

Great Falls CONNECTION

HomeLifeStyle

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PHOTO BY STEVE HIBBARD

DECEMBER 9-15, 2015

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— REAL STORIES FROM THE EXPRESS LANES —

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Stephanie's story was one of our winning entries in our "Express Lanes Love Story" promotion.



The lighting of the Christmas Tree during the 25th Annual Celebration of Lights and Great Falls Holiday Fest on Sunday, Dec. 6 at the Great Falls Village Center in Great Falls.



Visiting with Santa are Jackson Whitt, 4 1/2, with his mom Cheryl of Great Falls.

Celebration of Lights in Great Falls

Hundreds of people attended the 25th Annual Celebration of Lights and Great Falls Holiday Fest on Sunday, Dec. 6 at the Great Falls Village Center in Great Falls. Santa and Mrs. Claus arrived by antique fire truck and lit the giant Christmas Tree. There was a petting zoo, pony rides, a blazing yule log, and choral groups that sang holiday music.

Waiting in line to see Santa was Lauren Carbaugh and her family, who have been coming to the event for the past 17 years. "It's just a wonderful Great Falls tradition," she said.

Her daughter Charlotte, 10, added: "I've been coming since I was a little girl and it's part of our Christmas."

— STEVE HIBBARD



Long-time McLean resident and community leader Bob Alden with his dog Ginger.



Singing holiday tunes are the St. Francis Creche Preschool, part of St. Francis Episcopal Church, in Great Falls.



Cleo Dimi of Great Falls takes a pony ride.

Bless Brittany's Tree

GFCA Legacy White Oak Tree planting project widens its canopy of interest.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Brittany Geserick-Beschen's love for white oaks has deep roots.

She calls a mature multi-century oak in her Great Falls front yard, "The Big Guy." She set up a table and chair where she relaxes and daydreams by its side. She talks to her tree, sings to it, blesses it.

"I think of all the history when I sit under it. I think about our first president who was young when the tree was young. It survived the Civil War," said Geserick-Beschen, 27, of Great Falls.

"I like trees, oh gosh, I wish you could see it," she said.

"She is a history buff, particularly American History and sometimes she wonders about the historical events her tree has lived through," said her mother Beverly Geserick. "We are not sure but think the tree is over 200 years old. Someone once said 300 years."

When she and her husband constructed their house in 1984, "the contractor wanted to cut down the tree while clearing for building," said Geserick. "I wanted to keep it and to work the driveway around it."

The driveway was cut and they built a retaining wall. Although some white oaks from the property have died over the years, "The Big Guy" is still "going strong," she said.

"This tree has become very special to our daughter," she said. "It is her pet tree."

"It's just majestic, it's just such a grand tree," she said.

"The large white oaks are reaching maturity and dying and aren't being replenished," said Geserick, who has noticed diminishing amounts of acorns in recent years.

"This year we have plenty and I have planted them on our lot," she said. "The deer love to eat the new saplings and that is one reason why these trees are not being replenished."

BILL CANIS of the Great Falls Citizens Association has spearheaded an effort to plant white oaks in the center of Great Falls.

"The white oaks are native to where we live. When you drive around Great Falls and McLean and you see a really huge tree, there is a 90 percent chance what you are seeing is a white oak," said Bill Canis, vice president of Great Falls Citizens Association. "They are majestic giant trees. They live to be 200 to 250 years old."

Last year, 16 trees were donated to be planted in various spots in Great Falls. This spring, six were planted and this fall, three more by the Old Schoolhouse.

"We wanted to be a part of that especially given the tree loss in the center of town," said Geserick.

GFCA plans to continue the white



Brittany Geserick-Beschen sang Edelweiss, "bloom and grow forever," to her oak tree that was planted in front of the Old Schoolhouse.

PHOTOS BY KEN MOORE/THE CONNECTION



Brittany Geserick-Beschen with her mother Beverly Geserick. "I love the idea that they will be around a long time after me," her mother said.

White Oak Project

During the first year of the Legacy White Oak Project, GFCA raised enough money to plant 17 white oaks around Great Falls, including at the library, at Colvin Mill and Smith Chapel United Methodist Church, Riverbend Park, Nike Park, Turner Farm, Grange, Old Schoolhouse and Lockmead Park.

This past year, donors helped GFCA plant six trees in the spring and three in the fall, including three on the campus by the Old School House.

Local residents have been buying white oaks through the program and planting them in their own yards.

The native white oak is considered the king of east coast trees because of its potential to grow into a very large, strong tree, according to Canis. "They are a legacy from our rural past," he said.

GFCA plans to continue the white oak program in 2016; interested residents should watch the GFCA website—www.gfca.org—for details or contact GFCA Vice President Bill Canis at bcanis@yahoo.com.

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Local residents have been buying white oaks through the program and planting them in their own yards.

BRITTANY'S TREE was planted by the Old Schoolhouse around the same time the historic oak at the intersection was torn down by VDOT.

Brittany and her mother picked the precise spot her new tree would be planted.

When Brittany watched her new tree, "The Scraggly Guy," makes its new home, she sang Edelweiss to it.

"Bloom and grow forever," she sang. "I want it to live a long time. For me, it's a song with a blessing and encouragement," said Geserick-Beschen.

She asks people to pray for her tree, which is near two others planted by the Old Schoolhouse.

"I love the idea that they will be around a long time after me," her mother said.

A BIG SNOW during the winter of 2009-2010 broke a large limb, "larger than many trees," from the oak in the Geserick's front yard.

Geserick's husband Darrell Beschen cut the tree into logs and then rough split them and let them dry for two years.

"I had two crosses made by Kenny Hott of Crossmember Crosses and a small framed mirror, pen, and hair comb by Bill Hardy of Turnstyles," said Geserick.

Brittany has worn the comb every day since May of 2012.

She understands that VDOT felt it needed to cut down the tree at the intersection but wishes the wood could have been used for something in Great Falls.

And perhaps for the future if other trees need to come down.

SOME IN GREAT FALLS believe more effort could have been made to save the oak at the intersection of Georgetown Pike and Walker Road.

GFCA hired an arborist from North Carolina who specializes in management of historic trees, often those by roadways.

"This last oak fell not to science or reason, but misinformation and fear," said Guy Meilleur, who inspected the tree.

"We climbed into the canopy, and tomographed the trunks. Applying European research specific to the fungus involved, we specified standard pruning. VDOT obtained reports that were based on incomplete inspections, engineering formulas, and many assumptions, recommended removal," said Guy Meilleur.

Old-Fashioned Holiday Fun at Colvin Run Mill

On Saturday, Dec. 12, Santa visits so children can share their Christmas wish lists. Take a step back in time by enjoying the Christmas tree trimmed with Victorian decorations, and join the costumed 49th Virginia Volunteer Infantry caroling around a bonfire. Warm yourself by the fire as you roast marshmallows, and work together to make a family craft. Event is from 3-6 p.m. Tickets are \$5 per person. Colvin Run Mill is located at 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/colvinrunmill/>.



PHOTO BY RICHARD SUIB

Christmas Time in the Village

An oak tree, decorated for Christmas with diamonds-like lights, in front of the Adeler Jewelers shop.

Author Laura Elliott Reading

Great Falls author Laura Elliott will read and sign copies of her new novel "Davinci's Tiger" at the Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, on Thursday, Dec. 17 at 7:30 p.m. Call 703-757 for more information.

"Welcome to Our World," A Musical

A musical for Christmas written by Claire Cloninger and Robert Sterling. The musical includes traditional carols, newer

praise songs and, of course, original material. There's something for everyone in the family. "Welcome to Our World" will be at the Great Falls Methodist Church, 10100 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, on Sunday, Dec. 13 at 10 a.m. Visit www.greatfallsumc.org or call 703-759-3705.

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Safety Net for Holiday Celebrations

It's an opportunity to talk about responsibility, alcohol and planning ahead.

The holiday party season is here, and we will almost all be celebrating in some way. Some ways will involve celebrations that include alcohol.

It's up to you to make a plan to get home safely.

Plan to bring a designated driver. Plan to party (and live) where you can take public transportation. Plan to celebrate at home or someplace where you can spend the night. Plan to abstain.

And if all of that fails, the Washington Regional Alcohol Project has a safety net for you.

WRAP, a local nonprofit organization, will offer free cab rides to would-be impaired drivers throughout Northern Virginia during the winter holidays.

