

The Great Falls based Rotary Foundation notified Neighbors Foundation that they would not be taking over the annual 2014 July 4th Fireworks event.

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Comstock Shares Opening Week Notes

A new beginning, a new chairmanship and a new legislative session.

BY BARBARA COMSTOCK
STATE DELEGATE (R-34)

Wednesday, Jan. 8 – Symbolic of the Opening Day

It is always an honor to be part of the oldest continuous legislative body in the western world. On Jan. 8, we began a new session with a new Administration. The session is always kicked off early in the morning (7 a.m.) with the annual Commonwealth Prayer Breakfast. In keeping with tradition, outgoing Governor McDonnell and incoming Governor McAuliffe and senior government officials attend. This year I had the honor of offering the prayer for State Legislators at the Commonwealth Prayer Breakfast. The breakfast also features guest speakers every year and everyone was moved by the powerful testimony of Thomas Haynesworth, a truly inspirational man, who was exonerated in 2011 after being wrongfully imprisoned for 27 years for crimes he did not commit. Mr. Haynesworth spoke of his faith sustaining him throughout this unjust ordeal.

Opening day is also the day that we file our legislation for the session. Some of the bills I filed include a bill to provide a new sexual and domestic violence subfund to consolidate resources for sexual and domestic violence victims and for prevention; legislation to increase our Research and Development tax credit to assist our high tech industry; legislation to provide more in-state spots for our college students; and legislation to allow local school boards to determine the start date of our schools. I also filed several bills to continue our efforts to battle human trafficking.

When Session officially convened at noon on Jan. 8, I had the honor of nominating the Hon. William J. Howell as Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates. The Speaker was unanimously re-elected. We also had 14 new members of the House of Delegates get sworn in with us on the first day of session.

In the evening of the first day of the session, the Governor presents his “State of the Commonwealth” speech. Governor McDonnell gave an overview of his proposed budget and a review of his Administration priorities and accomplishments. After the speech, again by tradition, the Governor invites all of the legislators to the Governor’s mansion where we had the opportunity to visit with members of Governor McDonnell’s cabinet — many of whom who were ending their service to the Commonwealth.

Thursday, Jan. 9 – Constituents Come to Richmond

In the opening days of the session, we also have many groups and constituents come



RICHMOND
DIARY

to visit. Thursday was the annual Banker Day at the Capitol, and my office had the opportunity to meet with bankers from Capital One, Wells Fargo, and Chain Bridge Bank. We also had visits from Military Officers of America Association (MOAA), NASA, Canine Companions,

who train companion dogs, child advocacy groups, local Chamber representatives, and the Richmond Justice Initiative which works with us on human trafficking issues.

Every year the Virginia Federation of Republican Women also has their annual Richmond day and all of our Republican legislators take the opportunity to visit and have



Del. Barbara Comstock (R-34) speaks about her bills at a human trafficking press conference with the Richmond Justice Initiative. Joining her in the photo (from left) are Del. Vivian Watts, Sara Pomeroy (founder of the Richmond Justice Initiative), Del. Marcus Simon and Del. David Bulova.

lunch with their local club members who are visiting from around the Commonwealth. I had the opportunity to speak before the VFRW and greet many of our local members who came down for the day and to thank them for all they do.

Friday, Jan. 10 – Promoting Tech. Industry

This year I am the new chairwoman of the Science and Technology Committee, so in the opening days I have been meeting with the committee staff to plan the committee’s work and review legislation that will come before the Committee. Del. Rich Anderson who was elected with me in

2009 and has served on the committee for four years with me, is serving as my vice-chairman on the committee. Given the importance of the tech industry to our local and state economy, it is a great privilege to work with the tech community on promoting this industry in our Commonwealth and work with the large group of talented entrepreneurs and experts in this field. I invite any and all of our tech entrepreneurs and leaders to contact us about how we can continue to keep Virginia on the cutting edge of technology at all levels. We also are fortunate in the General Assembly to work with the Northern Virginia Technology Council (NVTC), of which I am a member. They represent the tech community and are among the best advocates in Richmond on promoting Virginia jobs.

Saturday, Jan. 11 – Governor’s Inauguration

I attended Governor-elect Terry McAuliffe’s Inauguration ceremony on Saturday as a member of the Inaugural Committee. A bipartisan group of members from the House and the Senate are appointed as

the official inaugural committee. We served as an official escort and welcoming committee and also were able to visit with past Governors George Allen, Tim Kaine, Mark Warner, Gerald Baliles, Jim Gilmore, Doug Wilder and Bob McDonnell, as well as former President Bill Clinton and former First Lady and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who joined the ceremony for Governor McAuliffe being sworn in as the 72nd Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia. I particularly enjoyed visiting with good friends, George and Susan Allen, our former Governor and First Lady. As Governor Allen

Retail Worries

**October numbers
artificially inflated;
holiday numbers
could spell trouble.**

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

The partial government shutdown was more than an October surprise during the race for governor. Newly available statistics from the Virginia Department of Taxation show the month was also an unexpected boost to sales tax revenues across the commonwealth. Fairfax County, for example, recorded a 15.5 percent spike in sales tax revenue in October 2013 compared to October 2012. But state and local officials says that’s because several major department stores neglected to increase their sales tax rate to reflect the new regional tax for transportation when the new fiscal year began in July. So the October numbers represent the backlog of uncollected revenues.

Which retailers flubbed their taxes? “That’s proprietary information, so we can’t say,” said Marcia Wilds, revenue and economic analysis coordinator with the Fairfax County Department of Management and Budget. “They’re big.”

The revenue corrections came at a key time for local governments, a month that many expected to be particularly bleak. Many government workers and contractors were out of work in October, when local governments became concerned that spending habits might reflect a sense of uncertainty about the future. Now budget officials across Northern Virginia are worried about what kind of sales tax revenue they’ll collect from the holiday season.

“The sales tax will be back with holiday sales,” said Stephen Fuller, director of the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University. “Over the year there will only a minor weakening.”

BUDGET OFFICIALS are not so sure. As local governments across the region prepare for the first round of budgeting next month, a sense of uncertainty looms over the revenue projections and spending priorities. Part of that is the unemployment rate, which remains at about 6 percent across Virginia. That means consumers may hold back on consumption based spending, which would mean lower revenues for local governments on retail sales and restaurant meals.

“If revenues continue to decline, it may be necessary to make up any additional shortfalls with expenditure reductions,”



The Great Falls based Rotary Foundation notified Neighbors Foundation that they would not be taking over the annual 2014 July 4th Fireworks event.

Going Dark?

Funding needed for Great Falls July 4 fireworks.

“Last Friday’s meeting didn’t result as we had hoped it would,” said Sharon Rainey, president of Neighbors Foundation.

The Great Falls based Rotary Foundation notified Neighbors Foundation that they would not be taking over the annual 2014 July 4th Fireworks event.

“This leaves the community in a real bind. At this point, there will be no fireworks in Great Falls this year, unless an organization steps forward within a week’s time,” Rainey said.

She explained that the contracts and permits are usually signed with deposits sent by the middle of January.

Rainey said that the morning events, including the 5K, parade, and amusements in the Village Centre will still be held. It is the evening event at Turner Farm Park in danger of going dark.

“We have a window of only 10 days before our vendors move on to other clients and we potentially lose the ability for anyone to host the event,” she said.

Last August, the Raineys met with Mike Kearney, saying it was time to pass the baton for this event. Jeff Rainey, chairman of the Fireworks event, had worked closely with Kearney for the 15 years prior when Kearney was running the entire day’s events, starting from the morning parade to the evening fireworks.

The Raineys no longer have school-age children, both are in

their 50s and are ready to scale back their schedules. The couple owns and runs their own local businesses (Home Equity Builders and myNeighborsNetwork) and Sharon Rainey is authoring and releasing her second book this spring.

“Jeff handled the entire evening event, from gathering sponsorships to laying out the parking,” Kearney said. “Over time, he has created a turnkey operation that now just needs a leader and a handful of volunteers.”

