedy, co-author of Secretariat's Meadow: The Land, The Family, The Legend. In the book, Tweedy and her co-author Leeanne Ladin detail the history of The Meadow, a thoroughbred farm in Caroline County, Va., once owned by the Chenery family. In the movie Secretariat, for which Tweedy served as a consultant, the champion thoroughbred horse helps to financially save The Meadow after winning the Triple Crown in 1973.

LIFT ME UP!'S THERAPEUTIC RIDING PROGRAM offers horseback riding lessons to both the physically and mentally disabled, as well as military veterans injured in battle through its Back in the Saddle program. Many of the riders have mental health conditions ranging from autism to cerebral palsy, down syndrome and post-traumatic stress disorder, to name a few, and they all benefit greatly from renewed balance, coordination and confidence from riding with Lift Me Up!'s therapy horses.

Georgia Bay, Director of Programs for Lift Me Up! notes that while its 13 therapy horses may not be championship-winning thoroughbreds, they do make a difference in riders' lives every day. "We see these wonderful little victories – the child who develops the ability to sit balanced, when before he could just lean to the side; the rider who decides to talk after months of riding in silence," said Bay, adding fondly, "Of course that first comment is always about the horse."

The nonprofit receives help from community donors and volunteers as well as student interns, equestrian students from the Madeira School, who work with riders each week. "If Penny were attending there now, I imagine she would likely volunteer too," said Laura Smith, Director of Donor Relations. Smith also noted that Penny's father, Christopher Chenery, helped to train military veterans in horseback riding here in Northern Virginia. "Penny has long been a champion for horses and people with disadvantages."

ONE OF THE PROGRAM'S HORSES is actually a former racing thoroughbred named Radar,

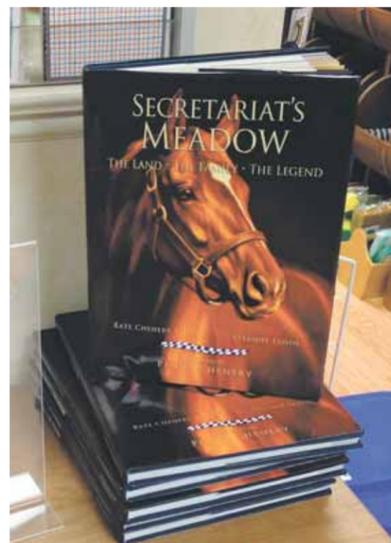


PHOTO BY ETHAN MCLEOD/THE CONNECTION

The Saddlery, at 731 Walker Road in Great Falls, is selling copies of Secretariat's Meadow: The Land, The Family, The Legend by Kate Tweedy and Leeanne Ladin for \$35.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ♦ Film Screening of Disney's Secretariat from 1-3 p.m., Jan. 31. Free. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, VA 22066
- ♦ Book signing featuring Kate Tweedy, daughter of Penny Chenery and co-author of Secretariat's Meadow: The Land, The Family, The Legend, 5-8 p.m., Feb. 8, 2014. Cost: \$50 for entrance, \$35 per book copy. Fairfax Hunt Club, 1321 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston.

who, after a short-lived racing career, has taken home awards with young riders at the Therapeutic Riding Association of Virginia's statewide horse show in Lexington, Va. Radar's former owner Donna Zimmerman, a Great Falls resident, donated him to Lift Me Up! after her daughter Jenna, now a volunteer with the organization, outgrew the former competition racing horse.

"He was the most gentle, caring soul that I had ever seen in a horse, and for me at the time, I knew that this horse was going to be safe with my daughter to learn on," said Zimmerman of Radar. When her daughter moved on to higher competition levels, Zimmerman saw that Radar would make a great training horse and notified Program Director Georgia Bay. "He's not a high-strung thoroughbred at all," added Zimmerman. "We knew that he would be a perfect horse for the riders to learn on at Lift Me Up! It's great to see him bring so much joy to so many people."

