

McLean junior Brandan Grammes, right, won the 6A North region 138-pound wrestling title on Feb. 13 at Fairfax High School.

McLean Wrestlers Win Region Titles

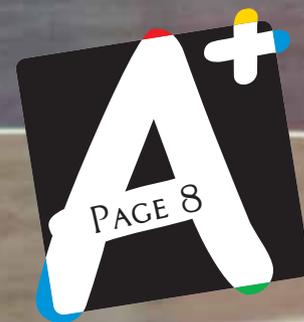
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1st Stage Receives Six Helen Hayes Nominations

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Seated, from left, a panel including Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board Recovery Specialist Kevin Earley, Fairfax County Chief of Police Edwin Roessler, Fairfax County Sheriff Stacey Kincaid, CSB Chairman Gary Ambrose and Supervisor John Cook (R-Braddock) speaks on the merits of the new Diversion First program which puts direct offenders with mental illness in treatment centers instead of jail.



PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

Dr. Jim Kelly (left), Emergency Services manager at the CSB Merrifield Center explains to reporters how individuals in custody enter the facility via a sally port. If they're struggling or in a more extreme state, they're taken to a separate emergency interview room.

Taking the Crime out of Mental Illness

Fairfax County officials announce Diversion First program designed to help individuals get treatment not jail time.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

Kevin Earley said he's living proof that Diversion First works. Earley has been living with bipolar disorder and had his last episode in 2007. "I was tasered, I broke the law and endangered myself," he said.

Earley was picked up by a Fairfax County Police officer who had received Crisis Intervention Team training and driven to the hospital, not the adult detention center.

Earley said the officer spoke with a calm tone and "treated me with dignity and respect. The smallest gesture can mean the world."

He was linked with a case manager "who loved and cared for me," and he also benefitted from other psychological and family support.

"I was sick and needed help, support, not jail time," Earley said. "It shouldn't be a crime to live with mental illness."

Now Earley works as a recovery specialist with the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board. He spoke to a room full of reporters and supporters on Feb. 11 at the CSB Merrifield Crisis Response Center, a massive Fairfax County-owned facility for mental illness treatment services located off Gallows Road in Fairfax.

THAT DAY a panel of government leaders explained the new program Diversion First, the main goal of which is to prevent people with mental illness from unnecessarily filling up the jail. To create more success stories like Earley's.

Fairfax County Sheriff Stacey Kincaid said about 40 percent of the jail's inmate popu-

lation has mental illness. "It used to be something taboo for people to talk about or report," she said.

After an intensive study of the mental health program in place through the Sheriff's office in Bexar County, Texas, Kincaid said her office has been making changes such as the relocation of women with mental illness to a separate housing area and change in release time to 8 a.m.

Kincaid also commented that the Diversion First program was "quite a bit" in reaction to the in-custody death of Natasha McKenna just over one year ago. Video was released of McKenna, an African American woman with mental illness, being tased numerous times by Fairfax County deputies while she struggled during an effort to transport her to Alexandria City jail.

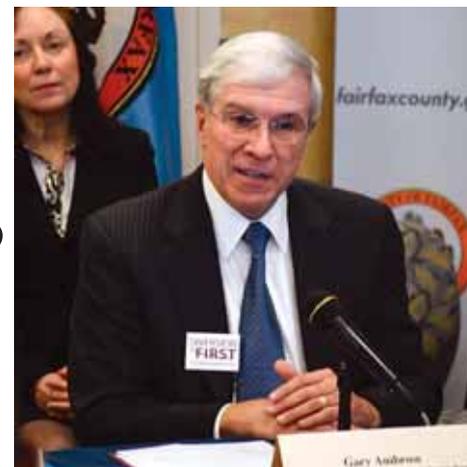
"It certainly pushed this forward," Kincaid said.

Prior to Diversion First, deputies might bring an individual with mental illness to the CSB for evaluation or treatment, but then be responsible for waiting with them, sometimes for many hours, until they could be seen.

Now, a deputy and police officer will be stationed at the Merrifield Center for 21.5 hours every day for other officers and deputies to hand off custody and then return to duty.

"The officers love this, the morale is good," said Fairfax County Chief of Police Edwin Roessler. "We do have gaps" in policing, he said, "especially where we serve those with mental health episodes. The majority of our use of force incidents are with those suffering mental health crisis."

For their part in Diversion First, Roessler has also been working towards getting 100



CSB Chairman Gary Ambrose said the Diversion First program has taken on "a dynamism of its own" after taking several years to initiate.

percent of officers trained in Crisis Intervention Team. This year, 176 officers have already received the training, he said. CIT is a Commonwealth of Virginia-certified program that teaches officers about what it's like to live with mental illness as well as procedures for de-escalating critical episodes both in the field and jail.

"This is a great first start," he said. The police are also implementing a new Critical Decision-Making Model based on policing in Scotland, the Chief said, and are the first department in the country to do so.

The model is "the backbone of CIT," said Roessler. "The goal is to preserve the sanctity of human life."

In the first month of implementing Diversion First (Jan. 1-31), Roessler said field officers have conducted 265 mental health investigations. Of those, 40 percent involved the Merrifield Center and 39 percent had participation from a CIT-certified officer or officers.

Once an individual with mental illness arrives at the CSB Merrifield Center, either under their own power or in custody, they check in, undergo a preliminary interview and psychological and medical evaluation. From there, CSB staffers determine whether treatment or further transport to the hospital is necessary.

Roessler said Diversion First isn't meant as a pass from jail for serious offenders or violent crimes. But empowered by Diversion First, officers may use their discretion in determining lawlessness.



Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board Recovery Specialist Kevin Earley lives with bipolar disorder and is thankful to diversion for the way he was treated during his last mental illness episode.

IF JAIL AND HOSPITAL are ruled out for the individual, a problem currently being tackled by the General Assembly is housing. The local psychiatric hospital in Fairfax County is the Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute in Falls Church on the INOVA campus, with 123 beds.

Those include emergency psychiatric beds, involuntary beds and forensic beds, said Tisha Deeghan, executive director of the CSB. Deeghan said it's a statewide problem that facilities such as the Institute in Falls Church don't have the capacity to handle all the referrals.

"We're working in Richmond to resolve it," she said. If there is no room in Falls Church, officers or deputies then try taking the individual to another facility outside of northern Virginia.

Kincaid encouraged people to contact their elected officials about building a new mental health facility to add capacity in northern Virginia.

"It's the right thing to do," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova, who explained there's a three-to-five-year funding mechanism in place to increase the capacity and services of the CSB. "There's savings in having someone not live in jail, but receive services and continue to live in the community."

For more information about Diversion First, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/diversionfirst.

Touching Many Hearts

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

They say that charity begins at home. Helen Yi and Taylor, the mother and daughter co-founders of Touching Heart, a nonprofit aimed at educating and inspiring children to empathize with the needs of others and to take action to assist them, have no argument with that statement. But they have taken that idea out of the home's front door, down the steps and out into the streets beyond. Since 2010, they have grown a dedicated group that has produced "Kids on a Mission" (KOAM) – children who are taught how to host their own fundraising events from selection of a cause, logistically preparing the event, developing budgets and seeing the plan through to fruition.

POSTPONED from last month's Snowzilla Day, Touching Heart held its second annual Minecraft for a Mission event on Feb. 6 at the Art and Design Building on the George Mason University campus in Fairfax, hosted by the Mason Game and Technology Academy. The event was a group playing of the Minecraft video game, with two computer labs filled with teams sharing their ideas and resources as they built their Minecraft worlds and filled them with tools and treasures. Current and former students of the Academy volunteered their time and computer wizardry to build the enclosed network for the gamers and even staffed the event to keep things running smoothly, provide additional instruction, and a helping hand when needed. With the registrants numbering better than 50 youngsters aged 8 - 12 and a registration fee of \$45 per participant, these Kids on a Mission raised a significant amount of money for foster care programs and residents in Fairfax and Loudoun County and Alexandria.

