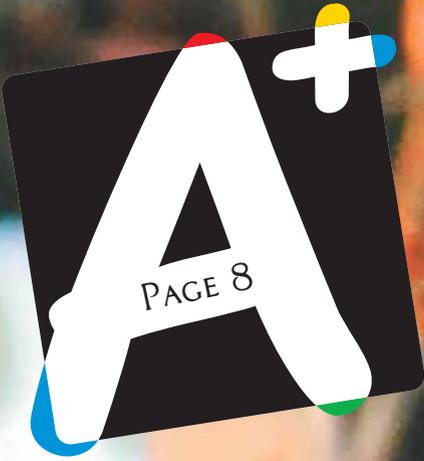


SPORTS, PAGE 12



OPINION, PAGE 6 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 10 ♦ SPORTS, PAGE 12 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 14

Summer on a High Note

NEWS, PAGE 8

Marta Snizek: All-American

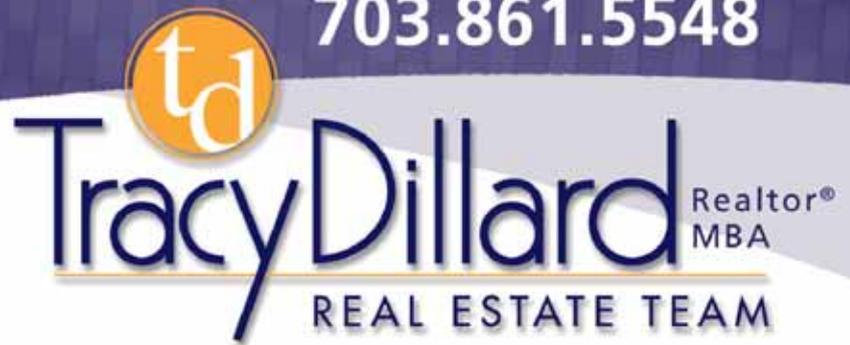
NEWS, PAGE 9

McLean graduate Elise Koehl scored more than 200 goals during her four-year high school lacrosse career. She will continue her lacrosse career at the University of Louisville.

CONNECTION FILE PHOTO

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A Beginning, Not an End

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

Citizen Michael Ducharme has lived with dyslexia since he was a student. His two daughters both have dyslexia. The father, representing the parents' movement Decoding Dyslexia, spoke at the July 9 school board meeting in support of the proposed Fairfax County Public Schools Strategic Plan that specifically addresses challenges in the schools facing students with dyslexia.

"We're now faced with the fact tomorrow is today, the fierce urgency of now," Ducharme said. "It's time for vigorous and positive action in this plan."

The plan, which the board approved on Thursday night, is a long-term strategic document with four main objectives of student success, caring culture, premier workforce and resource stewardship. It was developed with input and feedback from over 30,000 "stakeholders," according to Fairfax County Public Schools.

"Our growing and vibrant school system is now the 10th largest district in the United States, and having a clear plan and focus is critical to meet the needs of every child and deliver our Portrait of Graduate," superintendent Dr. Karen Garza said in a statement. "Ignite is about energy – it is about expending the time and effort on the actions necessary to close achievement gaps, support our teachers, provide resources to our schools and help our students succeed in life."

According to the release from Fairfax County Public Schools, some of the specific areas for attention and priorities highlighted in the plan include:

- *Developing a more holistic approach to education by addressing students' social and emotional needs

- *Eliminating achievement gaps

- *Helping students develop real-world skills

- *Creating a balanced assessment framework as a way to decrease instructional emphasis on test preparation

- *Increasing instructional time available to prepare students for success along with providing more equitable access to resources, especially technology

- *Hiring and retaining high quality teachers

- *Confronting budget issues that have led to the elimination of educational programming and employee positions

The board voted 11 to 1 in favor of the plan, with Springfield representative Elizabeth Schultz as the only dissenting opinion.

"I feel like it sort of became a Mr. Potato Head: you have all the parts, but you're not sure what it's going to look like at the end," she said. "The biggest concern I have is not specifically identifying what the known challenges are, or perceived challenges are, with changing demographics, growing student population, types of education our students are needing... the nexus of all of these



Pat Hynes accepts the gavel from Tammy Derenak Kaufax and begins her term as school board chairman.



FCPS superintendent Dr. Karen Garza comments on the new Strategic Plan during the school board's meeting.



Steven L. Greenburg, president of the Fairfax County Federation of Teachers, voices his support for the new Strategic Plan being voted on by the school board.



Michael Ducharme of Decoding Dyslexia applauds the new Strategic Plan for Fairfax County Public Schools for specifically addressing challenges for students with Dyslexia.

I think we just didn't get to in this document."

Dranesville representative Jane Strauss said the nature of the plan is that it's built to grow and change. "The Strategic Plan is really a beginning, it's not an end," she said, "an evolving plan, not set in stone. It lays out and solidifies our belief in the direction we need to go. It gives us a roadmap forward but does not create guardrails that are so high we cannot make adjustments."

Providence representative Patty Reed supported the plan and asked there be "detailed discussions on how do we actually use the document."

"How do we use it to make budget decisions?" Reed asked. "Everything in here obviously has been well thought out... But we all know our budget realities. How can this document help us make some tough decisions."

Dr. Garza, speaking on the plan, said, "I would urge this board: Let's adopt this plan, move forward, spend time perfecting it over time. Otherwise we'll continue to spin."

The plan calls for a quarterly status report to be filed, with a school board reassessment scheduled for June to make updates or adjustments.

THE BOARD ALSO VOTED ON A NEW CHAIRMAN and vice chairman to replace Tammy Derenak Kaufax and Ted Velkoff, respectively, for one-year terms.

In her outgoing remarks, Derenak Kaufax used candy to sum up some of her experiences with the board and its work going forward.

"We've had our Hot Tamales moments, a few Circus Peanuts moments," she said, "Mostly we're a group of dedicated Smarties

passionate about our desire to educate the next generation. To do so effectively, we must be funded properly, so we're always on the hunt for that extra 100 Grand, or million."

Pat Hynes was nominated as the only candidate for chairman and subsequently voted through.

Board members spoke highly of Hynes' nine years as an elementary school teacher in Fairfax County Public Schools as well as her law background.

"I think the combination of your lawyerly skills and your very recent and constant view from the classroom to be very important to this board," said Strauss.

Mason representative Sandy Evans said Hynes "has been a very thoughtful member of our board as well as a very candid one."

Schultz offered her criticism that she would've liked to see more competition for the position, rather than a decision being made prior to the meeting. I think it's healthy for us as an organization," she said. But she didn't withhold her support for Hynes, saying the candidate is "going to get a cautious yes from me... the proof will be in the pudding."

After receiving the gavel from now former-chairman Derenak Kaufax, Hynes said, "The job of the chairman and vice chairman is to protect the process for everyone. Collaboration is an important skill and I will be relearning it this year and looking forward to it."

Ted Velkoff nominated Sandy Evans for the vice chairman position. Evans also ran unopposed and also carried the vote.

"I would say she played a critical role in a couple of the signature accomplishments of this board," said Velkoff, including "reform of discipline process, later high school start times."

"The key trait," Velkoff added, "is willingness to compromise."

For more information on the "Ignite" Strategic Plan, visit the Fairfax County Public Schools website www.fcps.edu/news/strategic.shtml.



PHOTO BY KEN MOORE/THE CONNECTION

Langley High School alumna Katie Simmons Hickey raised more than \$277,000 for blood cancer research, and was named the 2015 Woman of the Year by the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's National Chapter.



Meeting Noah Ramirez and Hope Veazey, the 2015 Boy and Girl of the Year, solidified Katie Simmons Hickey's commitment to raise as much money as she could during the Woman of the Year campaign this spring.

Woman of the Year

Raising more than a quarter of a million dollars for cancer research with 17 local events.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Katie Simmons Hickey's daughter Rylie, 3, delivered the knockout punch in Hickey's fundraising film for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

"She's going to teach the world to beat cancer," said Rylie of her mom.