The annual Holiday SoberRide program will operate nightly from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. starting Friday, Dec. 11, 2015, and continuing until Thursday, Jan. 1, 2016 as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk, holiday period.

During these times, area residents 21 and over, celebrating with alcohol can call the toll-free SoberRide phone number 1-800-200-TAXI for a no-cost (up to \$30 fare), safe way home. Callers will be responsible for fare amounts

over \$30.

WRAP also offers free cab rides for other holidays, including Halloween, Independence Day, Cinco de Mayo, and more.

Concerns about consequences of driving under the influence are well founded.

In Fairfax County in 2014 there were 740 alcohol-related crashes, which included 12 alcohol related fatalities and 476 alcohol related injuries. (Overall in Fairfax County in 2014, there were 13,680 total crashes including 32 fatalities and 7,649 injuries.)

In 2014, there were no fatal vehicular accidents in the City of Alexandria. But of the 1,777 total crashes, 99 were alcohol-related; and of the 757 injuries in crashes, 60 were alcohol-related.

In Arlington in 2014, there were 235 alcohol related crashes, with two alcohol-related fatalities and 78 alcohol related injuries. (Overall in Arlington in 2014, there were 2,469 with five fatalities and 1,094 injuries.)

In 2013, 10,076 people were killed in alcohol-impaired driving crashes, accounting for nearly one-third of all traffic-related deaths in the United States, according to the CDC. Tens of thousands more were injured. Holidays lead to an increase in impaired driving, the Christmas through New Year season in particular.

EDITORIAL

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Climate Scientists Warnings Go Unheeded in Congress

To the Editor:

In this vituperative political age of partisanship, it is no wonder that 86 percent of voters disapprove of Congress, a body in which the national good seems to be trumped by political ideology, grandstanding, name-calling, pandering, and distortion of the truth—all of which gets in the way of common-sense governance.

Some of this elbowing justifiably begins with legitimate differences of opinion. How big should the government be? How much should the government regulate? What should be our national position on social issues such as abortion, gay marriage or gun regulation? What trade-offs are we willing to accept to protect ourselves from terrorists? How do we respond to the income gap between rich and poor? How do we stimulate job growth and deal with compensation for work? How robust should our military be? How should our health care system be structured? Answers to these and multiple other complex questions often start with our values, our history, and our notions of fairness.

Like most of us, I have strong feelings about how best to proceed

on many of these issues. At the same time, I recognize that others have very different but equally impassioned views. Our political process is supposed to be about sorting out differences like these. The majority of us presumably hope we could marshal at least some civility as we struggle to find a way forward that is in our national best interest. The goal for most of us, it would seem based on the record of Congressional approval, is for Congress to give us outcomes that work.

Sometimes, however, an issue comes along that so defies common sense and incontrovertible fact that it should make open-minded people wonder if Congress can resolve anything. Who would imagine that despite dire warnings from virtually every climate scientist in the world, a majority of members of the House of Representatives would vote to embarrass the United States during the world's most important conference on climate change by voting to limit the Environmental Protection Agency on its rules to lower power plant emissions? The evidence that our world's climate is rapidly changing in ways that will lower

the life-expectancy of our children is overwhelming. And yet the majority of our elected representatives in the House, driven apparently by narrow party ideology, has actually impeded solutions. Do campaign contributions from carbon industries and other special interests have anything to do with it?

Those members of Congress (including, regrettably, our own representative in the 10th Congressional District of Virginia) who vote to trivialize or combat this issue, are putting their credibility and judgment on the line for dealing with almost any issue and

Safe Ride Home

WRAP's 2015 Holiday SoberRide program will be offered from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. nightly from Dec. 11, 2015 to Jan. 1, 2016. To receive a free cab ride home (up to a \$30 fare), call 800-200-8294 (TAXI). You must be 21 or older to use the SoberRide service. See www.SoberRide.com.

Since 1993, WRAP's SoberRide program has provided more than 63,000 free cab rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.

We know that many young people over 21 are living at home with parents, or will be visiting for the holidays. Parents, be brave. Have a conversation with your children, whether they are under or over 21. Be sure those over 21 have a plan, and are equipped with the SoberRide number.

SoberRide is not available for underage drinkers, but parents still should talk to their children about their plans, and tell them out loud that you expect them not to drive impaired and not to get into a car with an impaired driver. Tell them to call you, and you'll come get them if necessary.

The consequences and vulnerabilities of drinking to excess are significant, more so for underage drinkers and young adults, even beyond drinking and driving. Don't let the opportunity to talk about it pass you by.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

thus, I would hazard, are risking their endorsement from us, the voters, to hold their seats. Their incomprehensible votes on climate change help to explain why we think so little of Congress and particularly so little of the House of Representatives. Climate change is an issue in which the stakes are so clear-cut and the facts so convincing that there should be no hesitation about moving forward with the enthusiastic backing of our elected representatives in both parties.

Jonathan Fisher
Great Falls

Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors.

Send to:

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

By e-mail: north@connectionnewspapers.com

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:
greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com

Kemal Kurspahic
Editor ♦ 703-778-9414
kemal@connectionnewspapers.com

Abigail Constantino
Editorial Assistant
703-778-9410 ext.427
aconstantino@connectionnewspapers.com

Ken Moore
Community Reporter
240-393-2448
kmoore@connectionnewspapers.com

Jon Roetman
Sports Editor ♦ 703-752-4013
jroetman@connectionnewspapers.com
@jonroetman

ADVERTISING:
For advertising information
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431

Salome Howard-Gaibler
Display Advertising
703-778-9421
salome@connectionnewspapers.com

Andrea Smith
Classified Advertising
703-778-9411
classified@connectionnewspapers.com

Debbie Funk
National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunc@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin
Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor & Publisher
Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Executive Vice President
Jerry Vernon
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor in Chief
Steven Mauren
Managing Editor
Kemal Kurspahic
Photography:
Deb Cobb, Craig Sterbutzel
Art/Design:
Laurence Foong, John Heinly
Production Manager:
Geovani Flores

Special Assistant to the Publisher
Jeanne Theismann
jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com
@TheismannMedia

CIRCULATION: 703-778-9426
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com



FAITH

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

The **Churches of the Ecumenical Council** are offering a Blue Christmas worship opportunity Sunday, Dec. 13 at 2:30 p.m. at Katie's Coffee House, 760 Walker Rd., Great Falls. This is an opportunity to come together expressing the griefs, losses and challenges of our lives as we connect to hope and faith. Call Carol 703-582-1640 with questions.

Chancel Choir, children and youth of the Great Falls United Methodist Church invite you to join them for worship as they offer "Welcome to Our World," a musical for Christmas written by Claire Cloninger and Robert Sterling on Sunday, Dec. 13 at 10 a.m. The musical includes traditional carols, newer praise songs and original material.

Robert R. "Mitch" Mitchell, Director of Music Ministries at Great Falls UMC, former U.S. Army Bandsman, and local area piano teacher/musician will be conducting the choir and narrators. Church keyboardist Thomas Pandolfi will be accompanying. Great Falls United Methodist Church is located at 10100 Georgetown Pike, right next to the Fire Station in the center of the village. All are welcome.

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 **Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax** will hold "From Newtown to New Hope: An Interfaith Memorial Service" on Monday, Dec. 14 at 7:30 p.m. at 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Clergy and community leaders from Fairfax County and beyond will gather to honor the 90,000 victims of gun violence and to call for people of faith to renew their commitment to ending gun violence at an Interfaith Memorial Service. 703-281-4230.

Celebrate Advent and Christmas at Trin-

ity United Methodist Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean. Weekly worship is Sundays at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m.; Wednesdays at noon. Holiday events include:

Sunday, Dec. 13, Children's Musical, 10:30 a.m. service.

Sunday, Dec. 20, Lessons and Carols, 10:30 a.m. service.

Thursday, Dec. 24, Christmas Eve, 5 p.m. family service; 8 p.m., Candlelight and Communion; 11 a.m., Candlelight and Communion. www.imtrinity.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.

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.

Trinity United Methodist Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean. Sunday worship services are at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday School for adults is at 9:30 a.m. and for children during the 10:30 a.m. worship service. Youth Group for grades 7-12 meets Sundays at 6 p.m. A 20-minute service of Holy Communion is held each Wednesday at noon. 703-356-3312 or umtrinity.org.

