

## Senior Living

Richard Graff, formerly of Vienna, showed Nysmith students from Herndon a photo taken of himself on V-E Day in 1945 when war in Europe came to an end 70 years ago. He still wears his uniform when sharing experiences of the war, and brings a Nazi flag he captured.

# First Hand Experience With World War

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## Witty, Intriguing Play

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## WEEK IN VIENNA

### Planning and Zoning Director Named

Patrick Mulhern has been selected as the Town of Vienna's Director of Planning & Zoning. "The Town of Vienna has approved specific smart growth design criteria to guide the on-going redevelopment of the Town," said Mulhern. "Their redevelopment effort offered me a unique new challenge that fully utilizes my skills, interest and talents. Vienna already is a great place to live. I'm excited to have an opportunity to improve the urban fabric of the Town so it matches the quality of the community."

Mulhern currently serves as the Planning & Community Development Director for the Town of Culpeper, where his efforts led to the Town receiving the Virginia Downtown Development Associate Award of Excellence, Neighborhood Stabilization Program Award from VDHCD as well as the Great Streets Award.

Mulhern has a Master's Degree from the University Of Virginia School Of Architecture. He is a classically trained tenor and has traveled to Canada, California, and the Virgin Islands to perform in benefit concerts where he raised money for many charities. Mulhern will join Vienna's Planning and Zoning Department on April 13, 2015.

### Navy Federal to Expand in Vienna

Navy Federal Credit Union, the world's largest credit union with more than 5 million members, will expand its headquarters campus in the town of Vienna in Fairfax County.

The credit union will add 600 headquarters employees and invest \$114.6 million in the campus as a result of the expansion - Governor Terry McAuliffe announced March 19.

The investment will include a new four-story, 234,000-square foot office building and a parking deck on a 10.8-acre site. An elevated walkway will connect the new building to the rest of the headquarters campus.

"Fairfax County has been proud to be the home of Navy Federal for more than three decades, and this significant expansion of the credit union's headquarters operation is a great testament to the confidence its leadership has in the county and the town of Vienna as a business location and hub for their employees," said Gerald L. Gordon, Ph.D., president and CEO of the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority (FCEDA).

# An Ancient Art Form TAKING THE WORLD BY STORM



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George Marshall High School team, winner of the 2015 Rookie All Star, celebrating their award.



Cougar Robotics of Oakton High School winning alliance member all smiles.

# FIRST Promotes ‘Gracious Professionalism’

## Robotics Competition held at the Patriot Center: Oakton and Marshall teams go to Nationals.

BY VALERIE LAPOINTE  
THE CONNECTION

This past weekend the annual Greater DC Regional FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Competition was held at the Patriot Center: 48 teams primarily from Washington D.C., Virginia, Maryland created robots to compete in this year’s game “Recycle Rush.” Six weeks before competition, teams are given identical starter kits that have all the rudimentary parts required to produce a robot with the necessary functionality to compete. However, the kit alone is not enough for complex maneuvering and teams must get creative, using materials from an approved supply list to build a truly competitive robot.

Obtaining the necessary materials can be an expensive endeavour for a high school robotics club, and so many teams enlist corporate sponsors for help.

“Having corporate sponsorship is the only way this really works,” said Jerry Stueve, a parent volunteer from the Herndon High team. “When people from within the industry come out and help, together with the students, parents, and teachers, it becomes a real team.”

Herndon High School’s team “Epsilon Delta” in partnering with NASA headquarters was able to acquire three 3D printers which allowed them to build scale models of the arena, and some parts they used on their robot.

**EACH TEAM** is given six weeks of build time before the competition to get their robots ready.

They are asked to complete changes annually. [www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

**Gryphons - George Marshall High School team — happy with mid-day results. From left: Emily Carson, Vienna; Joshua Shipler, Vienna; Marie Farson, mentor and engineering teacher; Alexander Roman, Vienna; Chester Cabauatan, Falls Church; Christian Cabauatan, Falls Church; Parham Mohammadi, Falls Church; and Bah-Cin Kumaran.**

PHOTOS BY  
TERRANCE MORAN  
THE CONNECTION



Langley High School team making on the fly repairs to their robot. Jun Choi, Chris Laronis, James Bollinger, Sepmta Khaashnoid, Brandon Kim and Brandon Sodgewich of McLean.

ally, this year’s theme centering on sustainability. The game is played by two teams of three robots each. Robots score points by stacking totes on scoring platforms, capping each of those stacks with recycling containers and properly disposing of pool noodles thrown into the field arena, representing litter. In keeping with the year’s theme, all game pieces used are reusable or recyclable.

While the competition is the center stage event, FIRST’s mission to encourage “gracious professionalism” extends well beyond the arena.

“The robotics is really just a small portion of what this is all about,” said Computer Science teacher Oliver Small. “It’s all about safety, outreach, visibility, engineering, and teamwork. It’s a kid driven event that allows them to decide what they want to learn, and find a way to learn it.”

Many students participating have STEM interests, like Abbey Kananagottu, a junior at Centerville HS. “I wanted to be a dentist before joining this team, but now I am seriously considering a mechanical engineering.” But since the project is completely student driven, not just when building the robots but in fundraising, crafting grant proposals, and doing outreach, others use the competition as a way to feel different interests.

Caleb Wilkinson, a student on the Herndon HS team wants to go into media. “For this competition I focused all my efforts on documenting our project visually and promoting outreach as our media representative.” said Wilkinson. “Not everyone here wants to go into a STEM field, some of us want to go into business or even writing and this serves as a platform for us to explore those interests.”

**AT THE END** of two long days of competition it was the coalition of the RoHawks from New York City, Cougar Robotics from Oakton HS, and the CAV-ineers from Severn, Md., who emerged victorious, advancing to Nationals in St. Louis, Mo. Teams from Chantilly HS, Marshall HS and Battlefield HS received judges awards and will also be going to Nationals.

# Moving: From Institution to Community

## Northern Virginia Training Center to close by March 2016.

BY TIM PETERSON  
THE CONNECTION

**J**oseph McHugh has lived at the Northern Virginia Training Center for 35 years, moving in when he was a teenager. McHugh has cerebral palsy and colostomy and severe spasticity issues.

At the training center, McHugh works with a speech pathologist, nurse, on-campus dietician and is close to an X-ray machine, dental facility and clinic on the grounds.



**Dr. Dawn Adams**

“My brother would’ve been dead without the training center,” said Chris McHugh, who lives in San Francisco. “He was almost pronounced dead a couple times, except for his proximity to a nurse, the clinic right there.”

Chris McHugh and his sisters Kim Arthurs McHugh of Arlington and Donna McHugh of Centreville are Joe’s legal guardians, and grew up together in Arlington. They’re skeptical about whether there are appropriate placement options so Joe can live successfully outside of the training center, which is slated to close next year.

“I want to be their biggest cheerleader,” said Chris McHugh. “I want to be wrong, to be excited about my brother’s choices and his peer’s choices, but I’ve seen people who

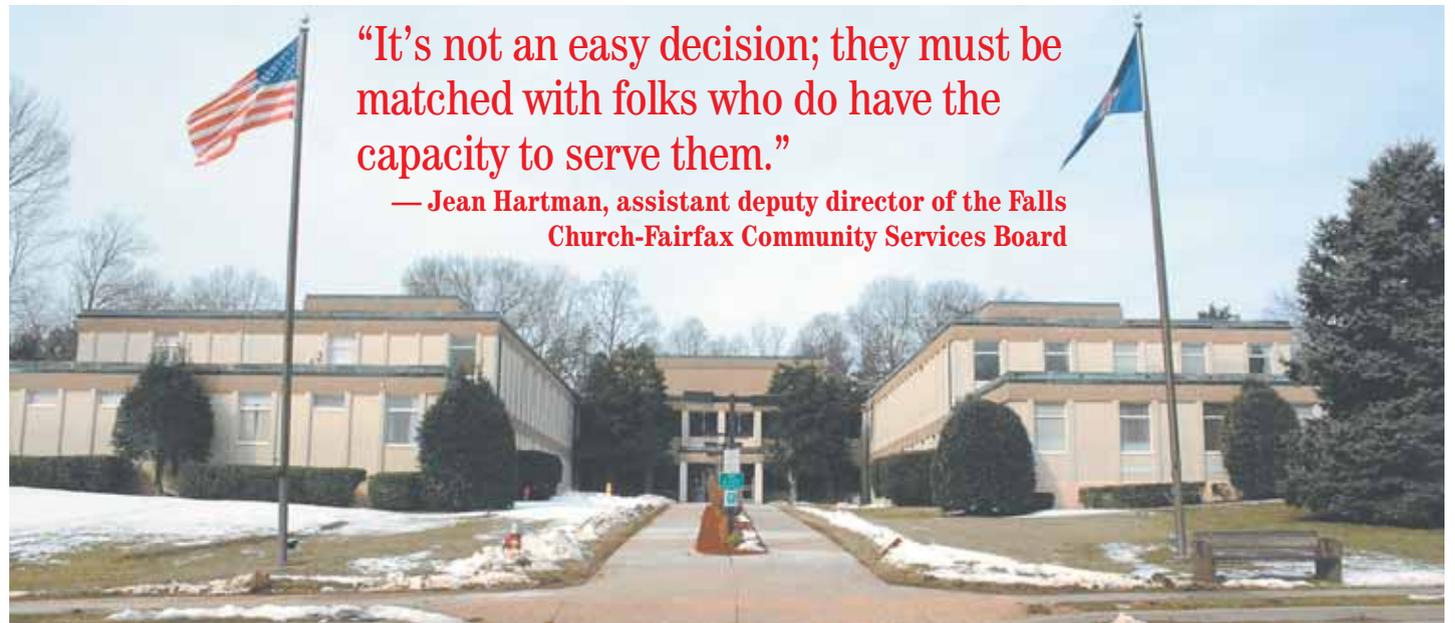


PHOTO BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

**The Northern Virginia Training Center on Braddock Road is scheduled to close in March 2016.**

**“It’s not an easy decision; they must be matched with folks who do have the capacity to serve them.”**

**— Jean Hartman, assistant deputy director of the Falls Church-Fairfax Community Services Board**

don’t have a family advocating for them slip through the cracks, wither on the vine.”

The training center, one of five large regional institutions in Virginia that are operated by the state’s Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, was built to house and provide services for people with intellectual and physical disabilities. The Northern Virginia facility, located on more than 80 acres off Braddock Road in Fairfax, has offered medical, dental and nursing services, physical and occupational therapy, social work and psychology services since opening in 1973.

Though the training centers provided an array of services, the institutional environment also moved people with disabilities out of their communities.

In June 1999, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Olmstead v. L.C.* that segregating people with disabilities from society is tantamount to discrimination and a violation

of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Governments or other public organizations, it said, must therefore offer more integrated, community-based services to people with disabilities.

Virginia Code § 37.2-319 calls for a Behavioral Health and Developmental Services Trust Fund that “shall be used for mental health, developmental, or substance abuse services and to facilitate transition of individuals with intellectual disability from state training centers to community-based services.”

Then in a 2011 letter, Assistant U.S. Attorney General Thomas E. Perez notified then-governor Bob McDonnell that the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division had conducted an investigation into the Central Virginia Training Center in Madison Heights, questioning the state’s compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The investigation concluded that Virginia “fails to provide services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs in violation of the [American with Disabilities Act],” Perez’s letter read.

“The inadequacies we identified have resulted in the needless and prolonged institutionalization of, and other harms to, individuals with disabilities in [Central Virginia Training Center] and in other segregated training centers throughout the Commonwealth who could be served in the community.”

The other segregated training centers included the one on Braddock Road.

In January 2012, the U.S. Department of Justice and Commonwealth of Virginia filed settlement in U.S. District Court, calling on the state to “create or expand a range of supports and services to individuals with [intellectual disabilities or developmental disabilities] and their families.”

The settlement summary referred to the continued operation of all five regional training centers as “fiscally impractical” and that the state should submit a plan for considering closing all but one institution. In his 2012 letter, Perez wrote the average cost of serving one person in a training center was \$194,000 per person annually, while offering them services outside the center averaged \$76,400.

According to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, the average cost of care per individual for FY2014 was \$342,504. For FY2015 (through October 2014), the cost rose to \$359,496 per individual.