Lift Me Up!'s major fundraising program for 2014 is called Good Fences Make Good Neighbors. The organization is collecting donations from the community in order to fund the building of new fences surrounding the nonprofit's property in Great Falls. "We need to reinforce our fences to protect both our horses and the properties of our neighbors," said Lift Me Up! President Bob Best about the fundraiser.

In addition to the organization's upcoming fundraising events in January and February, The Saddlery, located at 731 Walker Road in Great Falls, is also selling copies of Secretariat's Meadow for \$35 to contribute to the fundraiser.

ENTERTAINMENT

Stephanie Holladay Earl as Desdemona and Fernando Lamberty as Othello will perform Shakespeare's "Othello" on Saturday, Jan. 25, 8 p.m., at the Alden Theatre, McLean Community Center.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL BAILEY/COURTESY OF AMERICAN SHAKESPEARE CENTER

Send announcements to mclean@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Friday for the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged.

THURSDAY/JAN. 16-FRIDAY/JAN. 17 International Guitar Night. 8 p.m. Wolftrap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. The International Guitar Night (IGN) is the world's premier touring guitar festival, each show bringing together the most interesting and innovative acoustic guitarists to exchange musical ideas in a public concert setting. Tickets: \$25-27.

SATURDAY/ JAN. 18 Ballroom Dance. 8-9 p.m. Quick-Step lesson, 9-11:30 p.m. dance. Colvin Run Dance Hall, 10201 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. DJ music from Craig Bukowski playing favorite dance tunes from the 1930s to today. Attire is ballroom casual, no partner or experience is needed. \$15 for the evening. 703-759-2685 or www.colvinrun.org.

Six Degrees Singers. 7:30 p.m. 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Silver Spring's premiere young professional choir, will perform inspirational choral masterpieces. Tickets are \$15 at the door, students under 18 are free. <http://singsix.com/>

SUNDAY/JAN. 19 Breakfast Buffet. 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. 330 Center Street, N., Vienna. Adults \$8, children \$3. 703-938-1379.

National Choir Appreciation. 9:30 a.m. & 11 a.m. Antioch Christian Church, 1860 Beulah Road, Vienna. The community is invited to share appreciation for choir members at both services. For more information go to www.antiochdoc.org or call 703-539-8238.

Mission Sunday: Sudan. 10 a.m. Great Falls UMC, 10100 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. A sermon service hosted by Great Falls United Methodist Church.

THURSDAY/JAN. 23 Music from Oberlin at Oakton, 10th Season! 7:30 p.m. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. The Darwin String Quartet performing works by Mendelssohn, Haydn, and Piazzolla. 703-842-3156

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/JAN. 24 & 25 THIS. 8 p.m. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. *THIS* is a bright, tart, and melancholy comedy that captures the uncertain steps of a circle of friends entering the choppy waters of middle age. Contains adult language; for theatre-goers over 16. <http://www.viennatheatrecompany.org/>

SATURDAY/JAN. 25 Gustaf Yellowgold's Show. 10:30 a.m. Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave E., Vienna. Groovy Gustaf Yellowgold is a small, yellow, cone-headed fellow, who came to Earth from the Sun and has a knack for finding himself neck-deep in absurd situations as he explores his new life in the Minnesota woods. Equal parts pop rock concert and animated storybook, Gustaf Yellowgold concerts are a truly different multimedia experience that entrances children and adults alike. Tickets: \$10. <https://jamminjava.com/events/gustaf-yellowgold>

"Othello." 8 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave, McLean. Tickets: \$20 MCC District residents and \$30 for non MCC District residents. Visit: www.aldentheatre.org or call 703-790-0123.

SUNDAY/JAN. 26 McLean Chocolate Festival. 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. McLean Community Center. Wide variety of chocolate vendors. Plenty of parking. Children's game room with chocolate-themed games. Admission fee is \$2, with \$1 going toward the purchase of chocolate. Kids under 6 get in free. McLean Rotary uses proceeds to fund local charitable organizations. www.mcleanchocolatefestival.org.