Rainey said, “We have a core group of volunteers that help each and every year. The Boy Scouts help with set up, accepting donations at the gate, and clean up. Pat Nugent helps with the generators, Jon Paul takes care of the entertainment. Rich Curd, and Wayne Gamotis work tirelessly from laying out the site to helping run security teams. Everyone knows their job and they make it a fun event to run.”

Kearney brainstormed with the Raineys and they approached a few local nonprofits. No one was interested. Then news came out that Rotary Club was setting up a nonprofit foundation. A meeting was held, everyone agreed this was a perfect match.

“In the end, it doesn’t really matter what happened,” Sharon Rainey said. “What does matter is now we need to find a local organization willing to take on this project and we need to find them within a week’s time or there will be no fireworks in Great Falls this year.”

If any nonprofit organization is interested in taking over the 4th of July Fireworks event, contact Sharon Rainey at 703-929-2399 or Sharon@neighborsfoundation.org.

NEWS

Into the Budget Fray

Bulova highlights accomplishments, challenges in annual address.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

Despite the lingering impact of an anemic economy, and the regional ripple effects of federal sequestration, Fairfax County residents will see some concrete signs of progress this year.

That message was delivered by Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova, who cast a mostly positive light on the county’s future during a media screening of her televised annual State of the County address on Wednesday, Jan. 15.

In addition to the completion of Phase 1 of the Silver Line in Tysons, motorists can expect to see congestion eased through a number of state-funded transportation projects, including the new I-95 Express Lanes that will tie into the Beltway Express lanes at Edsall Road.

Residents can also look forward to the revitalization and redevelopment of older commercial and industrial areas throughout the county, including the \$250 million transformation of Springfield Mall into the Springfield Town Center in the fall of 2014.

The newly-renovated mall will include the addition of roughly 700,000 square feet of retail, restaurants, a food court and a state-of-the-art movie theater. The 20-foot-tall brown numbers that indicated the mall’s six main entrances — a hallmark of the 1970s-era mall — will be replaced with one central grand entranceway.

Bulova also praised the Economic Development Authority and Visit Fairfax for boosting tourism and facilitating the selection of Fairfax County as the host of the 2015 World Police and Fire Games, the world’s second largest athletic competition after the summer Olympics. The event is expected to generate more than \$100 million in tourism revenue for the county.

The 30-minute State of the County video, 10 minutes longer than last year’s production, highlights many county achievements in the past year — such as the county’s low crime rate and a 26 percent reduction since 2007 in the number of people counted as homeless. It also features three of the county’s new leaders: newly-elected Sheriff Stacey Kincaid, the county’s first female sheriff; Police Chief Edwin Roessler and Karen Garza, the new superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools.

In the video, Garza said one of her top priorities is “to listen and learn what our community expects of its schools.”

“One of our big projects this year is that we enlisted the help of a broad-based community committee to develop the Portrait of a Graduate — which will detail what our community expects an FCPS student to know and be to do upon graduating from our system,” Garza said.

Garza also addressed the ongoing challenge of funding a school system with a current enrollment of 184,600 students, making FCPS larger than the school systems of eight states and the District of Columbia.

“As you know, FCPS is facing some challenges as well,” Garza said in the video. “We have grown by more than 15,000 students in the last five years and our required expenditures for items like employee benefits have continued to increase. At the same time, revenues have not increased enough to cover expen-



PHOTO BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova hosted a media screening of her annual State of the County address on Wednesday, Jan. 15. Residents can view the address on Channel 16 from 7:30 to 8 p.m., or on YouTube at <http://youtube/YzeaC3K-wiY>

ditures.”

In fiscal year 2014, 53 percent of the county’s general fund budget was transferred to Fairfax County Public Schools, a sum of roughly \$1.9 billion.

School officials recently unveiled a \$2.5 billion budget, asking for a 5.7 percent increase, or nearly \$98 million more in county funding. Under the proposed budget, class sizes will increase at all grade levels and about 730 staff positions will be cut.

After the screening, Bulova emphasized that while education continues to be the board’s “highest priority” and the community’s “greatest investment,” there will likely be a significant gap between what school officials are asking for in their budget, and how much the board is prepared to give.

“The schools won’t get everything they asked for,” Bulova said. “The school board will have to roll up their sleeves and so will supervisors.”

When asked how close the board is prepared to get to the 5.7 percent request, Bulova said that a 2 percent increase — or \$33 million — is a more realistic number.

In an effort to bridge that gap, supervisors have made state education funding the county’s top legislative priority for this year’s General Assembly session.

“This is our education year, our number one ask and priority from legislators is to get the full fund-

SEE BUDGET, PAGE 12

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Del. Comstock Shares Her Notes on Opening Week

FROM PAGE 3

said at the inaugural, "Everyone, regardless of party, wishes the new governor well."

Kudos to our General Assembly staff who did a great job moving everyone through the ceremony under extremely volatile weather conditions which they accommodated by providing blue and green rain ponchos that just about everyone used to avoid being soaked in the downpour that greeted us as we were escorted to our seats.

Monday, Jan. 12 – Emphasis on Cyber Security

Monday evening following the Inaugural, the new Governor had the opportunity for his first address to the General Assembly where he provided an overview of his priorities for the coming session.

At my first committee hearing as the newly appointed chairwoman of the House Science and Technology Committee I had the pleasure of welcoming the new Technology Secretary-elect, Karen Jackson, when she testified before my committee and outlined the Governor's technology priorities. Karen served as the deputy secretary for the past four years and has worked with me on numerous technology issues includ-

ing my telework bills, so it has been a smooth transition to continue working with her in this new leadership position.

At the top of the list for the department is the continued expansion of broadband into communities still lacking access to the Internet, including parts of Loudoun County. Secretary Jackson estimated that three percent of the Commonwealth still lacks access to this basic technology. Another topic Secretary Jackson emphasized was the need for more emphasis on Cyber Security to protect our businesses, consumer privacy, and government data.

Wrapping Up Opening Week – Addressing Human Trafficking

With many retiring members this past session we have other committees headed up by new chairman, including the Transportation Committee on which I serve where Del. Tom Rust, in our neighboring district, now serves as chairman. In the Transportation Committee we also heard from the new Secretary-elect.

In the House Commerce and Labor Committee, where I also serve, we heard from the new Secretary-elect of Commerce and Trade, Maurice A. Jones. During the interview, Secretary Jones reiterated that we



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Del. Barbara Comstock speaking at the Virginia Federation of Republican Women luncheon in Richmond.

need to diversify Virginia jobs and to keep Virginia #1 for jobs.

In the opening days we also had a press conference hosted by the Richmond Justice Initiative on our package of human traffick-

ing bills. I have worked on a bipartisan basis with my colleagues at the General Assembly over the past four years to pass legislation which cracks down on this heinous crime. Human trafficking — modern day slavery — is a hidden crime that is happening across the Commonwealth and even in our own neighborhoods. In order to make an impact on this crime, we must work to identify this crime for what it is, and increase penalties on the demand side of this \$32 billion industry. My bills, HB994 and HB1155 will continue our efforts to combat human trafficking in the Commonwealth.

I always appreciate hearing your concerns and encourage you to contact my office at any time during the session or after. I can be reached during the General Assembly session at 804-698-1034 or Del. Barbara Comstock, P.O. Box 6156, McLean, VA 22106 or you can e-mail me at bcomstock@delegatecomstock.com. Also you can visit my website at www.DelegateComstock.com and sign up for "The Comstock Connection" and keep in touch. If you are in Richmond, you are also welcome to stop by our office at the General Assembly building in Room 407 in the General Assembly building.

Sales Tax Error Artificially Inflates October Revenue

FROM PAGE 3

wrote Alexandria City Manager Rashad Young in a memorandum to City Council members this month.

The concerns are larger than retail sales. One of the potential problems on the horizon is transient occupancy tax revenues. In Alexandria, for example, the hotel occupancy rate fell from 76.1 percent in October 2012 to 72.4 percent in October 2013. In Arlington, hotel occupancy tax revenues fell 15 percent in November compared to the previous year and 18 percent in December compared to the previous year.