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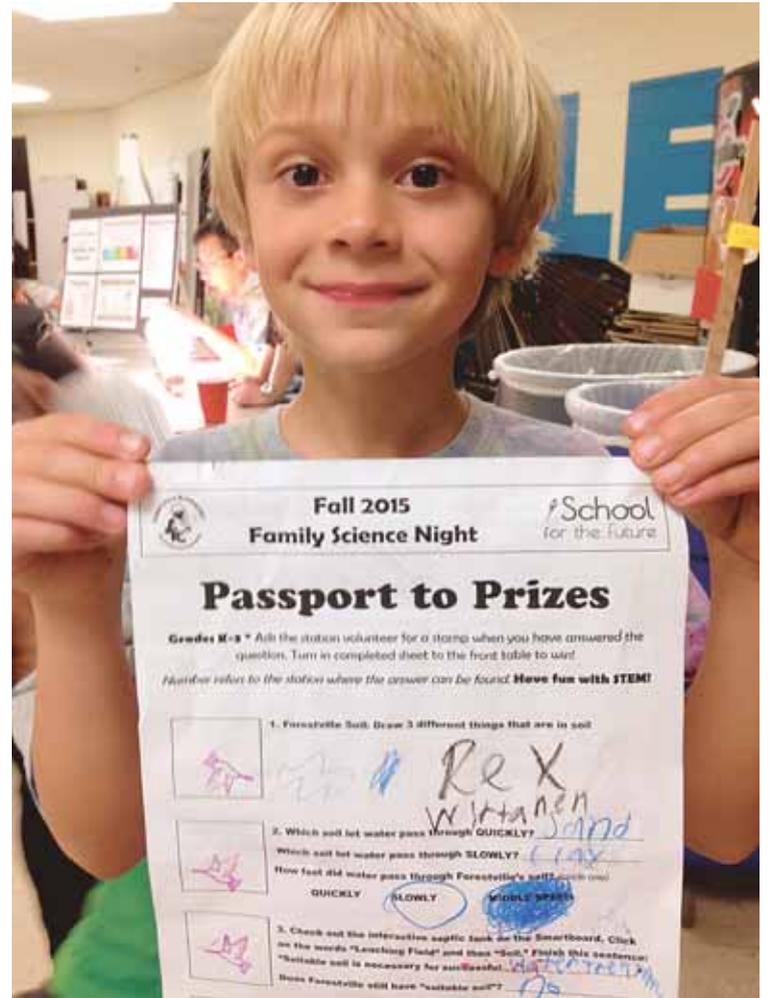
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NEWS

Forestville Parent and PTA co-vice president of Curriculum Niu-Niu Chen of Great Falls volunteers at the event to help children observe and calculate the energy costs of three different kinds of bulbs.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Second-grader and Forestville Elementary student Rex Wirtanen of Great Falls shows off his finished Passport to Prizes worksheet.

Forestville Holds Family STEM Night

Forestville Elementary School held “Creative STEM” on Friday, Nov. 6. The event was a Renovation-themed Family Science Night. Forestville will start its scheduled renovation in early 2016. The Science Night was developed by Great Falls-based nonprofit iSchool for the Future, which offers programming that blends STEM, Art and 21st Century Life Skills.

Families worked together to learn about Forestville’s environment and answer questions. Twelve stations examined two themes: changes to the school’s sewer system and the expansion and storage needs of its library.

To understand why the school is switching from a septic tank to a sewer system, visitors learned about

Forestville’s soil texture and how it affects percolation. They felt sand, silt, and clay and watched the passage of water through differing mixtures of rocks and soil.

To understand the future expansion implications of Fairfax County’s decision to install a large 8-inch diameter pipe (rather than a 6-inch pipe), children used kinetic and raisins to calculate volume, surface area, and slope.

“It was so exciting to see the students of all grade levels engaged in solving real-world problems which must be solved in the construction process. I loved seeing the children weigh library books and come

SEE STEM, PAGE 9

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NEWS

Forestville Parent Wendy Wallace and daughter Riley, of Great Falls, learn about the movement of liquids and solids using pipes and raisins from volunteer Eric Wallace, an eighth-grader at Kilmer Middle School.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

STEM Night at Forestville

FROM PAGE 8

up with solutions for a temporary library location," said Forestville librarian Margaret Bylund.

"I am not an educator, but I am always learning something new. From that experience I have found that learning is much more effective when all the senses are engaged and when the information is relevant to our present life. This is what this science night has done," said Forestville PTA president Jennisse Silvestri.

iSchool for the Future offers Creative STEM enrichment programs in Great Falls, Reston, Falls Church and Alexandria. It works in collaboration with partners to develop programs that are place-based so as to engage students in learning that is relevant to their lives.

The Reston Home Depot was a major partner, donating materials and supplies and constructing specialized equipment for hands-on activities. MOM's Organic Market also donated supplies used on multiple stations. Additional equipment was provided by Falls Church-based Markon Solutions and Dominion Electric.



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"I never wanted to leave my home, but moving to Brightview Great Falls was the best decision we made. The food is delicious and we particularly enjoy the musical entertainment and the friendships that we have made since moving here." – Bill W.

"At Brightview I still have my independence. I love everything here and I have everything here that I need. My family is welcome anytime and the best part is they no longer worry about me." – Sophia C.



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Unique Gift Ideas Found in Great Falls

For finding the perfect holiday gift for that special someone, **Adeler Jewelers** offers custom-designed jewelry for every occasion. They highlight unique gemstones and pearls and elevate them into jewelry that can be worn on any occasion. The family-owned and operated store is the oldest established retail business in Great Falls, since 1981, and prides itself on providing excellent service. And everything is

custom-made on the premises. "The holidays are a wonderful time of the year to embrace moments with family to build traditions. And jewelry is a great vessel or tool to capture those moments because it is an heirloom that can be passed down through generations," said Wendy Adeler Hall, vice president of business development.

Adeler Jewelers is located at 772 Walker Road, in the Village Center at Great Falls. Visit www.adelerjewelers.com.

PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION



Fine artist Coty Dickson, who works at Artists on the Green in the Great Falls Village Center.

Artists on the Green, located in the Great Falls Village Center, is a 12-artist co-op that serves as an artists' studio offering painting classes and workshops for children and adults. The artists work in oils and acrylics and offer their original, hand-painted works for sale from roughly \$75 to \$1,200.

This weekend, everything was on sale at 20 percent to half off.

"Purchasing a painting for a gift is not only appreciated but it does appreciate in value," said Coty Dickson, one of the fine artists.

Artists on the Green is located at 776B Walker Road, in the Great Falls Village Center. Visit Coty Dickson at www.coty dickson.com.

At Viva La Diva Luxury Consignments, located in the Great Falls Shopping Center, store owner Judy Stone carries women's and girl's clothing, shoes and accessory items that would make perfect holiday gifts. The inventory in varying price ranges comes from some of the finest closets in Great Falls and McLean.

"Consignment store shoppers are among the best-dressed because they can afford to be," said Judy Stone.

The store at 9843 Georgetown Pike in Great Falls is open Mon.-Sat. from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; and Sunday holiday hours from 1-5 p.m.

— STEVE HIBBARD



Viva La Diva offers a double-handled flap Chanel bag with a standard CC logo with a chain and leather strap. Priced at \$2,499.



Pictured (left): A Diamond Crescent 18-inch necklace in 18-kt white gold, 18-kt yellow and red gold. It is extremely versatile and can be worn from day to evening. The price is \$3,900.

Pictured (middle): Mirror Mirror Collection Earrings that come in many gemstones, including amethyst, citrine, and clear quartz with or without diamonds, in 18-kt white, yellow and red gold. The price is \$2,900.

Pictured (right): Freshwater Baroque Pearl Earrings that come in 18-kt gold with diamonds. Can be worn more for dress-up occasions. The price is \$7,700.



Fine artist Carol Howard, who works at Artists' Atelier in the Great Falls Village Center in Great Falls, with two of her recent pieces.

Artists' Atelier is a 10-person co-op with four oil painters, three acrylic painters, one photographer, one fabric artist, and one botanical artist occupying the studio spaces. The artists do their art work in the space and everything they do is available for purchase.

Fine artist Carol Howard, who currently has her works hanging at Katie's Coffee House at the Old Brogue Restaurant in the Great

Falls Village Center, sells her hand-painted pieces on linen from \$300 for a 12x12 up to \$900 for a 16x20 framed.