Music from Oberlin at Oakton. 7:30 p.m. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Music from Oberlin at Oakton hosts current Oberlin Conservatory students three times a year to provide top-notch music to the local community. In its 14th season, this program will feature two pianists, a percussionist, and a soprano. (703) 281-4230

You Can Change Your World. 10 a.m. Great Falls UMC, 10100 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. A sermon service hosted by Great Falls United Methodist Church.

FRIDAY/JAN. 31 THIS. 8 p.m. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. *THIS* is a bright, tart, and melancholy comedy that captures the uncertain steps of a circle of friends entering the choppy waters of middle age. Contains adult language; for theatre-goers over 16. <http://www.viennatheatrecompany.org/>

SATURDAY/FEB. 1 Ballroom Dance. 8-9 p.m. Samba lesson, 9-11:30 p.m. dance. Colvin Run Dance Hall, 10201 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Live music from Mike Surratt & the ECB playing favorite dance tunes from the 1930s to today. Attire is ballroom casual, no partner or experience is needed. \$20

for the evening. 703-759-2685 or www.colvinrun.org.

Arts for Autism Gala. 6:30 p.m. Tower Club, 8000 Towers Crescent Drive, #1700, Vienna. An evening that brings together the arts, fashion and autism communities to benefit individuals and families affected by Autism. Festivities include a reception, dinner and silent auction. www.arts-for-autism.org

SATURDAY/FEB. 1, 7, 8 THIS. 8 p.m. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. *THIS* is a bright, tart, and melancholy comedy that captures the uncertain steps of a circle of friends entering the choppy waters of middle age. Contains adult language; for theatre-goers over 16. <http://www.viennatheatrecompany.org/>

SUNDAY/FEB. 2 & 9 THIS. 2 p.m. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. *THIS* is a bright, tart, and melancholy comedy that captures the uncertain steps of a circle of friends entering the choppy waters of middle age. Contains adult language; for theatre-goers over 16. <http://www.viennatheatrecompany.org/>

SATURDAY/FEB. 15 Valentine's Ballroom Dance. 8-9 p.m. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Music from Oberlin at Oakton hosts current Oberlin Conservatory students three times a year to provide top-notch music to the local community. In its 14th season, this program will feature two pianists, a percussionist, and a soprano. (703) 281-4230

SATURDAY/MARCH 1 Ballroom Dance. 8-9 p.m. Merengue lesson, 9-11:30 p.m. dance. Colvin Run Dance Hall, 10201 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Live music from Helmut & Andre playing favorite dance tunes from the 1930s to today. Attire is ballroom casual, no partner or experience is needed. \$20 for the evening. 703-759-2685 or www.colvinrun.org.

ONGOING Straight Ahead Jazz. 8 p.m., at the Maplewood Grill, 132 Branch Road, Vienna. Every Monday drummer Karl Anthony hosts a night of straight ahead jazz featuring guest musicians and open to sit-in musicians. www.maplewoodgrill.com.

Personalized ebook/e-Reader Instruction. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave., McLean. Learn about your e-reader and downloading eBooks; event continues through March 31st.

McLean Community Center
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Here's What's Happening at MCC

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Free admission

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Friday, Jan. 17, 7-8:30 p.m.
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MLK Day Celebration Andrew Young
Friday, Jan. 17, 8 p.m.
\$20/\$10 MCC district residents

Old Firehouse Teen Center Teacher Work Day Trips
Thu-Fri, Jan. 30-31

Brush Up Your Shakespeare
Wednesday, Jan. 22, 7:30 p.m.
Free admission

American Shakespeare Center "The Merry Wives of Windsor"
Saturday, Jan. 25, 2 p.m.
\$30/\$20 MCC district residents

"Othello"
Saturday, Jan. 25, 8 p.m.
\$30/\$20 MCC district residents

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Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration in McLean Features Civil Rights Leader Andrew Young

In observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, the Alden at the McLean Community Center is presenting Ambassador Andrew Young: "A Continuing Legacy," at 8 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 17. Young, whose efforts have served and shaped the country for more than 50 years, will share personal memories of Dr. King and his years in the Civil Rights movement. Tickets are \$20, \$10 for MCC district residents. The Alden is located at 1234 Ingleside Avenue, inside the McLean Community Center.