Dr. Dawn Adams, director of health services  
SEE FINDING HOMES, PAGE 6  
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**Jean Hartman**



**From left: Joseph McHugh Jr. and Yvette Roberts, students at the Co-op School for Handicapped Children in Arlington, meet with First Lady Pat Nixon and Secretary of the Interior Rogers C.B. Morton at The White House in 1972 as poster children for a United Way campaign.**

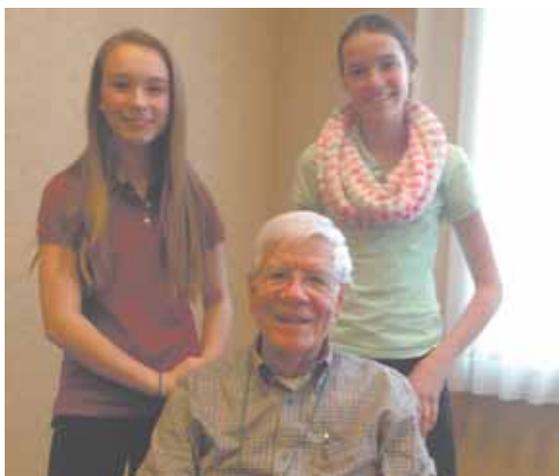


PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHRIS MCHUGH

**(Rear, from left) Donna A. McHugh, Kim McHugh Arthurs, Joseph F. McHugh Sr. and Chris McHugh celebrate with their brother and son Joseph F. McHugh Jr., who has been a resident at the Northern Virginia Training Center for 35 years.**



**Richard Graff, formerly of Vienna, showed Nysmith students from Herndon a photo taken of himself on V-E Day in 1945. He still wears his uniform when sharing experiences of the war.**



**Al Burris, formerly of Springfield, helped evacuate medical patients in the Korean War. He is pictured here with Alexandra Murphy and Anika Schipma, students at The Nysmith School in Herndon.**



PHOTOS BY KEN MOORE/THE CONNECTION

**Keith Wilkinson enlisted in World War II when he was 17 years old. Nysmith Students from Herndon recorded veterans' experiences for a Library of Congress Veterans History Project.**

# First Hand Experience with World War

BY KEN MOORE  
THE CONNECTION

**R**ichard Graff didn't hesitate to describe his darkest days while serving in World War II. "Every combat soldier has to get used to the bodies," he said.

"Whenever I think back to that one day when I didn't think I would have another day, you bet, I'm glad to be here," Graff said.

When speaking about World War II, Graff, formerly of Vienna, also brings a portrait photo taken on V-E Day, May 8, 1945, when

war in Europe came to an end nearly 70 years ago. He has a captured Nazi flag which is signed by comrades he served with.

Seventh and eighth graders from The Nysmith School in Herndon visited Ashby Ponds retirement community to record one-hour interviews with six veterans for The Library of Congress' Veterans History Project, including Graff, formerly of Vienna, Al Burris, formerly of Springfield, Keith Wilkinson, Al Beyer, Lee Holmberg and Bruce Petree.

More than one-quarter of the 850 residents at Ashby Ponds are military veterans, said Jessica McKay, public affairs manager.

"Who wouldn't want to hear the experience of a veteran?" said Nysmith student Emily Elkas, who talked to and recorded Keith Wilkinson. Wilkinson, formerly of New Hampshire, spent 32 years in the military, "mostly in the Air Force," he said.

"As we talked more and more, his story got so interesting," said Emily Elkas.

"I think it's wonderful that we live in a time that we have technology so we can record their stories on video," said Anika Schipma, who talked with Al Burris. Burris brought a model of the helicopter he flew to help evacuate soldiers who needed medical attention.

"Thank you so much. And thank you so much for your service," Alexandra Murphy, told Burris. "I learned a lot, so much that I didn't learn from textbooks at school."

Graff also told the Nysmith students some advice he learned from war and from the relationships through serving in the war.

"Learn all you can about every subject you can," Graff said. "Next, make all the friends you can. It always helps."

Finally, "have all the fun you can," he said. Nysmith students will return to Ashby Ponds, located on a 132-acre campus in Ashburn, throughout the spring.

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# Getting into Marian Homes

## Remodeling project to provide for residents with intellectual and or physical disabilities.

BY TIM PETERSON  
THE CONNECTION

**W**hen the new residents of Marian Homes' latest remodeling project move in to the Gresham Street house in north Springfield, Fairfax resident and Marian volunteer John Germain hopes they feel at home.



**Bill Crowder**

The retired Marine engineer has been helping supervise the remodel of the more than 60-year old structure, retrofitting it for the specific needs of five people with intellectual and or physical disabilities. Some of the most noticeable changes are doorways that have been widened to 42 inches to accommodate wheelchairs and a wide-open entryway leading to a main dining room bathed in sunlight from numerous windows.

"When they come in, this will help them feel welcome," said Germain, "that this is a home, not an institution." The remodel began Feb. 25 and the team expects residents will be able to move in by July.

More than re-painting, Marian Homes is converting it from three bedrooms to five, adding a walkout entry, putting in all new flooring, super-sizing the bathroom with a hoist mechanism and redoing the kitchen.

This is the third private residence Marian Homes has bought and redesigned. Its first is a home for five women in the Brecon Ridge subdivision of Fairfax, dedicated in 1998. The second, a home for five men, is a house in the Fairfax subdivision of Greenbriar, purchased in 2010. All 10 resi-



PHOTO BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

**Marian Homes volunteers from Fairfax (from left) — Walter Purdy, Michael Perri and John Germain — work on converting a north Springfield home to make it accessible for people with intellectual disabilities.**

dents were formerly living at the Northern Virginia Training Center on Braddock Road.

The all-volunteer, non-profit organization was started by Knights of Columbus St. Mary of Sorrows Council 8600. They purchase and maintain homes for people with disabilities; Chimes of Virginia takes referrals from Fairfax County to select individuals for the homes and independently manages the round-the-clock care for the residents.

Chimes of Virginia is part of the larger, Baltimore-based nonprofit corporation Chimes Foundation. Before Marian House purchased its first group home, the Fairfax Community Services Board assigned Chimes of Virginia to provide services once the house was completed.

People with intellectual or physical disabilities were once centralized in large institutions around the country, where it was believed more robust infrastructure and staffing could better meet the diverse health needs. The Northern Virginia Training Center, opened in 1973, is one example.

But over the last several decades, states have been closing their larger institutions

in favor of finding smaller housing and service alternatives that are more integrated into communities. The Northern Virginia center, scheduled to close in March 2016, has been discharging residents and currently has 74 remaining.

"This isn't anything new, in terms of federal standards," said Chimes Chief Operating Officer Nancy Eisele. "We just want to make sure we do it right in Fairfax County. We look at it as permanent housing for people, we want this to be their home."

**TO FUND** the first two residences it remodeled, Marian Homes has depended on rental payments from Chimes of Virginia, voluntary donations and grants from the Knights of Columbus Council and St. Mary of Sorrows Parish. The state-level Knights of Columbus organization KOVAR, dedicated to helping people with intellectual disabilities, has also offered Marian Homes loans and grants.

For the Springfield house, Marian Homes received financial assistance from Fairfax County's Department of Housing and Community Development.

In September 2014, the county issued a Request for Proposals to take advantage of \$1.8 million in federal funding for acquiring and rehabilitating affordable housing. The Fairfax County Housing Blueprint prioritized expanding housing options for the people with disabilities as well as homeless people.

In December, Marian Homes, along with the non-profit organizations Community Havens in Chantilly, Cornerstones Housing Corporation in Reston and Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services in the Mount Vernon area of Alexandria, was awarded funding in the form of deferred loans from the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority.

"This funding not only ensures persons with disabilities, the homeless and other people with special needs have a place to call home in Fairfax County," Kurt Creager, director of Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development, said in a statement. "It also supports efforts to provide a wide variety of affordable housing types and sizes to meet the diversity of needs in our community."

The \$510,000 mortgage Marian Homes received from the Redevelopment and Housing Authority helped cover the cost of the Springfield house, while the organization says it is costing \$103,000 to remodel it. Marian Homes president Bill Crowder called it "a very workable model, from the county standpoint and our standpoint."

Crowder said Marian Homes is beginning to reach out to local corporations for assistance as well. "This is a community effort," he said, "not just one organization. This is something we got underway but there's more than enough space for you to get in and help."

To find out more about Marian Homes, visit [www.marianhomes.org](http://www.marianhomes.org).

## Finding Homes for Those Hard To Place

FROM PAGE 4

vices with Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services helps oversee the clinical organization of Northern Virginia Training Center, making sure the new community settings for transitioning residents meet their specific needs.

Adams says that of the 73 people still living at the center, down from 152 residents in 2012, more than half have already started a 12-week discharge process.

"It's a very thoughtful, specific process to ensure there is choice, that there's a good fit with the provider and they're able to offer specific supports for that unique individual," Adams said.

Since October 2011, the state agency has identified 106 community options for Northern Virginia Training Center residents. The options include using individualized Medicaid waivers to acquire services either at home, in a group home setting, or at another intermediate treatment facility.

The key is that residents, their parents and associates should have more choices about

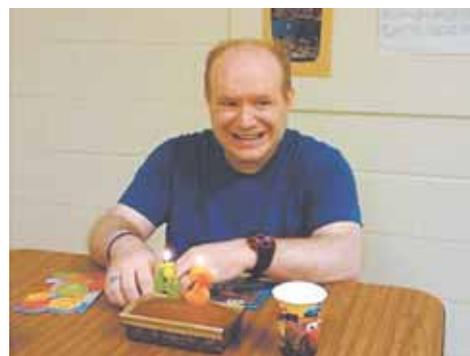


PHOTO COURTESY OF JUDITH KORF

**Judith Korf's son Adam Bertman celebrates his 43rd birthday in a Northern Virginia Training Center dining room, August 2014.**

how and where they live, ones that are integrated rather than segregated.

"While the training center model developed over time, it didn't necessarily keep up with the idea that health services have changed quite a bit," said Adams. "These are individuals, they're people, their spe-

cial issues are around the potential vulnerability and a whole bunch of different diagnostic items they embody. The challenge is working towards bringing people into the community, so it's no longer so foreign, due to lack of exposure."

Another challenge is the number of waivers; there's a waiting list, said Jean Hartman, assistant deputy director for the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board. "The need far exceeds the number of waivers by the General Assembly every year," said Hartman.

The Community Services Board runs an intake for people with intellectual or physical disabilities, then determines whether they have an urgent or non-urgent need for a waiver based on the acuity of their conditions.

"The waiver has made it possible for individuals to live and work with their friends and families in their home communities, and made those communities stronger and healthier as a result," Hartman said.

SEE PLACEMENT, PAGE 7

## Training Center Timeline

**April 1973:** Northern Virginia Training Center opens.

**1977:** Average residents numbered 230.

**1989:** Average residents numbered 263.

**1999:** Average residents numbered 185.

**June 1999:** In *Olmstead v. L.C.* ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court calls for public entities to provide community-based services for persons with disabilities.

**June 2011:** 157 residents

**2011:** Assistant U.S. Attorney General Thomas E. Perez notified then-governor Bob McDonnell that the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division investigated Virginia's training centers and concluded that Virginia "fails to provide services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs in violation of the ADA. ... The inadequacies we identified have resulted in the needless and prolonged institutionalization of, and other harms to, individuals with disabilities in CVTC and in other segregated training centers throughout the Commonwealth who could be served in the community."

**July 2012:** 152 residents.

**January 2012:** Settlement reached between Virginia and the U.S. Department of Justice regarding violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**June 2014:** Southside Virginia Training Center in Petersburg, Virginia, closes.

**March 2015:** Initial scheduled closing for NVTC. 73 current residents.

**March 2016:** Current scheduled closing for NVTC.



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES.

**The Northern Virginia Training Center spreads over 80 acres along Braddock Road, including facilities for administration, food service, programs, residences, a warehouse, transportation and therapy.**

# Finding Appropriate Placement

FROM PAGE 6

According to Hartman, in Fairfax County there are 450 people receiving services in the community through Medicaid waivers, from 30 providers in Fairfax County. However, 858 people are still on the “urgent” waiting list for waivers and 375 are on the non-urgent list.

Once you have a waiver, it’s a matter of matching up with the right provider and environment. For this, the Community Services Board, Northern Virginia Training Center staff and family or guardians collaborate to find the right fit.

“Those are hard times,” said Hartman. “It’s not an easy decision; they must be matched with folks who do have the capacity to serve them.”

**SOME FAMILIES** of residents of the Northern Virginia Training Center have viewed the closing as too hasty, that more time is needed to identify proper support providers. Several parents and guardians testified at the public hearing before the northern Virginia delegation headed to Richmond for the 2015 General Assembly session in January.

At the session state Sen. Stephen D Newman (R-23) introduced SB1300, which sought to extend the Northern Virginia Training Center closing until Dec. 31, 2016, prevent the land from being declared surplus once it’s closed and keep three of the remaining regional centers open. The bill, which was co-patroned by numerous Northern Virginia senators and delegates, only made it as far as the Finance Committee.

Reston resident Judith Korf, co-president of the Parents and Associates of Northern Virginia Training Center group, spoke at the hearing on behalf of her son Adam. Adam is 43 and diagnosed with autism and mild learning disability; he has severe behavioral issues and requires a high level of skilled supervision.

“The hardest ones to place are the ones that are left,” said Korf.

Chris McHugh is hopeful the process will be successful, but has seen his brother passed up for discharge from the center for more than two decades.

“His friends and peers, some would find appropriate group home placements,” said Chris McHugh. “They would go through his checklist of needs and Joe would never make the cut. He requires a bit more

in terms of therapy and care. A day at the bathroom with my brother is an adventure.”

However Adams remains confident all the residents will be able to find proper home and service combinations by the training center projected closing of March 2016.

**ONCE THE LAST RESIDENT** leaves, the Northern Virginia Training Center, the campus’ future is still uncertain. Dena Potter at the Virginia Department of General Services said the campus is currently in “the surplus property review process to make a decision on whether the property would be sold.” The state owns the land; several properties were purchased for the site from private owners while one was obtained under eminent domain.