"The kids choose a variety of people and organizations to assist," said Helen Yi, but the primary focus was on aiding other children less fortunate. The local foster care programs are a top priority for many of the fundraisers, but under the KOAM flag, youngsters have made meals for the homeless, raised funds to buy mattresses for an orphanage in Kenya and help them build a wall, and invested in projects like chicken farming and solar energy panels around the globe, helping struggling communities to become more self-sufficient. "It's amazing and humbling what these young people can do once you show them the needs," said Yi.

Minecraft for a Mission could have daunted even the most skilled event organizer, but the three primary organizers, who handled everything from recruiting sponsors to the logistics on the day, and even the opening ceremony instructions and remarks, seemed to take it all in stride were middle-school students Devin Host, Alex Lee and Lottie Dubert from the Nysmith School in Herndon.

Devin, who had participated in other KOAM activities, brought his friend Alex into the fold. Mutual friend Lottie heard



Organizers, staff and associates of Touching Heart show their signature move at the 2016 Minecraft for a Mission event to raise funds for local foster care programs and children.



The young organizers of this year's Minecraft for a Mission event are Nysmith School eighth graders Lottie Dubert, Devin Host and Alex Lee. The trio recruited sponsors, developed the promotional materials and worked out the logistics for the charitable group-gaming day.

them discussing their plans and knew she, too, had to join in.

"Getting the sponsors, that was probably the most difficult thing to do because we had never done cold-calling before," said Devin. On one occasion the trio walked the entire Fair Lakes Mall, making their pitch at each retailer. "Really," added Devin, as Alex and Lottie nodded their agreement, "that experience was one of the best things we got out of this. You really learn to be confident and state your case." Apparently their dedication and growing sales skills did the trick, garnering the event a number of sponsors, including one for whom Alex, with his graphic design skills, was able to develop a logo.

Minecraft for a Mission – Touching Heart and their "Kids on a Mission" raise funds for children in foster care.



Dad John Howells had some difficulty getting Minecraft for a Mission participant son Kenneth to stand still long enough to re-fuel before heading back for the afternoon gaming session. The fifth-grader from Reston heard about the event from a neighbor. "I like Minecraft and this is a good thing to do," said Kenneth, in between quick bites.

TOUCHING HEART offers an eight-week after school "Art of Giving Workshop" at several local schools. "And hopefully beyond fairly soon," said co-founder Helen Yi. The circle widens on its own, with one child who has participated in a workshop or in a KOAM project telling another child who either joins in or contacts Touching Heart for help in organizing their own project. Those two young philanthropists then spread the word, and the good works and development of compassionate young leaders keeps moving forward. This growth was on display at the Minecraft event, with several youngsters participating remotely from as far away as Sweden, children attending from way beyond Touching Heart's home-base of

Herndon, and another gamer who had played last year, then moved to Florida, but whose parents were willing to bring him back just for this charitable gathering.

"It's heartening to see that their interest in helping others doesn't end after one project," said Touching Heart Outreach Manager Susan Tseng.

Touching Heart has a number of events, activities and opportunities on their calendar this year. Learn more about their story, check out upcoming events like a "Movie Day" to support that Kenyan orphanage or the annual Touching Heart Golf Tournament fundraiser, get involved or become one of the Kids on a Mission, by checking out its website at www.touchingheart.com.

Tyson's Chamber Names Francis Gary Powers, Jr. Acting President

Lori Lopez, Chairman for the Tysons Regional Chamber of Commerce (TRCC) (www.tysonschamber.org) announced that Francis Gary Powers, Jr. has been hired as the Acting President effective Jan. 15, 2016. "Gary is a welcome addition to our leadership team and will build on the chamber's momentum to contribute to our goals for 2016 and beyond," said Lopez.

Born June 5, 1965, in Burbank, Calif., Powers is the son of Francis Gary and Claudia E. "Sue" Powers.

He holds a bachelor of arts degree in Philosophy from California State University, Los Angeles, and a master's degree in Public Administration/Certification in Nonprofit Management from George Mason University (GMU). During his career Powers has held a variety of positions including assistant registrar for the City of Fairfax, executive director of a nonprofit dedicated to the historical revitalization of Old Town Fairfax, marketing manager for home inspection company US Inspect, and president/CEO for the Vienna Tysons Regional Chamber of Commerce from 2000 to 2005. As chairman of the Presidential Advisory Committee for the Cold War Theme Study he works with the National Park Service and leading Cold War experts to identify historic Cold War sites for commemorating, interpreting and preservation. Recently,



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Francis Gary Powers, Jr.

he consulted for the Steven Spielberg Cold War thriller, "Bridge of Spies" about James Donovan who brokered the 1962 spy exchange between Soviet spy Rudolph Abel and Gary's father, U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers, Sr.

In 1996, Powers founded The Cold War Museum (www.coldwar.org) to honor Cold War veterans,

preserve Cold War history and educate students about this time period. Over the past twenty years he led that museum forward as founding chairman, which in 2011 opened at Vint Hill Farms, a former army communication base in Northern Virginia. As a result of his efforts to honor Cold War veterans, the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce selected him as one of the "Ten Outstanding Young Americans" for 2002. Powers lectures internationally and appears regularly on the History, Discovery, and A&E Channels. He is married and has one son.

The Tysons Regional Chamber of Commerce serves the diverse businesses and citizens in the Tysons region through networking, educational, community and collaborative events. For more information, visit www.tysonschamber.org.

Weichert, Realtors McLean/Dolley Madison Office, Two Associates Recognized

Bruce L. Green, regional vice president of Weichert, Realtors, announced that the McLean/Dolley Madison office was recognized for exceptional performance during the month of January. The office led the region, which comprises offices throughout Fairfax, Loudoun, Warren and Prince William counties, for new home dollar volume, resale listings, resale revenue units and resale dollar volume.

In addition, sales associates J.D. Callander and Gordon Harris of the McLean/Dolley Madison office were individually recognized for their industry success in January. As top producers, Callander led the region in resale listings and Gordon led for new home dollar volume.

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Transform 66 Inside the Beltway Project Arlington County, City of Falls Church and Fairfax County Design Public Hearings

All hearing times are 6-8 p.m., with a brief presentation beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Monday, March 7, 2016

Washington-Lee High School Cafeteria
1301 N. Stafford Street
Arlington, VA 22201

Tuesday, March 8, 2016

Eagle Ridge Middle School Cafeteria
42901 Waxpool Road
Ashburn, VA 20148

Wednesday, March 9, 2016

VDOT Northern Virginia District Office
4975 Alliance Drive
Fairfax, VA 22030

Visit Transform66.org to view a live stream of this presentation at 6:30 p.m.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), in partnership with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), will host Design Public Hearings for the Transform 66 Inside the Beltway Project. Improvements involve converting I-66 to dynamically-priced toll lanes in the peak direction during morning (eastbound) and afternoon (westbound) rush hours between I-495 (the Capital Beltway) and U.S. Route 29 in Rosslyn, along with implementing a series of multimodal improvements that will benefit toll users of I-66. Information related to proposed locations and design of toll gantries and signage will be available at the hearings, as well as a presentation on how the toll system will operate.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 CFR 771, draft Categorical Exclusion (CE) documentation has been prepared in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration and is available for review and comment. VDOT staff will be available to discuss the environmental studies underway and the coordination with appropriate regulatory agencies to obtain information about the resources in the project's vicinity. A public notice for review and comment on the final CE documentation will be posted at a later date. In compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 and 36 CFR Part 800, information concerning the potential effects of the proposed project on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places is also provided in the environmental documentation.

Stop by to learn more about the project, discuss your questions with project staff, and attend the formal presentation.

Review project materials at the hearings, including the draft CE, traffic technical report, plans, project schedule, and right-of-way, environmental and civil rights information. Materials are available for review at www.Transform66.org, at public locations listed on the project website, or VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office at 4975 Alliance Drive in Fairfax. Please call 800-FOR-ROAD (800-367-7623) or TTY/TDD 711 to ensure availability of appropriate personnel to answer your questions.

Give your written or oral comments at the hearings or submit them to Amanda Baxter, Special Projects Development Manager, at the VDOT Northern Virginia District Office (address noted above). You may also e-mail comments at any time to Transform66@VDOT.Virginia.gov. Please reference "Transform 66 Inside the Beltway" in the subject line. Comments must be postmarked, emailed or delivered to VDOT by March 24, 2016 to be included in the public hearing record.

