



Mike Kearney commissioned an oil painting by local Great Falls artist Begoña Morton to celebrate The Old Brogue's Irish roots and 35th anniversary. Pictured, from left, Kearney with Begoña Morton, Frances Duggan and chef John Conway.

Great Falls CONNECTION

Irish Countryside In Great Falls

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Four-Cent Tax Rate Increase, with Side of Vitriol

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Fashion Show to Support Scholarships for Women

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Four-Cent Tax Increase, With Side of Vitriol

Reconsideration hours later gives same result; board will consider putting meals tax to referendum in November.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Tuesday morning, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors voted for a four-cent tax rate increase, advertising a tax rate of \$1.13 per \$100 of assessed value. Hours later, a call to reconsider a higher rate sparked bitterness, anger and even disgust.

In the end, the outcome was the same. The board rejected Budget Chair Jeff McKay's motion for a five-cent increase on a 5-5 vote and Mount Vernon Supervisor Daniel Storck's motion to have a six-cent increase by a 3-7 vote.

But hours later Tuesday afternoon, March 1 after afternoon public hearings were finalized, Supervisor John Foust's motions to reconsider its advertised tax rate raised jointly by Sully Supervisor Kathy Smith — a tool permitted by Roberts Rules of Order — set off fireworks.

"I'm sorry, it's appalling, it's embarrassing," said Providence Supervisor Linda Smyth. "We're starting a budget session on the worst foot. We had a full discussion this morning."

"A robust discussion," said Hunter Mill Supervisor Cathy Hudgins.

Hudgins said she had come to the meeting planning to advocate for a five-cent increase, but said she was "disturbed" by the reconsideration. "This is childish play, that once you didn't get your way, you're going to bring it back."

Speaking of the School Board, she added, "You can't always have it your way."

Mason Supervisor Penny Gross: "I don't think we should be supporting voter's remorse."

"The ends do not justify the means," said Braddock Supervisor John Cook, who had reluctantly supported the four-cent increase. "I don't want anybody thinking there was a mistake."

Foust kept composed. If there's not enough support, he said, "we'll find out. We have this process available to us."

Lee Supervisor McKay said, "I support this, to get back to the original, responsible motion that I made," for a 5-cent increase.

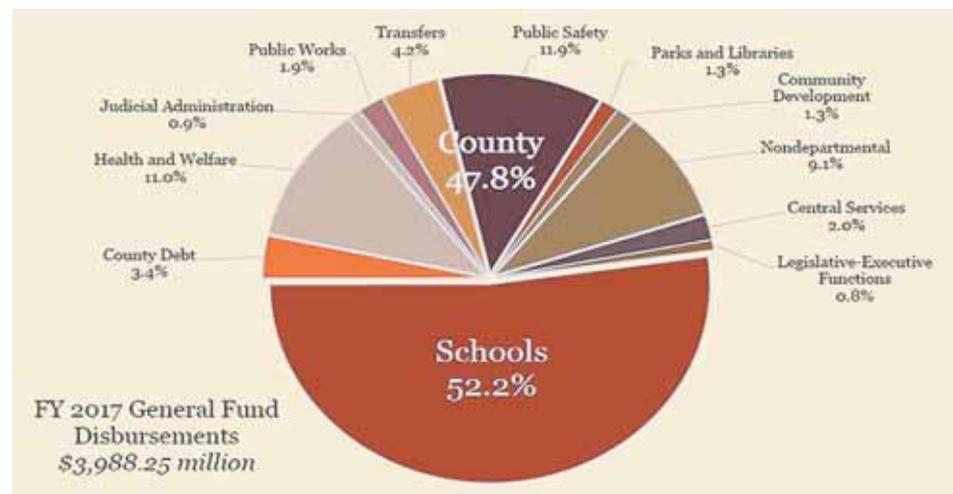
Chairman Sharon Bulova kept order, and supported the motion to reconsider.

"There's a process that allows for this," said Bulova. "So I am respectful that a member asked for it to be reconsidered."

The motion to reconsider failed with a 5-to-5 tie vote.

THE BUDGET BUILT and presented by County Executive Ed Long calls for a four-cent tax rate increase, about \$300 for the average household in Fairfax County, but also left Fairfax County Public Schools with a shortfall of \$68 million.