Because the 1973 opening predates the county’s Zoning Ordinance of 1978, the underlying zoning for the property is R1, meaning new construction would be limited to one house per acre, without being subject to public hearings and a change to the comprehensive plan.

According to the Virginia Code, if the buildings or property are sold, the money must first be used to make sure the same level and variety of services offered at the training center are available for former residents.

Parents and associates of center residents were scheduled to meet with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services Commissioner Dr. Debra Ferguson at the end of March to learn more about the plan to close the training center.

“Theoretically, we’re all supposed to get at least three viable options to choose from and that just isn’t happening,” said Korf. Of around 40 parents and associates who attended the meeting, many, she said, were “very frustrated” with the provider options they’ve been sent to assess so far. “They’ve looked at everything there to look at and it just wasn’t panning out.”

In the mean time, Adams said the campus will continue to provide dental services, something more difficult to establish than a primary care provider.

Joe Rajnic, the NVTC acting facility director, was not available to comment for this story.

The Northern Virginia Training Center website is [www.nvtc.dmhmsas.virginia.gov](http://www.nvtc.dmhmsas.virginia.gov).

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# OPINION

## Family Matters

BY MEGAN BEYER

### COMMENTARY

It may never feel like a “good time” to have a colonoscopy. You might have already used the excuse that the preparation day before a colonoscopy is unpleasant and cuts into your busy schedule — and then you put it off another year. But momentary discomfort or inconvenience is a small price to pay for saving your life.

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of death from cancer in the United States. Only 40 percent of colorectal cancer cases are found in the early stages when it is most treatable. Consider the implications of not getting screened, or of a family member putting off screening until it is too late. If you are over 50 years old and of average risk, you should get screened for colorectal cancer. Those at higher risk may need to be screened earlier. And colorectal cancer, long thought of as a disease of older adults, has been rising in young adults — which makes it especially important for people of all ages to be aware of risk factors like tobacco use, obesity and heavy drinking, as well as family history.

March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. There is no need to be uncomfortable talking about colorectal cancer. Make this a conversation topic in your family and encourage them to speak with their health care professionals about getting screened. Nearly

everyone has lost a loved one to cancer, and colorectal cancer is a disease that takes too many lives each year. This year an estimated 132,700 people will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer. Worse, nearly 50,000 people will die from it. In 2014 about 136,830 people are predicted to be diagnosed with colorectal cancer in the United States, and about 50,310 people are predicted to die of the disease. Don't become a statistic. Start taking preventive steps today.

Determine your family history of cancer and talk with your health care professional about colorectal cancer screening options. Experts recommend both men and women over 50 of average risk get screened. A colonoscopy allows medical professionals to examine the entire colon and remove any polyps (pre-cancerous growths) before they ever become cancerous. When colon cancer is found early, it is more treatable, and the five-year survival rate is 90 percent. If you cannot or will not have a colonoscopy, there are a variety of other screenings available, such as a virtual colonoscopy, flexible sigmoidoscopy or double-contrast barium enema. Talk to your health professional about what is best for you.

Some people need to start screening earlier because they are at a higher risk of colon cancer — they have personal histories of colorectal

## Prevent colon cancer for self and loved ones.

cancer, pre-cancerous polyps or inflammatory bowel disease; family histories of colorectal cancer, polyps or a hereditary colorectal cancer syndrome; or have Type 2 diabetes. Colorectal cancer incidence and mortality rates are highest in African-American men and women; incidence is about 25 percent higher and mortality rates are about 50 percent higher than those in Caucasians.

Healthy living is a vital step to cancer prevention and can lower risk for colorectal cancer. Maintain a healthy weight and stay active by exercising regularly for 30 minutes at least five times a week. Eat a nutritious diet low in red and processed meats (such as bacon or sausage) and full of fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Do not smoke and only drink alcohol in moderation. Use these tips to live a healthier life today, and share this information with family and friends.

Colorectal cancer is treatable, especially if caught early. Talk with your family and loved ones about ways to reduce their colorectal cancer risk. Visit [www.preventcancer.org](http://www.preventcancer.org) for more information about cancer prevention and early detection.

*Megan Beyer is the wife of U.S. Rep. Donald S. Beyer Jr. (D-8) and is a member of Congressional Families Cancer Prevention Program of the Prevent Cancer Foundation. All statistics are provided by the American Cancer Society.*

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Turning Every Rock For Education Budget

To the Editor:

Fairfax County is cited as having an average household income that is one of the top ten of all the counties and cities in our nation. Yet the proposed budget for the county's fiscal year 2014 reads in part: “We cannot fund all our priorities and investments,” and “We have turned over every rock looking for increased savings opportunities.”

Clearly they have neglected turning over every rock looking for increased revenue opportunities,

and they should have. Increased revenues could be found by increasing the county's real estate tax rate, now at \$1.09 per \$100 of assessed value of properties. Each penny of increase in the tax rate would yield the county an additional \$22.6 million.

By leaving the county tax rate unchanged for another year, we are short-changing our public school students. The teachers for these students have starting salaries that are 3 percent lower than teachers in neighboring counties. This small gap, however, increases to 20.5 percent for teachers with a Masters degree in their tenth year. Difficult to retain the best teachers in these circumstances.

There is another opportunity to

be found under another rock in the projected 2014 budget, viz: The meals' tax assessed on meals in restaurants. A tax of a mere 4 pennies on the total dollar expended by a restaurant patron would yield some \$80,000 to the county's coffers. No one is hurt. Thus, it's politically safe.

In conclusion, it is certainly not too much to ask our community with the 10th highest average income in the US to be a leader of our country in caring for the education of our children. Retaining the best qualified teachers to inspire our children requires us to lead in the salaries for those teachers.

**Bob Simon**  
Reston

## Fatally Flawed Police Policy Review Commission

To the Editor:

The recently created Ad Hoc Police Review Commission is fatally flawed by the limitation to examine only policies, practices, and programs regarding the release of information on police-involved in-

cidents. Only when Fairfax County eliminates the conflict of interest between police and the Commonwealth Attorney who prosecutes criminal cases will the county have an effective way to examine police-involved incidents.

Public prosecutors must work closely with police to build criminal cases on evidence collected by the police. In cases where police officers themselves may have committed crimes, such as the recent shootings of unarmed citizens, it is beyond reason to expect that State attorneys will be able function independently of their close working relationship with the police department.

Fairfax County needs an independent prosecutor to handle cases of police-involved incidents involving citizens. The idea of a citizen review board to provide independent oversight of the police department also should be considered, as suggested by Jeff Stewart, a member of the review commission.

The Police Review Commissions must go beyond just police policies and procedures to examine structural changes in the relationship between the police department and the citizens of Fairfax County.

**Ralph Craft**  
Fairfax

## Mother's Day Photos

Mother's Day is May 10, 2015, and every year at this time, The Connection calls for submissions to our Mother's Day photo gallery. Send photos of mothers, grandmothers, great-grandmothers, with children or without children in the photos. Please name everyone in the photo, the approximate date, de-

scribe what is happening in the photo and include your name, address, email address and phone number. (We will not print your full address or contact information.) You can upload photos and information directly to our website at [www.connectionnewspapers.com/mothersday/](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/mothersday/) or email to [editors@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:editors@connectionnewspapers.com).

Vienna & Oakton  
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# Still Honoring Vets in Schools

Fairfax County Public Schools Board votes down calendar amendment to make Veterans Day a holiday.

BY TIM PETERSON  
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax Station resident Steven Hunt, retired U.S. Navy, put it bluntly: “Votes count, words don’t.” That was following a vote in which all but two members of the Fairfax County School Board voted against an amendment to the 2015-2016 calendar that would have made Veterans Day a school holiday.

Hunt and Steve Martinez of Fairfax, recently retired from the Air Force, spoke before the School Board in favor of the amendment at the board’s March 26 meeting.

“Our nation realizes veterans deserve recognition and has set aside a day specifically to do just that, the eleventh of November, always the eleventh,” Hunt said in his remarks. “This should not be just another school day.”

Martinez, who moved to Northern Virginia in 2010, said he was “shocked” that Fairfax County would be “contradicting state and federal law.”

The amendment, proposed by Springfield District representative Elizabeth Schultz, would have given students the day off on Nov. 11, as well as shifted a teacher work day from the end of the school year in June to the beginning in late August.

Shifting the schedule to accommodate these changes, Schultz said, would even out the number of days in each quarter in a year that starts unusually late due to how Labor Day falls.

“A 37-day first quarter, 53-day second quarter; that is as choppy and up and down as it gets,” said Schultz. “We could have 43, 47, 47, 43. That’s pretty stable in terms of grading, having a balanced calendar.”

But the more emotional case from Schultz came in asking why veterans weren’t honored with a day off from school the way Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr and presidents are.

“We don’t refuse to teach our children about Martin Luther King on Martin Luther King day because they’re not there on Martin Luther King day,” she said.

Martinez made the same point in his remarks, saying “It sends a very negative message to our students that it is not as important as other holidays, such as Columbus Day or Washington’s Birthday, and therefore should be corrected im-



**U.S. Navy retiree Steve Hunt of Fairfax Station (left) and U.S. Air Force retiree Steve Martinez (right) spoke at the March 26 Fairfax County School Board meeting in favor of making Nov. 11 a school holiday in honor of Veterans Day.**

mediately.”

But other board members argued students had plenty of opportunities to learn about and respect veterans in a structured way. They gave examples of schools around the county organizing large, well-attended celebrations and remembrances that both educated students on the meaning of Veterans Day and involved more military parents and other veterans that had the day off themselves.

“I’ve seen the power of this in the classroom,” said Mount Vernon representative Dan Storck. “I see and hear frequently from parents and students about what they’ve learned that day, the benefit they receive from having veterans come in there, how it makes it easier for them to do that.”

Others opposed to the amendment called it “impractical” to rearrange the calendar at this point and that the month of November is already fairly jagged in terms of days off school.

“It doesn’t work for attendance,” said Sully District representative Kathy Smith. “We need to have more continuity of instruction in November.” Braddock District representative Megan McLaughlin, who supported the amendment, wasn’t convinced from her stance. “Why do surrounding jurisdictions honor this federal and state holiday and we don’t?” she said. “Is it that we think we’re doing it better, the Fairfax way, that somehow

everyone else just doesn’t get it?”

Schultz reminded the board that the calendar had not been published, and though it was scheduled to be voted on at a meeting at the beginning of March that was canceled due to snow, it was “exactly” the time to make needed changes.

Steve Hunt agreed: “If it’s too far along,” he said, “then why are they here?”

Schultz’s amendment was ultimately voted down; the original calendar motion passed unanimously.

The Board also approved establishing a new Advanced Academic Program Center at Poplar Tree Elementary School. The aim is to relieve overcrowding at close by Greenbriar West Elementary School.

Beginning in September, the new center will include students from third and fourth grade. Rising fourth grade students who attend the Advanced Academic Program Center at Bull Run Elementary School, whose base school is Cub Run Elementary School, will be able to choose to stay at Bull Run or request a pupil transfer to Poplar Tree.

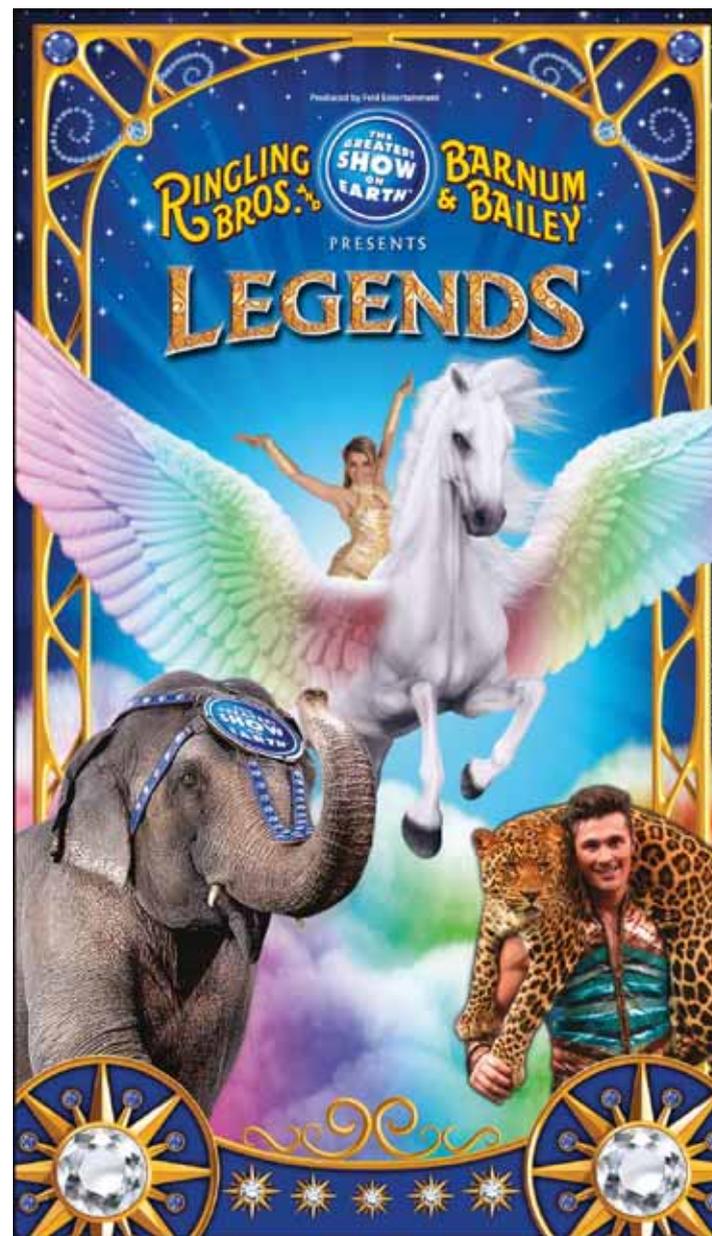
For more information on the new Advanced Academic Program Center at Poplar Tree, call the Fairfax County Public Schools Office of Communication and Community Relations at 571-423-1200.