The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society honored Great Falls resident and Langley alumna Hickey as this year's Woman of the Year.

Hickey called her family and friends who helped her organize her 10 week campaign "The Knockouts."

"It's incredibly heartwarming to have your community back you the entire way," said Hickey, in an interview at Katie's Coffee House.

Hickey raised \$277,000 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society by organizing 17 events this year, including events at The Old Brogue, Riverbend Park, a Grandmother's and Mother's Day Tea and Fashion Show at River Bend Country Club, a denim and diamonds wine tasting and auction at a residence in Great Falls, and a Great Falls Concert on the Green.

"It was a second, full time job, no joke," she said.

HICKEY GOT INVOLVED because her best friend Colleen Shea was impacted by blood cancer. "Colleen's fight inspired me to begin supporting LLS through Team in Training triathlons, Light The Night Walk, Leukemia Cup Poker Runs, and other local events," she said.

Shea is now 14 years in remission.

Hickey, vice president of The Simmons Team at George Mason Mortgage, said she



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Here, Katie Simmons Hickey is crowned "Woman of the Year." The 22 candidates for Man and Woman of the Year raised \$1.81 million, a new record for the National Capital Area Chapter.

"The public awareness we spread and the number of people I met whose lives have been affected by cancer, including our Boy and Girl of the Year, was both overwhelming and inspiring."

— Katie Simmons Hickey

decided to fully immerse herself in raising awareness and money after a personal tragedy last October.

"I knew the time had come to re-channel all those negative vibes into something posi-

tive, worthwhile and significant," she said.

"The public awareness we spread and the number of people I met whose lives have been affected by cancer, including our Boy and Girl of the Year, was both overwhelm-

ing and inspiring," she said.

The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society was founded in 1949 and has 59 chapters in the United States and Canada. The organization funds lifesaving blood cancer research around the world and provides information and support services regarding leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and myeloma.

Hickey and Kevin Rohalmin, CEO of Presidential Detailing, led 22 candidates who collectively raised \$1.81 million for the National Capital Area Chapter, a new record.

The Man and the Woman of the Year campaign is a fundraising competition in communities across the United States to raise money for cancer research in honor of local children who are blood cancer survivors.

Visit www.lls.org or call the Information Resource Center at 800-955-4572.

"I am honored to be tied to LLS for the rest of my life," said Hickey.

OUT OF 900 CANDIDATES across the country, Hickey learned she was named this year's National Woman of the Year runner up on July 7.

Her family, friends, and other attendees gave her a standing ovation last weekend when she was named Woman of the Year for the National Capital Area.

She looks forward next year to help others develop their own campaigns next year.

"Over the years, people like us have been responsible for funding medical advances that have doubled, tripled and even quadrupled the survival rates of many types of cancer," she said. "There's no reason to stop until we find a cure," she said.

For more information visit www.letsknockitout.com/

FAITH

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

Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 2589 Chain Bridge Road, Vienna, is holding Sunday evening worship service in a less formal atmosphere and more intimate setting to help you get ready for the week ahead. Sundays, 6 p.m. Communion offered. No childcare. 703-938-2119 or www.elcvienna.org.

St. Francis Episcopal Church, 9220 Georgetown Pike in Great Falls, offers musical, educational, outreach and fellowship ministries in addition to worship services, including a 7:45 a.m. worship service without music; 9 a.m. worship service, children's chapel and children's choirs; 10 a.m. Sunday school and adult forum; and 11 a.m. worship service with adult choir. 703-759-2082.

The Antioch Christian Church offers a time of Prayer and Healing on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. for anyone wanting encouragement and healing through prayers. People are available to pray with you or for you. Antioch Christian Church is located at 1860 Beulah Road in Vienna. www.antiochdoc.org

The Jewish Social Services Agency (JSSA) offers a wide variety of support groups for those with emotional, social, and physical challenges. www.jssa.org/growth-learning.

HAVEN of Northern Virginia offers a variety of free bereavement support groups, meeting on a weekly basis. 703-941-7000 or www.havenofnova.org.

McLean Bible Church Fitness Class

at Body & Soul Fitness. Gain balance, energy and strength at 9:45 a.m. Mondays and Fridays. Free childcare for registered students. bodyandsoul@mcleanbible.org.

St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church, 1830 Kirby Road in McLean, holds a third Sunday service every month at 10:15 a.m. which allows children to play active roles in the music and as greeters and ushers. Traditional services are every Sunday at 8:15 and 10:15 a.m.

Vienna Christian Healing Rooms are open, every Saturday, 1-5 p.m., at 8200 Bell Lane. A team of Christians is available to anyone requesting prayer. Free and open to the public. 703-698-9779 or www.viennachristianhealingrooms.com.

Chesterbrook United Methodist Church is at 1711 Kirby Road, McLean. Worship service is at 11 a.m. Sunday school is at 9:30 a.m. for adults and children. 703-356-7100 or www.ChesterbrookUMC.org.

Centering Prayer Group meets Fridays, 9:30 a.m. at Andrew Chapel United Methodist Church, 1301 Trap Road, Vienna. The hour includes a brief reading related to Centering Prayer, followed by a 20-minute prayer period. E-mail Martha Thomas at mmthomas211@hotmail.com or call the church at 703-759-3509.

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton, offers the Religious Exploration (RE) program for all children, from pre-K toddlers through high school seniors, emphasizing exploration of all religious traditions while developing a personal spiritual path. The RE program offers classes on Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings. 703-281-4230.

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OPINION

Backpacks for All

Thousands of students will begin school this fall at a disadvantage; help now so they have the basics.

The first day of school each year is fraught with anticipation and anxiety. Many local students will be concerned about what they wear, who they will see, what it will be like. They've already had multiple shopping trips, online and otherwise, to be sure they have the supplies and extras they need.

We live in an area where many if not most families have the means and desire to do almost whatever it takes to give their children the best chances for success.

But for thousands of students, families lack the financial resources to equip them for success on the first day of school and beyond.

In our affluent area, there are many poor families.

In Fairfax County Public Schools, more than 27 percent of more than 184,000 students are poor enough to qualify for subsidized meals. That's more than 50,000 children in Fairfax County who are going through the summer without their usual access to breakfast and lunch. For many of those children, having a fully equipped backpack on the first day of school is out of reach.

In the City of Alexandria, about 60 percent of the Alexandria Public Schools students are poor enough to qualify for subsidized meals. That's more than 8,000 of the city's 13,000-plus students.

In Arlington, more than 32 percent of the county's 23,000-plus students are poor enough to receive subsidized meals; more than 7,000 students.

Help these students get started on the right foot by contributing to one of the many local backpack drives.

Virginia sales tax holiday for school supplies and clothing is Aug. 7-9. Purchases of certain school supplies, clothing and footwear are ex-

empt from the Virginia sales tax. Each eligible school supply item must be priced at \$20 or less, and each eligible article of clothing and footwear must be priced at \$100 or less. See <http://www.tax.virginia.gov/content/school-supplies-and-clothing-holiday>.

This is a good place to start, but these students need more than backpacks. In this area, we need to address the impacts of income inequality in the schools. If we succeed in effectively educating these students, the savings overall will be enormous. These students need protection from budget cuts in their classrooms. They need help addressing inequality in the face of "bring your own device policies," and other technology needs.

Here are a few ways to give:

❖ **Fairfax County Collect for Kids** is a public private partnership that provides local children from economically challenged families with the school supplies they need to begin the school year, and has provided 90,000 supply kits and backpacks in its first three years. They seek donations of cash, backpacks donated by citizens and calculators donated by businesses. Contact Jay Garant in Fairfax County Public Schools Office of Business and Community Partnerships at 571-423-1225 jay.garant@fcps.edu or Sherry Noud SMNoud@fcps.edu 571-423-4300, Fairfax County Public Schools Office of Social Work Services.