The Fairfax County School Board, parents



Budget Town Meetings

❖ **Providence District Budget Council Budget Town Hall Meeting**

Wednesday, March 9, 7 p.m., Providence Community Center - 3001 Vaden Drive, Fairfax - Multi-Purpose Room 2

❖ **Mason District Budget Meeting**

Wednesday, March 16, 7 p.m., Mason District Government Center, 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale - Main Community Room

❖ **Springfield District Budget Meeting**

Wednesday, March 23, 7 p.m., West Springfield Government Center - 6140 Rolling Road, Springfield - Community Room

❖ **Dranesville District Budget Meeting / McLean Citizens Association (MCA)**

Wednesday, March 23, 7:30 p.m., McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean

❖ **Braddock District Budget Meeting**

Monday, March 28, 7:30 p.m., Robinson Secondary School - "Recital Hall" - 5035 Sideburn Road, Fairfax

❖ **Lee District Association of Civic Organizations Community Budget Meeting**

Wednesday, March 30, 7 p.m., Lee District Governmental Center - 6121 Franconia Road, Alexandria

❖ **Dranesville District / Great Falls Citizen's Association Budget Meeting**

Thursday, March 31, 7 p.m., The Great Falls Grange, 9818 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls

and other school advocates have been leaning heavily on the Board of Supervisors to advertise a higher tax increase to "fully fund" the school budget. The discourse has not always been collegial.

"The Board of Supervisors' decision today to set the advertised (maximum) tax rate at four cents is disappointing because it guarantees that the county and schools budgets cannot both be fully funded, denying the community its rightful role in that conversation. Today's decision is discouraging for the thousands of community members who have reached out to the School Board and the Board of Supervisors this year to advocate for a voice in this very important conversation about values and priorities," said

School Board Chairman Pat Hynes.

Cook directed a rebuke at the School Board. "If we don't do it exactly the way you want, [you say] 'you are bad people.' We're not. I have children in the school system too."

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS can adopt a tax rate that is lower, but not higher, than what was advertised at its board meeting Tuesday, March 1.

Each penny on the real estate tax rate provides \$23 million in revenue.

The motion to advertise a four-cent increase passed 7-to-3.

"I'm disappointed that the same people who advocated for flexibility voted against

flexibility," McKay said. "They've boxed in the Board of Supervisors and tied our hands. It's now nearly impossible to meet the superintendent's request. I strongly believe that would have been possible at 5 cents and that is why I put forward this responsible rate."

Springfield Supervisor Pat Herry spoke against raising the tax rate. "Our residents are having to make difficult decisions around their kitchen tables as job and wage growth stagnates. We need to get our economy going and the commercial tax base back. ... Until then, we have to make the same tough choices that our residents are having to make and until we do I cannot ask them to absorb a six-percent increase this year."

"The Board of Supervisors' decision today to set the advertised (maximum) tax rate at four cents is disappointing because it guarantees that the county and schools budgets cannot both be fully funded, denying the community its rightful role in that conversation."

— School Board Chairman Pat Hynes

The board also asked for more information regarding putting a meals tax on the ballot in November. The board's legislative agenda has supported diversifying the tax base, taking some tax burden off homeowners, according to a statement by the county. Under state law, if the board wishes to adopt a meals tax, the voters must decide in the form of a referendum. The restaurant industry and chambers of commerce have strongly opposed a meals tax.

The County Executive's Advertised Budget, which calls for a four-cent increase, transfers more than \$2 billion to FCPS and provides over 52 percent of County General Fund revenues to the schools, according to county documents.

There are a number of opportunities for residents to share comments and concerns regarding the county budget between now and April 19. In addition to budget town meetings and forums throughout the county, three days of budget public hearings will be held at the Fairfax County Government Center on April 5-7.

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NEWS

Fashion Show to Support Scholarships for Women

Great Falls Friends and Neighbors continues to support women's education.

The Great Falls Friends and Neighbors Scholarship Fund (GFFNSF) is raising money to provide scholarships to women, continuing its long-standing tradition of giving back to the community. Great Falls Friends and Neighbors (GFFN) was formed in 2011 as a result of a merger between the Great Falls Woman's Club and the Newcomers of Great Falls, two organizations that had been active in the area for more than 30 years.

GFFN has more than 200 involved members and provides opportunities for the residents of Great Falls and surrounding communities to connect through a variety of social, educational and cultural activities. It also provides service, support, and donations to philanthropic causes and civic organizations. The GFFNSF is one of the club's major philanthropies. It is a separately incorporated 501(c)(3) organization.