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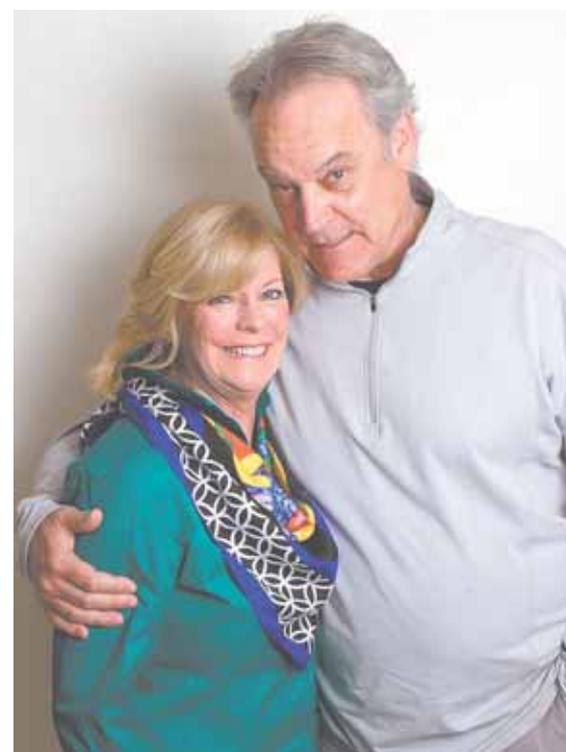
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## ENTERTAINMENT



Jeff McDermott and Kathy Ohlhaber.



Susan d. Garvey and Patrick David.

PHOTOS BY DAVID SEGAL PHOTOGRAPHY/COURTESY OF VIENNA THEATRE COMPANY

## Witty, Intriguing Play

Vienna Theatre Company to  
present "Other Desert Cities."

BY DAVID SIEGEL  
THE CONNECTION

**R**osemary Hartman, director of Vienna Theatre Company's next production described "Other Desert Cities" as "a play with plenty of political overtones in a world of power and influence, but driven by a complex family situation and a big secret."

"Other Desert Cities" is a drama-comedy that received multiple 2012 Tony Awards including Best Play. It was also a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. The play centers on the well-to-do, politically connected Wyeth family gathering together for Christmas. The play is set in 2004 after the Iraq War is underway.

"It is a strong play full of great material," said Hartman. Family life becomes a skirmish as long-simmering political and family differences appear. A possible tell-all memoir about the family opens deep wounds and plenty of verbal combat. Slowly, over the course of the play, family secrets and mysteries are revealed.

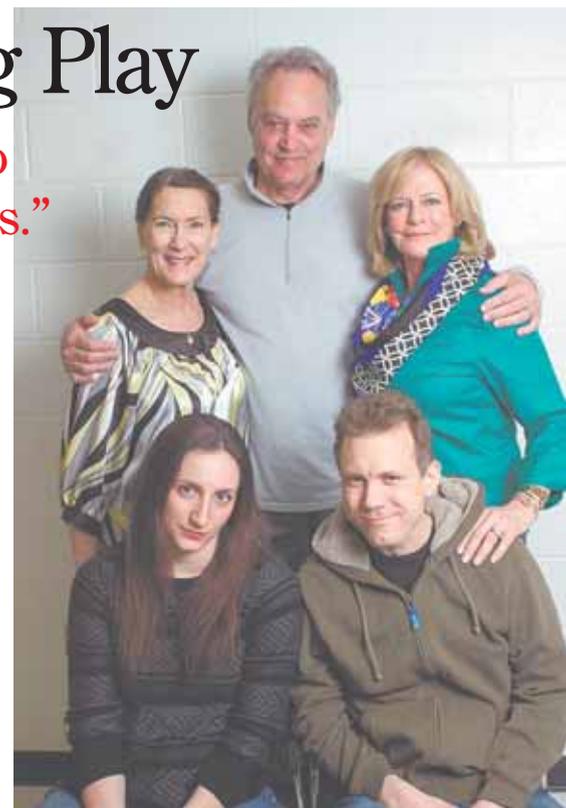
Through well-attended open auditions, Hartman sought for actors "who would work well together, could meld into an on-stage family and become thoroughly 'in synch' with each other."

To ensure that the Company's production of "Other Desert Cities" was in-line with the playwright's original intentions, Hartman even corresponded with John Robin Baltz, "receiving invaluable clarifications about some of his aims."

The five-member cast includes Patrick David (Falls Church), Susan D. Garvey (Reston), Jeff McDermott (Silver Spring), Kathy Ohlhaber (Reston) and Jessie Roberts (Great Falls). In an interview the cast as a whole described the play as one with sharp dialogue and plenty of humor. They saw themselves as an ensemble of actors who "clicked together into an on-stage family by listening closely to one another."

David described "Other Desert Cities" as a play with "great character development."

For Garvey the play is "timeless; showing the implications and effects of keeping family secrets too long."



From left, seated: Kathy Ohlhaber and Jeff McDermott, standing: Jessie Roberts, Patrick David, Susan d. Garvey.

### Where and When

Vienna Theatre Company presents "Other Desert Cities" at the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St. SE, Vienna. Performances from April 17-May 2, Fridays & Saturdays at 8 p. m. There will also be 2 p.m. matinees on Sunday, April 26 and May 3. Tickets are \$14. Call 703-255-6360 or visit [www.viennatheatrecompany.org](http://www.viennatheatrecompany.org)

According to Ohlhaber the play depicts "complex family relationships." For Roberts the production is one "with much emotional whiplash, but with honesty among the family."

Why should audiences come to see the "Other Desert Cities"? "It is a great play about family struggles, but with love and forgiveness. As the play concludes the audience will see the love the characters have for each other," said McDermott.

The cast also was in unison in agreement as Roberts added that a family should "be honest with each other."

"You are invited to be mesmerized by a top-notch cast and a great script," said Hartman.

**SPRINGFEST**

Saturday, April 4 10 a.m. - Noon

For ages 3-8. Take a Photo with the Bunny

EGG HUNT

Entertainment

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ARTS & CRAFTS

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# CALENDAR

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

## FRIDAY/APRIL 3

**Jam Session.** 7-9 p.m. 115 Pleasant St. NW, Vienna Acoustic musicians and fans are invited to join a jam session at the Vienna Art Center, playing acoustic instruments and singing in an environment featuring wood floors and surrounded by original art. Free and open to the public. 703-319-3971.

**Tom Paxton.** 8 p.m. The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Timeless folk icon. \$24-28. 703-255-1900.

## SATURDAY/APRIL 4

**Eggstravaganza in the Park.** 8-11:30 a.m. Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills, Great Falls. There will be a 5K, Tabatta, scavenger hunt for kids and a kids bootcamp. There will be lots of great raffles and prizes. All proceeds will go to support Katie Simmons Hickey 2015 Candidate for Woman of the Year for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/eggstravaganza-in-the-park-tickets-16075308681?aff=eac2> You can buy tickets there or at the gate, you can also see the schedule of events if you scroll down that page.

**Spring Fest.** 10 a.m. - Noon. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. Spring Fest is a special event that includes self-guided arts and crafts projects, an egg hunt, entertainment and the opportunity for children to get a professional photo with Bunny. In addition, The Amazing Kevin will perform his magic show. Admission is \$5 per person; infants to 36-month-olds will be admitted free of charge. Advance registration is required; walk-ins will not be admitted. To register, visit the Center's website, [www.mcleancenter.org](http://www.mcleancenter.org), and use Activity No. 4501.315. For more information, call the Center at 703-790-0123, TTY-711.

**Easter Egg Hunt at Nottoway Park.** Nottoway Park, 9537 Courthouse Road, Vienna. The Fairfax County Park Foundation and the Friends of Nottoway will host an Easter egg hunt on April 4. Visit with the Easter bunny and hunt for candy, toys and eggs filled with treats. Bring your own basket. Egg hunt start times: 10:30 a.m. (1-2 yrs.); 11 a.m. (3-4 yrs.); 11:30 a.m. (5-6 yrs.); 12 p.m. (7-9 yrs.). Walk-in registration starts 9:30 a.m. (\$9 per child—cash only). Call 703-324-8566 for information.

**BandHouse Gigs' Tribute to Steve Winwood & Traffic.** 7:30 p.m. The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Featuring Patty Reese, Eric Scott, Tommy Lepson and Brian Simms. The District's most talented artists recreate the powerful sound of legendary Rock and Roll Hall of Famer Steve Winwood and Traffic. \$25-27. 703-255-1900.

## MONDAY/APRIL 6

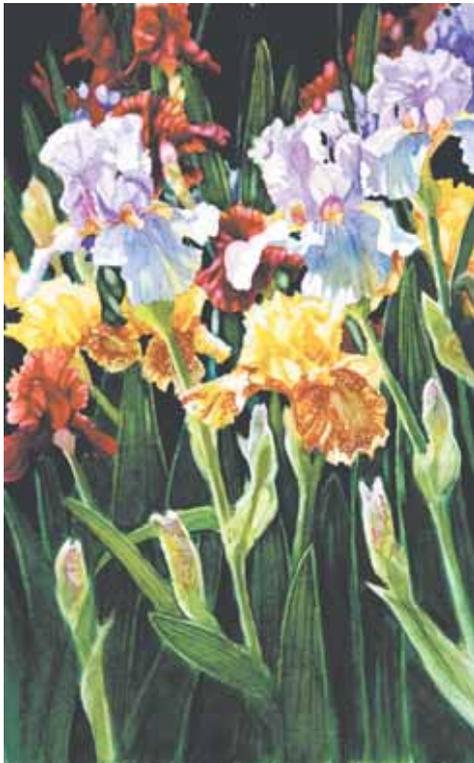
**Medieval Times.** Old Firehouse Teen Center, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. \$65/\$55 MCC district residents.

## THURSDAY/APRIL 9

**Jane Monheit.** 8 p.m. The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Watch the spirit of cabaret and the swagger of jazz, this talented



McLean Community Center will hold Spring Fest, a spring-themed event for young children, from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, April 4. Spring Fest is a special event that includes self-guided arts and crafts projects, an egg hunt, entertainment and the opportunity for children to get a professional photo with Bunny. In addition, The Amazing Kevin will perform his magic show.



Members of the Vienna Arts Society present their annual spring show, judged by Brenda Barthell. Meet the artists at the awards reception, Saturday, April 11, 4-6 p.m. Vienna Art Center, 115 Pleasant St. NW, Vienna.

songstress takes audiences on journeys from Brazil to Beatles-era Britain. \$30-35. 703-255-1900.

**Artist's Demonstration.** 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Vienna Art Center, 115 Pleasant St. NW, Vienna. Acrylic landscape artist Bryan Jernigan will show how he goes from sketch to a finished abstracted landscape painting in an easy-to-follow, step-by-step process by applying paint in free and creative ways.

## FRIDAY/APRIL 10

**Poulenc Trio.** 8 p.m. The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. This intriguing oboe, bassoon and piano trio performs a virtuosic evening of French music. \$35. 703-255-1900.

## SATURDAY/APRIL 11

**Spring's Sprung.** Tuesdays - Saturdays, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. April 7 - May 2. Vienna Art Center, 115 Pleasant St. NW, Vienna. Members of the Vienna Arts Society present their annual spring show, judged by Brenda Barthell. Meet the artists at

the awards reception, Saturday, April 11, 4-6 p.m. Free and open to the public. 703-319-3971.

**Spring Cookout and Watoto Choir.** 4:30 p.m. Providence Baptist Church, 8980 Brook Road, McLean. Comprised of orphan children from Uganda, this exciting group will be back at Providence with their energetic, joyful brand of praise and worship. Come at 4:30 p.m. to mingle with friends and neighbors at the Spring Cookout. Stay for the concert at 6 p.m. A love offering will be received at the end of the concert.

## FRIDAY/APRIL 17

**Pilobolus.** 8 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. Award-winning, internationally recognized Pilobolus Dance Company will perform innovative, energetic and gravity-defying works. Acclaimed for its mix of humor, invention and drama and for the quickness and athleticism of its dancers, the company continually breaks down barriers and challenges the way people think about dance. Tickets are \$50 for the general public and \$40 for McLean tax district residents.