"Am I worried? Yes," acknowledged Arlington Budget Director Richard Stevenson. "But that's what budget directors do. We worry."

EXPERTS WHO FOLLOW local government revenues say jurisdictions are worried for two reasons. The first is the lack of continuity on the part of the federal government. When the shutdown was happening, nobody knew how long it would last or when it would end. That led families to cut back their spending habits and cast a wary eye toward the future.

"That, obviously, is scary," said Frank Shafroth, director of the Center for State and Local Government at George Mason University. "It means for a family that you always have to leave something aside instead of using it at a local restaurant, store or other facility."

A second reason for worry is that the uncertainty is far from over. The budget agreement reached between Congress and the

president is good through September, leaving open the possibility of yet another battle about bankruptcy and insolvency. That leaves open a sense of doubt for long-term contracts involving everything from bridges and fighter planes to satellite and veterans hospitals.

"With the Federal Highway Trust Fund expected to be insolvent by next year," said Shafroth, "a key partner in the regional Washington economy is becoming an uncertain one."

THE NEXT FEW months will detail the extent of the economic damage created by sequester and shutdown. Will the numbers track with expectations? Or will they fall well below the budgets local leaders voted for last spring? That has local governments worried and prepared to make reductions

if necessary. Then again, they also don't want to make spending reduction that are unnecessary and potentially damaging.

"What you don't want to do is make cuts that if we recover enough we didn't need to make," said Laura Triggs, finance director with the city of Alexandria. "But by law, if it continues to be low then yes I have to cut back on expenditures."

Part of the problem is revenue growth not meeting expectations. Even if local governments see an increase in revenue from sales tax revenue, failure to meet expectations could spell trouble for balancing the books in the current fiscal year. And that means even more headaches for trying to predict the future in fiscal year 2015.

"Normally our sales tax is increasing at a larger extent than it is right now," said Wilds.

Jacques BREL

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COMMUNITY

Showing Appreciation

Old Brogue Irish Pub hosts monthly dinners, where donations are matched to contribute to military veteran organizations.

BY ETHAN MCLEOD
THE CONNECTION



PHOTO BY ETHAN MCLEOD/THE CONNECTION

In a packed house at The Old Brogue Irish Pub in Great Falls on Jan. 13, all in attendance stood up at the request of Bob Nelson, the man who put together the event. Nelson had asked any guests with family members who had served in the military, however distant the relation might be, to please stand.

"I do this so that everyone can recognize just how much all of us are in this together," said Nelson.

Nelson, a Great Falls resident and Realtor for Keller Williams Realty, is the chief organizer of Military Appreciation Mondays, a series of monthly dinners that brings in thousands of dollars in donations for military causes thanks to the generosity of Nelson and his co-sponsors.

This past month's dinner was dedicated to the Navy SEAL Foundation, a nonprofit that provides assistance to SEALs returning home from overseas, as well as the families of those killed in battle.

Over the course of two seatings between 5:30 and 9:30 p.m., close to 140 guests showed up for January's Military Appreciation Monday dinner.

In his pre-dinner introduction, Alan Oshirak of the Navy SEAL Foundation spoke of how 88 SEALs had been killed since 9/11, leaving behind 57 spouses and 75 children, all of whom the foundation works to support.

"It's important work, but it's often unheralded," said Oshirak, a retired SEAL, before thanking the audience and Nelson for his work.

THE JAN. 13 DINNER had about 140 guests in attendance, which, with Nelson and his 18 co-spon-

SEE MILITARY, PAGE 13

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PEOPLE



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Donation Supports Box Turtles

Great Falls BSA Venturing Crew 364 presented a \$250 check to the Fairfax County Park Authority on Dec. 11, providing a lifetime sponsorship of eastern box turtles at Riverbend Park. These turtles are used to educate children at the park and local Fairfax schools about wildlife and conservation. Their population in the wild has been declining in Northern Virginia. Presenting the check to Riverbend Park Naturalist Julie Gurnee is Natalie Gilbert, president of Venturing Crew 364. Joining in the presentation are: Camille Speer, the Crew's past president and adult advisors, Bill Canis and Gary Pan. Venturing is a youth development program of the Boy Scouts of America and provides opportunities for young men and women to participate in high adventure activities, serve their communities and become responsible and caring adults.

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OPINION

Extend Health Coverage in Virginia

General Assembly should not block coverage for as many as 400,000 uninsured.

Standing on what is essentially scorched earth, Republicans in the Virginia General Assembly have condemned hundreds of thousands of poor Virginians to living without health coverage even though it would be fully funded by Federal money for the next three years, and with Virginia paying 10 percent after five years.

Gov. Terry McAuliffe has pledged to do everything he can to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, and we encourage him to use every creative option available to make that happen. In Ohio, the governor found a legal way to accept the Medicaid funds despite objections from the General Assembly, for example.

Earlier this week, McAuliffe included an amendment to the FY2014 budget bill authorizing the Governor to act in the event that the Medicaid Reform Innovation and Reform Commission (MIRC) fails to decide

EDITORIAL

whether or not to accept federal funding to cover up to 400,000 uninsured Virginians through Medicaid by the end of the current legislative session.

Business groups and chambers of commerce around Virginia, including the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce, support accepting the expansion of Medicaid in Virginia under the Affordable Care Act. One persuasive factor for the business community: The expansion would create an estimated 30,000 jobs. Hospitals support expanding Medicaid which would offset many of the costs of caring for uninsured populations.

It isn't as if there is no health care cost for the uninsured now. Right now, they access health care when they are very sick by going to an emergency room or other clinics, where providers spread the cost of care around. This is inefficient, expensive and unhealthy, including for those of us who do have health insur-

ance. It means unvaccinated and/or sick people are going to work and going about their daily lives putting themselves and others at risk.

As of January 2014, in Virginia, Medicaid eligibility for adults without disability is limited to parents with incomes below 51 percent of poverty, or about \$11,900 a year for a family of four, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. Adults without dependent children remain ineligible regardless of their income.

The General Assembly should not be able to block coverage for as many as 400,000 Virginians basically out of spite. The established excuse, that the Feds can't afford it and can't be counted on to pay the money, doesn't hold water in Virginia, which receives more Federal dollars per capita than any other state but Alaska. If legislators are so concerned about Federal ability to pay, you might expect to see them refusing transportation money, for example, or to turn the possible FBI headquarters away, or thousands of other ways that Federal dollars make their way into Virginia.

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

OBITUARY

Nathan F. Holeman

Nathan F. (Red) Holeman died on Dec. 24, 2013. He was born July 16, 1925 to George and Hazel Holeman in Tuxedo Junction on the outskirts of Bartlesville, OK.

As a young man Red was a ranch hand/cowboy, worked on the Santa Fe railroad and moved houses before joining the USMC in 1943. Nate served four years in the Pacific in the 6th Marine Division, fighting on Okinawa and Guam, then disarming Japanese troops in Tsingtao, China before receiving an honorable discharge in 1946.

Nate came to Bremerton, Wash, upon discharge and entered Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in 1948, retiring in 1981. A resident of Port Orchard, Wash., from 1948-1997, he is survived by his wife Lois; three daughters, Joni Holeman of Sterling, Va.; Kathy Peterson of Hayward, Wisc., and Gayle Kundert of Port Orchard, Wash.; plus two sisters, Janet Walker of Everett, Wash., and Joyce Fowler of Puyallup, Wash.

Nate and Lois were avid RV

motorhome campers, hitting the road in 1997 for Salem, Ore., to help his nephew operate the stadium for the Salem-Kaizer Volcanoes AAA baseball team. In 2001 they rolled into Hayward, Wisc., to be near grandchildren Megan and Christopher Peterson, both of Richfield, Minn. In Port Orchard, Wash., Nate is also survived by six more grandchildren: Brandon, Joe, Amanda, Jessie and Chelsea Kundert, along with Tony May. Nate's great-grandson Kailar Kundert was born in May 2013.