Before Andrew Young became a U.S. congressman, a United Nations Ambassador and the Mayor of Atlanta, he was a trailblazer. A friend and aide to civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., Young bore witness to—and was at the frontlines of—many of the historic events that defined the 20th century in America. He confronted segregation with Dr. King and galvanized a movement that transformed a nation through non-violence. Young was a key strategist and negotiator during the Civil Rights campaigns in Birmingham and Selma that resulted in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Reflecting on his experiences, Young will



Andrew Young

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

inspire and challenge audience members to continue to push toward peace and justice throughout the world.

Tickets are on sale now. For more information or to purchase tickets online, visit: www.aldentheatre.org or call 703-790-0123, TTY: 711.



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Honoring Martin Luther King, Jr.

Praise in Motion, of Shiloh Baptist Church in McLean, performed Sunday, Jan. 12, at the Chantilly Pyramid Minority Student Achievement Committee's 20th annual Martin Luther King Festival at Westfield High in Chantilly. In photo, the group is dancing to the powerful song, "Break Every Chain."

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Creating Books With Children

Experts say helping little readers become authors can deepen a love of reading.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

K.J., 8, and his sister Kalina, 3, love reading books, particularly books they've written themselves or with their mother. In fact, K.J. is an avid reader of both homemade and traditionally published books, and his sister is following in his footsteps.

"When they were younger, I took pictures and copied them on a home printer," said their mother, Holly Karapetkova, an associate professor of literature at Marymount University in Arlington. "Once they were older, they illustrated the books or chose the item they wanted to include like for a specific letter in an alphabet book."

Karapetkova and other researchers said that creating books like this with children is not only easy and inexpensive, it's one of



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOLLY KARAPETKOVA

K.J., 8, and his sister Kalina, 3, make books with their mother, Holly Karapetkova, a professor of literature at Marymount University in Arlington. Experts say making books with children can help them develop of a love of reading.

the best ways to help them develop a love of books and reading, which Karapetkova said is one of the greatest gifts a parent can give a child.

"Reading is one of the fundamental ways that we interact with the world and particularly with knowledge," she said. "As a college professor, I find that my students who can read well can also think well and write well. They are thinkers on a much deeper level. Research has shown that reading makes you more contemplative, builds patience, concentration, and you have to use your imagination."

MAKING YOUR OWN BOOKS stretches the imagination. M. Susan Burns, Ph.D., a member of the early childhood education and human development and family sciences faculty at George Mason University says there are a few things that parents should keep in mind when making books with their children, however.

"Parents need to make it a positive experience," she said. "Children need to have books available [on topics] that are of true interest to them. When a book is being made

SEE LITTLE READERS, PAGE 15

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SPORTS

Collier's Return Boosts Langley Boys' Basketball

Saxons beat Marshall for second road win in three days.

BY ANDREW MINER
FOR THE CONNECTION

In Langley's second road game in three days, the Saxons defeated the Marshall Statesmen 53-44 on Jan. 10.

Donning their Baylor/Oregon look-a-like neon jerseys for the first time since their nine-point overtime loss to McLean, Langley had an offensive outburst in the first two quarters yet struggled to hang on for the victory in the second half.

The Saxons, who improved to 4-7 with the win, at long last had senior Garrett Collier back on the court providing experience and confidence for a team that entered 2014 with a 2-7 record. Collier missed the previous nine games with a broken collarbone suffered in Langley's football playoff loss against Stonewall Jackson. Finally, however, head coach Scott Newman and company were enjoying the luxuries of fielding a lineup that featured four seniors and one junior entering what he considers to be the second stanza of the season.