Each year the GFFNSF awards up to six scholarships to deserving Virginia women over the age of 25 who are attending either George Mason University or Northern Virginia Community College. One scholarship is presented to a dance student at George Mason University in the name of a club founder, Bette Carter. According to Annette Kerlin, a GFFNSF board member, "Many of these scholarship recipients have jobs, children or both, and would not be able to continue their education without this help. The beneficiaries are very impressive individuals and we are thrilled to be able to help them in this manner." For more information on the recipients, see GFFNSF.org.

The GFFNSF has been providing this kind of financial assistance to female college students for the last 34 years. To facilitate its efforts, the GFFNSF has established two endowments, one at George Mason University and one at Northern Virginia Community College, which are maintained through donations and fundraising activities. On Sunday, April 24 from 10 a.m. to 12, the GFFNSF will be hosting its "2016 Spring Fashion Show" at Bloomingdale's Tysons Corner in McLean to raise scholarship money. This event will feature a champagne brunch, raffle, silent auction, shopping event and fashion show.

Sally Andrew-Pyne, of the GFFNSF board, said, "Bloomingdale's is pulling out all the stops with a fabulous lineup of this season's styles. They also are generously donating 10 percent of the attendees' purchases to GFFNSF. Add a yummy brunch and a number of exciting silent auction and raffle gifts and you have a Sunday morning packed with fun – and all for a terrific cause."

The GFFNSF is accepting contributions from individuals, organizations and companies who would like to support this cause by becoming one of the event



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

The Board of the GFFNSF discussed the details of the fashion show they are hosting at Bloomingdale's Tysons Corner on April 24. From left: Allison Granstedt, Kristen Trimble, Sally Andrew-Pyne, Laura Bumpus, Annette Kerlin and Ricki Harvey (center – back to camera).



Martina Atabong, a 2015 GFFN scholarship recipient studying nursing at GMU where she is on the Dean's List.



Lea Lines, a 2015 GFFN scholarship recipient and GMU nursing student who resumed her studies after staying at home more than a decade with her children.



Members of GFFN rally around publicity for the Scholarship Fund's Fashion Show scheduled for April 24 at Bloomingdale's Tysons Corner. From left: Annette Kerlin, Karen Deardorff, Julie Casso, Claire Jones, Tracie Hildson, Keula Binelly-Fletcher, Sally Andrew-Pyne.

sponsors. Monetary donations are also appreciated. To become a sponsor, donate money or purchase tickets for the fashion show, visit GFFNSF.org for details.

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GFHoops Wraps Up the Season, Donates to Haiti Children

BY MALIA SIMON KISHORE

Great Falls Basketball wrapped up their season this past weekend with a double elimination tournament, All-Star games, scholarship awards and by giving the gift of health to Haitian school children.

The tournament games were well fought, well-coached contests, and the All Star games were fun and competitive. The season's end was highlighted by the awarding of the Matthew Poyner Youth Leadership Award, an award instituted by GFHoops in 2015, to honor the memory of Matt Poyner, a member of our community and beloved son, brother, friend, and student-athlete. Four outstanding seniors were acknowledged for their leadership within the GFHoops community. Mackenzie Regen, Jonathan Canfield, Chris Miner and Dante Vasiliadis were each awarded a plaque and \$1000 towards defraying their college costs.

This season GFHoops players turned out in full force to support health initiatives in Haiti in the second annual Shots for Shots contest. Each player donated \$5 to participate in a basketball shooting contest. Team winners received a T-shirt, age group winners received an Amazon gift card, and the team that scored the most points overall won a pizza party. However, the big winners are the students in Haiti. Through GFHoops' fundraising the Community Co-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Wood and Emmy Parker of Community Coalition for Haiti receiving the check from GFHoops Commissioner Michelle Claude.

alition for Haiti has been able to institute a mobile healthcare clinic to bring healthcare to students in and around Jacmel, Haiti. GFHoops players and families donated \$4350.00 this year. In a country where a family of four live on less than \$2 per day, the impact of this donation will go a very long way.

GREAT NEWS!
Loebig Chiropractic & Rehab is excited to introduce our new Acupuncturist, Chung Park!



Chung is an Acupuncture professional with experience in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), Japanese Acupuncture, Five Elements Acupuncture, Korean Four Needle and Acupuncture Physical Medicine. He is a licensed acupuncturist in Virginia and Maryland

specializing in detoxification. Chung is excited to work with his patients to help balance and harmonize a healthy life through Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine! He is available for appointments on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. **Schedule your appointment now!**

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Bringing Back the Electric Chair

In a word: Barbaric.