The Artists' Atelier is located at 756 Walker Road, in the Great Falls Village Center, in Great Falls. The hours are Wednesdays, noon to 4 p.m.; and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., or whenever the flag is out, it means someone is working. Visit www.GreatFallsAtelier.com.



Viva La Diva offers Stella and Dot bangle bracelets costume jewelry priced from \$40 to \$50.

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

WEDNESDAY-SATURDAY/ DEC. 9-13

Conservatory Ballet's "The Nutcracker." Check for times. Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. More than 85 area students make holiday magic come to life performing in Conservatory Ballet's 43rd annual production of The Nutcracker. www.restoncommunitycenter.com. 703-476-4500.

THURSDAY/DEC. 10

Naked Health Holidays. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Clyde's, 8332 Leesburg Pike, Vienna. 'Tis the season to party, eat, drink. Do it all without putting on weight. It can be done. Find out how to maximize the eat and drink and minimize the bulge. \$45. Dawn@nakedhealth.com. 703-217-8383.

My First Book Club. 4:30 p.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Avenue, McLean. Each month we will read a book and participate in activities and crafts related to the story. You do not need to read the title in advance to participate. Grades Kindergarten-2. 703-356-0770.

FRIDAY/DEC.11

Holiday Tea. 2-4 p.m. Our Lady of Good Counsel, 8601 Wolftrap Road, Vienna. Adults 55 and older are invited to celebrate at a Holiday Tea. Sponsored by the Shepard Center of Oakton-Vienna and the Vienna Parks and Recreation Department, the afternoon includes tea, snacks, and dancing to the music of Tallwood Trio. \$10. Reserve a ticket at 703-281-0538.

SATURDAY/DEC. 12

Traditional Holiday Tale, "A Christmas Carol." 1 and 4 p.m. The Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Perhaps the best loved holiday story of all time, Theatre IV's adaptation of Charles Dickens' classic is particularly suited to children. \$10, \$15. <http://mcleancenter.org/alden-theatre>. 703-790-0123.

CHO Christmas Store. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Vienna Presbyterian Church, 124 Park Street, NE, Vienna. Last year because of the generosity of the community and churches, we were able to make Christmas a very special time for 450 children in this area at our annual Christmas Store. We are collecting gently used jackets and bikes, new toys, gift cards for teens, and food gift cards for the Store. Volunteers are also needed to help clients shop. For more information, call CHO at 703-861-7614 and leave a message in box #1. Any overall questions, contact at edjporter@gmail.com.

Community Irish Ceili and Set Dance. 6:30-10 p.m. Frying Pan Park Visitors Center, 2739 West Ox Road, Herndon. Call for directions, 703-437-9101. Wear flat, comfortable shoes and lightweight clothing. Holiday headgear for a chance at an extra door prize ticket. \$15. 703-631-9179.

Troop 55 Open House. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. St. Francis Episcopal Church, 9220 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. The Boy Scouts of Troop 55 would like to warmly extend an invitation to all WEBELO 2 Cub Scouts, 5th, and 6th grade boys to attend an open house. RSVP to Raymond Merrill at raymond.merrill@gmail.com.

SUNDAY/DEC. 13

"Welcome to Our World." 10 a.m. Great Falls Methodist Church, 10100

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 13

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 12

Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. a musical for Christmas written by Claire Cloninger and Robert Sterling. The musical includes traditional carols, newer praise songs and, of course, original material. There's something for everyone in the family. www.greatfallsumc.org. 703-759-3705.

Christmas Festival. 6-7:30 p.m. Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. The church choirs will be joined by a string ensemble as they prepare for Christmas with a program entitled "Dance and Sing! Christ is Born!" The music includes those carols written with the rhythms of dance of many styles as well as songs about dance, including the final movement of the Bach Brandenburg Concerto No. 5. The program will be followed by dessert in St. Andrews Hall. Free. www.lewinsville.org.

Colonial Wassail. 1-4 p.m. Claude Moore Colonial Farm, 6310 Georgetown Pike, McLean. In the dead of winter the Claude Moore Colonial Farm's apple trees need encouragement to bear well in the coming year. Gather in the Farm's orchard to wassail the trees with singing, dancing and chants to ensure a "howling crop." Enjoy hot spiced cider, sugar cakes, a roaring bonfire and 18th-century games. Adults, \$3. 3-12 years, \$2. Under 3, free. Weather permitting. www.1771.org.

MONDAY/DEC. 14

"From Newtown to New Hope: An Interfaith Memorial Service." 7:30 p.m. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Clergy and community leaders from Fairfax County and beyond will gather to honor the 90,000 victims of gun violence and to call for people of faith to renew their commitment to ending gun violence at an Interfaith Memorial Service. 703-281-4230.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 16

Walk, Waddle and Wiggle. 10:30 a.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Avenue, McLean. Animals move in many different ways. Walk like a turtle, waddle like a penguin and wiggle like a worm as we explore the world of animal movement through music, activities and stories. Presented by Riverbend Park and sponsored by the Friends of the Dolley Madison Library. Ages 3-5. 703-356-0770.

THURSDAY/DEC. 17

Holiday Crafts for Children. 5:30-9 p.m. Meadowlark, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. Visit the craft table and make a free craft to decorate for the holidays. http://winterwalkoflights.com. 703-255-3631.

Author Reading. 7:30 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike. Local author Laura Elliott will read and sign copies of her new novel "DaVinci's Tiger." Free. 703-757-8560.

Model Investment Club of Northern Virginia. 7 p.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Avenue, McLean. Learn more about investing following an investment club model. New visitors welcome. 703-356-0770.

SATURDAY/DEC. 19

John Eaton "Holiday Spectacular." 2 p.m. The Alden, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Musicologist, humorist and jazz pianist will share the history and harmonies of some favorite seasonal songs from the American Songbook at a special "Holiday Spectacular." www.aldentheatre.org. 703-790-0123.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Great Falls' Caroline Wildman, gracefully moving to the exotic sound of Tchiakovsky's Arabian melody, mesmerizes young and old in the Conservatory Ballet's "The Nutcracker," playing at the Reston Community Center. The show runs Wednesday, Dec. 9 to Sunday, Dec. 13.

Ongoing

Weekly Storytime. Wednesday and Saturday. 11 a.m. Barnes & Noble, 7851 L Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Themes and Titles vary. Free admission.

"Harvey." Check for show times. Nov. 12-Dec. 20. 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, this beloved classic is a treat for the whole family. Veta Simmons and her daughter Myrtle Mae have just moved back into town and are making quite a splash on the social scene. Gatherings and engagements abound as Myrtle Mae peruses for a viable suitor. \$15-\$30. www.1ststagetysons.org. 703-854-1856.

Great Falls Decorating Contest. Through Dec. 22. Bring out your lights, bows, tinsel, inflatables and everything festive to help light up the holidays in town. Submit pictures of your business, organization or neighborhood to info@celebrategreatfalls.org and then vote for your favorites on our website. Voting runs through Dec. 22. www.celebrategreatfalls.org.

Meadowlark Gardens' Winter Walk of Lights. Nov. 14-Jan. 4. A half-a-million colorful LED lights span the lakeside and gardens of Meadowlark Botanical Gardens off Beulah Road in nostalgic and fairytale scenes of the holiday season. http://winterwalkoflights.com/.

Bingo Night! 4 p.m. Sundays, Dec. 13, 20, 27. Vienna Volunteer Fire Department, 400 Center Street South, Vienna. The Vienna Volunteer Fire Department hosts smoke-free bingo every Sunday night in the Flame Room and activities include 33 games for a \$100 prize each and one \$1,000 jackpot game. Admission: minimum \$10. 703-255-6300.

53rd Annual James A. Bland Contest. Through Monday, Feb. 15. Vienna Lions Club invites elementary and high school vocalist and instrumentalists to present a song or piece for cash prizes. For information and application, contact Susan Stiles at sandcs89@yahoo.com or 703-938-1142.

Vienna Lions Club Christmas Tree Sales. Weekdays noon-8 p.m.; Saturdays & Sundays 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Through Dec. 17. Walgreen's lot, 225 Maple Ave East, Vienna. Help the Lions help the youth, vision- and hearing-impaired of our community. Fresh, live, beautiful Christmas trees, wreaths, roping, Virginia peanuts, extra-large coloring books all for sale at the best prices in Town.