"The basketball season is similar to that of three periods of a hockey game," Newman explained.

He continued to break down the stanzas as the early non-conference portion of the schedule; the holiday break tournaments and conference play as the second, and the postseason as the final.

"We are 2-0 in the second period," Newman finished.

Langley jumped out to a 17-8 after the first quarter, which included an 11-4 run, and entered the locker room with a 14-point advantage. The Statesmen suffocated Langley with a full-court press that transformed to a 1-2-2 defensive trap in the half court in the second half. The Saxons, up 14 at the half, saw their lead dwindle to four within the waning minutes of the fourth quarter.

"We did a good job of utilizing the week off in practice for players to learn how to individually handle pressure," Newman said. "We did better tonight, but still have a lot of work to do and as coaches we have to do our jobs in both victory and defeat."

Through the first half of the fourth quarter Marshall went on a 6-1 run, where Langley fumbled through the motions of their press offense, ran into white wall double-teams, and turned the ball over with countless erroneous cross court passes. It was junior Christian Gaibler who broke the spell as he hit two 12-foot jumpers on consecutive possessions



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

South Lakes Girls to Face Langley

South Lakes junior Princess Aghayere scored 18 points and grabbed 19 rebounds during a 60-52 win against Madison on Jan. 10. South Lakes improved to 11-1, with its only loss coming against Central Bucks West (Doylestown, Pa.) during the Boo Williams Classic holiday tournament. The Seahawks will host Langley at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 17.

with approximately four minutes to play. His two free throws with fewer than two minutes in the game gave Gaibler a personal 6-0 run in a two-minute span when his team desperately needed a pick-me-up.

"The press put us on our heels in the front court, which made us have a tough time scoring and therefore we stopped attacking," Newman said when asked about the effects of the Marshall press. He went on to praise Gaibler saying "his shots were huge for us, I'm really glad he hit them."

The trio of Saxon forwards added seven points as sophomore Nate Shafer (2) and seniors Will 'Bach' Gent (3) and Austin Denham (2) pounded the glass and were tasked with the defensive challenge of defending Tyler White, the 6-foot-6 Statesmen sophomore. Gaibler finished with 16 points for the night, senior guard Ross Callaghan finished with 10, and Collier had a game-high 20.

Collier, who will be playing Division III basketball at Denison University in Ohio next year, has averaged 22 points in the first two games of the Saxons' second stanza; made even more impressive is the fact that both resulted in road victories that has doubled Langley's win total.

Collier, however, does not really care where he is playing noting, "I like nothing more than going into two places and silencing two crowds."



PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

The Langley gymnastics team placed fourth at a Jan. 9 meet at Oakton High School.

Langley Gymnastics Places Fourth at Oakton Meet

The Langley gymnastics team placed fourth at a Jan. 9 meet at Oakton, posting a score of 114.65. Oakton won the meet with a score of 129.625, followed by Chantilly (128.375) and South County (118.225).

Langley junior Natalie Volpicelli placed third in the all-around with a total of 33.125. She placed first

on vault (8.85), fourth on bars (8.2), fourth on floor (8.675) and 10th on beam (7.4).

Oakton's Natalie Weaver won the all-around with a score of 34.625, followed by Chantilly's Elise Mazzone (33.4).

Langley will compete in five-team meet at McLean at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 15.

Oakton sophomore Natalie Weaver won the all-around competition during a home meet on Jan. 9.



McLean Citizens Association Conducting Residents Survey

It's not too late to participate in the McLean Citizens Association's (MCA) survey on community perspectives and desires at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/McLeanAreaSurvey>.

Your responses on what you like about McLean, what you would like to see preserved, and what changes you would like to see will help MCA focus on what matters to McLean residents in 2014 and beyond. The survey is short — only 10 questions — and should take only a few minutes to complete.