No doubt Virginia and Texas will be the last two states to continue with the death penalty until, inevitably, evolving standards of decency lead the U.S. Supreme Court to declare that the death penalty is unconstitutional.

But fear of loss has motivated the Virginia General Assembly to amend a law that allows prisoners facing execution to choose between lethal injection and the electric chair so that the electric chair is used if drugs for lethal injection are not available.

It's barbaric, and execution debacles with electrocution and unproven drugs for lethal injection could speed overall rejection of the death penalty.

Most representatives from our area voted against, but in the House of Delegates, which voted 62-33 for the electric chair, Dave Albo, Jim LeMunyon and Vivian Watts voted in favor; Tim Hugo didn't vote but registered that he intended to vote yes. (Voting no were Jennifer Boysko, David Bulova, Eileen Filler-Corn, Charniele Herring, Patrick Hope, Mark Keam,

Paul Krizek, Mark Levine, Alfonso Lopez, Bob Marshall, Ken Plum, Mark Sickles, Marcus Simon and Rip Sullivan. Kathleen Murphy didn't vote but registered that she intended to vote no.)

The Virginia Senate voted for the electric chair 22-17. From our area, only Dick Saslaw voted in favor of the electric chair. Voting no were George Barker, Adam Ebbin, Barbara Favola, Janet Howell, Dave Marden, Chap Petersen, Scott Surovell and Jennifer Wexton.

Residents of the 35th Senate District could rightfully question whether they are getting the representation they expect from Senator Saslaw (D), who without doubt will continue to be reelected until he chooses to retire.

Saslaw voted for mandatory use of the electric chair if lethal injection drugs are not available, worked to kill legislation that would protect consumers from predatory lending and interest rates of more than 200 percent, and was chief patron of the notorious proffer bill, which, if signed by Gov. Terry McAuliffe as passed, will result in localities losing the ability to temper costs of development and likely property tax increases.

EDITORIAL

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Protecting Arts Programs in Schools Questioning (Some) Rules

To the Editor:

After reading the article, "Fairfax County: Parents, Community

Supporters Rally to 'Invest in Kids' by Tim Peterson (Connection, February 18-24), spending on public education is clearly becoming a huge concern. Being a former student of Fairfax County, I remember how important programs related to the arts were to many students. Many students gained an interest in music beginning at an

early age. Without the availability of the classes or the teachers, many young children may have never discovered their hidden talents or interests in the field.

I strongly believe spending should not cut out the arts from public education, and students should continue to receive the same opportunities we did when we were in elementary school.

Roxana Jahanbani
Great Falls

Lifting Stigma from Drug Users

To the Editor:

I believe that your in-depth look at Northern Virginia's heroin subculture ("Police Arrest 20 for Heroin Use in One Day," Connection, March 2-8, 2016) was a step in the right direction towards helping to lift the stigma from drug users. You chose to expand upon the stories of the 20 people recently apprehended for the possession and/or distribution of heroin instead of simply focusing on the crime itself.

I applaud how the fine men and women of the police departments of Loudoun, Fairfax, and Prince William counties chose to opt for rehabilitating those arrested instead of simply detaining them and risking that they return to drugs. Instead of placing a "bandage" on the chronic issue, they

decided to treat the wound itself in order to prevent it from happening later on. It was very thoughtful and sensitive of them to realize that this wasn't just a private trouble in the lives of the addicts, but instead a public issue in their community that needed to be rectified.

Helping the victims out of their addictions instead of just incarcerating them may have also helped in reducing the number of deaths attributed to heroin and the health consequences that result from its use as well. All in all this was a very well written paper and your dedication to providing the whole truth about the situation is refreshing and welcomed.

Preston Taylor
Springfield

To the Editor:

I have two children in the Fairfax County School System. The principal is mandating a doctor's note after a set number of absences. Excused or unexcused. This news was delivered in a form letter generated by attendance numbers. Nothing else.

In FCPS policy 2232.3, it states, "The principal or his designee determine whether or not absences will be excused and may require a physician's note in cases of chronic or long-term illness."

The principal may request a doctor's note every time a child misses class, it's his choice, but it is not reasonable.

The administration should approach the situation with the assumption that parents have their children's best interest at heart and know their children best. The administration can't possibly know what is best for each of their 2400 students, especially if there has been no dialogue with the family.

The Supreme Court has even addressed the importance of parental discretion even when some parents do not act responsibly: That some parents "may at times be acting against the interests of their children" . . . creates a basis for caution, but it is hardly a reason to discard wholesale those pages of human experience that teach that parents generally do act

Making Good Choices On Saint Patrick's Day

Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), will offer the 2016 St. Patty's Day SoberRide program, providing free cab rides to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area next Thursday, March 17.