Dennis Crayon and Susan La Mont Exhibit. Through Dec. 20. 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. View the works of two accomplished artists while attending a performance of "Harvey." www.1ststagetysons.org. 703-854-1856.

Nutcracker Tea. 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Dec. 12 and 19. The Ritz-Carlton Tysons Corner, 1700 Tysons Blvd., McLean. Delight in a contemporary twist on the beloved holiday classic by the South Riding Dance School while you enjoy afternoon tea, petite sandwiches and pastries. All children will go home with a nutcracker doll. \$79 per person. www.ritzcarlton.com/tysons. 703-748-4068.

Enchanted Forest Tea. 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Dec. 13, 20. The Ritz-Carlton Tysons Corner, 1700 Tysons Blvd., McLean. Watch a dazzling performance by the South Riding Dance School as the Snow Fairy strives to save the woodland ballerinas from the Icicle King, whom is trying to freeze over the forest. Enjoy afternoon tea, petite sandwiches and pastries. \$79 per person. www.ritzcarlton.com/tysons. 703-748-4068.

Optimist Club Christmas Tree Sales. Through Dec. 19. Weekdays 2-9 p.m.; Saturdays & Sundays 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Maple Avenue West at Branch Road. Fill your holidays with the sight and scent of fresh Fraser Fir trees and wreaths, and pine garlands. Trees range in size from cute and cozy 4-foot tall to towering 12-footers. All sales benefit the Optimist Club of Greater Vienna Youth Fund. Any questions, contact at info@optimistclubofgreatervienna.org.

Trail and Ales with Caboose Brewing and Grass Roots Fitness. Mondays through Jan. 31. Caboose Brewing Company, 520 Mill Street, NE Vienna. Come Run with us every Monday night. \$1 Off All Pints! All paces welcome. We will run between 3-5 miles with options to go shorter or longer. You can walk or run. Dog and stroller friendly. Contact Joann Meginley at joannandfrancine@grassrootsfitness.org.



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Here's What's Happening at MCC

**Old Firehouse Teen Center
Friday Field Trip
ICE! at Gaylord Hotel
National Harbor
Friday, Dec. 11, 3:30-10 p.m.
\$50/\$40 OFTC members**



**Onstage @ The Alden
Theatre IV: "A Christmas Carol"
Saturday, Dec. 12, 1 p.m. and 4 p.m.
\$15/\$10 MCC district residents**

**Onstage @ The Alden
John Eaton Holiday Spectacular
Saturday, Dec. 19, 2 p.m.
\$35/\$20 MCC district residents**

**Be a Part of the Arts!
Alden Theatre Usher Event
Monday, Dec. 21, 5:30-6:30 p.m.**

**Old Firehouse Teen Center
Winter Break Trip
Dave and Buster's
Monday, Dec. 28, 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
\$65/\$55 MCC district residents**

**Old Firehouse Teen Center
Winter Break Trip
Flight Indoor Trampoline Park
+ Sakura Hibachi
Tuesday, Dec. 29, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
\$55/\$45 MCC district residents**

**Old Firehouse Teen Center
Winter Break Trip
Autobahn Indoor Go Kart
Wednesday, Dec. 30, 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
\$75/\$65 MCC district residents**

**The McLean Community Center
www.mcleancenter.org
Home of the Alden Theatre
www.aldentheatre.org**



1234 Ingleside Ave.
McLean, VA 22101
703-790-0123, TTY: 711



Director Scott McCormick conducts the Philharmonic orchestra.



Concert Orchestra, conducted by Ms. Elizabeth Leung, opened the concert with a piece featuring soloists Brooke Baird, Madeline Yu and Christopher Fox.

PHOTOS BY CHI PHAM

Langley Orchestra Kicks Off the Season

BY ANANYA HEGDE
SENIOR/LANGLEY HIGH

Langley High School's Orchestra kicked off the year on Dec. 1 at South Lakes High School. Continuing the tradition of themes director Dr. Scott McCormick and Ms. Elizabeth Leung are known to use for their concerts, the music, food, and even the MC was British. Senior Maria McQuade explains, "I've always loved the themed concerts that we've had because it makes it an entire experience rather than a bunch of random music."

Guidance counselor Julie McGreevy donated her time to the Langley Orchestra in order to bring the British spirit to life with

her endearing accent. Ms. McGreevy utilized her British heritage to introduce and detail each piece. Senior Jacob Baker raves, "Ms. McGreevy did a great job introducing every piece and had hilarious facts before each song."

The Concert Orchestra composed of freshmen and sophomores opened the concerts with Percy E. Fletcher's lively tune "Folk Time and Fiddle Dance" and G. F. Handel's "Allegro" from Concerto Grosso Opus 6, No. 1. To segue between Concert and Sinfonietta Orchestra, the talented junior Sophia Wugang performed "Toccatta" by Henry Purcell, leaving the audience in awe. The Sinfonietta Orchestra took the stage with the eclectic "En-

glish Folk Song Suite" composed by Ralph Vaughan Williams followed by "Dashing Away" from Suite for Strings composed by John Rutter, which proved to be a crowd favorite. The Symphonic Orchestra comprising primarily juniors then performed alongside band students Sandra Ng and Wendy Tang as well as harp student Mary Duplantier to perform "Fantasia on Greensleeves," another piece composed by Ralph Vaughan Williams. Orchestra students then performed "Capriol Suite" composed of four movements by Peter Warlock. To end the night, the Philharmonic Orchestra performed "A-Roving," another piece from Suite for Strings and "St. Paul Suite" composed by Gustav Holst.

For a festive fundraiser, the Tri-M Honor Society collaborated with the Langley Orchestra Society to have a silent auction to auction off a variety of items, coupons, baskets, etc. The winners were announced at the end of the concert, helping save a currently at-risk music department. An announcement was made during the concert to inform the audience of the potential budget cuts of elementary programs, which would inevitably decrease the level and intensity of high school orchestras. Senior and Tri-M president Swetha Ramesh thought that "events like these are so important to high schoolers because they allow music to become a part of our lives. That's something that really can't be taught from a textbook."

At the tasting, local whiskey connoisseur, Joe Nelson, carefully selected unique spirits and talked about their crafting.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Tasting Whiskey for a Cause

The New Dominion Women's Club hosted the "Second Annual Whiskey Tasting" to support local charity organizations. The event was held at a beautiful new home in the River Oaks neighborhood provided by Capital City Builders. At this tasting, local whiskey connoisseur, Joe Nelson, carefully selected unique spirits to savor and talked about their crafting. Hors d'oeuvres were served to complement the tasting. It was an en-

joyable and educational event.

Alina LeMay, NDWC president, announced new beneficiaries will be the Falls Church/McLean Children's Center, McLean Project for the Arts, Safe Community Coalition, and SHARE. The club will host additional fundraising events to support these organizations until June 2016.

Monica Gibson was the chair of "Second Annual Whiskey Tasting" event committee. Other members on the planning committee included Kimberly Coer,

Having a good time for a good cause.

MaryAnn Miller, Karen Martins, Joan Murray, Stacie Steinke and Roxanne Nunes.

New Dominion Women's Club is a civic organization established in 1968 to help local charities and promote fellowship among women. The mission of the club is to support and cultivate the civic, cultural, educational and environmental welfare of the community through volunteer service and / or financial support. NDWC is actively involved with coordinating the Children's

Art Walk for the McLean Project for the Arts, Reading is Fundamental at the Falls Church/McLean Children's Center, Adopt-a-Highway on Westmoreland Street, and SHARE through helping less fortunate clients who participate in the food pantry, holiday event and backpack for school children's programs. Monthly meetings provide the opportunity to share ideas and establish friendships with a diverse group of women. For more information, visit www.ndwc.org.

HomeLifeStyle



Designers at Merrifield Garden Center spend almost one year creating holiday displays.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MERRIFIELD GARDEN CENTER

This rustic holiday space incorporates branches and animals.

Ideas for Decking the Halls Local designers create opulent holiday designs.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

From traditional to glamorous, fresh to faux and high-end to old school, local tastemakers tell how they create holiday dazzling holiday design extravaganzas.

Karen Velehoski and the rest of the design team at Merrifield Garden Center in Fair Oaks spend nearly a year planning and building the holiday displays that overtake each store during the Yuletide season.

In creating the holiday wonderlands, the designers assemble each space around a theme, maintaining consistency in style, color and texture. Their goal is to dream up design concepts that will inspire.