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT's Civil Rights Division at 800-367-7623 or TTY/TDD 711.

State Project: 0066-96A-358, P101 UPC: 107371

Fairfax Presses Ahead with Diversion First

When police encounter someone in mental health crisis, they can transport them to Merrifield Crisis Response Center instead of jail.

Natasha McKenna died a little more than a year ago on Feb. 7, 2015. McKenna, with a long history of severe and often untreated mental illness, had been deteriorating in the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center since Jan. 26, 2015, arriving directly from release from the hospital on an outstanding warrant from the City of Alexandria charging felonious assault on an Alexandria police officer.

We can't know whether new efforts to provide people in mental health crisis might have saved her life if they were available and put in place early in this particular crisis, which appears to have begun a month before her death. McKenna's death is a terrible tragedy, and no new program will remove that horror.

But it's clear that treatment rather than jail can make all the difference for many people who come into contact with law enforcement in a mental health crisis. Diversion First is a collaborative effort in Fairfax County to reduce the number of people with mental illness in the county jail by diverting low risk offenders experiencing a mental health crisis to treatment rather than bringing them to jail.

Sheriff Stacey Kincaid estimates that 40 percent of detainees at the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center have mental illness. Notably, it is far more expensive to house someone in

county jail than to provide treatment.

The collaborative effort was in no small part launched by Supervisor John Cook when he asked that the Board of Supervisors to add crisis intervention training to the scope of work of the Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission. The Mental Health subcommittee along with the Community Services Board, the Sheriff's Department, police and mental health advocates set and met an aggressive agenda

Freedom of Information on Life Support in General Assembly?

Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34) cites FOIA on life support in his blog oxroadsouth.com:

"Last week, the Assembly passed SB 202, which undid a major push eight years ago to ensure that all of our public spending was 'online' and searchable by ordinary citizens. This, of course, meant disclosing the salaries of public employees over a certain income level. However, SB 202 has undone all of that, which means that you will no longer know how much a public employee (even a city manager) is paid unless you make a formal FOIA request. (Because we all have time to do that).

"This bad idea passed on a 27-12 vote.

"Today the Senate passed SB 552 which is even more sweeping. It actually prohibits from disclosure not just the salary information but

and timetable for implementation, with the program actually beginning in less than a year, on Jan. 1, 2016. In the first month, the Merrifield Crisis Response Center handled more than 100 cases involving police and people in mental health crisis.

Merrifield Crisis Response Center operates as an assessment site where police are able to transfer custody of nonviolent offenders who may need mental health services to a CIT-trained officer or deputy assigned there, instead of taking them to jail.

How far-reaching, life-saving and resource-preserving Diversion First will turn out to be will depend on how it is implemented and the discretion and policies of the police and prosecutors, among others.

even the names of public safety personnel, including the Sheriff, the Chief of Police and the Fire Chief.

"On the floor today, I pointed out that a Chief of Police could put his own family on the payroll and be protected from disclosure. This could also be an issue if a law enforcement agency hires an officer with a poor record from another jurisdiction — and nobody knows. Again, who are we protecting?"

"Again, the bill passed 25-15."

"If I'm making a veto list, these two are definitely on it."

We agree.

— MARY KIMM

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Building on Success

BY BARBARA COMSTOCK
U.S. REP. (R-10)

Congress continues to work together in a bipartisan manner on an issue that grabs headlines throughout the country and here in Northern Virginia. Human trafficking is a growing global criminal enterprise that knows no bounds. Nearly 300 victims of human trafficking have been identified in Northern Virginia from October 2013 through January 2015. This scourge that targets our young and vulnerable is in our very own backyard.

To effectively combat human trafficking we need to give our law enforcement the tools they need to do their job. Earlier this month, the House passed and the president signed into law H.R. 515, the *International Megan's Law to Prevent Child Exploitation and Other Sexual Crimes Through Advanced Notification of Traveling Sex Of-*



fenders. This important bipartisan legislation, which I co-sponsored, will protect children worldwide from sexual predators who want to do them harm by better tracking their movements and

travel. It is imperative that law enforcement on the international level constantly talk with one another so that these predators do not slip through the cracks.

We also need to have assets other than law enforcement who can spot when something just seems out of place. That is why I teamed up with Congresswoman Dina Titus (D-Nev.) this month in introducing the *Secure Our Skies (SOS) Act*. This legislation will require airline industry employees to get the proper training to recognize and report human trafficking. Sara Nelson, president of the Association of Flight Attendants-

Congress passes more legislation to fight human trafficking.

CWA, said the legislation "...can save lives with 100,000 trained eyes in the sky." The SOS Act is the type of common sense legislation that will help combat human trafficking because it uses the power of those in the airline industry as a force multiplier. Just last week, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, on which I serve, passed Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization legislation that incorporated much of this human trafficking bill.

These pieces of legislation are part of a multipronged bipartisan approach to rooting out human traffickers. So far in the 114th Congress I have co-sponsored ten pieces of legislation on human trafficking and become a member of the Congressional Human Trafficking Caucus. Last year, S. 178, the *Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act*, one of the most comprehensive pieces of anti-human trafficking legislation, passed the

House. The legislation provides restitution to victims of these horrible crimes and increases the punishment for those who profit from them. It also recognizes child pornography as a form of human trafficking and subjects perpetrators to stricter punishment. This legislation, which I cosponsored, was signed into law by the president last year.

One of the most important ways to address human trafficking is to shed light on this dark subject through public education. As part of our office's 10th Congressional District Young Women Leadership Program, I have had panels with local law enforcement and a number of human trafficking nonprofits including Just Ask VA and Polaris to discuss human trafficking with middle and high school aged girls. We have also participated in a number of other forums in churches, libraries and schools throughout the Northern

SEE COMSTOCK, PAGE 15



NEWS

All of the Langley musicians posing in front of the Sagrada Família in Barcelona



PHOTOS BY CLAUDIA FRALEY

Langley High Orchestras Tour Spain

Langley musicians perform two concert, tour three cities.

From Feb. 3-9, members of the Langley High School orchestras (Freshman, Sinfonietta, Symphonic and Philharmonic) traveled to Spain, where they performed two concerts and toured the cities of Madrid, Segovia and Barcelona. The first performance was in the stunning Spanish cathedral Basílica de San Francisco El Grande, where the orchestras received a standing ovation from their sold out audience after playing pieces such as Enrique Granados' "Spanish Dance Op. 37, No. 5-Andaluza," Albeniz's "Suite Espanola No. 1, Op. 47 Asturias" and "Bailes Para Orquesta" by Richard Meyer. A community center hosted the second performance, where the orchestra followed a Spanish college orchestra.

"One of the most memorable experiences occurred after our second performance," Langley Symphonic violist Minh Pham said. "We had just shared the stage with a community orchestra from Spain, consisting of people around our age. Afterward, we all went for dinner at the same restaurant. There was a moment after we all finished eating where the Spanish musicians and the American musicians exchanged dances and songs attributed to our country. It was a great time."

When the students weren't rehearsing their music or performing, the Langley students took a city tour of Madrid, shopped at local stores and markets and visited the Prado Museum, which is the main Spanish national art museum. The museum displays one of the world's finest collections of 12th- to early 19th-century European art. Madrid's famous Buen Retiro



Langley Seniors posing in front of the Roman aqueducts in Segovia.

Park and popular Café Chocolatería San Gines were also on the itinerary, where the students devoured the café's famous churros con chocolate. A side trip to Segovia, a historic city just outside of Madrid, featured a tour of the historic Alcázar, a royal castle dating back to the 12th century, stunningly sited above the junction of two rivers near the Guadarrama Mountains.

With their performance behind them, the Langley orchestras traveled to Barcelona prior to their return to Virginia. While in Barcelona, the students toured famed Spanish architect Gaudi's church Sagrada Família, Barcelona's Olympic Park and The Columbus Monument. The Langley Saxons also raved about Barcelona's breathtaking architecture, the colorful collection of items at the markets and the warm climate, which was a nice break from the freezing cold temperatures of Northern Virginia.

Langley Philharmonic violist Katherine Carris said, "From the rich culture to the unforgettable food, experiencing Barcelona with my orchestra was beyond incredible."