Nate and Lois have been living with their daughter Joni in Sterling, Va. They are members of Christ the King Lutheran Church where Nate was active in the Men's Breakfast Group. A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. on Feb. 8, followed in July with interment at Arlington National Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, consider a contribution to the Memorial Fund of Christ The King Lutheran, 10550 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, VA 22066-2416. Visit www.colonialfuneralhome.com.

LETTER

Development Taking Wrong Direction

To the Editor:

Thanks for the great article about The Most Important Issues in Great Falls, including the "Walker Road Diet Project." At last we can put a face and an organization on the most ridiculous waste of tax-payer dollars since the infamous "Bridge to Nowhere." Reducing a four-lane road with unobstructed visibility at the main commercial intersection in town, to two lanes with hazardous parallel parking and no turn lanes for customers or semi-trailer delivery trucks is not only irresponsible, but dangerous. I sincerely hope the first accidents will not include fatalities, but the risk of youngsters darting from parked cars, or drivers trying to back into parking spaces or opening doors into traffic is obvious. When I first saw the plan for the project posted in the Library a couple years ago, I thought it was a joke and posted my comments. I was sure that sound minds and austere budgets would prevail. But, I was wrong and never dreamed of "stimulus dollars." I have talked to many neighbors, residents, and business owners/managers and have not found a single person that thinks the project is a good idea. In fact, all of them would like to see the project stopped immediately, and Walker Road restored to its original configuration.

In the 30 years I have lived in Great Falls, I've waited for the promised trails along Walker, Arnon Chapel, or other roads that would allow residents to walk or ride a bicycle to the center of town. I would also like to see the section of Walker Road north of Georgetown Pike freed from commercial truck and equipment parking along the roadway. But instead we get a project that is totally unwanted, unhelpful and dangerous south of Georgetown Pike.

Another ridiculous series of projects imposed on us by Fairfax County is the "Pond Branch Watershed Management Plan" which eliminates many of the efficiently designed and effective storm drainage systems consisting of landscaped lawns, and replaces them with swamps with unmaintained vegetation that collects roadside trash and harbors mosquitoes and snakes. Some of us remember the beautiful lawn next to the Library where kids would play. Now it's an unmaintained eyesore swamp that collects plastic bags, cans, bottles, and other paraphernalia tossed there by irresponsible teens. The purpose seems to parallel that of the Walker Road project, to eliminate the efficient flow of traffic or storm water in favor of congestion and sewage. Good work Great Falls Citizens Association! Have you actually counted citizens that agree with your plans?

Gene Phillip
Great Falls

Great Falls CONNECTION

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An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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Letters to the Editor
The Connection
1606 King St., Alexandria VA 22314
Call: 703-917-6444.

By e-mail: greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com

Piercing the Marble

Virginia Supreme Court opens audio recordings to public.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

Members of the Virginia Supreme Court have a New Year's Resolution — become more transparent.

Starting this year, members of the public will finally have access to audio recordings of oral arguments. The recordings were once public, but installation of new recording equipment in January 2008 changed that. Because the new microphones were so powerful, justices were concerned that sidebar conversations between justices might be audible.

"That was a lame excuse," said Del. Dave Albo (R-42). "I'm glad they decided to change this without the General Assembly passing legislation to make it happen."

As it turns out, legislation was already in the works when the justices changed the policy. Wise County Clerk of Court Jack Kennedy approached Del. Terry Kilgore (R-1) about introducing legislation requiring the court to release audio recording of oral arguments. Draft language for House Bill 1018 said au-

dio records of Supreme Court oral arguments "shall be made publicly available in electronic format without fee within a reasonable time after oral arguments take place."

"I'm a Democrat and he's a Republican," said Kennedy, who lives in Kilgore's district. "But transparency should not be a partisan issue."

THE LACK OF TRANSPARENCY in Virginia has been a problem for many years, and the commonwealth has recently gained a reputation as a place that is hostile to open government. In 2012, the State Integrity Investigation ranked and graded each of the 50 states on government accountability, transparency and corruption. Virginia got an F, largely because police agencies deny access to basic documents. This week, Richmond-based Open Law Virginia issued its own state-by-state guide comparing public availability of online documents. Virginia got a C minus, largely because many documents and files are difficult for members of the public to access.

"Access to live and recorded oral arguments creates opportunities for civic education and public engagement," the report concludes. "And even many judges have recognized, in part based on experience, that it is time to bring video coverage to appellate courtrooms routinely."

SEE VIRGINIA SUPREME COURT, PAGE 17

"We can't have secret courts."

— **Ginger Stanley,**
executive director,
Virginia Press Association






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Into the Budget Fray

FROM PAGE 4

ing of \$33 million,” Bulova said.

Although Fairfax County is not facing the “doomsday budgets” of the mid-1990s, a projected budget shortfall of \$25 million this fiscal year, coupled with the accelerating growth and financial needs of Fairfax County Public Schools will present the Board of Supervisors with choices and challenges.

“Once again, it will not be an easy budget year,” Bulova said. “Actions or lack of action at the federal level has impacted commercial and sales tax revenue, making it more difficult for the county to recover from the downturn.”

Bulova said the county’s advertised bud-

get for fiscal year 2015 will be released for public comment next month. The county will host a number of public hearings, community forums and town meetings to give residents the opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions. In late April, the board officially adopts the budget.

“Every budget tells a story,” Bulova said. “We’ll look for efficiencies and savings and opportunity for savings, but it won’t be easy. The low-hanging fruit has already been picked.”

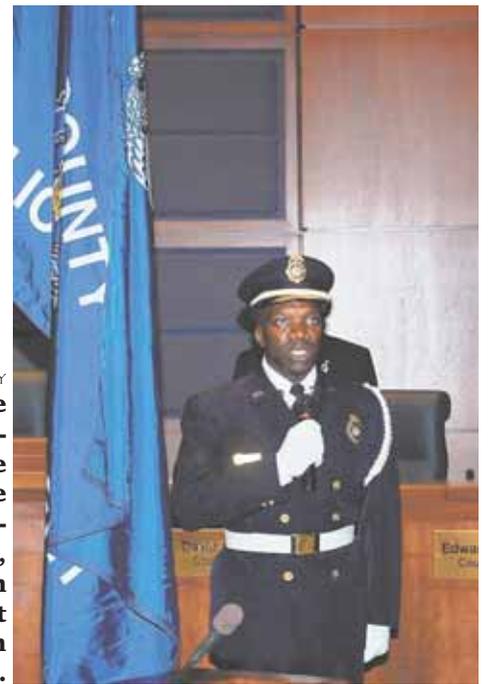
In spite of the challenges, Bulova said she believes the board has consistently been able to strike a balance that has kept taxes affordable while delivering high quality ser-

vices to residents.

“We remain committed to work with the community to maintain excellence in the face of our challenges,” she said.

COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY

During its Oct. 8 meeting, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors received a presentation on the World Police and Fire Games to be held in Fairfax County, June 26-July 5, 2015. The 11-day event, expected to generate \$100 million in tourism revenue, brings in first responders from 70 countries in an Olympic-style competition.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2014 STATE OF THE COUNTY

“Our first area of response focus is on preventing the 911 call. This is where our men and women ... knock on doors and offer assistance in checking smoke alarms or checking other items that may cause fire or injury ... We’ve visited over 40,000 homes since June 8 and installed over 6,000 smoke alarms”

— Fire and Rescue Chief Richard Bowers

“Recently, the department has established the chief’s Council on Diversity Recruiting. This council provides the agency engagement with leaders from culturally diverse communities to assist us in developing innovative recruitment opportunities ... to mirror the communities we serve.”

— Police Chief Edwin Roessler

“Based on my 26 years of experience in the Sheriff’s Office, there are a number of initiatives that we will be pursuing in the coming year. First, it is important that the Sheriff have a strong bond with our diverse communities. I will be out in the community listening and learning and bringing the new ideas, as well as any concerns, back to the office.”

— Sheriff Stacey Kincaid



PEOPLE

Cadette Troop 1111 Earns Silver Award

The girls in Girl Scouts Cadette Troop 1111 have been busy doing more than selling cookies this past year. They recently earned the organization’s Silver Award — the highest award a Girl Scout Cadette is eligible for.