<http://collectforkids.org/resources/>

❖ **Cornerstones in Reston** needs 3,000 backpacks. Each year, Cornerstones and its partner, Kids R First, equip thousands of K-12 children in the Reston-Herndon area (Cornerstones' clients, as well as other local students who receive free or reduced cost school meals) with brand-new backpacks. You can buy backpacks online and have them delivered to Cor-

nerstones. Or deliver the backpacks to Cornerstones Administrative Office at 11150 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 210, Reston; Aug. 10-14 (Monday - Friday); 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Contact Alacia Earley, Volunteer and Drives Manager, 571-323-9568.

<http://www.cornerstonesva.org/donations/drives/back-to-school/>

❖ **United Community Ministries** annual Back to School campaign is underway, and they rely on your support to meet the needs of students from low-income families in the Mount Vernon community. They especially need larger-sized backpacks for middle and high school students, and seek cash contributions to buy supplies. <http://www.ucmagency.org/back-to-school-2015.html>

❖ **OUR DAILY BREAD** Collect for Kids Back to School program runs each summer in partnership with with Collect for Kids in a county-wide effort to ensure that the neediest children in our community receive the supplies they need to succeed in school. The program is made possible through a partnership with Kids R First, Fairfax County Public Schools, the Fairfax County Office of Public and Private Partnerships, Apple Federal Credit Union and numerous community-based organizations and businesses in the Fairfax County area who are working together to provide supplies in a more cost-effective and efficient way. Contact Dawn Sykes at 703-273-8829.

❖ **Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing** APAH is collecting backpacks and supplies for more than 400 children among the 1,200-plus households a year served by APAH, providing low income families with affordable housing. Purchase items on their list. Donations can be dropped off at the APAH office: 2704 N. Pershing Drive in Arlington. Questions? Contact Emily Button, Resident Services Manager, at 703-851-3635 or ebutton@apah.org. <https://www.roonga.com/apahschoolsupplydrive/>

— MARY KIMM,
MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

EDITORIAL

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Virginians Have Paid for Medicaid Expansion

To the Editor:

The concern expressed in the letter regarding Medicaid Expansion in Virginia (How to Pay for Medicaid Expansion?, Connection, June 24-30) focused on the question of "how to pay for it" and that those favoring expansion "do not discuss cost specifics."

The writer would have readers believe that we in Virginia have not already paid for Medicaid expansion with our tax dollars, Virginia tax dollars that are now going to other states, states that have

expanded Medicaid; and some of those states are led by Republican governors that have favored Medicaid expansion because they saw it as a good deal financially as well as a reasonable way of making healthcare accessible to so many of their working poor — 400,000 in Virginia would benefit from the expansion.

With respect to the writer's fiscal concerns, that issue has been addressed multiple times by The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and The Commonwealth Institute. The conclusion, which is documented by the numbers cited in the various reports, is this: "Medicaid Expansion is Producing Large Gains in Health Care and Saving States Money."

The letter-writer's fiscal concerns have already been essentially addressed, but opponents have apparently already made up their minds and have manifested little interest in the documentation provided. This documentation has been cited numerous times, and it is not reasonable to assume that Delegate Ken Plum, a delegate re-elected multiple times that takes seriously his fiduciary responsibilities, and other legislators in solidarity with him have not looked at the numbers before advocating for the expansion of Medicaid

Dr. Paul Krugman, an economics professor at Princeton and the winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics in 2008, recently asked this question: "But why would any state

choose to exercise that option (not expand Medicaid)? After all, states were being offered a federally-funded program (a program already paid for by taxpayers) that would provide major benefits to millions of their citizens, pour billions into their economies, and help support their health-care providers. Who would turn down such an offer?"

It is the same question many of us in Virginia have been asking and have not received any satisfying answers from the Republican legislators that dominate the Virginia House and Senate.

John Horejsi (and SALT's 1200 advocates)
SALT Coordinator
Vienna

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LETTERS

The Act in Sheep's Clothing

To the Editor:

A few weeks ago the House passed HR 2042, the Ratepayer Protection Act. Sounds great, right? Wrong. The Ratepayer Protection Act is a wolf in sheep's clothing and attacks EPA's ability to curb climate change. Specifically, the Act goes after the Clean Power Plan, set to be finalized this summer, which would require states submit carbon reduction plans to the EPA. Carbon pollution is a serious health threat to all Americans, but especially to those with chronic lung disease like

asthma. Carbon emissions fuel climate change, and as temperatures rise so does the risk of experiencing unsafe levels of ozone pollution in the air we breathe. Ozone kills and as someone who has had asthma since childhood I am concerned for the nearly 24,000 children with asthma who live in the county.

Exposure to unhealthy levels of ozone is linked to worsened asthma, increased risk of hospitalization and even premature death. Have you ever seen a child have an asthma attack? Have you ever been forced to watch as their lips tinge blue and panic sets in as they fight to get in a full breath of air

but can't? It's something I've experienced firsthand; no child should have to suffer in that way.

That's why I'm disappointed that Representative Barbara Comstock voted in support of the Ratepayer Protection Act. Fairfax County received an F for ozone pollution according to the American Lung Association's 2015 State of the Air Report. Is the Representative okay with that? Her vote sure implies as much.

Jennifer Kaufer

The American Lung Association in Virginia
Fairfax

BULLETIN BOARD

To have community events listed in the Connection, send to north@connectionnewspapers.com. The deadline for submissions is the Friday prior to publication.

THURSDAY/JULY 16

Model Investment Club NOVA Meeting at Tysons-Pimmit Library. 7-9 p.m. 7584 Leesburg Pike. Individual investors meet to learn and become more successful. This nonprofit Better Investing Club focus on finding quality companies, determining fair price, and managing a portfolio. Free.

FRIDAY/JULY 17

English Conversation Group. 10 - 11:30 a.m. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Avenue East, Vienna. Practice your English conversation skills in a group. Adults. Visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/ph/>.

MONDAY/JULY 20

Effective English. 1- 2:30 p.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Avenue, McLean. Get expert help with speaking and conversing, reading and writing, and listening and comprehending. Adults.

Spanish Chat.

1- 3 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Practice Spanish in a relaxed environment with a native speaker. All levels welcome. Visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/gf/>.

WEDNESDAY/JULY 22

English Conversation Group. 1 p.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Avenue, McLean. Practice conversational English in a group setting. Adults. Visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/dm/>.

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Dr. Kathryn J. Sowerwine is a board certified Allergist and Immunologist with a special interest in dermatological diseases linked to allergy. She completed a residency in Internal Medicine at Georgetown University Hospital and her clinical and research fellowship in allergy and immunology at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD.

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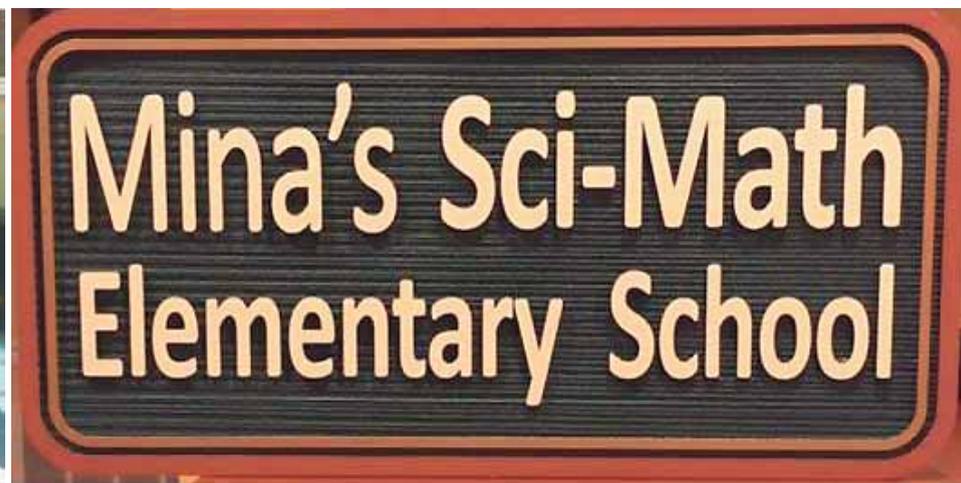
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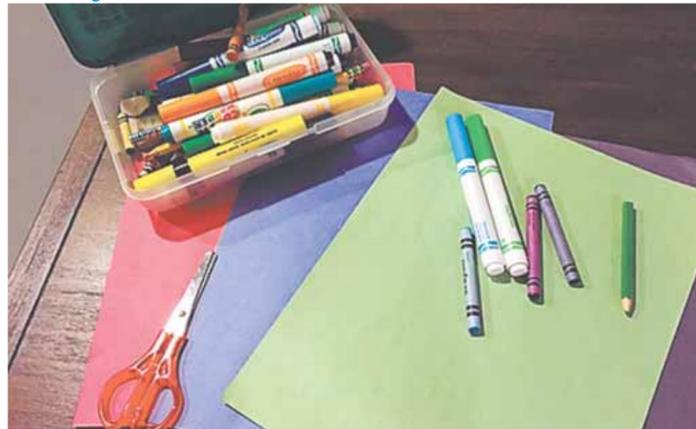


PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Art supplies and games that allow for creative play can be an important part of unstructured free time.