McLean Community Foundation Grant Request Deadline Approaching

The McLean Community Foundation is accepting proposals for its current grants cycle until Feb. 1, 2014. Applications can be found on the MCF's website at mcleancommunityfoundation.org.

In 2013 the foundation funded projects as diverse as Share, Inc, a monument to honor victims of the Global War on Terrorism for American Legion Post 270 to medical care for the Children Partnership Foundation. Total grants in 2013 totaled \$54,954.

The McLean Community Foundation (MCF) is a non-profit formed in 1980 by the McLean Citizen's Association to meet the philanthropic needs of a growing McLean community. Our focus is entirely and specifically on our McLean community and was established solely as a charitable foundation to benefit the residents of the McLean Planning District of Fairfax County.

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In Case Someone Is Wondering

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



I don't mind being alive, really I don't. Occasionally though, I receive well-intended inquiries – electronic and otherwise, from people (who know my cancer story) who are sort of wondering if perhaps I'm not. When people haven't heard from me in a while – and this is a category of people with whom I don't have regular/recurring interactions, but rather a group of people who reach out and attempt to touch me (figuratively speaking) every three or four months or so – there is a presumption on their part that my silence (so far as they know) is not in fact golden, but rather ominous, as in the cancer might have won and yours truly didn't. And when I respond, their pleasure/relief at my not having succumbed to the disease is quite positive, generally speaking. Their honesty and joy in learning that I'm still alive is both rewarding and gratifying. Rewarding in that they care and gratifying in that I must be doing something right which enables me to sustain myself through a very difficult set of medical circumstances: stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer, the terminal kind (is there any other kind?).

Statistically speaking, stage IV (there is no stage V) non-small cell lung cancer patients, according to various studies by The American Cancer Society, The National Cancer Institute, N.I.H. are not long-term survivors (the understatement of the year). Those of us who survive five years should have a parade, but very few would be alive to attend. February 27th, 2014 will be my five-year anniversary. Lucky doesn't begin to accurately describe my feelings. Amazing begins to scratch the surface.

Obviously, I understand the underlying concern of those individuals who don't hear from me and can't help but wonder (presume even; let's be realistic) that I've joined the ranks of the undesirables: those who have died and not left a forwarding address. In a peculiar way, these queries are my most favorites. They reinforce to me everything I've done right and minimize anything I've done wrong. They make me proud of who I am and how long I've survived with a "terminal" disease. And the longer I continue to receive them, the longer I will have survived. What's better than that? (That's a rhetorical question). Nothing is better than that!

Still, there are many ongoing challenges I face every day. Perhaps as alluded to in the previous paragraph, grasping at straws (figuratively) is one of my enduring pursuits: attempting to find solace, comfort, understanding, support and an indescribable number of non-quantifiable emotions which build me up and make me feel whole again despite being splintered into a million figurative pieces when unexpectedly diagnosed with an inoperable, incurable, terminal disease at age 54 and a half. After having never suffered a broken bone in my entire life or even spent a single night in a hospital (and only one visit to the E.R.), here I was, in the prime of my middle age, being told in effect that my life (certainly as I knew and understood it) was over. If I was in college, I would have put that in my pipe and smoked it. However, as a mid-fifties-aged adult, recently orphaned, I was left to ordinary devices, which had never been so thoroughly tested.

Presently, five years after the fact, the tests still left to be taken mostly involve well-meaning friends and acquaintances wanting to know my status. A little awkward? Sure. A lot of care and concern? Absolutely! Inquiries I can live without? Not a chance.

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

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Little Readers

FROM PAGE 11

with parents, it may not be engaging if the book is only of interest to the parent.

“Sometimes it gets sickening to have your kid tell you another princess story or another train story, but it is really important though to go with the child’s interest,” she continued. “You can take a little bit of a twist on the story by maybe adding a map that shows that places where the train might go.”