"We hope that people will get ideas for their own homes, but the first step is to focus on color," said Velehoski. "You can incorporate family heirlooms or decorations that you've had for years if you coordinate the colors. You can really use ribbons to tie the colors together easily."

For example, they designed a rustic space that draws inspiration from a snow-covered forest. "It's decorated with things like branches, berries, birds and other outdoor

animals," said Velehoski. "And we used red, plaid ribbon to keep the outdoorsy feel."

There's another winter scene that sparkles with décor in hues of gold, copper and platinum, and a classic display that pays homage to time-honored traditions. "It appeals to people who like greens, reds and poinsettias," said Velehoski. "This year we incorporated a little bit of black with that red, white and green which is pretty."

There's even inspiration for those with a penchant for pastels. "It has an icy look," said Velehoski. "It has an icy, frozen winter wonderland feel with snowflakes and icicles. We used a lot of pale blue, pink and a touch of silver."

Simple, clean and fresh are words that Gretchen Fuss, an interior designer with Tchoupitoulas Furnishings in Alexandria, uses to characterize her holiday design aesthetic.

"I don't like to over do it when it comes to holiday design," she said. "I love the mood and ambiance of white lights. It changes the feel of a room. I

like candlelit rooms."

Fuss says she uses a minimalist approach to incorporating family heirlooms with new acquisitions. "I do little vignettes where I'll have a piece, for example, that my mother once used to store ornaments in, and I'll use that to display fresh greenery."

The designer has even created holiday adornments of her own. "I've made holiday sculptures," said Fuss. "I even made little flower-shaped sculptures that I put together to make a six-foot tall Christmas tree."

Fuss adds white back-lighting, which shines through each flower petal, illuminating the tree.

Candles, ribbons and bows hanging on a mantle, swags of greenery and garlands draped over wall art and mirrors are what visitors who enter the spaces created by the designers of Patina Polished Living in Alexandria will see.

"... A string of lights combined with ornaments might flow down the center of a table, or shine inside a cloche combined

with a winter wonderland theme," said designer Amanda Mertins.

For an exterior space, Mertins advises using a twinkling wreath or a lit arrangement in an urn to greet guests at the front door.

Maintaining thematic consistency is a precept that designer Jenne Whitlaw, of GTM Architects in Bethesda, Md., recommends when conceiving ideas for holiday spaces. "Pick a central focal point, and echo the sentiment around the space, for both indoor and outdoor," she said. "This allows the eye to bounce around your holiday canvas, experiencing asymmetrical visual harmony and balance."

For those who prefer holiday decor in muted hues, Whitlaw suggests, "neutrals [like] winter white and pale greys, when paired with light, reflective metallics and sparkle add elegance and a sense of timeless wonder to every room."

For a touch of whimsy, Whitlaw recommends adding decorations to unexpected places. "For a surprising embellishment, how about placing ornaments around the vanity in your powder room?" asks Whitlaw. "Chandeliers are also a perfect theatre in the round for cascading trinkets and greenery."

"I love the mood and ambiance of white lights."

— Gretchen Fuss,
Tchoupitoulas Furnishings

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SPORTS

Five-foot-5 Madison guard Daniel Ungerleider knocked down five 3-pointers and scored 18 points during a 64-51 victory over Robinson on Dec. 4.



PHOTO BY JON ROETMAN/THE CONNECTION

Ungerleider Leads Undersized Madison

Warhawks win two games at 'Readers are Leaders Tip Off.'

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

Following Friday's "Readers are Leaders Tip Off" contest against Robinson, Madison senior guard Daniel Ungerleider was asked about his listed height of 5 feet, 8 inches.

"That's not accurate," he said.

Ungerleider, a team leader playing in his third varsity season, is actually 5 feet 5, which is fitting for the vertically-challenged Warhawks, whose tallest players are listed at 6-3. But while Ungerleider's roster height is off by a few inches, the accuracy of his perimeter shooting helped the Madison boys' basketball team earn its second victory in as many nights.

Ungerleider made five 3-pointers and scored a team-high 18 points as Madison defeated Robinson 64-51 on Dec. 4 at South Lakes High School. The Warhawks won both of their games at the two-day event, including a 43-40 victory over Archbishop Carroll on Dec. 3.

Madison opened the season with a 62-47 loss against Vienna rival Oakton on Dec. 1.

"I think it was a huge confidence builder," Ungerleider said about the Warhawks' performance at the "Readers are Leaders Tip Off." "We were all pretty disappointed after the first loss and we were talking together about [how] we've got to come focused each game. Even yesterday, we didn't play as well as we thought we should have, so it was great to come out today [with] the entire team ready to

play and the entire team contributing ..."

Madison built a 38-26 halftime lead against Robinson. Ungerleider opened second-half scoring with his fourth 3-pointer, and added his fifth in the final quarter. He averaged 12.3 points during the Warhawks first three contests and knocked down 10 3-pointers.

"He doesn't back down," third-year Madison head coach Kevin Roller said about Ungerleider. "He competes. Some friends of mine call him 'The Bulldog.' We joke sometimes because I'm 6-3 and he's not, but when you dribble the ball this far off the ground, you become a one-man press break. When he's focused, he controls a high school basketball game. That simplifies everything offensively: get him the ball and he's going to control what happens — and then he can shoot the ball a bit."

Roller also praised junior forward Nick Conforti, who finished with 14 points against the Rams.

"He's my 5-foot-10 4-man right now," Roller said. "I thought he was exceptional tonight."

Junior guard Johnny Corish scored 11 points for the Warhawks. Senior guard Taiga Walker finished with nine points and senior guard Brett Wellde had eight.

Senior center Dillon Most and sophomore forward Johnny Hecht are Madison's tallest players, both listed at 6-3. How do the Warhawks compensate for their lack of height?

"All five guys have to box out," Roller said. "For a high school team, we're not perfect, but we box out about as well as any high school team I've ever coached."

Madison faced Trinity Christian School on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. The Warhawks will host Marshall at 7:15 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 11 and will open Conference 6 play at home against Hayfield on Dec. 15.

Connection's deadline. Oakton will travel to face Broad Run at 7:15 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 10.

Oakton Boys' Basketball Beats Madison

The Oakton boys' basketball team opened the 2015-16 season with a 62-47 victory over Madison on Dec. 1.

The Cougars faced McLean on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. Oakton will host Broad Run at 7:15 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 10.



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Paige Galiani, seen last season, and the Langley girls' basketball team started 2-0 this year.

Langley Girls' Basketball Starts 2-0

After winning 21 games last season, the success of the Langley girls' basketball team has carried into the 2015-16 campaign.

The Saxons won their season opener against Osbourn, 48-43, on Dec. 1 and defeated Edison 51-43 on Dec. 3.

"We have competed hard in each game," head coach Amanda Baker wrote in an email, "and have played well as a team."

The Edison program has won three consecutive region championships.

"The Edison game was a great opportunity to see how we measured up against a top team early in the season," Baker wrote. "It's great to be 2-0, but we understand it's only December and we will need to continue to improve as we prepare to face more quality opponents each week."

Paige Galiani led Langley with 17 points against Osbourn. Lizzy Shamloo finished with a team-high 15 points against Edison.

Langley faced Robinson on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. The Saxons will travel to face HD Woodson at St. John's College High School at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 11.

— JON ROETMAN

Newman Enters Third Season as Langley Boys' Coach

After a pair of sub-.500 seasons, third-year Langley boys' basketball coach Scott Newman thinks this is the year the Saxons turn things around.

"I feel like we're ready to turn the corner as a program," said Newman, a Saxon assistant before taking over as head coach in 2013. "We had a great run when I was [Travis Hess'] assistant and it's taken us a little time to reboot things, but ... this is my favorite team since I've been the head coach at Langley."

Why does Newman think so highly of this group? It starts with seniors Nate Shafer, a 6-foot-5 forward, and Tavon Tarpley, a 6-foot-3 guard.

"We have a strong senior class, led in particular by a really dynamic duo of Nate Shafer and Tavon Tarpley," Newman said. "Those two kids are really, really tough players. Nate, to me, is the best 5 man in the region. People can say what they want about the kid over at West Springfield or [Lake Braddock's] James Butler; those kids might have more of a D-I prospect ... but if you talk about who do I want on my team right now, there's no one in the region I'd rather have than Nate. He, to me, is a D-I player at a D-III height."