Unsheduling Summer Play

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

What was once a time for catching fireflies, swimming and exploring has evolved into a period of elite day camps, academic enrichment classes and top-dollar sports clinics.

For many children, summer is packed with so many activities that it can hardly be called a break, say local educators, reminding parents of the benefits of unregulated play.

"Camps and activities are fine in moderation because children need structure," said Andrew Clarke, Ph.D., an Arlington-based child psychologist. "But allowing children to have free time during the summer is important for their self-confidence and overall well-being. ... Children can become enriched simply by being allowed to explore their own environments."

NOT ALL CHILDREN are naturally self-directed, but parents can provide minimal structure through which children can gain the benefits of unstructured free time.

For example, help children develop a list of potential activities that might interest them. This could assist children who have difficulty thinking of things to do on their own or who might be prone to saying "I'm bored" when faced with free time and no planned activities.

"I recommend giving kids suggestions of various activities and having them choose," said Stacie B. Isenberg, Psy.D., a child psychologist based in Bethesda, Md. "Sometimes it is helpful to make a list together with them and post it on the refrigerator or

Experts praise the benefits of free play for children.

other prominent place."

Isenberg suggests including activities such as playing board games, reading books, hula hooping, kicking around a ball, blowing bubbles, doing mazes, puzzles or painting. "When it's time for a new activity, have them check out the list," she said.

It's especially beneficial if the activity won't require constant supervision. "Provide safe spaces for them to play in," said Joan L. Ehrlich, Ph.D., a coordinator in the Interpreter Services Office at Northern Virginia Community College. "If you know the space is safe, you can give them more leeway to play on their own, and can pull back on the direct supervision."

PARENTS SHOULD ALSO SET boundaries and standards regarding acceptable and unacceptable activities, she continued.

"Provide safe spaces for [children] to play in. If you know the space is safe, you can give them more leeway to play on their own."

— Joan L. Ehrlich, Ph.D., Northern Virginia Community College

hard to compete with other healthy, educational options."

"All you need to do to facilitate unstructured downtime is to not over schedule them ... and provide an open-ended learning environment," added Gail Multop, an early childhood education professor at Northern Virginia Community College. She believes the tools for such play are simple: "Puzzles, books, an art table with supplies and time outdoors in nature."

Summer on a High Note

Spring Hill Elementary School orchestra director's Strings Camp remains McLean's summer tradition.

BY NATALIA KOLENKO
THE CONNECTION

Every summer, Spring Hill Elementary School orchestra director Ruth Donahue runs an orchestra summer camp for children to improve their music skills.

"I used to teach in Oklahoma. I think the first camp I taught was in 1983," Donahue said. "I moved here in 1988 and the kids were, I shouldn't say it, but they're even better than the Oklahoma kids with how quickly they learn. So I said we've got to do a summer camp here."

And so was the beginning of the Summer Strings Camp at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in McLean.

Donahue has run the summer camp every year since then. The students of the summer camp are usually in third, fourth, fifth and sixth grade Donahue said, and her only requirement is that the students be able to read music. The camp does dress-up days for the kids with Messy Monday, Wacky Wednesday, and Freaky Friday. The children also get the chance to play kickball to get to know each other, Donahue said.

When asked about their camp experience, the students had nothing but positive things to say.

Amin Kaleem, a cello player, said his favorite part of Summer Strings Camp is how he and the orchestra get to play a concert in front of people.

Sarah Kim said her favorite part of camp was how it lets her improve her violin skills. Bass player Joseph Mihaon said his favorite part of camp was that "it's really fun and easy and we get to do a lot of trips."

Donahue went on to say that she has the students sight-read the music pieces every time, a process of playing a music piece all the way through without preparation.

"Every Summer Strings [camp] we sight-read... I would say about 40 pieces, so they've already sight-read maybe 25 or 30 because this is just our third day," Donahue said.

The camp lasts for seven days each year with a concert to wrap up the week. This year, the Summer Strings Camp concert was held on Wednesday, July 8.

The camp was created, Donahue said, to help the students become better musicians and to help them learn how to become better sight-readers. "When you see children every day of the week instead of once a week, which is normally when orchestra directors see them [during the school year]," Donahue said, "they learn so much faster."



Two cello players from the Summer Strings Camp sight-reading music. The students are dressed up for Wacky Wednesday, one of the dress-up days the camp has.

PHOTOS BY NATALIA KOLENKO/THE CONNECTION



Spring Hill Elementary School orchestra director Ruth Donahue runs the Summer Strings Camp. She has been running the camps since she moved to the area in 1988.

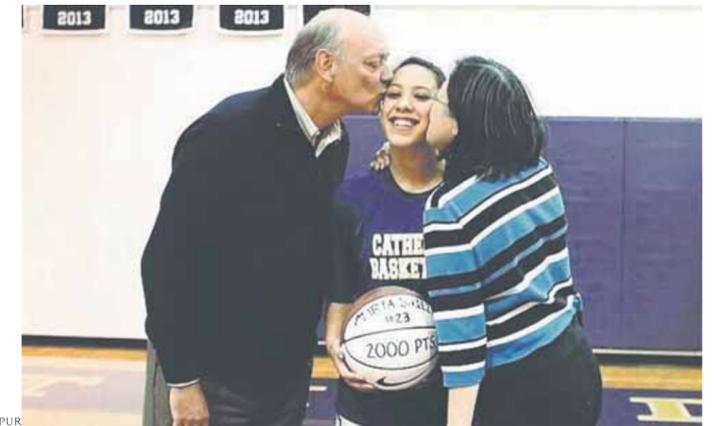


The violin section of the Summer Strings Camp. Every music piece the students receive is sight-read. The students will sight-read about 40 pieces of music over the course of the seven day camp.



The viola, cello, and bass section of the Summer Strings Camp. The camp lasts for seven days each year with a concert to wrap up the week.

Marta Sniezek's father and mother, David and Edwina, kissing Marta as she is awarded a basketball for her 2,000 career point at the National Cathedral School.



PHOTOS BY BRIAN KAPUR

Marta Sniezek: All-American

It's not easy being the second youngest member of a family of 11.

BY GORDON ROGO
THE CONNECTION

For Marta Sniezek, ranked one of the top basketball players in the country, her parents and her siblings are her motivators in a family where success is a blueprint.

"I credit all my success to my family who have supported me in everything that I wanted to pursue," the McLean resident said. "My father taught me that I could do anything my brothers can academically and athletically. My sisters and brothers taught me tough love."

Marta has won numerous awards on and off the court, maintained above a 3.0 GPA at National Cathedral School and also makes time for volunteer work. Most recently she was named to the Parade All-American Basketball team, which recognizes the top 60 male and female players in the country. Previous recipients of this honor included Michael Jordan, LeBron James and Candace Parker. In the fall she will be attending Stanford University on a basketball scholarship.

One person who particularly inspires Marta is her mother, Edwina Sniezek, who was diagnosed in 2008 with chronic myelogenous leukemia in 2008. She underwent bone marrow transplant in 2013.