**"Other Desert Cities."** 8 p.m. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St. SE, Vienna. "Other Desert Cities" tells the story of the fictional Wyeth family — a clan led at the top by a mother and father highly regarded in old Hollywood circles and admired by Republicans for their service to and friendship with the Reagans in their heyday. The play explores the dark family secrets that threaten to destroy external and internal perceptions about the life the family members lead.

**Eileen Ivers.** 8 p.m. The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. This virtuoso's award-winning skill and Irish-inspired playing prove she is "the Jimi Hendrix of the violin," according to The New York Times. \$27-30. 703-255-1900.

## SATURDAY/APRIL 18

**Model Trains and Thomas at Open House.** 1-5 p.m. Historic Vienna Train Station, 231 Dominion Road NE, Vienna. See and hear model trolleys and steam and diesel trains plus Thomas and some of his friends. The layout reflects the mountainous terrain and towns of Western North Carolina with award winning structures. Free admission. 703-938-5157. [www.nvmr.org](http://www.nvmr.org).



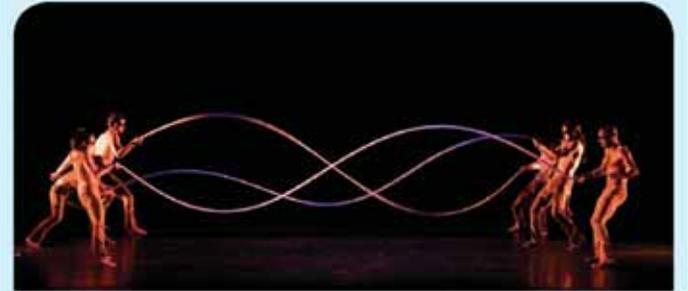
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## Here's What's Happening at MCC

### Spring Fest

Saturday, April 4, 10 a.m.-noon  
\$5 per person; children 36 months or younger are free.



### Dance Company @ The Alden Pilobolus

Friday, April 17, 8 p.m.  
\$50/\$40 MCC district residents

### McLean Spring Community Garage Sale

Saturday, April 18, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.  
Free admission

### "Call Me William" The Life and Loves of Willa Cather

Sunday, April 19, 2 p.m.  
\$20/\$15 MCC district residents

### Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Trip Fabulous Floral

Tuesday, April 21  
\$130 per person/\$125 MCC district residents

### Raymond Griffith in "Hands Up"

Wednesday, April 22, 7:30 p.m.  
\$12/\$8 MCC district residents

### @ Old Firehouse Teen Center The Unruly Theatre Project

Friday, April 24, 7-9 p.m.  
Free admission

### "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" and Other Eric Carle Favourites

Saturday, April 25, 2 p.m.  
\$15/\$10 MCC district residents

The McLean Community Center  
[www.mcleancenter.org](http://www.mcleancenter.org)  
Home of the Alden Theatre  
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# SPORTS



Marshall junior right-hander Steven Johel tossed five shutout innings against Paul VI on March 28.



Marshall senior Will Brooke will play baseball at Coastal Carolina University.

## Marshall Coach Tarr Pleased with Pitching Performances

Statesmen competitive against perennial powers Madison, PVI.

BY JON ROETMAN  
THE CONNECTION

The Marshall baseball team had just suffered its second narrow defeat in a week against a top-flight opponent when head coach Aaron Tarr met with a reporter behind the third-base dugout at Waters Field in Vienna.

The Statesmen battled Paul VI with temperatures in the 30s on Saturday night. Marshall had the potential go-ahead run thrown out at home plate in the top of the seventh inning before surrendering the game-winning run in the bottom half via bases-loaded walk.

The Statesmen missed an opportunity to upset a private school program that routinely competes for championships. Tarr, however, wasn't bitter. On the contrary, the third-year Marshall head coach voiced pleasure in the realization that the defending Conference 13 champion Statesmen have the pitching necessary to make another deep postseason run.

Paul VI defeated Marshall 1-0 on March 28, dropping the Statesmen's record to 0-2. While Marshall struggled to generate offense, the performance of starting pitcher Steven Johel was a bright spot for the Statesmen.

Johel tossed five shutout innings, allowing just two hits. The junior right-hander walked one, struck out one and hit two batters.

**JOHEL'S PERFORMANCE** came four days after Marshall senior Will Brooke, who will play for Coastal Carolina University, pitched in the opener against perennial power Madison, keeping the Statesmen competitive before losing, 4-2.



Marshall catcher Mitch Blackstone, a 2014 all-state selection, is a four-year varsity starter.

"I take away [from Saturday's game] that Steven Johel, our pitcher, did a flippin' awesome job," Tarr said. "The reality is that in order for us to advance as far as we want, you've got to have two or three guys that you can trust. The way that Will showed that he could throw on Tuesday against Madison, and then Steven showed that he could throw today — against those two opponents in particular — gives us a lot of confidence in our pitching staff going forward."

What makes Brooke and Johel quality pitchers?

"Will's strength is he throws hard," said Tarr, adding that Brooke throws in the mid-to-upper 80s with a good curveball and change-up. "... He has stuff that can dominate people. Steven's a little bit different than that, where he's more of a high pitch-execution guy. It's not that he doesn't throw hard — he can get into the 84, 85 range, just not as hard as Will — but he throws stuff with heavy sink and run. Guys pound the ball into the ground; they don't get the barrel [on the ball] very much."

**"Most [teams] only really have their one ace who goes out there and you know he can get a win. I'm happy to say that we have two."**

— Marshall catcher Mitch Blackstone

Handling the Marshall pitching staff is senior catcher Mitch Blackstone, a four-year varsity starter and 2014 all-state selection.

"Most [teams] only really have their one ace who goes out there and you know he can get a win," Blackstone said. "I'm happy to say that we have two. Steven has definitely come a long way. He looked really solid today, absolutely great start. Will, he's always good and when he's on, he's virtually untouchable."

Along with being a leader behind the

plate, Blackstone, who will play baseball at Cornell University, is one of the top sluggers in the area.

"It's very hard because you can kind of look at his career and say, let's get another .500 [average] and another five [or] six home runs, or more than that," Tarr said. "He's capable of lord knows how much — [in batting practice], he looks ridiculous. I try to temper the expectations on that because it can be dangerous for him to play that numbers game. Our expectations are for him to lead the way he always has been and to scare other people, which he does, and try not to put actual numbers on stuff."

Marshall sophomore shortstop Robert Guenther had a double against PVI, and seniors Shane Russell and Mark Leduc, and sophomore Casey Lauer each had a single.

The Statesmen are looking to improve on playoff runs from each of the last two seasons. In 2013, Marshall started 0-7 and entered the postseason with a 6-13 record but managed to reach the AAA Northern Region semifinals, falling one victory shy of a state berth.

In 2014, Marshall won the Conference 13 championship and reached the 5A North region semifinals, again falling one win short of states.

Tarr said the Statesmen want to take the next step.

"We just want that last little bit," he said about qualifying for states. "We would take that over winning another conference championship."

**AFTER SPRING BREAK**, Marshall will host Langley at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 7.

"The fact that we're competing against teams like PVI and Madison, the fact that we're holding them close, playing them well, battling back ... it shows me that this program has come a long way from three years ago when I was a freshman and we played Madison, went over to their place, and the game was over after the second inning," Blackstone said. "I'm really excited about this team."

# SPORTS

## Oakton Baseball Improves to 3-0

Members of the Oakton, left, and Lake Braddock baseball teams race to the first-base bag during Monday's game at Lake Braddock Secondary School. Oakton won, 7-5, improving its record to 3-0.



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL THE CONNECTION



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Katie Sciandra and the Madison girls' lacrosse team beat South Lakes 13-6 on March 26.

## Madison Girls' Lacrosse Beats South Lakes

Despite a slow start hampered by severe downpours, the Madison girls' lacrosse team beat South Lakes at home on March 26, 13-6.

South Lakes scored two quick goals in the first half to lead the Warhawks.

Head coach Amanda Counts called a timeout and the Warhawks responded with ball control and goals.

Kierra Sweeney and Katie Sciandra led Madison with four goals apiece. Maddie Roberts contributed three goals and three assists.

Rounding out the scoring was Anya Saponja and Andie Battin each with a goal. Sigourney Heerink was once again strong in goal for Madison with 15 saves.

Midfielder Megan Greatorex and goalie Caitlyn Maginniss stood out for South Lakes. Greatorex scored two goals while Maginniss stopped 13 shots.

Next up for the Madison Warhawks (2-0) is an away game against the Centreville Wildcats on Friday, April 10 at 7:30 p.m.

South Lakes (2-1) will host Herndon at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 9.

## Madison Boys' Tennis Beats Fairfax

The Madison boys' tennis team defeated Fairfax 9-0 on March 25 at Madison. The Warhawks had several new players in the lineup, in an effort to give them experience in official matches. Madison sophomore No. 1 Luke Sablik (10-2); senior No. 2 Alex Dondershine (10-1); senior No. 3 Dylan Miks (10-0); junior No. 4 Connor Smith (10-0); sophomore No. 5 Connor

Williams (10-2); and freshman No. 6 Aryan Ossareh (10-1) each won their respective singles matches. In doubles, the Warhawk duos of sophomore Ravi Suresh and senior Mark Fertal (No. 1, 10-3); senior Chris Liu and sophomore Clark Bowden (No. 2, 10-2); and freshman Ben Liu and sophomore Ashutosh Ukey (No. 3, 10-4) each won doubles matches.




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Peter Chang One LLC trading as Peter Chang, 2503 N. Harrison St, Ste E, Arlington, VA 22207. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL(ABC) for a Wine and Beer Restaurant on Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Wenqiang Huang, Manager  
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**OBITUARY**



**Dougherty, Margaret Alicenea, 70**, passed away peacefully in the presence of her family on Thursday, March 19, 2015 at Norton Brownsboro Hospital in Louisville, Kentucky after a long battle with breast cancer. She was born August 15, 1944 in Hot Springs, Virginia. She was the only child of Frances (Pritchard) and Clarence Hudson. Mrs. Dougherty attended George Mason Elementary School and graduated from F.C. Hammond High School in 1962 in Alexandria, Virginia. She attended James Madison University in 1963 and graduated from George Washington University in 1966 with a degree in French and Education. She received her M.A. in Special Education from George Washington University in 1975. Mrs. Dougherty worked for many years in preschool special education within the Fairfax County Public School system in Virginia. One of her proudest professional achievements was to obtain a grant to build a playground at Timber Lane Elementary School in Falls Church, Virginia. In 1966, she married William Dougherty. Mrs. Dougherty was a member of St. Mary Episcopal Church in Arlington, Virginia and enjoyed serving on the Altar Guild. After residing in Northern Virginia for 50 years, Margaret and Bill Dougherty moved to Louisville, Kentucky in 2004 to join their daughter Christine and her son-in-law Dr. John Wo. Margaret showered her grandchildren Katelyn and David Wo with her unconditional love. Mrs. Dougherty participated in volunteering activities at Sacred Heart Model School, where her grandchildren attend. In 2009, she received a Doctorate of Special Education from George Washington University, with her dissertation on, "Identification of Needs Reported by Grandparents of the Grandchildren with Disabilities from Birth to Twenty-one Years in Commonwealth of Kentucky." She was appointed an Adjunct Professor at George Washington University's Department of Special Education. Margaret Dougherty is survived by her spouse William Dougherty, daughter Christine Wo, and grandchildren Katelyn and David. She was a gentle woman who cared more about others than herself. She was a supportive and loving spouse for her husband of 49 years. She was an inspiration to her daughter Christine, who will miss dearly her gentle loving Mom. She was a pillar of strength for her son-in-law, who will miss her acceptance and love for the past 25 years. She was the dearest grandma for her 12-year old granddaughter Katelyn, who will miss the love of literature and reading that binds them forever. She was the best, "grandma in the world" for her 10 year-old grandson David, who will miss the Lego sets hidden in the house for him to find. Survivors also include her Aunt Jeanne Pritchard, cousins Mary Haddock, Patty Kelly, Kathy Miller, Vicki Haley, Terri Henrickson, Anne Acuff, John Pritchard, Chad Pritchard, and her dear friends Janet Deatherage, Claire Booth, Bonnie Franklin, Mary Steed Ewell, Brenda Kimmel, Florence Gootenberg, Marlene Pollock, who's son Jason influenced Margaret toward a career in Special Education. Margaret will also be greatly missed by her extended family of in-laws, nieces and nephews. Margaret Dougherty loved the visit to Hong Kong and China with her family and even climbed the Great Wall. She was concerned about social injustice and spent a career in preschool special education for children with disabilities. She never boasted about her intellect and completed a doctorate degree just because she wanted to. She will be remembered by her kindness and unselfishness to her family and everyone she encountered. The family requests donations to be made to the National Association for Down Syndrome (NADS) or the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS). A memorial service and interment of ashes will be held at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Arlington, Virginia at a later date.

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Alexandra Lujan's second grade class at Westbriar Elementary School in Vienna learn about the businesses in the community during Junior Achievement of Greater Washington's "JA in a Day" program. From left, Ariana, Sophia, Abdullah and Jay create a new doughnut flavor to attract customers to their shop.