—CAROLINE WATKINS

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lost (adj): 1. unable to find the way. 2. not appreciated or understood. 3. no longer owned or known

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Time To Plan for Kids' Summer Camp Adventures

Local camp fair offers sampling of summer programs.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Under a blanket of February frost, summer might seem light years away, but it's closer than one might think. As coveted slots fill at some of the area's most sought-after camps, now is the time to begin planning, say camp directors. With options ranging from sailing to fencing, narrowing down the decision can be daunting. That's why local camp fairs can be a valuable one-stop-shopping service for choosing summer activities. Hundreds of camp representatives will be on hand for the Northern Virginia Camp and Summer Fun Expo on Feb. 20-21 at 2100 Dulles Town Circle, Dulles.

"We will have a lot of exhibitors in one location so that parents can see a variety of camps to make sure that their children have a fun summer," said Samantha Carter of Washington Parent, the event's sponsor. "There are programs to fit every budget."

Camp fairs, says Carter, offer parents an opportunity to meet representatives from a variety of camps, gather information and ask



PHOTO COURTESY OF NORWOOD SCHOOL

Now is the time to plan for summer camp, say experts.

questions. "We have camps from all up and down the eastern seaboard, even as far away as Maine."

With so many choices, narrowing the list of options can leave many parents feeling flummoxed. Camp experts shared a few key factors parents should consider before settling on summer camps to help avert unpleasant surprises.

"First, I think that parents should take their children into consideration, and the kinds of activities they like to do and whether they are being offered at the camps they are looking at," said Kevin Rechen, Summer Camp

director for Norwood School in Bethesda, Md.

It's a good idea to inquire about the camper to staff ratios and the types of staff the camp will hire, such as adult teachers or activity specialists. "Who are the individuals who will watch over the campers and what kinds of licenses do they have?" asks Francesca Reed, a mother of two and associate vice president for Enrollment Management at Marymount University in Arlington.

Safety and medical considerations are also key factors to consider, especially for children who have allergies or other medical

Summer Camp Fair

The Northern Virginia Camp and Summer Fun Expo
Feb. 20-21, Saturday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Sunday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
2100 Dulles Town Circle, Dulles

issues. "Is there a nurse on site?" asks Stacie Gottlieb, director of Summer Programs at Bullis School in Potomac, Md. "What safety and medical procedures [does the camp] have in place?"

Reed suggests parents also inquire about a camp's drop off and pick up times, availability of after-care services and whether fees are charged for late arrivals. "Some of the basic questions are the cost and any additional fees that might not be apparent," said Reed. "Find out the camp's reimbursement policy in case you have to cancel before camp starts or while it's in session."

For parents who have more than one child who will attend camp, Rechen suggests looking for camps that offer an assortment of activities that appeal to children of different ages. "For the sake of convenience, it's key for a lot of parents to have all of their children in one camp, so they don't have to make multiple trips each and every day," he said. "Having a variety of programs for a wide age range also allows younger children to see the activities that they have to look forward to as they get older."



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

More than 300 students and parents came to campus to take part in fun, interactive STEAM-based challenges.

STEAM Fair Pushes Innovative Thinking

On Saturday, Feb. 6, The Langley School hosted its first-ever STEAM Fair to celebrate the school's interdisciplinary, inquiry-based approach to learning and discovery through science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics.

More than 300 students and parents came to campus to take part in fun, interactive STEAM-based challenges such as building the tallest spaghetti tower that supported a single marshmallow, creating a lunar lander that prevented a marshmallow from bouncing out when it landed, or building foil boats that held the most plastic bears afloat. Participants used their creativity to paint works of art based on NASA images of our galaxy and used problem-solving skills to make working popsicle-stick windmills and paper airplanes that carried the most weight.

"STEAM initiatives are becoming an increasingly important part of our curricu-

lum at Langley because they help students develop the collaborative design-thinking and problem-solving skills they will need to succeed in today's ever-changing world," says assistant head of school Kathleen Smith. "The STEAM Fair provided a great way to showcase STEAM-based activities, inspire students of all ages to create and innovate in new ways, and bring together teachers, students, and parents for a wonderful community building event."

In addition to the hands-on activities at stations throughout Langley's campus, the STEAM Fair also featured displays of interdisciplinary STEAM projects from each grade level and technology demonstrations using the school's 3-D printer and other devices. In addition, middle school students presented their sophisticated science projects which included a hover board built by a Langley seventh-grader.



Star Wars Fans Flock to Local Classes

Movie's popularity leaves fans wanting to feel "The Force."

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Beams of neon light flash around a dark room. Young Star Wars fans from a galaxy not so far away wield light sabers and move with carefully choreographed steps. These Jedi-in-training are undergoing a fantasy combat training that melds martial arts with light saber fighting, Star Wars-style.

"Star Wars fans are the ultimate martial arts enthusiasts. Star Wars is 100 percent developed on the concepts and philosophies of martial arts ... the use of the sword, the belief structure," said Michael Dietrich of Dietrich's Karate Fitness and Life Skills in Burke. "Now we have an opportunity to invite students because of their interest in the movie. It's an easy way to bring them into our schools and show them what martial arts are all about."

Building on the hype surrounding the recent release of "Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awakens," Dietrich began offering classes at his newly created "Laser Saber



PHOTO COURTESY OF DIETRICH'S KARATE FITNESS AND LIFE SKILLS

Students work on light saber skills during a class at Dietrich's Karate Fitness and Life Skills in Burke.

Academy." Students sign up for a six-week class, where they learn how to use a light saber, tap into "The Force," and improve their focus, discipline and determination. "Any time a new movie or TV show comes

out that features a robot, there is a spike in interest in robotics," said Dan Gallagher of RobotWorks in Burke. "Every kid I've talked to since the Star Wars movie came out wants to know how BB-8 works. Before that, they



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PHOTO BY TERESA CASTRACANE/COURTESY OF 1ST STAGE

Philip Hosford as Professor Josef Mashkan in 1st Stage production of "Old Wicked Songs."

1st Stage Receives Six Helen Hayes Nominations

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

The Helen Hayes Awards, now in its 32nd year, recognizes outstanding achievement in more than 90 professional theatres across the Washington metropolitan area, including Northern Virginia. The nominees for the 2016 Helen Hayes Awards were recently announced. 1st Stage, performing in Tysons near the Spring Hill stop on Metro's Silver Line, received six nominations.

"The recognition of 1st Stage among so many talented artists and companies is a great privilege, said artistic director Alex Levy. "This was an exciting year of live theatre in the D.C. area, and we are proud to have been a part of it."

1st Stage received Helen Hayes nominations for:

Outstanding Musical Director, Walter "Bobby" McCoy for "Old Wicked Songs,"
Outstanding Lighting Design, Robbie Hayes for "The Good Counselor,"

Outstanding Sound Design, Kenny Neal for "Old Wicked Songs,"

Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Play, Lolita Marie in "Doubt, A Parable,"

Robert Prosky Award for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Play, Philip Hosford in "Old Wicked Songs,"

Outstanding Play, "Old Wicked Song."
Named for the legendary First Lady of



PHOTO COURTESY OF 1ST STAGE

Walter "Bobby" McCoy



TERESA CASTRACANE/COURTESY OF 1ST STAGE

Lolita Marie as Ms. Muller in "Doubt, a Parable" at 1st Stage in Tysons Corner.

the American Theater, the 2016 Helen Hayes Award recipients will be announced at a major ceremony to be held on May 23.

Often featuring young and emerging actors, plus a separate gallery space, 1st Stage's first full season was 2008-09. In 2010, 1st Stage received the John Aniello Award for Outstanding Emerging Theatre Company excellence from the Helen Hayes Awards. The theater troupe is also a recipient of an American Theatre Wing National Theatre Company award among its other honors and awards.

1st Stage is located at 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons. The theater company's current production is "When the Rain Stops Falling." Information about 1st Stage can be found at www.1stStageTysons.org.

CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

Northern Virginia Photographic Society Art Show. Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Jan. 15-Feb. 29. The Frame Factory, 212 Dominion Road, NE, Vienna.