By planning and completing a 50-hour community service project, Friendship Across Generations, the girls demonstrated leadership, organization and a commitment to community service. The troop organized a Tea and Cookie Social with the residents of the Vinson Hall Retirement Community in McLean, where senior residents are commissioned military officers and their immediate families.

The girls’ mission was to bridge the generational gap by interviewing and socializing with residents to find common threads between the past and present.

They found success through shared stories of childhood pets, favorite games, music trends, summer camp adventures, family vacations, and other memories. In listening to the residents’ stories, a connection was made between the teens and the seniors, and the girls discovered many similarities in their own lives. Girl Scout songs were sung by all and each of the residents went home with a box of Girl Scout Cookies.

Troop 1111, led by Suzanne McGrath, begins its 10th year in Girl Scouts.



Troop members pictured from left are: Ainsley Jacobs, Kylie Smith, Lanie Conzone, Kaitlin West, Hailey McGrath, Sophie Holsinger, Lilly Kishore and Aryana Nobakht.

COMMUNITY

Military Appreciation Mondays Bring Donations

FROM PAGE 7

sors each matching 10 percent of the amount that diners spend, yielded around \$5,400 for the foundation. "Tonight I think we'll be at about a 200 percent match," said Nelson in his introductory speech for the evening.

That figure does not include the additional \$2,500 in donations from restaurant patrons who paid to enter the drawing for end-of-dinner door prizes, which brought the grand donated total to around \$8,000 in one night.

Nelson, a veteran himself who also worked with the State Department during the 1970s, began organizing the dinners in 2009 as Tuesday charity events for organizations such as the American Heart Association and American Diabetes Association.

He emphasizes that these dinners, however, are not charity events, but rather ways to show the community's appreciation for America's service members. The patrons who come in bring with them an air of enthusiasm for the causes they are supporting.

"A huge percentage of the money goes to the organizations, rather than administration and other costs, and that means a huge deal to him," said Nancy Nelson, who helped her husband all night with presenting door prizes and accommodating guests.

Military Appreciation Mondays have helped many organizations over the past four years, such as Our Military Kids and the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund. One Dec. 2011 gathering contributed about \$12,500 to the organization Stop Soldier Suicide, founded by Langley graduate Nick Black and two of his fellow

Army members in 2010, which helped the nonprofit to get off the ground early on. Black's father Cofer Black was in attendance at the most recent dinner.

"I think it's very important for a community to support its warriors, both when they are overseas and when they return," said Black, a former CIA official during the George W. Bush Administration. "Bob really helps to bring the community together and raise funds for a spectrum of causes, including veterans' families."

NELSON'S HARD WORK has not gone unnoticed. In November 2013, he was awarded a community service award from the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution for sustaining the dinner series for several years and donating to a large number of military causes.

"We felt he was a perfect candidate for the award because he has committed several years to this project," said Holly Lynne M. Schmidt, who represents the Thomas Nelson chapter of the organization that presented Nelson with the award.

As for the future, Nelson has his eye on expanding Military Appreciation Mondays to other locations, including Reston. He says that plan is in its "infancy stage," and he and a potential host are searching for the perfect venue. In the meantime, Pulcinella Italian Host restaurant in McLean, which has hosted dinner events in the past, is another potential location.

The next Military Appreciation Monday dinner will be at the Old Brogue Irish Pub in Great Falls on March 10, and will support the CIA Officers Memorial Foundation.

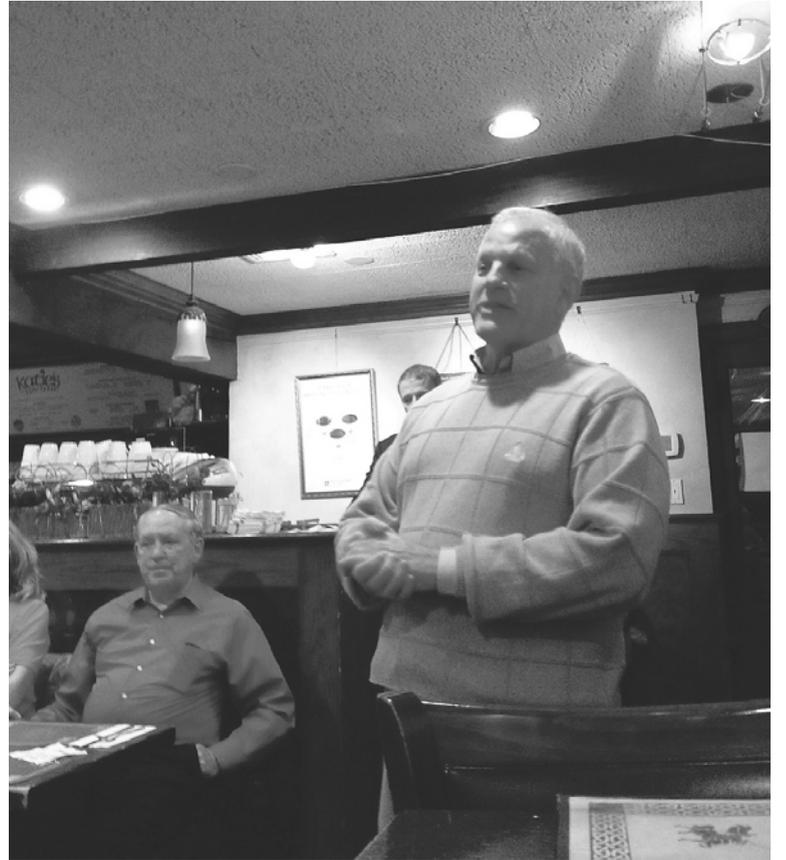


PHOTO BY ETHAN MCLEOD/THE CONNECTION

Bob Nelson thanks a room full of guests at the Old Brogue Irish Pub who have gathered to support the Navy SEAL Foundation.

Be Part of The February Pet Connection

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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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A Casino Night to Benefit the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington, Fairfax County Region

Save the Date!
Friday, March 7th, 2014
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Musical Approach to Family

“La Cage Aux Folles” arriving at Alden Theater.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

One of Broadway’s biggest hits, “La Cage Aux Folles” is coming to the Alden courtesy of the McLean Community Players. The long-running musical won six Tony Awards including Best Musical and Best Score when it originally appeared on Broadway. Its two Broadway revivals since have also garnered Tony Awards.

McLean Community Players will give local audiences the opportunity experience its award-winning musical score and memorable characters.

The storyline centers around Georges, the owner of a popular drag nightclub, and Albin, the club’s star. They have been partners for many years. They have raised a son together, Jean-Michel, who has just announced his engagement to Anne, the daughter of a rather conservative politician. The engagement throws everything into topsy-turvy turmoil. All is presented with a big smile and a bigger heart.

“La Cage” was written by a Broadway dream team of Harvey Fierstein, Jerry Herman and Jean Poiret. The original production was directed by Arthur Laurents.

The McLean Community Players production of “La Cage” with a cast of 25, is directed by veteran actor and director Hans Bachmann. “La Cage aux Folles” at its heart, is a story about family and the sacrifices that parents make to ensure their children’s happiness It is a story most everyone can relate to.”

Musical director John Edwards Niles will have an orchestra of 10 to perform the score of 16 songs. Choreography is by Duane Monahan.

Show song titles include “I Am What I Am” with a lyric “I am my own special creation.” and “Look Over There” with the line, “How often is someone concerned with the tiniest thread of your life? Concerned with whatever you feel?”

Cast member Tim Adams (Jean-Michel) called “La Cage” “just a wonderful story about an everyday loving family.” Actor Christopher Furry (Albin) said, “everyone can relate to this show ... it is just so sincere in telling about people who care for each other in a centered relationship.”

Harv Lester (Georges) said audiences will find it an “hilarious show about a strong family relationship. It is a little over-the-top but so easy to enjoy.”