"It had a big impact on our family, particularly Marta," according to Marta's father, Dr. David Sniezek. "Because of my schedule, it has always been Edwina who took her to practices, games, and to tournaments that required travel. Their time together and shared experiences allowed them to develop a close relationship, one that endures today."

Marta dedicated her junior basketball and soccer seasons to her mother, which culminated in a D.C. Gatorade Basketball Player



Marta Sniezek on the court for National Cathedral School

of the Year award among other accolades, and an All-Met Honorable Mention award to go along with a District of Columbia State Athletic Association state title for National Cathedral in soccer.

At the same time, she devoted whatever time she could to be her mother's primary caregiver. "The experience gave Marta a bit of an edge in sports and life because she knew that she was going to have a conversation with her mother about everything she did that day," her father said.

Going into her senior year Marta had already committed to Stanford for basketball. And she could have easily relaxed: she had planned to forgo her senior season of soccer to avoid added exposure to injuries.

"I only played soccer for NCS just to be with my friends. I never intended to play soccer senior year, but when I found out that one of the team's standout players was leaving the area then I decided to play," she said. "I wanted the seniors to win a third DCSAA title so I decided to play."

Marta's decision to play exemplified what many people highlight as some of her best-unknown attributes as a person.

"Marta is a really caring and loving person. She values teammates, family, and all those around her," said one of her AAU coaches, Bob Dix. "She is fierce competitor on the court, but also an extremely caring person."

Her decision turned out to be a good one, as she helped NCS win a third straight state title. Marta was named first team All-Met and the D.C. Gatorade Soccer Player of the Year making her the first female to win the Gatorade Player of the Year in two different sports in D.C. history.

She is also an Academic High School All-American in soccer and basketball, a member of the National Honor Society, a recipient of the Merit/Leadership Independent School Scholar, and a three-time Fairfax Stars "Outstanding Scholar Athlete Award" among other awards.

She also has volunteered for community service work, locally on behalf of the Haiti Relief Fund, for the So Others Might Eat organization, Jill's House, and as a National Cathedral School volunteer for the Latino disabled community.

"I don't think there is an athlete in the DMV that has the accolades that this young woman has on and off the court," said Dix. "She truly embodies that the phrase student athlete."

Looking ahead, Marta looks to keep the success going at Stanford. And she is excited about what her future holds, something she knows can be accomplished with the strength and inspiration of her mother on her mind.

"My mother instilled self-reliance, hard work and compassion in me," she said.

CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

"The Healing Wall." Tuesdays – Saturdays, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., through Aug. 1. Vienna Art Center, 115 Pleasant St., NW, Vienna. "The Healing Wall" is assembled from two dozen puzzle pieces created by soldiers recovering at the Fort Belvoir Community Hospital. Each piece makes a powerful statement by itself as well as part of the larger puzzle.

Restful Pause. Wednesday-Saturday, through Aug. 1. Katie's Coffee House, 760 Walker Road, Great Falls. Robert Gilbert brings his nine, framed still-life paintings to exhibit. The subjects are wine bottles, wine glasses, ceramic pots, fruits and vegetables. The paintings are realistic in some areas and impressionistic in others.

What's in Your Garden? Tuesdays - Saturdays, through Aug. 1. Vienna Arts Society "Gallery in the Village Green," 513 Maple Ave. W, Vienna. Featured artist Loy McGaughy of Reston exhibits a collection of watercolors inspired by her personal photographs. The exhibition includes more than a dozen other artists.

Tyson's Concerts on the Plaza. Fridays, through Aug. 7. 6-8 p.m. at Tysons Corner Center, 1961 Chain Bridge Road, Tysons Corner. Sit back and enjoy live music with a special line up each week. Tickets are available on a first-come, first-serve basis beginning at 10 a.m. each Friday morning in the mall concourse on level 2 next to ZARA.

Summer Reading Program. Friday-Sunday, through Sept. 5. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike Great Falls. Attend summer events and check out books. All ages. Visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/gf/>.

Great Falls Concerts on the Green. Sundays, through Sept. 6. 6-8 p.m. at Great Falls Village Centre Green. Come out on Sundays and listen to some live music. Visit <http://www.celebrategreatfalls.org/concerts-on-the-green/>.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/JULY 17-26

"Jesus Christ Superstar." 8 p.m. The Alden, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. "Jesus Christ Superstar" is based on the accounts in the Gospels of the final days of Jesus of Nazareth, from his arrival in Jerusalem until his crucifixion. A large part of the plot focuses on the character of Judas Iscariot. Tickets: \$23-\$25. Visit www.McLeanPlayers.org.

WEDNESDAY/JULY 15

Rock-A-Bye Baby. 11:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Avenue East, Vienna. An early

literacy enhanced storytime, featuring rhymes, stories and songs. Birth-12 months with adult. Register at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/ph/>.

Treasured Three to Fives. 10:30 - 11:15 a.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Avenue, McLean. An early literacy enhanced storytime featuring stories, rhymes and songs. Age 3-5 with adult. Register at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/dm/>.

THURSDAY/ JULY 16

Free Wine Tasting. 6-8 p.m. The Vineyard, 1445 Laughlin Ave., McLean. Five top rated Brunello di Montalcino from the outstanding 2010 Vintage available to taste. Costs \$5. Visit www.thevineyardva.com.

My First Book Club. 4:30-5:30 p.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Avenue, McLean. A book discussion group for boys and girls. Grades Kindergarten - 2. Register at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/dm/>.

Knit Club. 6-8 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Kids and teen knitting club. All levels welcome. Bring your supplies. Crochet, knitting and cross stitching techniques. Ages 8-18. Visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/gf/>.

Mister G. 10:30 a.m. Wolf Trap, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. Sing and dance to bilingual tunes in Spanish and English. Ages 3 and up. Tickets: \$10. Visit www.wolftrap.org

Guster. 8 p.m. Wolf Trap, 1645 Wolf Trap Road Vienna. Alternative rock and on-stage humor. Tickets: \$32-\$45. Visit www.wolftrap.org

FRIDAY/JULY 17

Pokemon League. 3-6 p.m. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Avenue East, Vienna. Learn and play. Ages 5-18.

Minion Fun. 7 p.m. Barnes & Noble, 7851 L. Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Become a certified Minion and attend Villain-Con in stores to help search for the most despicable villain to follow. Activities and giveaways round out the fun. Space is limited. You must be registered to attend. To register call the store at 703-506-2937.

SATURDAY/JULY 18

SocialBurger Wine Pairing. 1-6 p.m. The Wine Outlet, 278 Cedar Lane SE,



"The Healing Wall" is assembled from two dozen puzzle pieces created by soldiers recovering at the Fort Belvoir Community Hospital. Each piece makes a powerful statement by itself as well as part of the larger puzzle. View the exhibit Tuesdays – Saturdays, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., through Aug. 1 at Vienna Art Center, 115 Pleasant St., NW, Vienna.

Vienna. Cost: \$7. Visit www.viennawineoutlet.com

Kayak Mini Float Trip. 11 a.m. Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills Street, Great Falls. A scenic wagon ride from the Visitor Center to the launch site at Riverbend Park, followed by a 1.5-mile instructor-led float trip down through riffles and flat water. No previous experience necessary. Cost is \$38. For information, call 703-759-9018.

Star Wars Saturday. 2 p.m. Barnes & Noble, 7851 L. Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Fans of all ages join us for exclusive products, activities, cosplay, trivia and for a chance to win a Star Wars character standee.

KidSave Event:Nature Scavenger Hunt/Duct Tape Creations. 2-4:30 p.m. at First Church of Christ, 1683 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Join this child advocacy organization, based in Washington, D.C., for these orphans chance at being part of a loving family in your area and getting adopted. Anyone interested in meeting the children is welcome to attend online orientation any Wednesday in July (8 pm -8:30 p.m.) and come to any event. Free. Visit www.kidsave.org/summer-miracles-events/ and contact the Development Manager at 202-503-3104

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/JULY 18-19

Claude Moore Colonial Farm 1771

Market Fair. 11 a.m.-4:30 p.m. 6310 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Sit in the shade and savor roast chicken and spicy sausages, enjoy dancing and singing with the fiddler, test your water color and writing skills with Mr. Andrews at the Stationer. Visit <http://1771.org>.