McMurry Artist Showcase. Feb. 1-24. Broadway Gallery Fine Art and Framing, 1025-J-Seneca Road, Great Falls. Local artist Richard McMurry's stylized landscape paintings will be on display. www.broadwaygallery.net. 703-450-8005.

"When the Rain Stops Falling." Feb. 4-28. 1st Stage Tysons, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. Epic in scope and poetic in language, this beautiful, haunting play crosses continents and challenges the boundaries of time to tell the story of one family and the events that bring them together and drive them apart. \$15-\$30. www.1ststagetysons.org. 703-854-1856.

Pigments of My Imagination. Jan. 4-March 31. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Long time Great Falls resident Donna Barnako, has created over a dozen colorful and whimsical small works. Her subjects are varied, from pigs to puppies and cowboy boots.

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

"1776." Fridays and Saturdays, 8 p.m. Sundays, 2 p.m. Through Feb. 21. Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The founding fathers who participated in the creation and signing of one of the most important documents in our nation's history are presented in a humorous way, with their human foibles and failings. Directed by Annie O'Neill Galvin; produced by Jerry Gideon and Jean Match. \$23-\$25. mcleanplayers.org. 866-811-4111.

Gentle Yoga. Thursdays, 6:30 p.m. Emmaus United Church of Christ, 900 E Maple Ave. E, Vienna. Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Gentle Kundalini Yoga, one free introductory session, senior discounts. Increase your flexibility, improve your breathing and health, reduce your stress. Ravi Kaur has 15 years experience teaching yoga. \$15 per session. www.edimprovement.org. 571-213-3192.

"Poetry in Motion" Exhibit. Tuesdays-Saturdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. From Feb. 2-27. Exhibition of VAS members paintings with the theme "Poetry in Motion." Free.

Tai Chi Beginners' Practice. Saturdays, 8-9 a.m. St. Luke's Catholic School Gymnasium, 7005 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Weekly Tai Chi practice. Group has met for over 20 years. Free. FreeTaiChi.org. 703-759-9141.

"Wishes and Dreams" Exhibit. March 1-April 2. Vienna Art Center, 115 Pleasant St., NW, Vienna. Free. viennaartsociety.org. 703-319-3971.

THURSDAY/FEB. 18

The Jones Family Singers. 8 p.m. The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. The family that sings together stays together. The seven Jones children and their father, Bishop Fred A. Jones, have been making a joyful noise for more than 20 years. \$25. www.wolftrap.org.

FRIDAY/FEB. 19

Kevin Griffin of Better than Ezra. 8 p.m. The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Frontman of the alt-rock band Better Than Ezra, this prolific singer/songwriter has penned numerous hits for Train, Sugarland, James Blunt, Howie Day, Missy Higgins, Blondie, and more. \$25-\$27. www.wolftrap.org.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/FEB. 19-21

Hope on Ice. 3-8 p.m. Tysons Skate Rink, 1961 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Community ice skating extravaganza benefiting American Cancer Society and honoring cancer survivors. U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11th) will be present on Friday. DJ Civil, live music, entertainment and Luminaria on ice ceremony. First 50 cancer survivors receive commemorative T-shirt. \$12. skatetysonscorner@gmail.com. 703-673-8044.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Puppeteer Jim West performs at the McLean Community Center on Saturday, Feb. 20.

SATURDAY/FEB. 20

Puppetry Festival. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Jim West Puppets and Crabgrass Puppets will present and perform. Children can enjoy two puppet shows and learn how to make their own puppets. \$15/\$10. <http://ow.ly/WLmhq>. 703-790-0123.

Winter Wine Tasting. 7-10 p.m. River Bend Golf and Country Club, 375 Walker Road, Great Falls. Mingle with and join your neighbors for a delicious selection of hors d'oeuvres, cheeses and fine wines. \$75. www.celebrategreatfalls.org/winter-wine-tasting/.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/FEB. 20-21

HAPA. 7:30 p.m. The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Often described as the "Soundtrack of Hawaii," the ancient chants and warm, contemporary tunes of this group's liquid guitar runs are woven around clear harmonies and poetic lyrics. \$25-\$30. www.wolftrap.org.

SUNDAY/FEB. 21

Hula Dance Master Class. 3 p.m. The Center for Education, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. Take a trip to the fascinating Hawaiian islands in this fun-filled hula dance master class. Learn the beautiful footwork and graceful hand motions of a hula 'auana, modern hula, to a special mele, Hawaiian song. Ages 13 to adult. \$20. www.wolftrap.org.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 24

1964 The Tribute. 8 p.m. The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Recreates the Fab Four's early '60s concerts—see their astonishing show live, complete with period instruments, clothing, hairstyles, and onstage banter. \$38-\$42. www.wolftrap.org.

THURSDAY/FEB. 25

Marty Stuart. 8 p.m. The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Grammy winner Marty Stuart's music reflects the rich legacy of his Mississippi roots and the intersection of gospel, drinking and cheating ballads, and rock. \$50-\$55. www.wolftrap.org.

FRIDAY/FEB. 26

Itamar Zorman, Kwan Yi. 7:30 p.m. The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Violin and piano pieces by Mozart ("Sonata in B-flat Major K. 378"), Crumb ("Nocturnes"), Brahms ("Sonata in A Major"), Bartok ("Sonata no. 1 for Violin and Piano"). \$35. www.wolftrap.org.

McLean Art Society Meeting. 10 a.m.-noon. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Gavin Glakas, a well known portrait artist will be the featured presenter. He will bring his own model and will do an oil painting demonstration. Guests invited. 703-790-0123.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

SATURDAY/FEB. 27

Scott Miller. 6:30 p.m. Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave., E, Vienna. Staunton, Va. native, singer songwriter and farmer. www.jamminjava.com.
John Eaton, The Swingin' '30s. 8 p.m. The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Join renowned pianist and vocalist John Eaton as he interprets the Great American Songbook. \$25-\$27. www.wolftrap.org.

SUNDAY/FEB. 28

Crys Matthews. 6 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E, Vienna. Herndon resident Crys Matthews and two of the Mid-Atlantic's best singer-songwriters for a night of amazing music. \$15. jamminjava.com.

MONDAY-TUESDAY/FEB. 29-MARCH 1

Herb Alpert and Lani Hall. 8 p.m. The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Join Alpert and his Grammy-winning wife—the original voice of Sérgio Mendes' Brasil '66—as they take the stage with their dynamic band. \$55-\$65. www.wolftrap.org.

SATURDAY/MARCH 5

"Wishes and Dreams" Reception. 4-6 p.m. Vienna Art Center, 115 Pleasant St., NW, Vienna. Free. viennaartsociety.org. 703-319-3971.

THURSDAY/MARCH 10

Vienna Art Society Meeting. 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Speaker will be Davi D'Agostino who will discuss and demonstration her paintings in oils and acrylics and how she plans subject matter for her own works and also for the classes she teaches. Free. viennaartsociety.org. 703-319-3971.

SATURDAY/MARCH 12

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

TUESDAY/MARCH 15

Whiskey Classics Dinner. 7-9 p.m. Ruth's Chris Steak House-Tysons Corner, 8521 Leesburg Pike, Vienna. Ruth's Chris Tyson's Corner and Macallan Highland Single Malt Scotch Whisky presents a five-course "Whiskey Classics Dinner" prepared by Executive Chef Jean Bosch. \$99.99. <http://www.ruthschris.com/restaurant-locations/tysons-corner>. 703-848-4290.

Perennial Personalities. 10 a.m. Vienna Presbyterian Church, 124 Park St., Vienna. Karen Rexrod, plant expert and former owner of Windy Hill nursery, will present her favorite perennial personalities. Karen's expertise and knowledge of perennial plants and their habits. Free. lmc323@aol.com.

FRIDAY/MARCH 18

Flashlight Egg Hunt. 7 p.m. Glyndon Park, 300 Glyndon St., NE, Vienna. Enjoy a family evening searching for eggs and prizes in the dark! Please bring a flashlight so you can find the eggs. Jump like a bunny in the moon bounce and visit the Easter Bunny. 703-255-6360.