“La Cage’s” previous community theater production in the area was about a decade ago. Inviting audiences to see the optimistic “La Cage aux Folles,” actor Lisa Anne Bailey called it a show about an “accepting family and not just about feathers and glitter.”



PHOTOS BY TRACI J. BROOKS STUDIOS

Jacqueline (Lisa Anne Bailey) makes sure Georges (Harv Lester) and Albin (Christopher Furry) don’t forget her in rehearsals for “La Cage Aux Folles.”

Where and When

McLean Community Players present “La Cage aux Folles” at Alden Theatre, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave. Performances, Jan. 31-Feb. 16. Fridays and Saturdays, 8 p.m.; Sundays 2 p.m. Tickets are \$18-\$20. Visit www.mcleanplayers.org or call 703-790-9223. Note: Audio description services for the visually impaired on Feb. 15.



Jean-Michel (Tim Adams) gets a lesson in family responsibility from Georges (Harv Lester).



PHOTO BY JOCELYN STEINER

From left: Shannon Benton and Rikki Howie rehearsing for the play “THIS,” a comedy that captures the uncertain steps of a circle of friends entering the choppy waters of middle age. Starts Jan. 24 at the Vienna Community Center.

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

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

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-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. www.viennatheatrecompany.org/

MONDAY/JAN. 27

Fuse Box. 7:30 p.m. Jammin’ Java, 227 Maple Avenue East, Vienna. A guitar-driven, rock ‘n roll band. Tickets are \$10 in advance, \$13 day of the show, and are on sale now at www.jamminjava.com.

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. www.viennatheatrecompany.org/

FRIDAY/JAN. 31-SATURDAY/FEB. 1

La Cage aux Folles. 8 p.m. Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Book by Harvey Fierstein, music and lyrics by Jerry Herman, based on the novel by Jean Poiret. Georges, the owner of a popular drag nightclub in San Tropez, and Albin, the club’s star, have lived in unwedded bliss for 20 years. Jean-Michel, the son they have raised together, throws the happy household into hilarious turmoil by announcing that he is going to marry the daughter of an ultra-conservative politician. www.McLeanPlayers.org or 866-811-4111.

SATURDAY/JAN. 25

Gustafer Yellowgold’s Show. 10:30 a.m. Jammin’ Java, 227 Maple Ave E , Vienna. Groovy Gustafer 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, Gustafer Yellowgold concerts are a truly different multimedia experience that entrances children and adults alike. Tickets: \$10. <https://jamminjava.com/events/gustafer-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

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

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 15

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 15

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

SUNDAY/FEB. 2

La Cage aux Folles. 2 p.m. Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Georges, the owner of a popular drag nightclub in San Tropez, and Albin, the club's star, have lived in unwedded bliss for twenty years. Jean-Michel, the son they have raised together, throws the happy household into hilarious turmoil by announcing that he is going to marry the daughter of an ultra-conservative politician. www.McLeanPlayers.org or 866-811-4111.

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. 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



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Visitors enjoy a chocolate fountain from Capitol Chocolate Fountains at the 2012 McLean Chocolate Festival. This year's festival will be Sunday, Jan. 26 at McLean Community Center.

age. Contains adult language; for theatre-goers over 16. www.viennatheatrecompany.org/

www.McLeanPlayers.org or 866-811-4111.

SUNDAY/FEB. 9

La Cage aux Folles. 2 p.m. Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Georges, the owner of a popular drag nightclub in San Tropez, and Albin, the club's star, have lived in unwedded bliss for twenty years. Jean-Michel, the son they have raised together, throws the happy household into hilarious turmoil by announcing that he is going to marry the daughter of an ultra-conservative politician. www.McLeanPlayers.org or 866-811-4111.

FRIDAY/FEB. 7-SATURDAY/FEB. 8

La Cage aux Folles. 8 p.m. Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Georges, the owner of a popular drag nightclub in San Tropez, and Albin, the club's star, have lived in unwedded bliss for twenty years. Jean-Michel, the son they have raised together, throws the happy household into hilarious turmoil by announcing that he is going to marry the daughter of an ultra-conservative politician.



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Public Weighs Options for Park Land Swap

Officials reveal three alternatives for Langley Fork Park land swap.

BY ETHAN MCLEOD
THE CONNECTION

McLean residents may see an upgraded Langley Fork Park within the next year, but some are more excited than others about 55 potential new acres of synthetic turf fields, lights, and the crowds that will come with it.

McLean residents received a first glimpse at three alternatives for a revised Langley Fork Park Master Plan presented by National Park Service (NPS) officials on the evening of Tuesday, Jan. 14. The Park Service sought public comment during an evening meeting at Franklin Sherman Elementary about the exchange with Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) of 55 acres at Langley Fork for an equally valued area of 101 acres at neighboring Langley Oaks Park.

The original agreement between NPS and FCPA, formed in 1981, has been renewed each year since it expired in 2005, and has allowed FCPA to maintain the original facilities constructed in 1981 at Langley Fork Park. However, NPS is unable to construct additional facilities to match community demand for new activity spaces at Langley Fork Park.

The FCPA presented the first draft of its Master Plan in its own public comment session Oct. 17 of last year. The Park Service's recent evaluation and revision of FCPA's plan with their own environmental assessment provides for three land usage alternatives.

McLean residents in attendance on Jan. 14 demonstrated mixed feelings about which option they preferred. Alternative 1, in which no land swap takes place and the Park Service maintains control of Langley Fork Park, was the favored option of some community residents who live close to the park and do not want the additional traffic, lights and noise.

"Many of us like our quiet dis-

SEE PARK SERVICE, PAGE 17

VIEWPOINTS What do you like or dislike most about the plan?



Gifford Malone

Retired, McLean Resident

"I'm in favor of Alternative 3, in which there is a swap, and the Fairfax Park Authority would build new athletic fields with artificial turf and parking."



Bucky Morris

Executive Director, McLean Youth Lacrosse

"There's two fields there right now and it's all dirt and very hard to use for our organization, so we're really hoping that Alternative 3 goes through."



Vicki Hermann

Resident, Retired

"My primary interest in the land swap business going forward here is the suggestion and proposal for a dog park. It makes sense to me in both organizations getting properties that belong to two bodies who can't use them in their current configuration, and while there's plenty of clamoring in the area for more open space for athletic events for the kids, there's no reason the adults can't take advantage of it too."



Zac Kaye

Physician

"When we moved in, the opening of that part of Georgetown Pike was tree-lined and shaded, it was a gorgeous entry to a scenic highway. When they put Clemyjontri [Park] in, they cut it all down and destroyed the area, and we now have to deal with the traffic. With soccer fields, you've got air horns and whistles, and while we love people cheering and having a good time, we feel the noise pollution and lights in the evening will have an impact on our quality of life."



Susan Mosse

Retired, McLean Resident

"For us, I think the most important thing is that the area stays natural and wild, like it is today. We don't want any more development, more traffic, so preferably we would like to have just one owner, either the National Park Service or Fairfax County Park Service, but not both of them dividing the property."



Roberto Mosse

Retired, McLean Resident

"If you look at the map, you'll see that the whole back of Langley Oaks, it's all this land that is not developed. Now if a portion of that goes to the National Parks and a portion stays with Fairfax County, then who does the upkeep? We have in some places already two different owners, but we would be worsening it if we have more."

SPORTS BRIEFS

Langley Hockey Wins Two

The Langley hockey team added four more points with victories against Colonial/N. Stafford on Jan. 6 and Westfield/Heritage on Jan. 10. The Saxons traveled back to Prince William for a Monday afternoon tilt against Colonial where they got production from Charlie Eisner, Owen Westerheim, Sam Lafuria, Will Clemson and Drew Schneider. Both Westerheim and Eisner continued to demonstrate Langley's grinders have elevated their games with goal production and ice time. Ryan Guidi minded the net, allowing a single goal on 17 shots while Langley's offense potted six goals on 29 shots. Referee whistles were busy, flagging Langley for four penalties while only assessing one to the opponent, but Langley penalty killers were up to the task, killing off three of the four while the power play unit scored on their only opportunity. The final score was 6 - 1.