SoberRide will be available for 12 hours starting 4 p.m. on St. Patrick's Day and continuing until 4 a.m. on Friday, March 18 as a way to help keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk holiday.

Make your own plans to celebrate safely by having a designated driver, celebrating where you can take public transportation or spend the night. But if those plans go awry, area residents celebrating with alcohol may call the toll-free SoberRide phone number 1-800-200-TAXI (8294) for a no-cost (up to a \$30 fare), safe way home. For more information, visit www.soberride.com.

— MARY KIMM

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After several months training with her FitCoach, Barbara is 50% stronger. She looks fantastic. She is strong, fit and, most importantly, healthy.

Tyler is impressed. "To see someone who has gone through so much and is now achieving her goals – it's incredible. Barbara always wants me to challenge her, and I love it! What makes me most proud is the simple fact that she is proud of herself. I may have helped along the way, but if she hadn't made the first step to come into Koko FitClub, none of this would have been possible."

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Commission Recognizes Outstanding Women in Fairfax County Government

PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

Edwyna Wingo of the Chantilly area began her career with Fairfax County as a nurse in the Health Department on Sep. 1, 1965 and worked her last full day Oct. 1, 2011.

Wingo graduated from the University of Virginia nursing school in 1964 and decided she didn't much care for rotating and night shifts. Looking for a more regular schedule, she found work in "Home Health," providing health services for individuals outside the hospital.

"The bug of public health really stuck," she said. "And I was on the cutting edge of public health back then. Home visits, community clinics, I did it all. And I never gave up on my love of patient care."

Wingo now works as part-time on special projects for the Fairfax County Health Department, including a car seat program for families whose income is low enough to make them eligible. She started with the project four years ago and said to date thousands of car seats have been given out.

Wingo is the longest-tenured of 12 women honored by the Fairfax County Commission for Women on March 1, Super Tuesday, at the Government Center prior to the Board of Supervisors regular meeting.

"I was absolutely floored when I got the email," Wingo said. "Fairfax County has been very dear to me. I've had opportunities in Fairfax County with the Health Department."

Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova spoke to the group before moving into the Board's auditorium to begin the regular business meeting.

The Chairman opened with her response when people ask her what the obstacles were to her achieving her success in public elected office.

"I've benefitted from years of wonderful leadership of women in Fairfax County," Bulova said, referencing the late Jean Packard, the first woman to serve as Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Audrey Moore and Kate Hanley.

"They've paved the way for me," Bulova continued. Then transitioning and acknowledging the 12 women being recognized by the Commission, she thanked them each for "your knowledge, and the way you served Fairfax County."

Eleven women, each having spent 40 years or more with Fairfax County govern-



Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova addresses the Fairfax County Commission for Women recognition program.

"I've benefited from years of wonderful leadership of women in Fairfax County."

—Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova

Laura Sizemore, a junior at Lake Braddock Secondary School and in her second year as the student representative to the Fairfax County Commission for Women, was in the audience for the recognition ceremony.

"I bring the perspective of teenagers to the commission," Sizemore said, "I know the school side of issues like dress code and sexual harassment."



Lake Braddock Secondary School junior Laura Sizemore is the student representative to the Fairfax County Commission for Women.



Pat Harrison is Deputy County Executive for Human Services and spoke on behalf of the Commission for Women during the proclamation ceremony with the Board of Supervisors recognizing March as Women's History Month.



Donna Bird a business analyst for Special Projects with the Department of Public Safety Communications.



Pat Burton is a management analyst II with Department of Cable and Consumer Services.



Beth Imming is a public health nurse II with the Department of Public Health, Annandale office.



Linda O'Brien is an administrative assistant III with the Reston District Station of the Fairfax County Police Department.



Mary Rezzarday-White is currently library assistant II for youth services in the Fairfax City Regional Library.



Doris Robey is a manager in the Department of Tax Administration, Personal Property and Business License division.



Nancy Stallings is an investigator for the Departments of Planning and Zoning, and Code Compliance.



Deanna Velasco is an administrative assistant IV in the Department of Family Services, Self Sufficiency Division, Fraud and Investigation Unit.



Edwyna Wingo works as a public health Nurse II with the Department of Public Health.



Susan Woodruff retired Jan. 21, 2016, as Director of the Department of Human Resources.

ment, represented a collective 433 years of service.