Children may also want to turn to real-life for their books. “Children love to create stories based on their own experiences, and begin to develop a love of art and literature at an early age,” said Sharon Fishel, ArtReach director for the McLean Project for the Arts in McLean. “Parents can foster the link between drawing, writing and reading by having their child draw pictures of their daily routine or special events, such as field trips, family outings or unplanned adventures.”

When creating a homemade book, the text doesn’t have to be original either. “You can take a familiar song and adapt the lyrics,” said Karapetkova. “For example, a book about a daily routine can say ‘This is the way we brush our teeth, brush our teeth, brush our teeth early in the morning.’”

The techniques for young children are a little different. “You want a little one to engage with a book,” said Fishel. “A parent-child idea is nice. We do a lot of parent-child workshops here [at the McLean Project for the Arts] where one parent does one side [of the page] and child does the other.”

The books children and their parents create don’t have to be fancy, however. “When I’ve made books like this with my children, we’ve taken photos, we cut out pictures from magazines, glue sticks, something to put the picture onto,” said Burns. “You can make those books fun by using artifacts. If you’re doing a book from your beach trip, your child may want to put some sand in the book, but it is important to have a child initiate it.”

“I like the thicker paper stock and sometimes it makes it easier to hold onto,” she added. “The other thing is to get the clear laminating paper and putting a plastic sheet over it.”

Even “folded paper, bound with a pencil becomes a writer’s journal,” said Karapetkova. “You can also take plastic zip-lock bags, punch holes in the bags, fill them and they become bath time books because they are waterproof.”

Fishel suggests sticking with the basics: “Composition book, crayons, colored pencils. Go to a crafts store [and get] bags of origami papers or printed pattern papers,” she said, noting that “each part of it can be come a lesson plan. Get a patterned piece

of paper and explore with your child what makes that a pattern. Don’t assume that your child knows.”

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS at St. Andrew’s Episcopal School in Potomac create their own books as part of the elementary school curriculum. Jordan Love, head of the Lower School, said that parents can “create a writing center at home by providing a child with an area dedicated to their work and ideas. All children need is blank paper, coloring crayons or markers, and a quiet place to work, preferably at a table that is their size. Elementary-age children should be provided paper that has a blank section at the top and lines on the bottom.

“As a college professor, I find that my students who can read well can also think well and write well. They are thinkers on a much deeper level.”

— **Holly Karapetkova, Ph.D., Marymount University.**

“For preschool age children,” Love said, “parents can ask their child to dictate or describe in order the illustrations. Parents should describe what they are writing while the child watches them transcribe their ideas to the paper. This reinforces that language can be printed.”

Experts add that it’s important to emphasize that mistakes, corrections and changes are OK. “I usually say don’t let them erase what they write or draw 150 times. It is not about perfection,” said Fishel.

Burns agrees. “In books for pleasure you don’t want to make big corrections,” she said. “It’s the relationship with parents that will make it positive.”

Love suggests that parents display their children’s books. “Writing and reading go hand in hand, and through supporting the writing process, parents are enhancing their child’s ability to be a more effective and efficient reader. Writing together helps to expand a child’s vocabulary, encourage creativity, activate prior knowledge, and build self-esteem.”

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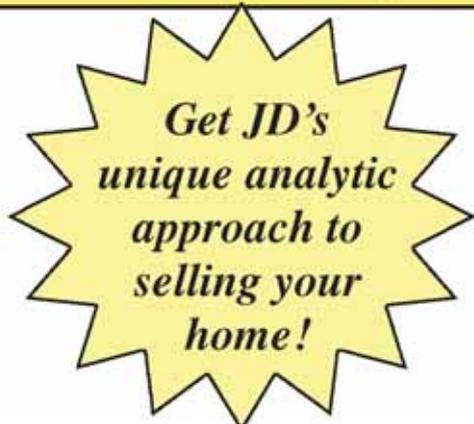


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