In the Friday game, freshman Nickon Yazdani made a strong debut in net, allowing a single goal. The Langley offense continued its dominance with a four bagger from Guidi, hat trick from Clayton and multi goals from Lafuria and Shapiro. Defensemen Will Clemson and Chris Lane both delivered several powerful checks to keep Westfield offense from establishing any chemistry. The game ended with time left on the clock as Langley made the score 11 - 1.

The Saxons' next game is against Stone Bridge on Friday, Jan. 24 at Ashburn Icehouse at 9:20 p.m.

McLean Girls' Basketball Suffers First Loss

The McLean girls' basketball team lost to Madison 65-45 on Jan. 17, snapping the Highlanders' 13-game winning streak and dropping their record to 13-1.

McLean will host Langley at 5:45 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 24.

Langley Boys' Basketball Falls to South Lakes

The Langley boys' basketball team lost to South Lakes 58-51 on Jan. 17, dropping the Saxons' record to 5-9.

Langley lost to Madison 45-44 on Jan. 14 and beat Patriot 46-44 on Jan. 16.

The Saxons will travel to face McLean at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 24.

TJ Swim and Dive Beats South Lakes

The TJ boys continued their winning ways (211-94) at the first meet of the new year against South Lakes.

The boys' 200 medley relay — Luke Thorsell (Oak Hill), Joseph Doran (Springfield), Lucas Lin (Fairfax), Miles Oakley (Fairfax) — placed first, and TJ boys' 400 free relay teams took both first — Michael You (Alexandria), Emilio Sison (Annandale), Thorsell, Kyle Alexander (McLean)— and second place —Matthew Szilagyi (Lansdowne), Jared Nirenberg (Springfield), Andrew Seliskar (McLean), Nathan Ouyang (Oak Hill). Seliskar (200 free, 100 fly), Thorsell (200 IM, 100 back), Oakley (50 free, 100 free), and Sison (500 free, 100 breast) were individual double winners as well.

The girls lost (171-144), but Carrie Heilbrun (Fairfax Station) (100 fly) and Sophie Bennett (Arlington) (500 free) finished first, continuing a strong season. Heilbrun and Bennett were also part of the winning girls 200 free relay with Charlie Lertlumprasert, Sophia Moses (Arlington).

In boys' diving, CJ Wilson (Alexandria) finished first, while Callan Monette (Fairfax) took first and Gloria Chen second place for the girls.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THOMAS SHEFFER/NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Preliminary Alternative 2: Land Exchange with Minimal Development by FCPA

Under this alternative, NPS and FCPA would exchange the area known as Langley Fork Park (approximately 55 acres) that is part of the NPS George Washington Memorial Parkway, with an equally valued portion of Langley Oaks Park, an undeveloped parcel of approximately 101 acres, in return.

FCPA would improve and redevelop facilities in Langley Fork Park within the general footprint of the existing facilities. Athletic field sizes and types might be varied; improvements such as field lighting outside of the historic overlay district and synthetic turf might be added; new features might be added such as pavilion(s) or a dog park.

NPS would manage the exchanged parcel of Langley Oaks Park in its natural condition, ensuring permanent protection of the Potomac Gorge watershed and the site's resources with no plans for change or development.



LANGLEY FORK PARK
LOWER INTENSITY DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO
DECEMBER 2013

Langley Fork Park and Langley Oaks Park Land Exchange Project

Preliminary Alternative 3: Land Exchange with More Extensive Development by FCPA

Alternative 3 includes the same land exchange as described under Alternative 2, and FCPA would more fully develop Langley Fork Park in a configuration that will be consistent with the outcome of FCPA's master planning process. Possible improvements would be an expansion in the number of athletic fields to serve a variety of sports, improvement of fields with synthetic turf and the addition of field lighting outside of the historic overlay district, trail enhancements, a dog park, pavilions, and expanded parking.

NPS would manage the exchanged parcel of Langley Oaks Park in its natural condition, ensuring permanent protection of the Potomac Gorge watershed and the site's resources with no plans for change or development.



LANGLEY FORK PARK
FULL BUILD-OUT DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO
DECEMBER 2013

Langley Fork Park and Langley Oaks Park Land Exchange Project

While Alternative 1 includes no development or exchange of land, Alternative 2 provides for minimal additions to Langley Fork Park by Fairfax County Park Authority.

Alternative 3 provides for far more extensive development of Langley Fork Park, including options for a dog park and additional parking.

Park Service Presents Revised Langley Fork Master Plan Options

FROM PAGE 16

expanded parking.

trict and do not want two neighbors," said Roberto Mosse, who lives in the Langley Oaks neighborhood.

Alternative 2 provides for the full swap of 55 acres for the 101 acres at Langley Oaks, and partial development that includes varying field sizes, lights, and potentially a pavilion and dog park. Alternative 3, the favorite of youth sports advocates and pet owners, is a more expansive version of Alternative 2 that includes installation of new synthetic turf fields on the right side of the park, a dog park, additional pavilions, and

NPS OFFICIALS ALSO explained the outcome of the swap on Langley Oaks Park, which backs up to the George Washington Memorial Parkway, also owned by the National Park Service. In accordance with the National Environmental Protection Act, the Park Service must conduct an environmental assessment. "The National Park Service has no plans to further develop the land at Langley Oaks Park if the swap takes place other than adding NPS signage for trails, according to Thomas Sheffer, NPS Park Planner at George Washington Memorial

Parkway. "The intention is to preserve the Potomac Gorge resource area in its natural form."

The Park Services Office of Value Appraisal determined that the area of 101 acres at Langley Oaks Park was of an equal value for the exchange, according to Project Coordinator Brian Williams.

In its environmental assessment, NPS has conducted two years of research, factoring in forest cover, invasive species, and proximity of nearby agencies, namely the CIA, into their assessment. The Park Service has also worked with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to fulfill requirements

of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which mandates that the NPS evaluates potential effects on nearby historical properties in McLean before a swap takes place.

The NPS is still in the public scoping stage of its environmental assessment and will be accepting public comments until Feb. 3. Written comments can be submitted online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/GWMP>; by mail to Superintendent, George Washington Memorial Parkway, Attn: Langley Fork Park Project, c/o Turkey Run Park, McLean, VA 22101; or by fax to 703-289-2598, Attn: Langley Fork Park Project.

Court Makes Audio Recordings Public

FROM PAGE 9

When the court's policy of denying public access became public last year, leaders at the Supreme Court initially decided to defend the policy.

In a written statement explaining the lack of transparency, director of legislative and public relations for the Office of Executive Secretary Katya Herndon said new technology was to blame.

"The new digital recording equipment is more sensitive so that the recordings now include any confidential comments any justice makes to another justice during the oral argument," said Herndon last June. "Accordingly, the recordings, which are for the internal use of the justices, are no longer made available to the public."

Since that time, a number of media outlets have reported on the lack of transparency. And legislators began drafting bills to force the court to open up. Now, the court has decided to change course — at least for oral arguments moving forward. Advocates for open government say it's a victory for



PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEE POPE/THE CONNECTION

Since January 2008, the Supreme Court of Virginia has denied public access to audio recordings of its oral arguments.

the public.

"We can't have secret courts," said Ginger Stanley, executive director of the Vir-

ginia Press Association. "The public has a right to hear these audio records. That's how democracy works."

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Friends Forever

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



Since it had been more than a few months, today I summoned up the courage to Google my long-time friend and fellow stage IV lung cancer survivor, Suzanne. Suzanne and I had been years out of touch (for no real reason other than initiative and the geographic consideration that she lived in Barnstable, Ma. and I live in Burtonsville, Md.) and recently back in touch – due to our identical cancer diagnoses. I learned that she had succumbed to her disease back in October, 2013. We last had contact electronically back in the summer. She was extremely weak then, she said, too weak to talk, so e-mailing was best. In that e-mail, ultimately her last, she wrote that the most recent chemotherapy drug with which she was infused was no longer effective and that her oncologist had no other drugs left to recommend. Not that she said it in so many words, but at that point her prognosis was grim. She offered that her two boys were with her and from them she would gain great comfort. The news was very unsettling to me and I was afraid that this e-mail might be our last – and so it was.