Forwards John Rau (6-7) and Finn Gundersen (6-4), and guard Chris Miner (6-4) are also members of the senior class.

Junior point guard Chas Battaglia, sophomore combo guard Colter Carton and junior guard Grant Hughes are expected to be primary contributors.

Langley dropped its season opener to Osbourn, 51-50, on Dec. 1. The Saxons faced Robinson on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline.

Langley will play three games in the Bahamas Dec. 10-12 and will return to face South Lakes on the road on Dec. 15.

BY JON ROETMAN

BASKETBALL ROUNDUPS

Oakton Girls' Basketball Starts 3-0

The defending 6A North region champion Oakton girls' basketball team started the 2015-16 season with a pair of road victories.

The Cougars defeated Madison 57-42 on Dec. 1 and beat South County 44-32 on Dec. 3.

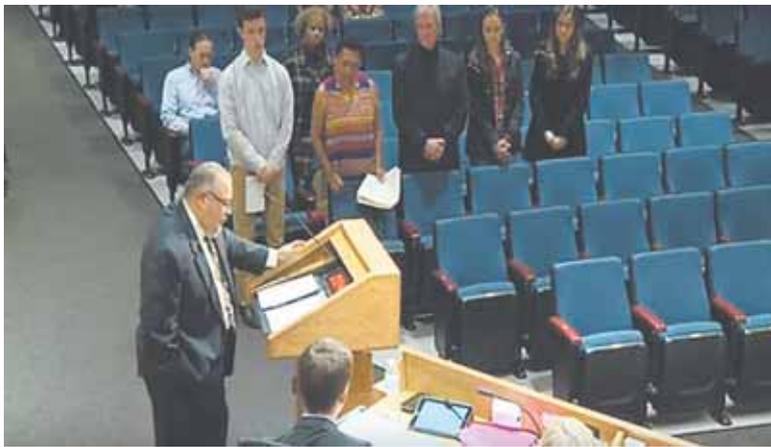
Oakton beat Stafford in its home opener on Saturday.

The Cougars faced McLean on Tuesday, after The

NEWS

Edwin Henderson, a retired Fairfax County Public Schools U.S. history teacher and president of the Tinner Hill Heritage Foundation, voices his support for changing the name of J.E.B. Stuart High School to Thurgood Marshall.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Citizen Speakers Turn Out for Stuart Name Change

School Board to take action Dec. 17.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

J.E.B. Stuart High School senior Whitten Rutledge is proud of his school, mostly.

"The culture around the school is a wonderful one," he said, addressing the Fairfax County School Board on Dec. 3, "we believe the name should reflect the culture we have."

Rutledge was speaking on behalf of Students for Change, a group at the Falls Church school that's upset with the institution being named after a Civil War cavalry leader for the Confederate army.

"Change is necessary," Rutledge continued. "In order for our school to embrace its own culture, we need a symbol that accurately represents who we are, not a confederate general who stood adamantly for the segregation of society."

Stuart seniors Anna Rowan, Cassie Marcotty, Marley Finley, Abby Conde and Lidia Amanuel founded Students for Change and were recognized by the Fairfax County NAACP for their work to have the school's name changed to honor Thurgood Marshall.

"The momentum we need for change is happening everywhere," Rutledge said, referencing over 34,000 signatures his group has obtained in support of changing the name.

Under the current policy (8170.5), new names for schools are only allowed at new buildings or buildings that have been repurposed. Since being adopted first in 1987, the policy has only been corrected or revised three times.

As part of its new business on Dec. 3, the School Board scheduled a decision for changing the policy. On Dec. 17, the Board will vote on adding the sentence "The School Board may also consider a change in the name of a school or facility where some other



Whitten Rutledge, a senior at Stuart, explains why he and the group Students for Change believe his high school's name should be changed from J.E.B. Stuart.

compelling need exists," to the naming guidelines, which would essentially open the door for a formal pitch to change Stuart's name.

Edwin Henderson, a retired Fairfax County Public Schools U.S. history teacher and president of the Tinner Hill Heritage Foundation, spoke after Rutledge, adding his support.

"I believe the time to do the right thing is now," said Henderson. "Renaming the school for a giant of American jurisprudence, who lived in this very community, championed Brown v. Board of Education and began a policy to dismantle segregation and open this country up to equality. If you truly honor diversity, the choice couldn't be clearer: Rename J.E.B. Stuart High School to Thurgood Marshall High School."

Fairfax County NAACP president Shirley Ginwright spoke next,

comparing Stuart the man to abolitionist John Brown, who fought to free slaves and was sentenced to death by hanging.

"One is considered a hero, the other considered a traitor," she said.

"As an African American," Ginwright continued, "it is painful to be constantly reminded of the trials and tribulations of our forefathers and what they had to endure. It is hard to have our children faced with the same pain in feeling there's nothing they can do about it because of policies and institutionalized behaviors that have been supported by racism and discrimination. It is time for us as a community to correct the wrongs that have been imposed by those who have previously held these positions. It is not a matter of rewriting history, but telling history as it happened, all of the history."

The Board is scheduled to vote on the policy change at its Dec. 17 meeting, at Luther Jackson Middle School, 3020 Gallows Road in Falls Church. For more information about participating at meetings, visit www.fcps.edu/schlbld/meetings/requestspeak.shtml.

SCHOOL NOTES

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) is participating in **Speak Up**, a national online survey about the use of technology in schools. The information collected will help policy makers at the local, state, and national levels, as well as the business community contribute to the national dialogue about science, technology, and preparing students for the 21st century workforce.

FCPS will be participating in the sur-

vey through **Dec. 18**. The online survey is open to students, parents, educators and the community. Survey is voluntary and take 20 minutes to complete.

To take the survey, please visit <http://www.speakup4schools.org/speakup2015/>. Students will be asked for a secret word (password) when they take the survey. The secret word for students is **fcps**. Aggregate survey results for FCPS will be available in

February 2015.

Speak Up is an annual research project conducted by Project Tomorrow, a national education nonprofit organization that collects and reports the views of students in K-12, teachers, administrators and parents on 21st century education and technology. For more information about Project Tomorrow, please visit <http://www.tomorrow.org/speakup>.

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-Arthur Wing Pinero

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-Werner Heisenberg

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- Ralph Waldo Emerson

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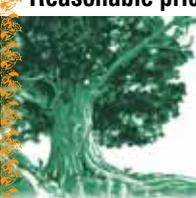


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I Beg Your Indulgence

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



Even after seven years as a patient in the cancer whirled, I still find it emotionally difficult to promptly return a well-meaning phone call or a likewise intended e-mail when the message/content is clearly having to do with my health and welfare. Not that I don't appreciate, and on many levels, most likely need these kinds of communications; nevertheless, the challenge of summoning up the intestinal fortitude to discuss, detail, outline, rehash, speculate, articulate, wonder, hope, fear, introspect, extrovert, try to make light of and not be made heavy by, in addition to all the other miscellaneous anxieties a cancer patient experiences 24/7, is often too much. And as regularly as we are left alone with our own thoughts, sometimes, the emotional road less traveled is the one fraught with fewer bumps and bruises.

Not that I want to get stupid and live in a "cone of silence," where I can't be heard and others can't hear me; that wouldn't be smart. Still, as often as not, the effort to respond in kind is not respectfully honored. It's an odd reaction to be sure. Receiving inquiries is one thing, a helpful thing, almost like "Thing" from "The Addams family," but not responding is quite another thing. It's not exactly akin to trudging through the snow – uphill, in winter, as our parents all claimed they did, but the emotional weight of it is something that I'm probably having difficulty explaining – as much as I'm trying.

Maybe this is all just an excuse to obfuscate my ill-mannered and disrespectful negligence. How poorly was I raised that I don't know enough to provide a common courtesy? People ask, you answer. When one is sick or "diseased," and friends, family and co-workers reach out, one is not supposed to pull back, right? I should appreciate their support and absorb whatever positive energy/good vibrations they're sending. Let's face it, as I do most days; living with cancer is not exactly a solitary pursuit. Although it may seem like it, at home, alone, especially at night when tossing and turning and not sleeping becomes an Olympic sport, the cancer experience is not a meal best served cold, if you know what I mean.