PHOTOS BY ABIGAIL CONSTANTINO/THE CONNECTION

Westbriar Elementary School second grader Jay listens to Abdullah's heartbeat using his grandfather's stethoscope. Jay, who wants to be a doctor when he grows up, and Abdullah, who wants to be a soccer player, participate in "JA in a Day" on Friday, March 27 in Vienna.

## Vienna Children Learn about Micro and Macro Economies

### Westbriar Elementary School children learn about financial literacy.

BY ABIGAIL CONSTANTINO  
THE CONNECTION

Students in Future Business Leaders of America spent the day teaching Westbriar Elementary School students in Vienna about financial literacy during "JA in a Day." Junior Achievement of Greater Washington partnered with FBLA in Marshall High School in Falls Church to bring the program to the elementary school children. Both groups of students were encouraged to dress up in the professions they want to pursue.

While the younger children donned lab coats, soccer kits and stethoscopes, the high school students wore name tags with labels such as pediatrician, financial planner, and Ambassador to Russia.

Junior Anya Karaman said that the program inspires younger students by modeling behavior. "They get a semblance of an idea of what they want to be when they grow up," she said.

"Elementary school kids can see them-

selves in the high school students," said Caitlin Hennessy, education manager at Junior Achievement of Greater Washington.

In Michael Hunt's fourth grade class, senior Twinkle Gera taught about characteristics and traits of entrepreneurs and inventors. She and other FBLA members trained for weeks on how to teach the grade-specific content, manage the classroom and engage the students using materials in kits provided by Junior Achievement.

The course is tailored for each grade—from a storybook lesson for kindergartners to the global marketplace for sixth graders.

In Alexandra Lujan's second grade class, Marshall High School students Sean Hoffmann and Mpesa Kapinka focused on the community and its businesses and workers. The second graders were given professions in the community and were also tasked with working at the local doughnut shop. Working in groups, they learn about cooperation and production.

Later on in the activity, the class will learn how much it takes for individuals and busi-



Westbriar Elementary second grader Sophia creates a new doughnut flavor to attract customers played by her toy Slick, as classmate Ariana looks on. Both girls want to be veterinarians when they grow up.



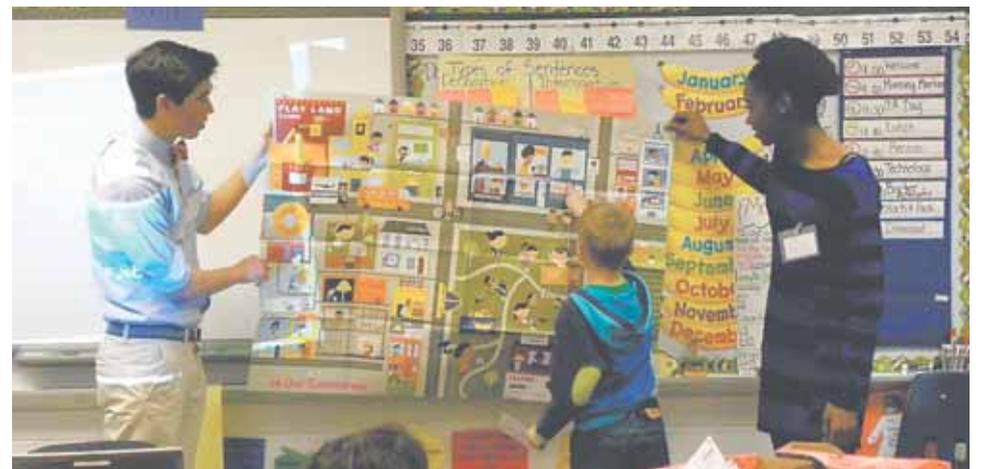
Marshall High School students Jishnu Purihella, Alek Langford and Patrick McCabe wear name tags identifying the profession they want to pursue—an approach to model behavior and inspire the students at Westbriar Elementary School in Vienna.

nesses to maintain a community. "None of the professions handed out include government jobs. When the doughnut shop catches

on fire, they will learn about taxes," said Hennessy. "It's really hard to get them to pay taxes."



Second grader Annika invents a birthday cake, ice cream-filled doughnut during "JA in a Day," where second graders learn how local businesses operate in the community.



George Marshall High School students Sean Hoffmann and Mpesa Kapinka teach Alexandra Lujan's second grade class at Westbriar Elementary School in Vienna about the community during Junior Achievement of Greater Washington's "JA in a Day" on Friday, March 27.

# Senior Living

SPRING 2015



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## Senior Living

# Fit for the Golden Years

Fitness programs for seniors are part of a trend.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

One night each week, Sue Thompson can be found dribbling a basketball down the court, leading her team, the Nova United, to victory. Thompson, who is in her 60s, is one of the youngest players in her league, the National Senior Women's Basketball Association.

"There are women who play with me who are 80 and living out their dream to play basketball. We were way before Title IX," said Thompson, who is also a professor of physical education at Northern Virginia Community College in Annandale and Alexandria, Va. "The women are fit, but with seniors, the social part is really important. Some of the ladies have been widowed or have spouses with health issues. They've really been a support group for each other."

According to the American College of Sports Medicine, Thompson is part of a national fitness trend: fitness programs for older adults, including strength training and team sports. Fitness programs for the now-

retired and retiring baby boom generation are increasing in popularity.

New research continues to show the benefits of exercise, aerobic and strength training, range from delayed cognitive decline and a boost in social functioning to an ability to manage chronic diseases and even turn back time.

"There are a lot of benefits for the aging population," said Lisa M.K. Chin, an assistant research professor at George Mason University's Department of Rehabilitation Science in Fairfax, Va. Exercise "slows physiological changes that come with aging. ... The other thing that exercise manages is chronic diseases that come with aging, such as cardiovascular problems or diabetes."

Mark Brasler, a 69-year-old who lives in Springfield, Va., has been active for most of the past 20 years. He moved into a retirement community four months ago and got a fitness assessment in the property's gym. The results led him to up his fitness game.

"I still walk every morning and do weights and resistance machines every other day," said Brasler. "I was also told that I needed to take balance class. We focus on agility, how to stand up straight and how to get up when you fall. We also do stretching, yoga and Pilates. I feel more confident about myself."

Such fitness classes can help preserve mobility and cognitive function, say re-



**Women of the Nova United, part of the National Senior Women's Basketball Association get exercise with a team sport. They are part of a new fitness trend.**

searchers. "It helps in terms of preserving bone mass and maintaining mobility longer," said Chin. "If you're using your muscles, especially during weight-bearing exercises, ultimately it reduces the risk of falling and improves balance."

An exercise class that includes both aerobic, strength and balance exercises can help preserve freedom and independence for seniors. "The key components of staying physically active are having strong muscles, reasonable flexibility and endurance, such as the ability to keep walking or doing an

activity and not getting tired and fatigued right away," said Rita Wong, professor of physical therapy and associate dean of graduate and professional studies at Marymount University in Arlington. "It's essential to keep oneself mobile and active."

It's almost never too late to increase fitness levels, Wong said. "Often with older adults, people think that they can't improve anymore so why bother. But research has shown time and time again that older adults have an ability to improve that is as similar as young adults'."

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# Senior Living

## 'Your Life Is Today and Tomorrow'

Residents of local senior living communities share their experiences.

BY ANDREA WORKER  
THE CONNECTION

“I didn’t want to come here,” said Bill Woessner, referring to Brightview Assisted Living Community in Great Falls.

“That’s right,” agreed Sheila, his wife of more than 50 years, with plenty of her native Scottish brogue to be heard in her voice. “He really didn’t. We have a lovely house here in Great Falls and I don’t think he was ready to budge. But how long after we got here did that change?” she turned to her husband and asked.

“At least a day,” he laughingly replied. “Seriously,” said Bill Woessner, “it probably wasn’t more than the first 48 hours.”

What changed his mind, especially after what many would call a major life-up-heaval?

“The food!” was his answer. “We have



PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

Always ready for a few hijinks around Brightview Assisted Living Community in Great Falls are L-R: Sheila Woessner, Porta Nickles, Sophia Coulopoulos, Bill Woessner, and director of Community Sales, Joanna Banks.

gourmet food at every meal, served by the nicest people in the most beautiful surroundings, and we never have to cook it or clean up afterwards.”

According to Sheila, while the food really is that good, what probably impacted her husband’s initial attitude was “the amazing staff, the friendly and interesting residents, and the freedom. Of course, we’re retired, so we’re not bound to the responsibilities of work.” But neither are the Woessners bound to home maintenance concerns, housekeeping, cooking and cleaning.

Or “shoveling snow, like we would have been doing last month if we weren’t right here,” gloated Bill. “We have the time to do what we like, to try new things and meet new people, without that worry.”

Bill and Sheila Woessner chatted about their experiences as residents in a senior living community with friends and fellow residents Porta Nickles and Sophia Coulopoulos, over lunch in the Brightview dining room.

Porta Nickles, who is 99, admitted to a bit of a sweet tooth. “My father owned a candy and ice cream shop in upstate New York,” she said, recommending the homemade coffee ice cream for dessert.

The ice cream is made using the recipe of the area’s beloved Thelma Feighery. Brightview is built on the site of Thelma’s Ice Cream, once the hotspot for local gathering in Great Falls. Thelma and her husband Frank

started with a gas station on the site in 1950. Thelma took over and served her own recipe ice creams and other goodies after Frank’s death in 1988, until her own in 2001.

Long-time Great Falls resident Sheila Woessner said she used to go to Thelma’s “just to catch up on all the local doings” even though she’s not one for sweet treats. “I think Thelma would be pleased. Not only do we have our own “Thelma’s” on site and make ice cream to her specifications, but it’s still the place for us to gather and keep up with what’s going on.”

Porta Nickles came to Brightview after living the last 70 years in Middletown, N.Y., where she helped run the family’s Coney Island hot dog franchise, and later went on to enjoy a career in education with the local school district. Having lived somewhere that long, it’s understandable that the move took some adjusting to, but Nickles found herself comfortable and more than content in short order. “I was lonely there,” she said. “And I didn’t even know how lonely until I got here, starting making new friends, finding out there were so many things I could still do and learn and enjoy. And now I get to see my kids, grandkids and great-grand kids.”

“And so do we all,” added Bill Woessner. The youngsters in Porta’s extended family (many of whom live close by) are favorites at family related social events held at Brightview, holidays, birthdays, and some “just because” occasions. Having family nearby, the visits, and having opportunities designed to promote interaction with different age groups, all help make Brightview

a home environment in the estimation of this group of residents.

The Brightview Great Falls location has only been open since September of last year. Sophia Coulopoulos, who had lived for several years in the Maryland suburbs around the District, actually came here from another area community, where she lived with her ill husband until his death. Speaking of him caused a quick smile, but also brought a hint of tears. Porta on her one side and Brightview Community Sales Director Joanna Banks seated on her other side, were immediately offering hugs, pats and encouragement.

“Get involved and take advantage of your time,” was Sheila Woessner’s advice for new

SEE ‘YOUR LIFE.’ PAGE 4



With Dale Jarrett on the piano performing some of the residents’ favorites, Garrey Stinson, owner of Dancing With Garrey, Therapeutic Ballroom Dancing for Seniors, brings a smile to Sophia Coulopoulos.

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Senior Living

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# Your Life Is Today and Tomorrow

FROM PAGE 3

residents.

Sheila Woessner has always been a game player “and she knows the words to every song going,” Porta Nickles said in admiration.

During her days with the British Information Services in New York City with Bill, Sheila Woessner took home some hefty prize money by playing on the televised “Name that Tune” game show, money that she used to finance their wedding. The couple even appeared on Johnny Carson’s “Who Do You Trust?” game show. Nowadays, Sheila uses her ability to help out at the community’s sing-a-longs.

Many activities are organized and facilitated by Brightview’s Vibrant Living Director, Josh Graf.

Bingo is Sophia’s favorite. She’s been pretty lucky, winning often enough to splurge with her earned Brightview “bucks” at the monthly “gift shop” where you never know what interesting items might be on offer.

Brightview Great Falls is part of Baltimore-based Brightview Senior Living, LLC with a number of communities in Virginia, Maryland and beyond. Brightview Great Falls offers independent living, assisted living, and accommodations for residents with Alzheimer’s and memory impairment. The community also offers outdoor space with unspoiled views and a Natural Wildlife Habitat accreditation.

Transitioning to senior community living is not always as easy as the lunch lunch at Brightview experienced. Sometimes the move starts with heartache or circumstances that speed up what should be a more lengthy and considered process. That was certainly the case for both Jim Draper and Rachel Garbee,

residents at The Hermitage in Alexandria.

Draper was a pastor for many years in the southern portions of the Commonwealth. He and his wife of 53 years were actually engaged in ministerial duties when she fell and hit her head. “It was a simple fall outside a Wendy’s, could happen to anyone.” Two weeks later, Draper was a widower. He continued on, but experienced several medical episodes associated with his own health issues. Eventually, the decision was made for him to move to Northern Virginia, close to family. “It’s been hard,” he admits. I really had my heart set on a retirement place near Richmond. And I miss my wife so much.” To make the transition more difficult, because of his medical condition, Draper can no longer drive. “That’s a real blow,” he said.