SUNDAY/JULY 19

Jennifer Cutting's OCEAN Orchestra. 5 p.m. The Alden, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. Musical cocktail from genre-bending composer/bandleader Jennifer Cutting. Cutting directs an all-star ensemble of the Washington, D.C. area's favorite Celtic musicians, in music ranging from ethereal to rockin'.

Manga Mania. 2 p.m. Barnes & Noble, 7851 L. Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Discover this popular style of Japanese comic books and graphic novels. Enjoy a special offer, activities and giveaways.

MONDAY/JULY 20

The Living Rainforest. 2:30- 3:15 p.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Avenue, McLean. Meet animals from the rain forest. Presented by Leesburg Animal Park. Age 6-12. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/dm/>.

TUESDAY/JULY 21

Cocktails & Conversation. 5-6:30 p.m. The Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner, 1700 Tysons Blvd., McLean. The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia invites you to a private event for substantial supporters and friends of the Community Foundation.

WEDNESDAY/JULY 22

Peter Pan Storytime with Special Guest Wendy. 11 a.m. Barnes & Noble, 7851 L. Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Storytime featuring Wendy from J.M. Barrie's Peter Pan. Wendy will read Peter Pan related stories and help the children write special letters to Neverland. Come dressed in your favorite Peter Pan costumes.

THURSDAY/JULY 23

Starlight Storytime. 7-7:45 p.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Avenue, McLean. Wear your favorite pajamas and join us for stories and songs. All ages. Register at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/dm/>.

FRIDAY/JULY 24

Fangirl Friday. 7 p.m. Barnes & Noble, 7851 L. Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Fangirls unite and celebrate fandom. Get introduced to the Women of Marvel, enjoy cosplay, giveaways and much more.

SATURDAY/JULY 25

Vinyl Day. 2 p.m. Barnes & Noble, 7851 L. Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Explore an assortment of vinyl records with events celebrating vinyl culture, including giveaways, special offers and exclusives.

KidSave Event: Art Studio. 2-4:30 p.m. at The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Join this child advocacy organization, based in Washington, D.C., for these orphans chance at being part of a loving family in your area and getting adopted. Anyone interested in meeting the children is welcome to attend online orientation any Wednesday in July (8 -8:30 p.m.) and come to any event. Free. Visit www.kidsave.org/summer-miracles-events/

SUNDAY/JULY 26

The Lisa Lim Band. 5 p.m. The Alden, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Multiple-WAMMIE award winner, Lisa Lim, will rock the park with masterful songwriting, burning guitar and distinctive vocals—all with a blues/rock edge.

Local Nursery Closing After 42 Years ~ Going Out of Business Sale

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SCHOOLS

Send school notes to mclean@connectionnewspapers.com by Friday.

Dylan Phillips, of Great Falls, graduated with honors from James Madison University with a Bachelor of Arts in Computer Information Systems.

Kristen Wolaver, daughter of John and Barbara Wolaver of Great Falls, and a 2013 graduate of Langley High School, has been named to the Dean's List for academic achievement for the spring semester at the University of Pittsburgh. Kristen is a neuroscience major with a minor in chemistry at the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences at Pitt, where she will begin her junior year in August 2015.

Brendan Mullen, Langley HS grad class of 2011, son of Mike and Debbie Mullen of Great Falls, graduated Magna Cum Laude, with Distinction from the Pennoni Honors College, Drexel University in Philadelphia, Pa. Brendan earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Biological Sciences and will be attending Drexel College of Medicine in the fall. While at Langley, Brendan played goalie for the Langley Saxons Ice Hockey team and at Drexel, played on two inline teams, one of which won the Philadelphia College Roller Hockey League championship this spring.

George Mahaney-Walter, son of Mary Claire Mahaney and Herbert Walter of McLean, was awarded the degree of Master of Business Administration in recent commencement exercises at the Simon School of Business of the University of Rochester.

Northern Virginia Community College is preparing to welcome 17 incoming Honors Program Scholars for the start of the 2015-2016 academic year, which begins Aug. 24. The scholarship provides \$10,000 to be divided into fall and spring semesters for two years, at \$2,500 per semester. It will assist students with the cost of tuition toward a NOVA degree. **Natalia Chavez Choque and Benjamin Atherton, of McLean High School**, received this scholarship.

Gabrielle Greco, of Vienna, daughter of Drs. Stephen and Judith Greco, was named to the Dean's List at the College of William and Mary for the Spring Semester.

Dylan Maxwell Phillips, of Great Falls, has been named to the president's list at James Madison University for the spring 2015 semester. Students who earn president's list honors must carry at least 12 graded credit hours and earn a GPA of 3.90 or above. Phillips is a senior whose major is Computer Info Systems - BBA.

Victor Zheng, 21, of McLean, is among five University of Virginia scholars who have received Critical Language Scholarships to assist them in pursuing their love of language. They will spend seven to 10 weeks in intensive language institutes this summer in one of 13 countries to study languages the U.S. government has deemed "critical." Zheng will study Chinese in Dalian, China. He is a third-year history and Chinese major who is learning Mandarin Chinese.

"I applied out of a desire to have another opportunity to go back to China and be immersed in its environment," he said. "I also just inherently love being abroad where I believe I learn the best and the most." Zheng, who is a member of U.Va.'s Virginia Glee Club, plans to pursue a master's degree in international relations.

Graham P. Lobel, the son of Doug



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Brendan Mullen

and Betsy Lobel of McLean, received a Bachelor of Science degree cum laude, from Haverford College, in Haverford, Pa., at the school's 177th Commencement on Sunday, May 17. Lobel graduated with High Honors in Chemistry. At Commencement, Lobel also received The George Peirce Prize in Chemistry, for excellence in undergraduate research. Lobel graduated from the Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in 2011.

Chun-Ming "Chris" Chen of Vienna and Maria Vera Alvarez of South Riding have been awarded **Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholarships**. Both students attend Northern Virginia Community College.

Chen and Vera Alvarez are among 90 students nationally to receive the prestigious award which provides up to \$40,000 a year toward tuition, books, living expenses and required fees for the final two to three years needed to earn a bachelor's degree. It is the largest private scholarship for two-year and community college transfer students in the country.

From examining the genes in the monkey flower, to exploring the Rev. Martin Luther King's political, social and theological beliefs, to epilepsy therapies, to sustainable tourism, 38 **University of Virginia** undergraduates will pursue 36 grant-funded research projects this summer. Thirty-five of the proposals received Harrison Undergraduate Research Awards and another student has had his research underwritten by the Stull family of Dallas. This marks the 16th year of the program, which helps further a key component of the U.Va. student experience: hands-on research.

The research awards support students who present detailed plans for projects that have been endorsed by a faculty mentor. In February, a Faculty Senate committee selected the winners, who receive up to \$3,000. Faculty mentors who oversee the projects receive \$1,000.

This year's Harrison Undergraduate Research Award winners and their research topics include

❖ **Pasha Davoudian, 21, of McLean**, a third-year neuroscience major, who is researching the role the thalamus plays in epilepsy therapy.

❖ **Daniel Naveed Tavakol, 19, of Vienna**, a second-year biomedical engineering student, who is researching angiogenesis, or blood vessel growth, in the mouse cornea and retina, distinguishing key factors in support-cell recruitment and location in vascular networks.

Gabrielle Greco, daughter of Drs. Judith and Stephen Greco of Vienna, made the Dean's List at the College of William and Mary for the spring semester.

New Lane to Ease Rush Hour Travel on I-495 North

Commuters on the inner loop of the Capital Beltway (I-495) traveled on an additional lane Tuesday morning, July 7, after the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) opened the I-495 shoulder lane, improving travel conditions where the northbound 495 Express Lanes join the regular lanes. The 1.5-mile lane allowed traffic to travel on the left shoulder of northbound I-495 from where the 495 Express Lanes end to the George Washington Parkway. This shoulder lane will be open to all traffic from 7-11 a.m. and 2-8 p.m. on weekdays. A lane-use management system, with green arrows and red "X's," similar to the lane-control system on I-66, will alert travelers when the shoulder is open. In addition to the extra lane, several safety enhancements have been implemented such as upgraded concrete barriers in the median of I-495, new cameras and electronic highway signs to help with incident response and traveler information, and new pavement. All travelers and buses will benefit from the new capacity and improved merge. There will be no barrier separation between the shoulder lane and the regular Beltway lanes, ensuring easy access for travelers. Construction on the \$20 million project began in June 2014.