The 12th, Deputy County Executive for Human Services Pat Harrison, was scheduled to speak on behalf of the Commission for Women during a proclamation ceremony with the Board of Supervisors recognizing March as Women's History Month.

To see the 12 women honored for their vast careers with Fairfax County, Sizemore said it inspires her to work hard and do what she wants with her life, "not what people want me to do," she said.

The junior said computer science is a big passion and she plans to pursue a career in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or government.

SoberRide Offered on St. Patrick's Day

Preparing to combat that time of year when, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), nearly half of all U.S. traffic deaths are caused by drunk drivers, free cab rides will be offered to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area next Thursday, March 17 (St. Patrick's Day).

Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the 2016 St. Patty's Day SoberRide program will be in operation beginning at 4 p.m. on Thursday, March 17 (St. Patrick's Day) and continue until 4 a.m. on Friday, March 18 as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk holiday.

During this 12-hour period, area residents celebrating with alcohol may call the toll-free SoberRide phone number 1-800-200-TAXI(8294) and be afforded a no-cost (up to a \$ 30 fare), safe way home. AT&T wireless customers can dial #WRAP for the same service.

Local taxicab companies throughout the Washington-metropolitan area provide this no-cost service to local residents age 21 and older who otherwise may have attempted to drive home after drinking.

"During the evening hours immediately following the 2014 St. Patrick's Day celebrations, nearly half of all U.S. traffic fatalities involved drunk drivers," said Kurt Gregory Erickson, WRAP's President.

SoberRide® is offered in the District of Columbia; throughout the Maryland counties of Montgomery and Prince George's; and throughout the Northern Virginia counties of Arlington, Fairfax, (eastern) Loudoun and Prince William.

Last St. Patrick's Day (2015) SoberRide program provided nearly 200 (190) free cab rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Washington-metropolitan area. Since 1993, WRAP's SoberRide program has provided 64,641 free cab rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.

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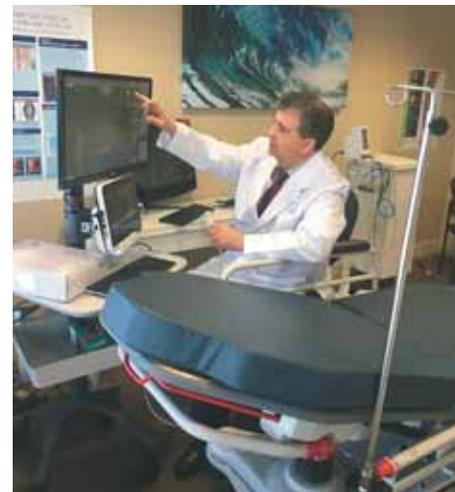
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Irish Countryside in Great Falls

The Old Brogue celebrates 35th anniversary on St. Patrick's Day with painting of Irish countryside by Great Falls artist.

BY LISA COLBURN STEWART

Mike Kearney opened The Old Brogue in Great Falls on St. Patrick's Day in 1981. In preparation for the restaurant's celebration of 35 years as a Great Falls Village institution, Kearney commissioned an oil painting by local Great Falls artist Begoña Morton to celebrate the restaurant's Irish roots.

"While this painting reflects our Irish heritage, it also is a celebration of our community as it is a neighborhood collaboration," Kearney said. "The painting and its creation is a meaningful way for us to commemorate our 35 years in the Great Falls community."

The inspiration for the painting began with a large window frame Kearney rescued from a Great Falls residence undergoing renovation. The frame sat in Kearney's garage for more than two years while considering how to re-purpose it. It was during an Arts of Great Falls exhibit of Morton's oil paintings in the restaurant's Katie's Coffee House that Kearney decided to commission a painting to be framed by the window.

A native of Spain, Morton moved to Great Falls from Belgium in 2006. She studied classical oil paint technique in Spain and with the Arts of Great Falls.

Kearney, Morton, Limerick-born restaurant manager Frances Duggan and John Conway, chef at The Old Brogue for the last 14 years, poured over photos of the Irish countryside to select areas, sites and landscapes of personal significance, as well as recognizable highlights of the Irish landscape.

Conway, a native of County Wicklow, Ireland, selected several of that region's geographical and historical sites. The Wicklow Head Lighthouse to the right in the painting on Ireland's east coast, has been in Conway's family history for four generations and his mother is still the housekeeper at the Lighthouse's bed and breakfast.

"Begoña brings to life images that are our memories of the Irish countryside and our families," comments Conway. "The entire landscape does not exist in reality but within each pane is a memory that is meaningful to each of us in a different way."