Rachel Garbee was living in North Carolina and “doing pretty good.” Then one night her furnace exploded. Living alone, she had no one with her to handle the situation. “It was very scary. I didn’t really know what had happened, couldn’t figure out how to turn off the alarms. I went to my neighbors for help and that’s when we found out about the furnace.” Luckily, Rachel Garbee and her home survived the experience, but when her son received the call in the middle of the night, “I was packed up pretty quickly and here I am.”

Both Jim Draper and Rachel Garbee have taken some time to adjust, but things are getting better with the help of staff like Lynette Mitchell, The Hermitage director of marketing and outreach. “She’s a special lady,” said Draper, “really made for the job.” Other residents have also helped Jim, Rachel, and others settle in to this new phase of their lives.

Gladys Laclède knows what it’s like to be a “newbie” from out of state. Moving here to be closer to her sons, she offers support and assistance where she can.

Peg Bixler remembers when Jim Draper



PHOTOS BY ANDREA WÖRKER/THE CONNECTION

**In the lounge at The Woodlands Retirement Community in Fairfax, Col. James McAllan (US Army-Ret) with Riley on his lap and Linda McAllan offered up some thoughts on their senior community living experience. The McAllans were celebrating their Woodlands one-year anniversary that day.**

first arrived. “I remember when we met in the elevator,” she told him. “I could tell it was hard.” She recalls telling him to just “Wait a bit. It does get easier.”

Of course, by the description of her daily activities, it sounds like Peg Bixler doesn’t have much time for waiting. A former nurse, she volunteers at the Kennedy Center, with the Wounded Warrior and Honor Flight projects, and more. She also fits in some serious walking to keep fit and limber, as well as activities offered at The Hermitage and visits with her daughter who lives in the area. Peg is grateful that she is still in good health and still able to be “a fairly quick walker.”

She tilts her head at friend Bea Larson, who is laughing that Peg “nearly finished me off” when she took Bea for their first few walks together.

Rachel Garbee also walks, but mostly sticks to Hermitage hallway strolls, often in the evenings after dinner. “It’s quiet then, and where else could I take a walk in my pajamas, bathrobe and slippers?”

The Hermitage offers its residents a number of activities and amenities, although Peg, Bea and Gladys think that more people should take advantage of what’s on offer. Gladys Laclède was on the community’s activities committee and they were always on the lookout for something new and fun to get the residents involved.

Peg Bixler offered advice to those who might have such a move coming in the future. “Get rid of a lot of stuff as soon as you can. Don’t wait. And do what you can to make it easier on your kids.” Bixler thought she had done a good job of downsizing before the move, but still found herself “with a lot of stuff I just don’t need.”

Rachel Garbee encourages other “newbies” to not be afraid to ask questions or ask for help, especially if your move to senior community living is an abrupt one like hers.

“All of my questions and concerns have been met with nothing but genuine care and helpfulness here.”

“Be open,” is what Gladys Laclède advises. Pastor Jim Draper, who has started using more of his time to help others in need around the community, thinks just speaking to everybody and actively looking for friendship is key to making the most of this next life chapter.

Bea Larson certainly hasn’t lost her sense of humor with her new living arrangements. “My advice,” she said, “is don’t be hard of

hearing!”

Col. James McAllan (U.S. Army Ret.) and his wife Linda, who retired from an administrative career with the IRS, started their research on retirement living options six years ago. As you would expect from a military intelligence officer (Army, Civil Defense/FEMA) and a woman who made order and efficiency part of her life’s work, these two had a plan and a checklist of requirements. While living in Falls Church, they visited dozens of communities over the years.

“We didn’t want one of the really big places,” said Col. McAllan. “We were looking for someplace with a diverse population and where we could comfortably remain, even if our health circumstances changed.” The couple also decided they would prefer a community that was locally owned, and better still, locally managed. Their extensive research and personal inspections eventually took them to The Woodlands Retirement Community in Fairfax. “It checked all the boxes.”

The community is, in fact, locally founded and operated by the Bainum family. The size fits for the McAllans, as well, with only 102 units. The Woodlands is also what is known as a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC), meaning that residents can avail of a lifetime range of care, from the independent living that the McAllans now

enjoy, to more assisted living through to advanced nursing care without having to uproot and move to a completely new community.

The McAllans hadn’t planned to move in when they did. “My knees really made that decision for us,” said James. But once they decided, they found that only one apartment was currently available. Not wanting to risk a long encampment on the waiting list, they went ahead and closed the deal on their two bedroom, 2.5 bath apartment with separate kitchen, dining room and den. Their daughter, who lives just minutes away, told them it was “all meant to be.” And the icing on the cake was that The Woodlands would accept the other member of the immediate family, 4-year-old shih tzu Riley, who has been dubbed “The Mayor” by many of the other residents. Riley is not particularly fond of the only other four-legged community dweller, but he adores visiting – and being properly fussed over by – residents, staff, and visitors.

“Coming down to the lobby is his favorite activity,” said Linda. “I think he fakes some of his requests for his outside needs,” she added, “since half the time when we get down here he suddenly finds plenty of time to check out whoever is around.”

The Woodlands offers physical and entertainment activities, including an indoor heated pool and a well-equipped exercise room, but Linda noted that the variety of groups, clubs, lectures and discussions available.

“We’ve had the first Ambassador to Israel as a speaker, a violinist who spent 40 years with the Washington Opera orchestra, a retired opera singer, and so many more, in addition to book clubs, poetry clubs, gardening,” Linda McAllan said. A presentation by the authors of “Worry Free Retirement Living” was on the March schedule, and “Aging Well: Aging is Not a Spectator Sport” is on the April agenda. The McAllans also like that co-founder and manager Kevin Bainum holds monthly “Kevin Talks.” There are other regular town hall-type meetings and several councils or committees, but in Mr. McAllan’s words, it’s “this kind of relaxed, open communication that really brings us all together.”

Betty Marshall, whose apartment is frequently used as a stop on any tour of The Woodlands, couldn’t agree more with her neighbors, the McAllans. A Fairfax resident for more than 25 years, Marshall,

who was born on Cyprus when her South Carolinian mom followed her father to his native Greece for a time, has also seen a bit of the world thanks to her husband’s military postings in Alaska, Okinawa, Greece and Paris. Like the McAllans, Betty did quite a bit of planning for this move. When her husband, Col. Charles Marshall (Ret) died in 2013, she put those plans into action. Picking which pieces to take with her from a lifetime of international travel wasn’t as hard as she thought it would be. Of course, Betty Marshall, a music major who taught the instrument wherever the couple went, couldn’t leave the piano behind. Nor could she leave her favorite furnishings and artwork, many from her Okinawa days.

When not busy with activities outside of The Woodlands world like volunteering at the Fair Oaks Hospital gift shop or heading up the Flower Guild at the Providence Presbyterian Church, Betty is involved with the goings on in her own community. “And the people here make it easy on every level.” Betty sings the praises of the maintenance and facilities staff, in particular. “They are so willing to do anything you need. Hang a picture, move furniture, fix anything. They even prepare the plots for us gardeners. I just have to get out there and do the planting.” Of course, she does reward them with the fruits of their combined labor. “Zucchini bread for everyone this year!”

Having learned flower arranging, Betty teaches those skills as well as crafting to interested residents. She’s also organizing

a Caribbean cruise for a group of residents and family members. The Woodlands staff will be handling the transportation to and from Baltimore when the travelers embark on their sea-faring adventure.

“I would just tell people to never look back,” Marshall said. “Keep the memories, they are what made you. But your life is today and tomorrow. Keep looking ahead. Plan. And find a place where you can really thrive.”

If it’s time to start contemplating the transition to senior independent or assisted living for yourself or a loved one sorting through the information and the available properties and options can seem overwhelming.

There are properties that resemble four-star resorts. There are communities that are extensions of a particular faith institution or religion. Others, like non-profit Vinson Hall in McLean were founded to serve our large commissioned military officers population and government workers of equal rank. There are properties set in rural locations, while others like The Jefferson, a Sunrise Senior Living community located steps away from the Ballston Metro and Ballston Common Mall in Arlington, are set right in the thick of things. Westminster at Lake Ridge and Ingleside at King Farm in Maryland offer small town living right in the Washington area. There are communities offering every possible range of care, service and amenities in all price ranges.



**Gladys Laclède, Bea Larson, Jim Draper, Rachel Garbee and Peg Bixler share a table and a photo op in the library of The Hermitage, a senior assisted living community in Alexandria. Peg is the veteran in the group and does her best to welcome newcomers.**



**Betty Marshall is so noted for her gracious hostess skills that she is often called upon as an “ambassador” for The Woodlands Retirement Community. One look around her two-bedroom apartment and you know why it is frequently chosen as a stop on the**

## Senior Living

# Centers Offer Seniors Activities, Social Interaction

In 2014, the attendance at Fairfax County senior centers was 277,342.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

At the Kingstowne Center for Active Adults, volunteer Frank Bauer sees zumba and yoga classes “flowing into the main room sometimes,” he says, revealing how popular those classes are at the center, which caters to seniors 55 and older. This Kingstowne center, one of 14 senior centers throughout Fairfax County, offers classes and activities to keep seniors active.

“It keeps them mentally engaged, it’s a very friendly atmosphere,” said Bauer, who lives nearby and puts in about 30 hours a week at the Kingstowne center.

Fairfax County’s senior centers are sponsored by the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services that offer classes, health and wellness programs, and internet access, as well as trips and tours. The activities provide seniors an opportunity to socialize with others and stay connected with the community. In 2014, the attendance at the senior centers was 277,342,

according to program officials.

“Our participants consistently rank developing social connections and enhancing emotional and physical health and wellness as the top two benefits from attending senior centers,” said Evan Braff, one of the regional managers at the Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services. “We work to meet the needs and interest of our participants.”

According to the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP), senior centers are valuable resources in communities across the nation. Many centers sponsor Meals-on-Wheels programs and provide volunteer opportunities, as Bauer has found. According to Ginger Thompson, the associate state director of communications at AARP Virginia, “some programs in the center are funded through the Older Americans Act which AARP is urging congress to reauthorize. AARP is calling on Congress to prevent seniors from losing access to services they count on for their health and financial security by renewing the Older Americans Act.” The Older Americans Act supports



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY

One of the county’s Senior Center activities involves mural painting at a local school.

services including Meals-on-Wheels, in-home care, transportation, elder abuse prevention and caregivers who make it possible for seniors to live in their homes.

“The OAA also helps save federal and state tax dollars by keeping seniors out of costly nursing homes and preventing unnecessary hospital re-admissions,” Thompson said.

In Fairfax County, officials are also trying

a different approach, called Centers Without Walls. These are senior centers without a county building to gather in, and an alternate set of basic activities the other centers may offer. Two of these programs are in Burke/West Springfield and Great Falls. The Senior Centers Without Walls are developed through a public-private partnership be-

SEE COUNTY, PAGE 7



Richard Graff, formerly of Vienna, showed Nysmith students from Herndon a photo taken of himself on V-E Day in 1945. He still wears his uniform when sharing experiences of the war.



Al Burris, formerly of Springfield, helped evacuate medical patients in the Korean War. He is pictured here with Alexandra Murphy and Anika Schipma, students at The Nysmith School in Herndon.



Keith Wilkinson enlisted in World War II when he was 17 years old. Nysmith Students from Herndon recorded veterans’ experiences for a Library of Congress Veterans History Project.

PHOTOS BY KEN MOORE/THE CONNECTION

## First Hand Experience with World War

BY KEN MOORE  
THE CONNECTION

Richard Graff didn’t hesitate to describe his darkest days while serving in World War II. “Every combat soldier has to get used to the bodies,” he said.

“Whenever I think back to that one day when I didn’t think I would have another day, you bet, I’m glad to be here,” Graff said.

When speaking about World War II, Graff, formerly of Vienna, also brings a portrait photo taken on V-E Day, May 8, 1945, when

war in Europe came to an end nearly 70 years ago. He has a captured Nazi flag which is signed by comrades he served with.

Seventh and eighth graders from The Nysmith School in Herndon visited Ashby Ponds retirement community to record one-hour interviews with six veterans for The Library of Congress’ Veterans History Project, including Graff, formerly of Vienna, Al Burris, formerly of Springfield, Keith Wilkinson, Al Beyer, Lee Holmberg and Bruce Petree.

More than one-quarter of the 850 residents at Ashby Ponds are military veterans, said Jessica McKay, public affairs manager.

“Who wouldn’t want to hear the experience of a veteran?” said Nysmith student Emily Elkas, who talked to and recorded Keith Wilkinson. Wilkinson, formerly of New Hampshire, spent 32 years in the military, “mostly in the Air Force,” he said.

“As we talked more and more, his story got so interesting,” said Emily Elkas.

“I think it’s wonderful that we live in a time that we have technology so we can record their stories on video,” said Anika Schipma, who talked with Al Burris. Burris brought a model of the helicopter he flew to help evacuate soldiers who needed medical attention.

“Thank you so much. And thank you so much for your service,” Alexandra Murphy, told Burris. “I learned a lot, so much that I didn’t learn from textbooks at school.”

Graff also told the Nysmith students some advice he learned from war and from the relationships through serving in the war.

“Learn all you can about every subject you can,” Graff said. “Next, make all the friends you can. It always helps.”