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SPORTS

Q&A: McLean Lacrosse Standout Koehl Headed to Louisville

Former Highlander hates losing, loves pizza, chocolate.

Elise Koehl was a three-sport athlete at McLean, but the lacrosse field is where she made her mark.

Koehl spent four seasons on the Highlanders varsity lacrosse team, tallying more than 200 goals and 300 points during her high school career. As a senior in 2015, she helped McLean earn its first regional tournament victory in more than a decade, according to results on laxpower.com, scoring a career-best 10 goals against West Potomac during an 18-10 win in the opening round. She finished the year with 76 goals and 44 assists, and received first-team all-conference honors for the fourth time in her career.

Koehl, who also played field hockey and competed for the track team, graduated from McLean High School in 2015. She will continue her lacrosse career at the University of Louisville.

Koehl recently participated in a Q&A via email with The Connection.

Connection: You'll be playing lacrosse at Louisville next season. What made Louisville the right choice for you?

Koehl: I knew Louisville was the right school for me after they asked me to visit. I loved the coaches, fellow recruits, campus, training facilities, sports teams, dorms and the heart and city of Louisville. It's incredible how much academic and athletic support I will receive when I am there.

Connection: What position(s) will you play?

Koehl: Midfield/attack.

Connection: What are you most looking forward to about going to college?

Koehl: I am mostly looking forward to being a part of the Louisville lacrosse family.

Connection: At what age did you start playing lacrosse?

Koehl: Eleven.

Connection: When did you realize playing college lacrosse was an option for you?

Koehl: I started getting interest from schools and realized I could actually have the opportunity to play in college.

Connection: What is your favorite memory of playing lacrosse at McLean?

Koehl: My favorite memory of playing lacrosse at McLean was being on the team with my younger sister Julia (a freshman named Conference honorable mention on defense!) my senior year.

Connection: How would you describe the McLean/Langley rivalry?

Koehl: The McLean/Langley rivalry is unlike any other rivalry in the region. The students and faculty all participate in the events and the rivalry exists beyond the fields.

Connection: Have you ever tried a sport and found out you were embarrassingly bad at it?

Koehl: I tried out for the gymnastics team my senior year and my only skill was that I could do a cartwheel.

Connection: Looking back, if you could change one thing about your high school lacrosse career, what would it be?



CONNECTION FILE PHOTO

McLean graduate Elise Koehl scored more than 200 goals during her four-year high school lacrosse career.

Koehl: I wouldn't change anything about my high school lacrosse career because it's helped me get to where I am today, and I wouldn't trade that for anything.

Connection: You're sitting around playing a board game with family/friends. Do you play to have fun or play to win?

Koehl: There have been countless fights and tears over games of Monopoly and Scrabble in my family. I can't stand losing!

Connection: What do you like to do when you're not playing a sport?

Koehl: I like being active every day, whether it's hanging out with my friends, going on hikes, or finding good food around the DMV.

Connection: Are you a pro sports fan? Which team(s) do you root for?

Koehl: I prefer watching college sports more than pro sports, but my family and I are Redskins and Nationals fans.

Connection: What location is the farthest you've traveled from the Washington, D.C metro area?

Koehl: The Dominican Republic.

Connection: What's your favorite food?

Koehl: Pizza and chocolate. I can eat it every meal of every day.

Connection: Who is your favorite music artist? Why?

Koehl: I love music. I don't have one favorite music artist but my favorite genre is alternative rock.

Connection: What is your favorite movie? Why?

Koehl: Any movie with Will Ferrell. He's so funny.

— JON ROETMAN



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

(From left) Nate Johnson (17), Jake Holzapfel (17), Duncan Proxmire (16) and Nate Robinson (18) celebrate their new Langley Club record of 1:57.65 in the Boys 15-18 200 M Medley Relay. The previous record of 1:58.64 was set in 2003.

Langley Club Swims Like Wild(things) to Remain Undefeated

The undefeated Langley Wildthings knew they would have to swim as hard as they've swum all season, to stay winners at the end of the meet against the Pinecrest Piranhas. Six sweeps, a lot of determination and a bit of sunshine drove the Wildthings to success, with 211-209 win on July 11. The victory was clinched by the end of the individual events, and the Wildthings went on to win five relays.

Langley's team of Nathan Johnson, Nathan Robinson, Duncan Proxmire and Jake Holzapfel broke the Wildthings' boys' 15-18 200M medley relay record

with a time of 1:57.65. The previous record of 1:58.64 has been in place for 12 years, since 2003.

This week's swimmers who took first place in two events are: Colin Walter (boys' 8&U 25M freestyle, 25M butterfly); Tessa Jones (girls' 8&U 25M freestyle, 25M butterfly); Luke Watson (boys' 9-10 50M freestyle, 25M butterfly); Isabel Schone (girls' 11-12 50M freestyle, 50M backstroke); and Matthew Buchanan (boys' 11-12 50M backstroke, 50M butterfly).

Single blue ribbons were earned by: Campbell Collins (girls' 9-10 50M freestyle); John Derringer (boys' 8&U 25M backstroke); Maddie Santos (girls' 8&U 25M backstroke); Brady Quinn (boys' 9-10 50M backstroke); Evan Poulos (boys' 8&U



Langley's 9-10 Boys sweep the Individual Backstroke Event, with Brady Quinn in first place, Peter Kaldes in second, and Tavian Jones in third. This was one of six sweeps in the meet against Pinecrest.

25M breaststroke); Kelly Crittenberger (boys' 9-10 50M breaststroke); Benjamin Scott (boys' 11-12 50M breaststroke); Audrey Wallach (girls' 11-12 50M breaststroke); and Kate Walter (girls' 11-12 50M butterfly).

The five blue ribbon relay teams were: boys' 8&U 100M freestyle (Beckett Collins, Wilson Buttz, Noah Golesorkhi, Colin Walter); girls' 8&U 100M freestyle (Margit Crittenberger, Marina Watson, Katie Alms, Tessa Jones); boys' 9-10 100M medley (Brady Quinn, Kelly Crittenberger, Luke Watson, Collin Troy); boys' 11-12 100M medley (Matthew Buchanan, Benjamin Scott, Sebastian Silvestro, Nico Carrion); and girls' 11-12 100M medley (Isabel Schone, Audrey Wallach, Kate Walter, Liliana Schone).



Giuka's garden in Alexandria.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION



Aronia Berries

Backyard Vegetable Gardens Feed Multi-Cultural Cuisines

In Fairfax County, tomatoes are a staple of local gardens along with peppers, cucumbers, potatoes, beans and herbs like mint, oregano and cilantro.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

There's nothing like a juicy red tomato fresh out of the backyard garden to brighten up a summertime salad or a sandwich. Or a bittermelon, aronia berries or "paradise apple," as persimmons are known in Bulgaria. The multi-cultural population in Fairfax County has grown roots in the backyard vegetable garden.

"In my country, the name is paradise apple," said Jiuka, an Alexandria resident from Bulgaria, as she held a small, green persimmon fruit on a tree in her yard. Jiuka's yard was full of cucumber plants, eggplant, green peppers, squash, tomato and okra, as well as aronia berries and drenka, another Bulgarian favorite. Planting her own fruits and vegetables "is very important, I came from a country where we had good agriculture," she said. She does all the gardening herself. "I learned from my mom," Jiuka said.