Regular interaction with humans, and I don't mean radio, television or Internet, is the next best thing to being there/reaching out and actually touching someone or being touched (which is likely another benefit). Moreover, being made to feel alive and well – and dare I say, normal (not diagnosed with cancer), is the goal, but the figurative elephant in our world is not just in one room, one time; it's in every room all the time; it's herd but not seen. But difficult to ignore nonetheless.

Stage IV lung cancer is like that. It's typical that when symptoms manifest themselves, the patient is already inoperable and tumors which gave the patient no indication that they even existed, have now metastasized (moved/grown). Ergo, the staging. There is no stage V, by the way. This is not to imply that it's ever too late. It's just hard to assimilate when the diagnosis comes out of the blue and previously you were feeling in the pink. In this context, the silence of it (meaning the lack of symptoms) was not golden; any more than my silence now in not responding to well-wishers is golden. It's not. It's self-indulgent and most times I readily acknowledge it. However, I feel powerless to affect it. Please don't take my lack of a timely response personally. I'm just trying to navigate as best I can. As George Costanza made famous on a long-ago "Seinfeld" episode: "It's not you. It's anybody, it's me...."

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

COMMUNITY

White House Ornaments Sale to Help Artemis House

Great Falls Friends and Neighbors continue the tradition of selling the White House Ornaments — available in the retail stores in Great Falls — that help their efforts each year to raise funds for the local Artemis House Shelter.

Artemis House shelters women and children that are victims of domestic violence and human trafficking.

This year's ornament honors President Calvin Coolidge. President Coolidge actually started the tree lighting tradition on Dec. 24, 1923. The 60-ft tree came down from his native state of Vermont, and was replanted in the center of the Ellipse. The ornament symbols on the tree all represent objects of importance to President Coolidge, and the tree lights up to commemorate the

President's historic event.

There are two Great Falls Retail Stores helping sell ornaments this year:

Great Dogs of Great Falls, Great Falls Shopping Center, 9859 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, 703-759-3601; and The Studio, 10123 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls, 703-757-2330.

The ornaments sell for \$25 each.

Fairfax County Companies Designated As Best Workplaces for Commuters

Ten companies in Fairfax County were honored as Best Workplaces for Commuters. "Promoting alternate ways to work, and policies such as teleworking and flex time, help make Fairfax County a better place to live and work by reducing congestion on our roadways," said Fairfax County Department of Transportation Director Tom Biesiadny. "We are pleased that Fairfax County is leading the nation in "Best Workplace" designations and are committed to continuing to expand these programs in years to come."

This year's recipients are:

Horizon Industries Limited (8245 Boone Blvd., Vienna)

Prosperity Metro Plaza (2675 Prosperity Ave., Fairfax)

FUTREND (8605 Westwood Center Drive, Vienna)

U. S. Geological Survey (12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston)

Kimley-Horn (11400 Commerce Park Drive, Reston)

Freddie Mac (multiple locations in Tysons and Herndon)

Synaptex Corporation (1818 Library St., Reston)

National Student Clearinghouse (2300 Dulles Station Blvd., Herndon)

FOX Architects LLC (8484 Westpark Drive, McLean)

Pyramid Systems Inc. (2677 Prosperity Ave., Fairfax)

The BWC designation acknowledges employers who have excelled in implement-

ing green commuter programs such as ridesharing, transit benefits, biking and walking, teleworking, alternate work schedules and other strategies.

Since 2010, Fairfax County has partnered with the National Center for Transit Research on the Best Workplaces for Commuters program to designate 57 local organizations with this elite, national recognition. Follow #FairfaxBWC on Twitter for more information on program updates and events here in Fairfax County.

For more information on Fairfax County's commuter programs and resources, go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot/news/trytransit.htm or contact Fairfax County Department of Transportation at 703-877-5600, TTY 711.

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.

THROUGH SATURDAY/DEC. 12.

Wish List Project. Take a look at the wish lists and take this opportunity to spread some cheer this December. Wish List Angels directly help families in area shelters, alternative housing and children in foster care. Make wishes come true by signing up to sponsor a child's wish. Find out how at <http://wishlistangels.com/>.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 9

Planning Commission. 8-10 p.m. Town Hall, 127 Center Street, South Vienna. 703-255-6341.

Youth and Education Committee

Meeting. 9:30-10:30 a.m. LearningRx, 8321 Old Courthouse Road, Suite 130, Vienna. Join us each month to plan for the Job Shadow Program, Chamber Stars, and other educational programs. Registration required at <http://business.tysons-chamber.org/events/details/youth-education-committee-meeting-12-09-2015-2957>.

THURSDAY/DEC. 10

Town/Business Liaison Commission. 7 p.m. Town Hall, 127 Center Street, South, Vienna. 703-255-6341.

New and Prospective Member

Orientation. 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Tysons Chamber of Commerce, 7925 Jones Branch Drive Suite LL210, Tysons. If you are a new Chamber member or are considering joining the Chamber, or have been a member and want to learn all the new and exciting things we're doing, this will be time well spent, guaranteed! Join for a catered lunch by Silver Spoon Catering as you learn more about the Chamber and how to make the most of your membership through the various events, committees, member to member benefits and marketing

opportunities. Registration required at <http://business.tysons-chamber.org/events/details/new-and-prospective-member-orientation-12-10-2015-2901>.

SATURDAY/DEC. 12

Understanding the Tax Code. 1 p.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Avenue, McLean. Phil Gaudiano, CPA presents a program on tax updates that highlights any recent changes to the tax law. Covered topics will include the Affordable Care Act, repair & maintenance regulations, business expense deductions, and various credits. Adults/older adults are welcome. 703-356-0770.

MONDAY/DEC. 14

Town Council Meeting. 8-10:30 p.m. Town Council Chambers, 127 Center Street South, Vienna. All Town Council meetings are open to the public and individuals are invited to attend and provide their input. 703-255-6300.

TUESDAY/DEC. 15

Emerging Leaders Council Meeting. 8:30 a.m.-9:30 a.m. 7925 Jones Branch Drive Conference Room, Tysons. Want to create instrumental partnerships, be viewed as a leader and become a voice in the boardroom? Join for the council meeting. Any question, contact at sbrown@tysons-chamber.org.

TUESDAYS/DEC. 15, 22

TIPS I: Lead Sharing & Networking at Fleming's. 12:15-1:30 p.m. Fleming's Prime Steakhouse and Wine Bar, 1960A Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Free to join, \$16 for lunch. Contact Peter Himmelberger, Travel Cruise and Tour, 703-496-4125 or phimmelberger@travelcruiseandtour.com.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 16

Women's Leadership Council. 9:30-10:30 a.m. 7925 Jones Branch Drive Suite TBD, Tysons. join us for a one hour informational/planning

meeting about upcoming events sponsored by Women's Leadership Council. Any question, contact Carla Doyle at 443-909-8665.

THURSDAY/DEC. 17

Community Enhancement Commission. 7:30 p.m. Town Hall, 127 Center Street, South Vienna. 703-255-6360.

MONDAY/DEC. 21

Alden Theatre Usher Event. 5:30-6:30 p.m. The Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Want to be a part of the arts? Learn how you can become an usher at The Alden. www.mcleancenter.org. 703-790-0123.

ONGOING

Food Drive for CHO. Places vary. Please help CHO to help others in our area. All food contributions greatly appreciated. CHO is making plans for the holidays. Please bring new unwrapped gifts for children and teens to Vienna Presbyterian Church, 124 Park St., NE, Vienna, on Dec. 11 between 9 a.m. and noon. Questions? Contact at cho@cho-va.com.

Langley Lacrosse Equipment Drive.

Through Dec. 12. Langley Girls Lacrosse is collecting used boys and girls lacrosse equipment to distribute at the clinic on Dec. 12. Their goal is to collect enough equipment that all kids in attendance at the clinic will be able to keep something. Drop off at Langley High School's Athletic Office, 6520 Georgetown Pike, McLean; or to the donation box at 9805 Arnon Chapel Road, Great Falls.

The Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna

has an urgent need for volunteer drivers to take area seniors to medical appointments and other activities. Opportunities to volunteer for other services are also available. No long-term commitment and hours are flexible to fit your schedule. Visit www.scov.org or contact the Volunteer Coordinator at 703-281-5086 or email volunteer@scov.org.



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Associate Realtor

Jan & Dan Laytham
Dianne Van Volkenburg
Office: 703-757-3222

9841 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, VA 22066 • 703-759-9190

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