Morton meticulously planned the painting so that each windowpane contains its own Irish vignette. According to Morton, "the creation of this painting has been a labor of love for each of us. After identifying the sites and landscapes we wanted to depict, I felt each image needed to be able to function on its own within a pane, as well as in unity with all of the other vignettes when the painting is viewed as a whole."

The mountains of Glenveagh National Park located in Northern Ireland line the top of the painting and are where Kearney spent many days hiking. "Ireland's Glendalough Lake does not actually lie at the base of these



Begoña Morton painting in her studio.



Mike Kearney commissioned an oil painting by local Great Falls artist Begoña Morton to celebrate The Old Brogue's Irish roots. Pictured, from left, Kearney with Begoña Morton, Frances Duggan and Chef John Conway.

St. Patrick's Day at The Old Brogue

The Old Brogue's 35th anniversary celebration will take place on St. Patrick's Day, March 17. The Snuggery (Katie's Coffee House space) will offer five seatings for a sit-down 3-course meal and music by Pennywhistle from County Donegal, Ireland. Reservations are required.

The St. Patrick's Day Pub Bash next door begins at 10 a.m. and features three bars serving traditional Irish beers, live music all day by Ted Garber, and the \$10 cover charge includes an official 2016 commemorative button. For more information or to make reservations, call The Old Brogue at 703-759-3309.

mountains but the way it is depicted in the painting you would never know otherwise. It just makes sense," added Kearney.

Also depicted is Ireland's famous Glendalough village, which typifies the beauty and rich history of small Irish villages.

Duggan selected the colorful Irish cottages depicted near the bottom of the painting and the cobblestone fence that traces a path across the canvas. "These images are distinctly Irish and can be seen throughout the country," Duggan said.

Most agree that the painting's most popular image is of the sheep at the lower right. Morton wanted an element that would be particularly appealing to children and was inspired by her own children's response to viewing Old Master paintings in museums. "Traveling with my children through museums, I noticed they were always immediately drawn to the animals depicted so I wanted to make sure I had an image to appeal to even the smallest diners," Morton added. "Although, I think they ended up being everyone's favorite, which is fantastic."

Great Falls resident and cabinetmaker Sam Thompson created a custom frame to surround the window's frame and safely enclose the canvas.

Kearney opened The Old Brogue in the space previously occupied by an ice cream parlor. The bar counter is a recreation of the original ice cream parlor bar and the freezer in The Old Brogue is the original used to store ice cream.

"My father was born in Belfast, and my grandfather ran several restaurants and inns in Ireland. I wanted to open a pub that reflected my Irish roots. For the last 35 years at The Old Brogue, we have tried to bring the unique Irish spirit and cuisine to Great Falls. We want everyone to feel a little bit Irish the minute they walk through the door and when they see this painting, I believe they do."

For more information about Begoña Morton and to view her artwork, visit www.begonamorton.com.

LISA COLBURN STEWART WRITER AND FOOD BLOGGER AT WWW.FAMILYANDFORKS.COM.

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WEEK IN GREAT FALLS

Spring Clean-Up at Colonial Farm

The Claude Moore Colonial Farm, 6310 Georgetown Pike, McLean will hold a Spring Clean-Up on Saturday and Sunday, March 19-20, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Play a role in getting the farm ready for the 2016 season and Opening Day April 1. On this 18th-century working farm, trails and fields need to be cleared, fences rebuilt and wood split, moved and stacked. There is also work in the greenhouse, cleaning animal pens and other spruce up activities. Complimentary picnic hot dog lunch will be available. Great activity for groups and families. Bring work gloves and dress for the weather.

No admission fee; RSVP to jengle@1771.org; directions and more information at www.1771.org.

Washington International Horse Show Seeks Junior Committee Members

Washington International Horse Show seeks applications for the 2016 WIHS Youth Ambassador and Junior Committee programs. The deadline for applications is Friday, April 1.

Applicants must be students between the ages of 14 and 18 enrolled at local Washington, D.C. area schools. Please review the requirements and complete the 2016 Junior Committee and Youth Ambassador Application forms, which can be found at <http://www.wihs.org/youth-ambassador-junior-committee/>.

The junior committee works with the WIHS management team over the summer and fall and during the show to help prepare for the week-long Washington International Horse Show held Oct. 25-30 at the Verizon Center in Washington, D.C. For more information, email info@wihs.org.