SATURDAY/MARCH 19

Old-Fashioned Egg Hunt and Roll. 10:30-11:30 a.m. Freeman House, 131 Church St., NE, Vienna. Children 12 and under and their parents are welcome to participate in an egg roll and visit with Easter Bunny, hosted by Historic Vienna, Inc. 703-938-5187.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

**Public Hearing on the
McLean Community Center's
FY 2018 Programs**
Wednesday, March 23, 2016 at 7:30 p.m.

The Governing Board of the McLean Community Center is **seeking input from residents** of Dranesville Small District 1A at its Public Hearing on Programs for FY 2018, which runs July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018.

The Board is interested in hearing residents' ideas on considerations for class offerings, community events, theatre programs, exhibits, tours, youth events and teen activities during the renovation period.

If you would like to speak at the hearing, call the Center to have your name placed on the speakers' list. You also may submit comments in writing to:
george.sachs@fairfaxcounty.gov

The McLean Community Center
1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean VA 22101
703-790-0123/TTY: 711
www.mcleancenter.org

SPORTS

McLean gymnasts Carolyn Brown-Kaiser, far left, and Anna Brower, far right, finished sixth and seventh, respectively, on vault at the 6A North region meet on Feb. 13 at Patriot High School.

PHOTO BY
JON ROETMAN/
THE CONNECTION



Three McLean Gymnasts Qualify for State Meet

Defending state champs place third at regionals.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

The defending champion McLean gymnastics team failed to earn a return trip to states, placing third at the 6A North region meet, but three Highlanders will compete as individuals this weekend.

Sophomore Carolyn Brown-Kaiser (vault, beam), junior Calista Pardue (floor) and sophomore Anna Brower (vault) each finished in the top eight in at least one event during regionals on Feb. 13 at Patriot High School, and will compete at the 6A individual state meet on Saturday, Feb. 20 at Kellam High School in Virginia Beach.

McLean finished third as a team with a score of 142.625. Yorktown won the region championship with a total of 146.05 and West Springfield finished runner-up (143.575). The top two teams earn a state berth.

Last season, McLean became the first Fairfax County school to win a state gymnastics championship since Langley in 2004.

The Highlanders finished state runner-up in 2014.

"Losing key gymnasts like my sister, Lizzy [Brown-Kaiser], and Jackie Green (to graduation) definitely played a huge role in our placement at both conferences and regionals," Carolyn Brown-Kaiser wrote in an email. "Although I'm disappointed that the McNastics team won't be able to compete at states, I am very pleased with everyone's performance."

Brown-Kaiser will compete in two events at states. During regionals, she placed sixth on vault with a score of 9.35 and finished eighth on beam (9.2).

"I was fairly pleased with my vault, however, I feel as if I could have performed better," Brown-Kaiser wrote. "With beam being my weakest event, I was very nervous to compete, but I feel as if I proved to myself that I can make a routine with confidence."

Brown-Kaiser finished ninth in the all-around with a score of 36.375.

"Because I was injured for the first half of the sea-



McLean sophomore Carolyn Brown-Kaiser, left, qualified for states on beam, placing eighth at the 6A North regional meet on Feb. 13 at Patriot High School.



McLean gymnast Calista Pardue tied for sixth on floor at the 6A North region meet on Feb. 13, earning her a spot at the state meet.

son, I've only been able to compete all-around about three times before regionals," she wrote. "My all-around score at regionals was my highest it has been in my two years of high school gymnastics, and I'm extremely glad to have peaked at regionals."

Pardue tied for sixth on floor with a score of 9.425 — the highest score of the evening by a Highlander gymnast.

Brower tied for seventh on beam (9.3).

Yorktown freshman Julia Hays won the all-around with a score of 37.65, followed by teammate Juliette Mitrovich (37.475), West Springfield's Abbie Levine (37) and Battlefield's Emily Ignacio (36.675).

Next up: states.

"I hope to place in the top five for vault," Brown-Kaiser wrote, "and the top eight for beam at individual states."

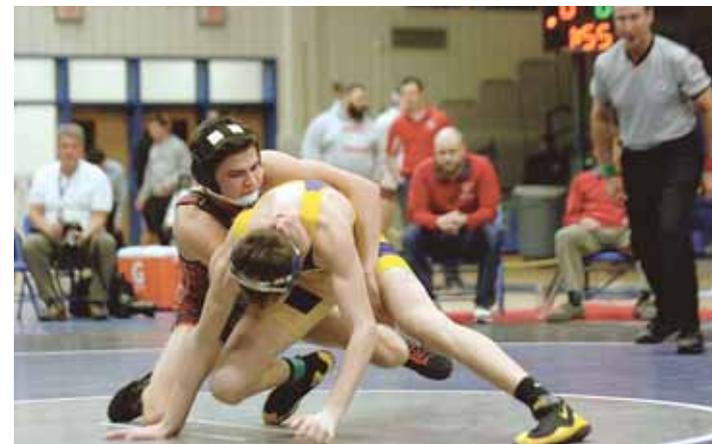


PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

McLean senior Conor Grammes, top, captured the 6A North region 160-pound wrestling championship on Feb. 13.

McLean Wrestling Places Fourth at Regionals

The McLean wrestling team finished fourth and captured three individual titles at the 6A North region championships on Feb. 13 at Fairfax High School.

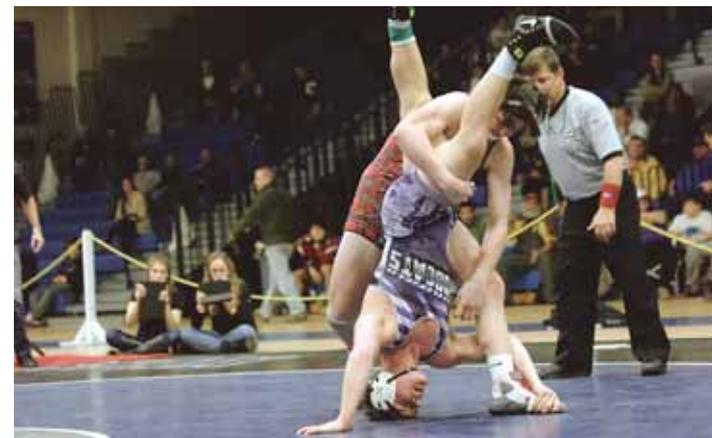
The Highlanders finished with a score of 134. Battlefield won the team title with a total of 194, followed by Hayfield (161) and Robinson (157.5).

Junior Brendan Grammes (138), senior Conor Grammes (160) and junior Gavin Legg

(170) each won a region title on Saturday.

Brendan Grammes defeated Annandale's Alex Joya (3-0 decision in) in the 138-pound final. Conor Grammes beat Lake Braddock's Tyler Matheny (pin) for the 160 title, and Legg defeated Battlefield's Ray Bernot (5-2 decision) for the 170 championship.

The state tournament will be held Feb. 19-20 at Oscar Smith High School in Chesapeake.



McLean wrestler Gavin Legg (170 pounds) was one of three Highlanders to win a region title on Feb. 13.

SPORTS ROUNDUPS

Loudoun Freedom Tryouts

The Loudoun Freedom is a competitive basketball organization for girls only. It provides players the opportunity to develop advanced basketball skills and knowledge, and to play in a very competitive environment. The Freedom emphasizes player development starting in third grade and continuing through high school. Open tryouts will be held for grades 3-8 on Sunday, Feb. 21 at Harmony Middle School.

Teams are formed at all playing levels to include an ELITE team at the eighth-grade level. Visit www.LoudounFreedom.com for specific tryout times/locations. Pre-registration is highly encouraged.

Looking for Umpires

Northern Virginia Baseball Umpires Association is in need of umpires for youth leagues, high schools, and collegiate-level baseball and volleyball games. Experience is helpful, but not required. Will give classroom and field training to aid you in acquiring skills needed. Contact John Porter at 703-978-3601 or assignor@umpires.org.



Sydney Grube

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Potomac School Senior Commits to Swim for University of Chicago

Sydney Grube, a senior at The Potomac School, has committed to swim for the University of Chicago. Grube will become the first Potomac athlete to swim at the collegiate level since 2006. "It's been a goal of mine to swim in college," she says. "I'm very excited about this opportunity."