Finally, “have all the fun you can,” he said. Nysmith students will return to Ashby Ponds, located on a 132-acre campus in Ashburn, throughout the spring.

# Senior Living

## Centers for Seniors

FROM PAGE 6

tween the county and businesses to create centers in churches. So far, the Accotink Unitarian Universalist Church, the Burke United Methodist Church and the Durga Temple were the first to support the Center Without Walls, but according to Braff, the county is looking at expanding that program. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors is supportive of that effort. "As additional needs present themselves, we stand ready to expand implementing the Centers Without Walls in another location," said Braff.

There is a fee to participate at the county centers, based on income, ranging from \$24 to \$48 a year and meals are provided "if they need it," Braff said. A meal donation is suggested based on a sliding scale. Transportation to the centers is available through Human Services Transportation.

The Kingstowne Center for Active Adults is open during the weekday hours, and Bauer sees many participants that live with their adult children and come over to the center when the children are at work.

On the weekends though, the center is occasionally rented for other activities such as board game events, or groups to gather. For example, on a recent Saturday, an instructional bee keeping lecture was held by a bee keeping group in one room, while a 'gaming club' was holding a benefit for wounded warriors in the main area.

### Center Locations

**South County Senior Center**  
8350 Richmond Highway, Suite 325,  
Alexandria, VA 22309  
Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 9– 4  
Phone: 703-704-6216, TTY 711  
Fax: 703-704-6699

**Herndon Senior Center**  
873 Grace Street, Herndon, VA 20170

**Senior+ Program**  
Operating Hours: Monday - Thursday, 9  
a.m. - 8 p.m., Friday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.,  
Saturday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Phone: 703-464-6200, TTY 711

**Hollin Hall Senior Center**  
1500 Shenandoah Road, Mount Vernon  
Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 9– 4  
Phone: 703-765-4573, TTY 711

**James Lee Senior Center**  
2855-A Annandale Road, Falls Church  
Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 9– 4  
Phone: 703-534-3387, TTY 711

**Kingstowne Center for Active  
Adults**  
6488 Landsdowne Center, Alexandria,  
VA 22315

Operating Hours: Monday - Friday 9  
a.m. to 4 p.m.

Phone: 703-339-7676, TTY 711  
**Lewinsville Senior Center**  
1609 Great Falls Street, McLean  
Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 9– 4  
Phone: 703-442-9075, TTY 711

**Lincolnia Senior Center**  
4710 North Chambliss Street,  
Alexandria, VA 22312

Senior+ Program  
Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 9– 4  
Phone: 703-914-0330, TTY 711

**Little River Glen Senior Center**  
4001 Barker Court, Fairfax, VA 22032

Senior+ Program  
Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 9– 4  
Phone: 703-503-8703, TTY 711  
Fax: 703-653-3548

**Lorton Senior Center** 7722 Gunston  
Plaza, Lorton, VA 22079

Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 9– 4  
Phone: 703-550-7195, TTY 711

Fax: 703-541-2092  
**Pimmit Hills Senior Center** 7510  
Lisle Avenue, Falls Church, VA 22043

Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 9– 4  
Phone: 703-734-3338, TTY 711

**Providence Senior Center**  
3001 Vaden Drive, Fairfax VA 22031

Operating Hours: Monday - Saturday, 9  
a.m. - 10 p.m.

Phone: 703-865-0520, TTY 711  
**Sully Senior Center** 5690 Sully Road,  
Centreville, VA 20120

Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 9– 4  
Phone: 703-322-4475, TTY 711

**Wakefield Senior Center at Audrey  
Moore RECenter**

8100 Braddock Road, Annandale, VA  
22003

Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 9– 4  
Phone: 703-321-3000, TTY 711

Fax: 703-764-2204  
**City of Fairfax**

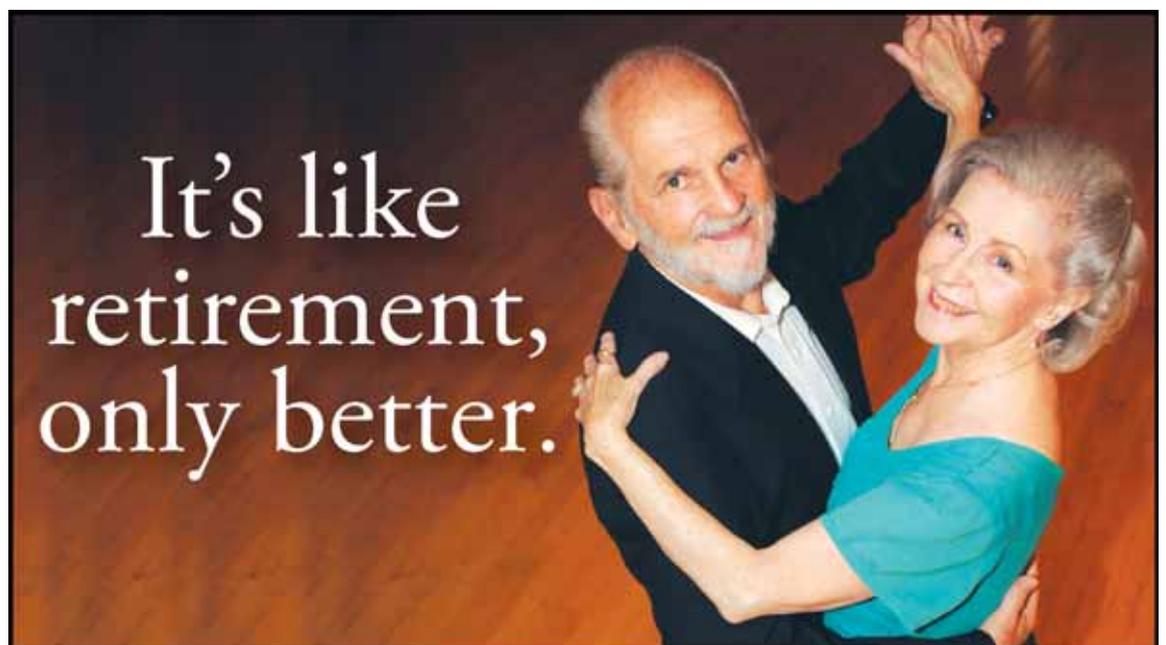
4401 Sideburn Road, Fairfax, VA 22030

Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 8  
a.m. – 5 p.m.

Phone: 703-359-2487, TTY 711  
**City of Falls Church**

223 Little Falls Street (next to City Hall),  
Falls Church, VA 22046

Operating Hours: Monday – Friday, 9– 3  
Phone: 703-248-5020, TTY 711



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**THE CONNECTION**  
NEWSPAPERS

# Creative Aging Festival Coming in May

Includes 114 performances, poetry readings, art exhibits, lectures, classes and more.

BY STEVE HIBBARD  
THE CONNECTION

**A** Creative Aging Festival will take place throughout the month of May at 100-plus local venues in Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax, Arlington and Alexandria. The month-long festival includes 114 performances, poetry readings, art exhibits, lectures, classes and more.



The festival is being sponsored by Fairfax County, AARP Virginia, the Fairfax County Arts Council and several other community organizations and businesses, and

coincides with Older Americans Month. It will also include programs that unlock the creative spirit through yoga, tai chi and even a walk through a garden labyrinth.

“What we’re hoping is that people will discover where the opportunities for art are for Fairfax County. We want them to know that it’s here; it’s in the community and we’re hoping they will participate,” said Grace Lynch, manager of communications with the county’s Division of Adult and Aging Services. She said the festival “gives us permission to do something that we may not have done before and to explore ourselves in a more creative and artistic way.”

“Fairfax County is home to over 200 non-profit art organizations many of them offering exciting events for the 50-plus com-

munity. The Creative Aging Festival is a wonderful opportunity for our arts organizations to market their existing programs by and for 50-plus residents, encouraging older adult participation in the county’s many arts offerings, and showcasing opportunities to engage in our community,” said Lisa Mariam, grants director and master arts plan coordinator at the Arts Council of Fairfax County.

Planners are now developing the program and expect to post the full calendar of events in early April (see sidebar). Some of the examples include:

- ❖ An open house allowing guests to participate in an organization’s dance, music, visual art, yoga, gardening programming;
  - ❖ A speaker on art, gardening, yoga, etc.; or
  - ❖ An older adult artist, writer, actor, poet, dancer or musician to speak about their art.
- “We’re not about bingo anymore. We’ve really raised the bar. We’re focusing on yoga, tai chi, in addition to painting and music, performing arts and dance,” said Julie Ellis, Director of Hollin Hall Senior Center in Mount Vernon.

Many Fairfax County programs will be held at local libraries, 14 senior centers, adult day healthcare centers and park programs are planning to be involved. For example, seniors here will have the opportunity to experience movement classes with professional choreographer Janet Storms of the Choreographers Collaboration Project. “She’s going to talk about the joy of movement as you age,” said Ellis.

The festival’s objectives are to encourage audiences for the arts, especially for art created and performed by older adults; encour-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY STAN SCHRETTER

## Seniors take part in programs at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at GMU.

age older adult participation in the county’s many public and private art programs; promote public understanding of the benefits of older adult participation in the arts; establish the festival as an annual event each May with Older Americans Month.

“Research has shown a strong connection between participation in the arts and the cognitive health of older adults,” said Richard Chobot, chair of Fairfax Area Agency on Aging. “The Creative Aging Festival will provide examples of the variety of arts experiences available to older adults, and individuals of all ages.

“The Creative Aging Festival gives the public an opportunity to dive into the soul of the many programs the area offers for adults with dementia,” said Isabel Castillejo, CTRS, of the Herndon Adult Day Health Care Center. “Fairfax County’s Adult Day Health Care Centers understand the value behind creative arts and the opportunity to see someone’s unique expressions through art, music and various other mediums. We encourage the public to get a glimpse of these wonderful gems their community has to offer.”

“The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at (GMU) is excited to take part in the festival, offering four events that will showcase our popular acting and Tai Chi classes, fabulous musical performers, and first rate fine artists and photographers,” said Jennifer Disano, executive director.

As part of the festival, GMU will be hosting an “Arts, Aging & Well-being” panel on Monday, May 18 from 9 a.m. to noon, on the Fairfax campus. “When we connect with others through creative expression, great things happen,” said GMU Associate Professor Holly Matto, Ph.D. “The arts and health research shows that participation in the creative arts can enhance cognitive, emotional and interpersonal functioning,

## Sampler of Events

- Essential Nature: A Gallery Tour.** ArtReach Director Sharon Fishel will present a gallery tour focusing on the work of artists who emphasize a sensory view of the natural world. May 1; Free.
- At McLean Project for the Arts,** 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Call 202-251-9898 or visit [www.mpaart.org](http://www.mpaart.org)
- Art Gallery Open House.** Four three galleries of contemporary art and find out more about this terrific community art program. May 1, 1-4 p.m.; Free. **At Lewinsville Senior Center,** 1609 Great Falls St., McLean. Call 703-442-9075 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs)
- Old Wicked Songs.** Old Wicked Songs is a play produced by 1st Stage in Tysons about divisions between generations and commonalities discovered through music. May 1, 8 p.m.; May 2, 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.; May 3, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. \$28 adults, \$23 seniors (65 and older), \$15 students, \$15 military. **At 1st Stage Theatre,** 1524 Spring Hill Road, McLean. Call 703-854-1856 or visit [www.1ststageTysons.org/](http://www.1ststageTysons.org/)
- Barefoot in the Park, The Mayhem behind the Madness.** A discussion about what goes on stage and off, before and during a performance. May 2, 6:30 p.m.; May 9, 6:30 p.m. \$15. **At Mclean Community Players at the McLean Community Center,** 1234 Ingleside Road, McLean. Call 703-476-3592 or visit [www.McLeanPlayers.org](http://www.McLeanPlayers.org).
- Woodcarving For Seniors.** Introduction to the basics of woodcarving in the Art Center at Goodwin House Bailey’s Crossroads. May 7, 2-4 p.m.; May 14, 2-4 p.m.; May 21, 2-4 p.m.; May 28, 2-4 p.m. Free. At Goodwin House Bailey’s Crossroads, 3440 S Jefferson St., Falls Church. Call 703-578-7218 [www.goodwinhouse.org](http://www.goodwinhouse.org)
- Cameo Jewels Showcase.** Variety showcase featuring opera, comedy, country music, a Michael Jackson tribute, Broadway tunes, etc. All performers are former Virginia Senior America queens or participants, and all are “60 or better”. May 8, 10:30 a.m.; Free. **At James Lee Community Center,** 2855 Annandale Road, Falls Church. Call 703-470-6160/703-549-7012 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs)
- Digital Art Workshop...Learn to Paint/Draw and Photograph on a Tablet or Smartphone!** Cherie Lejeune of High Performance Aging will conduct a workshop with the Shepherd’s Center Oakton-Vienna Adventures in Learning, demonstrating apps that enable you to paint, draw and use the built-in camera on a digital tablet. Session: 80 minutes. May 14, Noon; Free. **At The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax (UUCF),** 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Call 703-319-2023 or visit [www.scov.org](http://www.scov.org)



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY STAN SCHRETTER

## Seniors take part in tai chi programs to stay fit at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at GMU.