It's not just the "backyard" garden for Springfield resident Henry Nguyen, who lives in a corner lot that is full of vegetables, herbs and fruit, mostly of an Asian variety. His grandmother "does all the work when it comes to the garden," Nguyen said. There are Bartlett Pears growing on a few trees in the yard, with melons, red peppers and bittermelon, an Asian specialty that gives soup its flavor. Bittermelon has another unexpected use in the garden, said Nguyen. "We used to have deer, they took a bite of the bittermelon and never came back," he said.

Some of Nguyen's vegetables and herbs go to local Vietnamese restaurants too where they know the owners, he said, like the Golden Cow, Pho Factory and Bangkok Noodle, all in Annandale.

JIUKA AND NGUYEN are not alone in the



Red card in Nguyen's garden wards off animals.



Early stages of a bittermelon.

backyard garden craze. In fact, there is a surge of gardeners growing their own food in the last few years, according to the National Gardening Association, based in Williston, Vt. In their report, "Garden to Table: A 5-Year Look at Food Gardening in America," Americans growing their own food in home or community gardens went from 36 million households in 2008 to 42 million in 2013, an increase of 17 percent. The NGA attributes the increase to federal agencies increasing awareness and educational efforts, and by First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move," initiative that features food grown in the White House Kitchen Garden.

In Fairfax County, tomatoes are a staple of local gardens along with peppers, cucumbers, potatoes, beans, and herbs like mint, oregano and cilantro. Tomato gardening is what most of the questions the county Master Gardeners get, said Adria Bordas, a senior extension agent at the Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener helpdesk.

The Fairfax County Master Gardeners

Association, Inc. (FCMGA) is a nonprofit organization of volunteers who provide research-based horticultural information, tips, techniques and advice to home gardeners in the community.

Bordas noted that one of the strong points about vegetable gardening in Fairfax County is that gardens "can be a four-season veggie garden if you work at it with frost protection," she said in an email.

In Jiuka's garden, she has the tomatoes and cucumbers, but also a wide variety of fruit she likes to eat because by growing her own, she knows what goes into them as far as pesticides and fertilizers. "I try to be organic," she said. Bordas noted this as a possible healthier aspect of homegrown vegetables too.

Although Jiuka doesn't have bittermelon to fend off unwanted guests that nibble on the fruits and vegetables like Nguyen, she constantly battles with the local animals over the garden, especially the okra. "I have one rabbit that likes these leaves," she said. She puts nets over her blackberry and raspberry plants, but it's a constant struggle. "I'm

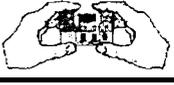
Highlights from Report

- NGA report "Garden to Table: A 5-Year Look at Food Gardening in America" states:
- ❖ 1 in 3 households are now growing food, highest levels seen in a decade
 - ❖ Americans spent \$3.5 billion on food gardening in 2013, up from \$2.5 billion in 2008
 - ❖ 76 percent of all households with a food garden grew vegetables, a 19 percent increase since 2008
 - ❖ Households with incomes under \$35,000 participating in food gardening grew to 11 million, up 38 percent since 2008

fighting with birds, they like it a lot," but admitted she's the imposter when it comes to the native birds and mammals.

BESIDES BEING FRESH AND ORGANIC, some of these exotic fruits and vegetables have health benefits that are not known to many in this area. Bittermelon, known as bitter gourd to some, has been known to be used for gout, cholera, eye problems and even hangovers. Aronia berries are used for urinary tract disorders, and another Bulgarian vegetable, drenka, helps digestion.

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“Scant” Know For Sure Anymore



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

After six years, four months and two weeks since being diagnosed with stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer (the “terminal” kind), I can say with certainty that I have no sense of what my next CT scan, scheduled for July 15th, will indicate. Previously (multiple scans over multiple years), I’ve felt something in my upper chest/lungs where the largest tumors are located and the subsequent scan showed nothing of consequence. On other scan occasions, I’ve felt nothing of consequence in my chest and the scan showed tumor growth, enough to change my medication. On still other scan occasions, I have felt something in my chest (where the tumors are located), and sure enough the CT scan showed some growth. Finally, and conversely, on still other CT scans, I’ve felt nothing of consequence and there was no tumor activity of concern. As a result of these four contradictory indicators of possible growth/no growth, for the weeks, then days, leading up to my every-three-month CT scan, I never know what to think I feel any more than I know what to feel I think. Thirty or so scans into my cancer-controlled life, I’m still teetering emotionally before, during and after the computerized tomography. And though the actual scan itself takes less than a minute, the damage is done and can only be undone after we learn the results.

Which oddly enough presents another similarly juxtaposed problem. In the early years, during our post-scan “scanzxiety,” waiting the week or so until our next face-to-face appointment with my oncologist to learn the results was unbearable, so usually I would call a day or two later and get a message to him or my oncology nurse, attempting to speed up a response. Typically, I would hear back sooner rather than later. Eventually, e-mail communication became part of the process, and after my scan was completed, I started e-mailing my oncologist directly, advising him of my status and asking for results.

Usually, the news was good. Occasionally the news was not. And though my oncologist would rather have delivered bad news in person, he certainly could appreciate how difficult it was for me/patients to wait, so he continued to e-mail. One time however, the post-scan e-mail he sent us was discouraging and said he would discuss it further at our next appointment, scheduled as usual within the week. When he saw us in person, he was surprisingly upbeat and immediately told us/apologized for having e-mailed us some incomplete information concerning my scan, and told us instead that the “results were good,” not bad, something about the radiologist comparing the wrong scan (he had me at “results were good”), the exact kind of potential miscommunication waiting and discussing results in person eliminates. As a result, we have, with experience gained over the last few years, begun to be able to wait for the appointment to discuss the scan and not stress too much in the interim, generally.

Since we stopped e-mailing and requesting scan results, my oncologist oddly enough has, on his own initiative, e-mailed us good news, not e-mailed us bad news and not e-mailed us good news. This inconsistency has remade the time leading up to the scan stressful again, because now we don’t know what not hearing from the oncologist might mean; heck, it might mean nothing, it just might just be that he’s on vacation (as was the actual case one time and it was no one’s responsibility to inform us of anything so no one did). Of course, we didn’t know, so naturally we went negative thinking it was bad news.

Similar to the CT scan results meaning/not meaning, this is not exactly two halves making a whole, this is more like eight quarters making up two different wholes. Unfortunately, easy is the last thing it has become, when it’s the first thing it needs to be. Cancer is tough enough on its own. It doesn’t need any help. I’m extremely grateful to still have a chance. I just wish I had more of a choice.

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

Fairfax County’s free **Family Caregiver Telephone Support Group** meets by phone on Tuesday, Aug. 11, 7-8 p.m. to discuss “Keeping Organized as a Caregiver.” Register at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices and click on Caregiver Support. Call 703-324-5484, TTY 711.

Fairfax County’s **Long Term Care Ombudsman Program** needs **volunteer advocates** for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Contact Lisa Callahan at 703-324-5861, TTY 711 or email Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov. Also visit the Northern Virginia Long Term Care Ombudsman Program at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/litcombudsman/.

The **Wakefield Senior Center** in **Annandale** needs an experienced **Canasta Player**, an **Art Instructor** and certified instructors **Pilates** and **Ballroom Dance**. For these and other opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

The **Herndon Adult Day Health Care Center** needs a **Piano Player** to play classical or music from the 1960s and before. For these and other opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

The **Hollin Hall Senior Center** in **Alexandria** needs instructors for the following classes: **Basic Guitar**, **Italian**, **Pottery** and **Ballroom Dance**. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

Fairfax County Meals on Wheels needs **coordinators**, **co-coordinators**, and **substitute drivers** for routes throughout the county. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

The **Little River Glen Senior Center** in **Fairfax** needs a **Computer Lab Assistant** and a **Zumba Gold Instructor**. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

The **Kingstowne Center for Active Adults** in **Alexandria** needs a **Country Western Line Dance Instructor**, **Mosaic Art** or **Jewelry Making Instructor**, **Hula Hoop Class Leader** and an **African Style Dance Instructor**. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

Fairfax County needs volunteers to **drive older adults to medical appointments** and wellness programs. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.



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 \$1,299,000



4090 Ridgeview Circle
 McLean 22101
 \$1,249,000

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