So far in her senior season, Grube has captained Potomac's girls swim team to a seventh-place finish in the Independent School League championships; individually, she placed third in the 100-yard breaststroke. During her junior season, Grube finished sixth in the 100 breaststroke and 11th in the 200 indi-

vidual medley at the Virginia states. In addition, she set school records at the Washington Metropolitan Interscholastic Swimming and Diving Championships in the 100 breaststroke, 200 individual medley, and the 200 medley relay. She notes, "It's been a lot of fun watching the team continually improve."

Grube is eager to bring her skills to a University of Chicago team that was ranked eighth in the country for Division III swimming in December. "I was attracted to the school's well-rounded liberal arts education and strong swimming program," she says. "I'm looking forward to training hard and contributing to the team."

Participants in Langley's Geography Bee on Jan. 14.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

The Langley School Crowns Geography Bee Champion

Ten students in grades 4-8 at The Langley School tested their geographic knowledge during the first round of the 28th annual National Geographic Bee on Jan. 14. After the students tackled a series of challenging questions, Langley crowned its 2016 winner, seventh-grader Chris Stewart, who won the school's competition for the second straight year.

Sponsored by the National Geographic Society, the opening round of the National Geographic Bee is held in thousands of schools across the country and is the first step toward naming a national champion. During Langley's competition, contestants were challenged with oral and written geography questions, ranging from the locations of national parks to the names of European cities.

As Langley's winner, Chris advances to the next level, a written examination to determine state competitors.

The top 100 scorers on this written exam from each state will then face each other in their statewide Geographic Bee, with state champions eventually competing for a \$50,000 college scholarship in the national competition in Washington, D.C. in May 2016.

Last month, all of Langley's fourth- through eighth-grade students were given a preliminary qualifying test prepared by the National Geographic. The two top-scoring students in each grade were then selected to participate in Langley's school-wide Bee.

Students who competed in Langley's Geography Bee on Jan. 14 included: eighth-graders Manu Kini and Jackson Merrick; seventh-graders Bela Aguilar and Chris Stewart (champion); sixth-graders Soud Al-Saif and Keira Cornwell (runner-up); fifth-graders Adrianna Leckow and Jack Nelson; and fourth-graders Nasma Doyle and Tom Weed.

WEEK IN MCLEAN

Shepherd's Center Begins Friendly Visitor/Caller Program

The Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church has initiated two programs for senior adults who find it difficult to leave their homes. The Friendly Visitor program matches volunteers to seniors who would like a visit periodically. The Friendly Caller program allows volunteers to call seniors to let them know they haven't been forgotten and remind them to call the Center if they need help. Both programs allow for setting up a time convenient for both client and volunteer. Volunteers are needed for both programs. If you want to share experiences by either visiting or calling a homebound senior, call the Shepherd's Center at 703-506-2199 or e-mail at info@scmafc.org.

Langley Crew to Hold Fundraiser

On Saturday, Feb. 20, crew members from Langley High School will participate in their "Boats and Oars" fundraising effort throughout neighborhoods in McLean and Great Falls. Each year, the Langley High School Crew asks the larger community for financial support. Donations to Langley Crew (LCBC) are tax deductible.

Also, the team invites you to come see a regatta or two in the spring. Regattas are held Saturdays, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. from March 26 until May 14 (no regatta on April 4) on the Occoquan at Sandy Run Regional Park, 10450 Van Thompson Rd, Fairfax Station.

Fundraiser Supporting Safe Community Coalition

A fundraiser for Safe Community Coalition has been announced by HBC Group's (Keller Williams Realty) Community Charity Champions. Come to dinner on Tuesday, March 8, 2016 from 5 to 8 p.m. at Pulcinella Italian Host in McLean to support Safe Community Coalition. Enjoy dinner and know that approximately 70 percent of the proceeds from food and drink will go to SCC as long as the diner brings the flyer for the event. Contact HBC Group at 703-734-0192 or visit www.HBCGroupKW.com to receive a flyer.

Sponsors of the event are: Karen Briscoe and Lizzy Conroy with the HBC Group of Keller Williams Realty, Marcus Simon with EKKO Title, Kevin Dougherty of Pillar to Post, Kathy and Justin Neal of The Neal Team/SunTrust Mortgage, BOWA, The McLean Chamber of Commerce, and Moe Jebali with Pulcinella Italian Host.

BASIS Independent to Open in Tysons Corner

In preparation of the opening of BASIS Independent McLean (which is Tysons Corner's first pre-k-12th grade school), Basis.ed's co-founder Michael Block will speak at an introductory session on Monday, Feb. 22 at the Sheraton Tysons Hotel at 7 p.m., located at 8661 Leesburg Pike in Vienna. The Washington Post recently ranked BASIS Oro Valley in Arizona the number one most challenging high school in America and now that private school model is coming to McLean. To register, go to <http://mclean.basisindependent.com> or call 703-854-1253.

School registration is underway for Tyson Corner's new school, BASIS Independent McLean. The school will be located at 8000 Jones Branch Drive in McLean.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Michael Block of Basis.ed leads info session on first private school in Tysons Corner.

"We're thrilled to bring BASIS Independent to Tysons Corner, the heart of so much growth, innovation and progress in Northern Virginia," said Michael Block, co-founder of BASIS.ed and BASIS Independent McLean.

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21 Announcements

ABC LICENSE
 JIGO, LLC trading as La Cote D'or Cafe, 6876 Lee Hwy, Arlington, VA 22213. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer On and Off Premises; Mixed Beverage license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Jacques Imperato, owner
 NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 dates from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200

21 Announcements

ABC LICENSE
 The Shamrock Arlington, LLC trading as The Spirits of '76, 3211 Washington Blvd, Arlington, VA 22201. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer On and Off Premises; Mixed Beverage license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Patrick Doody, Member
 NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 dates from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200

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21 Announcements

ABC LICENSE
 Painerya LLC trading as Pio Pio Peruvian Cuisine, 762 Walker Rd, Ste A, Great Falls, VA 22066. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL(ABC) for a Wine and Beer On Premises and Mixed Beverages license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Benazur Pain, President.
 NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date to the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

21 Announcements

I Never think of the future. It comes soon enough.
 -Albert Einstein

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21 Announcements

When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion.
 -Ethiopian Proverb

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ZONES

Zone 1: The Reston Connection The Oak Hill/Herndon Connection	Zone 4: Centre View North Centre View South
Zone 2: The Springfield Connection The Burke Connection The Fairfax Connection The Fairfax Station/Clifton/Lorton Connection	Zone 5: The Potomac Almanac
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One Hundred Pills



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

What exactly am I going to do with 100 pills? Well, barring unforeseen (good or bad) circumstances, I'll certainly continue to take them every four weeks: two the day before my chemotherapy infusion, two the day of and two the day after, as I've done so now, for this particular medication, going on 30-plus months. "Not that there's anything wrong with that," or new, for that matter. But when I refilled this prescription last week, I was surprised when, after the pharmacy customer-server opened the bottle to show me the pills and ask if I had any questions, she then mentioned the count: "100." That's a lot of pills, I thought, more than usual. Typically, I receive only 30 pills.