Suzanne and I were never boyfriend/girlfriend, but from Elementary School through High School we were extremely close and confidants of the highest order (“thick as thieves,” to invoke a quote from the warden in the movie, “Shawshank Redemption” describing the close relationship between Tim Robbins – “Andy Dufresne” and “Red,” – Morgan Freeman). Our friendship was forged during those formative, pre-adolescent years and maintained on – and then off – until back on again a year or so ago, for nearly 50 years. The reason I hadn’t inquired sooner than today was because I was fearful of what I would find out. Typically her e-mails were fairly random and on the occasion when I would e-mail her, she would rarely respond in a timely manner. I tried not to worry about this last silent interval. Today my worst fears were realized.

Just as cancer survivors draw great strength from those of us still living with this terrible disease, so too are we weakened when one of us dies. Rather than feeling fortunate that I am still alive, I feel sadness that Suzanne is not. When one of us dies, we all die – a little bit, or at least, our resolve to persevere dies a little bit. I’ve always said that there is strength in our numbers, numbers that we cannot afford to lose. (Lung Cancer causes approximately 160,000 deaths a year, the leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States.)

Certainly Suzanne’s death affects her family way more than it affects me. However, learning that she has died has given me pause to consider/reconsider how serious my health situation is. It’s ironic that Suzanne and I were friends for so many years and that ultimately we should be diagnosed with the same disease and given a similar prognosis. It seems only fitting that since we started together, we should finish together. I imagine I’ll see her soon enough. For the moment however, I hope it will be in my dreams – not that other place.

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

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OBITUARY

William Dixon Robertson, Jr.

COLUMBIA - William Dixon Robertson, Jr., 87, died Friday, January 17, 2014, following a brief illness. Funeral services will be held eleven o'clock in the morning, Wednesday, January 22, at Washington Street United Methodist Church. Burial will be at Arlington National Cemetery at a later date. The family will receive friends from five until seven Tuesday afternoon, January 21, at Dunbar Funeral Home, Devine Street.

Admiral Robertson was born in Lexington, North Carolina, on August 27, 1926, to the late William D. and Mary Norman Hargrave Robertson. He enlisted in the U.S. Naval Reserve on December 11, 1943, and under the V-12 Program attended the University of South Carolina at Columbia. He entered the United States Naval Academy on appointment from his native state in 1944. He graduated with the class of 1948 on June 6, 1947, and was commissioned Ensign. His selection for the rank of Rear Admiral was approved by the President on January 30, 1974.

Admiral Robertson was a proud destroyer officer. He served in USS VESOLE (DDR-878); USS MULLANEY (DD-528); and USS WEEKS (DD-701). He was Executive Officer under Elmo "Bud" Zumwalt's command of USS DEWEY (DLG-14). He attended the Naval Postgraduate School in Washington, DC, in Intelligence and Russian Language; and served as Assistant Naval Attaché at the American Embassy in Belgrade, Yugoslavia; operations officer to Destroyer Squadron THIRTY; instructor for the Naval ROTC Unit at the University of South Carolina; Head of Maritime Intelligence Branch, Office of Naval Intelligence; and Head of the Strategic Warfare Group, Systems Analysis Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OP-96). He was commanding officer of USS WATTS (DD-567); USS RAMSEY (DEG-2); and USS WAINWRIGHT (DLG-28). From August 1974 until his retirement in June 1979, he served as deputy, then Vice Director, Defense Intelligence Agency.

Admiral Robertson attended the Industrial College of the Armed Forces and received a Master of Science in Administration from the George Washington University, Washington, DC. He was awarded the Bronze Star medal with Combat "V" for "meritorious service during combat operations against the enemy" during the Viet Nam War; the National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal; Meritorious Service Medal, and Joint Service Commendation Medal. He also wore the American Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; National Defense Service Medal with bronze star; Vietnam Service Medal with bronze star; and Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with Device.

Admiral Robertson was active in his church and with his children's activities wherever his family was stationed. Upon returning to Columbia, he immediately became involved with Washington Street United Methodist Church. He served as Chair of the church's Foundation and he and his wife worked with Meals on Wheels. He was a member of the Columbia chapter of the US Naval Academy Alumni Association; the Saint Andrews Society of the City of Columbia; Forest Lake Club; the Quadrille Club; and a former member of the Caprician Club.

Admiral Robertson is survived by his wife of 61 years, Frances Tuttle "Tut" Robertson, of Columbia; son, William Dixon Robertson III (Allison), of Columbia; daughter, Frances Robertson Butler (Barre), of Charleston; sister, Sassy Shull, of Columbia; grandchildren, Frances Lee Butler Bressan (John) of Charleston; William Barre McLeod Butler of Columbia; and Allison Bethea Robertson of Columbia; three wonderful nieces; and a grand-niece and many grand-nephews and cousins whom he cherished.

Memorials may be made to Washington Street United Methodist Church Foundation, Wounded Warrior Project, or a charity of your choice.

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Nothing is too small to know, and nothing too big to attempt.
-William Van Horne

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THURSDAY/JAN. 23

Great Falls Writer's Group. 12-1:30 p.m. Great Falls Public Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Writers of all experience and skill level are invited to discuss the joys/challenges of writing, and to hear authors read from their work. No registration necessary. No charge.

FRIDAY/JAN. 24

Messages of Hope. 7:30-9:30 p.m. Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. This documentary is based on medium and spiritual author Suzanne Giesemann's story; participants can ask questions about the afterlife, hear the rest of the story, and get books signed following the discussion. \$10. www.unityoffairfax.org or 703-281-1767.

SATURDAY/JAN. 25

Making the Connection. 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Medium and spiritual author Suzanne Giesemann will show participants how to open themselves to higher levels of guidance, creativity, inspiration and love. \$35. www.unityoffairfax.org or 703-281-1767.

"Heart Gifts." 1:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m., Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Medium and spiritual author Suzanne Giesemann will tell the gripping story of a very special soul called "Wolf" and on how to bring peace, balance and greater love into life. \$35. www.unityoffairfax.org or 703-281-1767.

SUNDAY/JAN. 26

Home Seller Seminar: What Every Seller Needs To Know. Free no obligation community service offered by The Lyons & McGuire Team of Keller Williams Realty. Tips to getting the most money for your home, avoid inspection and appraisal issues, and the market forecast for 2014. 1-4 p.m. at 774-A Walker Rd., Great Falls. RSVP LyonsMcGuire@TeamGreatFalls.com.

TUESDAY/JAN. 28

CIVITAN Club of Tysons Meeting. 12 p.m. Clyde's of Tyson's, 8332 Leesburg Pike, Vienna. The mission of CIVITAN, a non-profit is to build good citizenship by providing a volunteer organization of clubs dedicated to serving individual and community needs with an emphasis on helping people with developmental disabilities. For further information or to attend the meeting email tysonscivitan@aol.com.

THURSDAY/FEB. 6

Great Falls Writer's Group. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Great Falls Writer's Group, Great Falls Public Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike (large conference room), Great Falls. Writers of all experience and skill levels are invited to listen to a panel of experts discuss the secrets to successful book publishing. Q&A session to follow the expert panel. No registration necessary; no charge.

THURSDAY/FEB. 20

Great Falls Writer's Group. 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Great Falls Writer's Group, Great Falls Public Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike (large conference room), Great Falls. Writers of all levels are invited to discuss the joys/challenges of writing, and to hear authors read from their work. No registration necessary. No charge.

ONGOING

Vienna Toastmasters. 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m., at the Vienna Community Center on the 2nd floor room opposite the elevator, 120 Cherry St., S.E., Vienna. A friendly place to get comfortable with public speaking and impromptu speaking for new and experienced speakers. Open to the public.

Run With the Doctor. Every other Saturday at 7 a.m. 8230 Boone Blvd, Tysons Corner. The Center for Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine offers its services in a convenient format to runners at this running event. Free. facebook.com/runwiththedoctor.



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