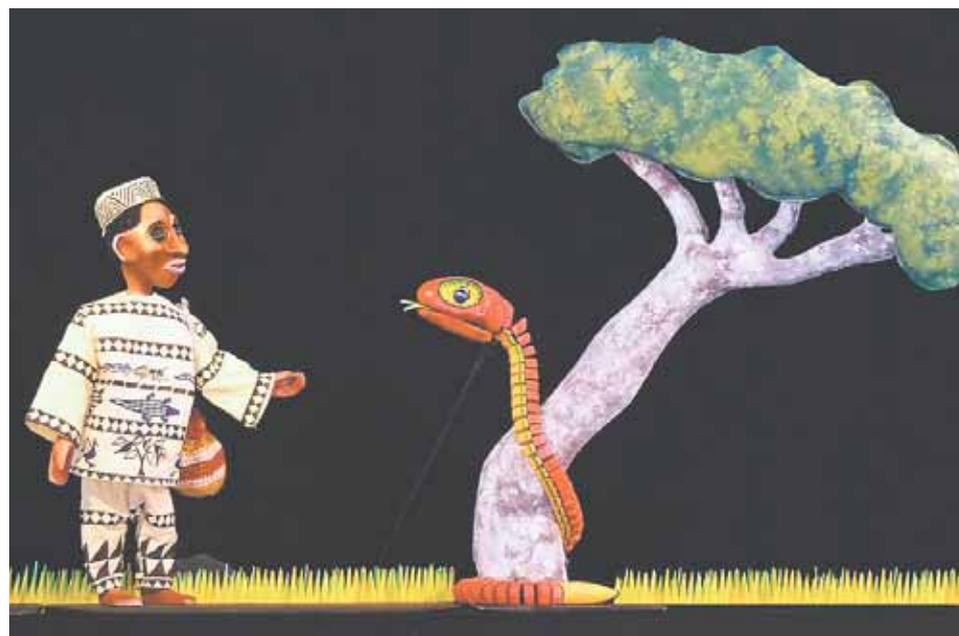
As I drove home from the pharmacy, I began to think (always dangerous). Why would my oncologist prescribe so many pills? I only need six per month. Is there a minimum he must order? A maximum? Did he over prescribe? Does he even have any input? Perhaps he's projecting my life expectancy? One hundred pills divided by six per month calculates to 17 months/infusions for which I now have pills. I don't want to look a gift oncologist in the mouth, but as a seven-year cancer survivor, I'm well aware that cancer treatment/results are hardly cast in stone and 17 months seems like a long time not yet gone (David Crosby song title, sort of).

I'm sure part of my presumptuousness is naiveté. I want/need to believe in something/anything positive (any port in a storm) concerning/relating to my health/treatment. More so when I'm in between my every-three-month, face-to-face appointment with my oncologist. That's when we review my most recent diagnostic scan and assess my overall status and consider treatment options before agreeing on a schedule for the next three months. Not that I'm discouraged from communicating with him in the interim. Quite the opposite in fact; he's very responsive to my e-mails. It's more that electronic communication is a "two-dimensional" type of communication, and I'm a "three-dimensional" kind of communicator. Obviously, I can respond electronically to his answers and presumably we could type back and forth, but dare I show my age and say: It's just not the same as being there/talking on the telephone. Ergo, during this between-appointment interval, I'm sort of left to my own devices and in turn inclined to wobble – and wonder, emotionally, about my life. Perhaps I should look on the bright side and be glad my oncologist didn't order six pills.

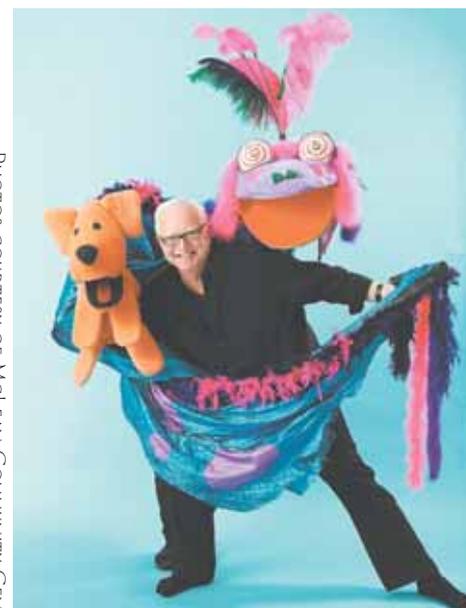
I suppose, if I wanted to be honest with myself, I'd say the number of the pills prescribed/in the bottle probably mean nothing. The doctor simply checked a box and off the order went with nary a consideration of the patient's reaction. Nor do I think the doctor is aware of patient co-pays, deductibles, percentage of benefits used or any of the other out-of-pocket expenses associated with the prescription/patient's health insurance. "Hippocratically" speaking, that's not his job. His job is to keep me/the patient alive.

And since I'm still alive, pill-count notwithstanding, I'm looking forward to the next 17 months. Seeing my bottles of pills become less full over time gives me a peculiar sense of accomplishment: that I continue to survive in the face of what was originally a fairly discouraging set of circumstances. Occasionally, however, I have to be realistic; 100 is simply a number, not a prognosis.

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



Crabgrass Puppets will present "African Adventure Tales."



Jim West Puppets will perform "Aesop's Fables."

Two Companies Bring Their Magic to McLean for 2016 Puppetry Festival

Children can enjoy two puppet shows and learn how to make their own puppets at a Puppetry Festival sponsored by The Alden in McLean on Saturday, Feb. 20. The event will be held in the Community Hall of the McLean Community Center (MCC) from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and features performances by Crabgrass Puppets of Halifax, Vt., and New York City-based Jim West Puppets. Tickets are \$15 for the general public and \$10 for MCC district residents. Infants and toddlers under the age of 2 will be admitted free of charge. MCC is located at 1234 Ingleside Ave.

Designed for children ages four and older,

Comstock

FROM PAGE 6

Virginia region. An effective way to combat human trafficking is to acknowledge the problem and raise awareness, and these forums have succeeded in bringing our community together to do just that. It is reassuring to know that our community is fully engaged on this important issue.

At the local level, in Congress, and even

the festival consists of two, 45-minute shows along with self-guided puppet-making stations, where parents can assist their children in making a variety of puppets. The stations will be open for the duration of the festival. Jim West Puppets will perform "Aesop's Fables" at 10:30 a.m. Jim West and his partners, with the help of Aesop himself (and his faithful dog, Moral), will share the author's famous fables, including "The Lion and the Mouse," "The Tortoise and the Hare" and "The Fox and the Grapes." This large-scale puppet production also features the music of Scarlatti, Beethoven and Chopin.

Crabgrass Puppets will present "African

Adventure Tales" at 11:30 a.m. Two funny folktales from Africa come to life with stunning puppetry, spectacular scenery and infectious music. "Anansi and the Talking Melon" features the irrepressible trickster Anansi the Spider, who eats his way into Elephant's melon and becomes too bloated to get back out. "Koi and the Kola Nuts" is a humorous tale from Liberia in which the youngest son of a chief is cheated out of his inheritance; instead of his father's riches, he receives just one small kola nut tree.

Tickets are on sale now. For more information or to purchase tickets online, visit <http://ow.ly/WLmqh> or call 703-790-0123, TTY: 711.

in the skies, people are more aware now of human trafficking than they were in the past. But more needs to be done because these predators are constantly changing tactics on how they take advantage of those who are vulnerable.

The saying "if you see something, say something" applies to human trafficking as well. So please, if you see something that is out

of sorts contact local law enforcement. Or if you, a friend, or a loved one you think may have been targeted or caught up in this growing criminal enterprise, call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or text "Be Free" to 233733.

To beat the traffickers we all must be united and on guard.

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.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 17

McLean Newcomers and Neighbors Monthly Luncheon. 11:30 a.m. Nostos, 81 Boone Blvd., Vienna. Ruth Robbins, senior program coordinator of the Smithsonian Associates, will describe programs she has organized with luminaries like Sonia Sotomayor, Henry Kissinger, Tom Brokaw and Martin Sheen. RSVP by Feb. 12 to mfskelly@verizon.net. \$38. Non-members welcome. www.McLeanNewcomers.org.

WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY/FEB. 24-25

Christ Presbyterian Preschool Open House. 10-11 a.m. Christ Presbyterian Preschool, 12410 Lee Jackson Memorial

Highway, Fairfax. Open house tours for the current school year and 2016-17. www.christpresbyterianpreschool.com. 703-691-9120.

ONGOING

The **Northern Virginia 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 www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/ltombudsman/.

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.

Respite Care volunteers give family caregivers of a frail older adult a well-deserved break so they

can go shopping, attend a doctor's appointment or just have coffee with a friend. Volunteers visit and oversee the safety of the older adult for a few hours each month. Support and training are provided. Contact 703-324-7577, TTY 711, or Kristin.Martin@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Fairfax County needs a volunteer **Senior Center Marketing Coordinator** to assist the Friends of Fairfax County Senior Centers with marketing. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

The **Lewinsville Senior Center** in McLean needs instructors for the following classes: Line Dance, Zumba Gold, Certified Arthritis Exercise, Square Dance, Basic Guitar, Art and Basic Spanish. 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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I'm looking forward
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