Great Falls Senior Center Luncheon at L'Auberge Chez Francois

The Great Falls Senior Center (GFSC) event for April 5 will be a luncheon hosted by L'Auberge Chez Francois, 332 Springvale Road, Great Falls, 11:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Luncheon includes appetizer, entrée, and dessert choices with coffee or tea.

Reservations are limited, Cost is \$40 per person (tip and tax included). Call Sondra Taylor, 703-759-6204 or email staylor131@cox.net. Send checks (Payable to GFSC) to Sondra Taylor 752 Boehms Court, Great Falls 22066.

GFSC's mission is to enrich the lives of the community's seniors with stimulating and social networking opportunities. To become a member for 2016, send your name, address, phone number and email with a check for \$15.00 per person payable to GFSC to GFSC; P.O. Box 425; Great Falls VA 22066. Also visit gfseniors.org.



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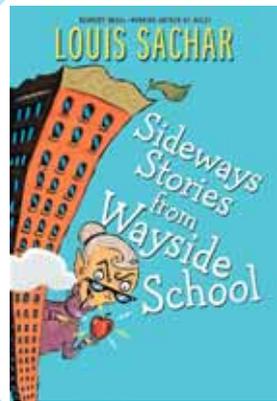
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McLean Community Center
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Here's What's Happening at MCC



An Alden Theatre Production
"Sideways Stories from Wayside School"
Sat. and Sun.,
Mar. 12-13, 3 p.m.
\$15/\$10 MCC district residents

Old Firehouse Spring Break Trips
Sky Zone, Sakura & Monster Mini Golf
Monday, Mar. 21, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
\$65/\$55 MCC district residents

G-Force Indoor Go Karts
Tuesday, Mar. 22, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
\$75/\$65 MCC district residents

Dave & Buster's
Wednesday, Mar. 23, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
\$65/\$55 MCC district residents

Baltimore, Md.
Thursday, Mar. 24, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
\$85/\$75 MCC district residents

Hogback Mountain Paintball
Friday, Mar. 25, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
\$70/\$60 MCC district residents

Welcome the Spring Season



Spring Fest
Saturday, Mar. 26
10 a.m.-Noon
\$5 per person;
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The McLean Community Center
www.mcleancenter.org
Home of the Alden Theatre
www.aldentheatre.org



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CALENDAR

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

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.

Game Night: Sheriff of Nottingham. 7 p.m. Barnes and Noble Tysons, 7851 L. Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Bring friends, grab a snack from the Cafe and get ready for some board game fun. Free. 703-506-6756. <http://stores.barnesandnoble.com/store/2238>.

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.

Churchill Road Elementary School Book Fair. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Barnes and Noble Tysons, 7851 L. Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Students, parents, staff will host activities to entertain children including an 11am Storytime, bookmark making, face painting and student performances. 703-506-6756. <http://stores.barnesandnoble.com/store/2238>.

Author and Illustrator Reading and Signing. 3 p.m. Barnes and Noble Tysons, 7851 L. Tysons Corner Center, McLean. McLean native Scott McBride and co-author Rod Thompson will read and sign copies of their book "The Adventures of Connor the Courageous Cutter: Saving Sarah." Illustrator Brian Martin will join them. Free. 703-506-6756. <http://stores.barnesandnoble.com/store/2238>.

Look to the Rainbow. 6-10 p.m. Charles Wesley United Methodist Church, 6817 Dean Drive, McLean. Come celebrate with the World Children's Choir with songs, dance, drumming and activities. Featuring songs with a Celtic spirit in honor of St. Patrick's Day. \$10-\$30. worldchildrenschoir.org. 571-344-2206.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/MARCH 12-13, "Sideways Stories from Wayside School." 3 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Delightfully demented comedy about the strangest school ever built, where the students battle supernatural teachers and endure madcap lessons. Performed by youths. Ages 7 and up. \$15/\$10. mcleancenter.org. 703-790-0123.

SUNDAY/MARCH 13

Capitol Steps. 4 p.m. James Madison High School, 2500 James Madison Drive, Vienna. Comedy troupe. Performance benefits rowing team. \$25-\$40. madisoncapitolsteps2016.brownpapertickets.com.

TaBois Galerie Re-opening. 2-6 p.m. 1800 Old Meadow Road, McLean. Music by Dave Danze. Premiering International Association of Self-Proclaimed Artists and Writers exhibition. Ctabois@ctabois.com.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Lynn Goldstein, Apres l'Crozon, 12" x 16", Pastel, on display at Broadway Gallery in Great Falls from March 1-23.

Ongoing

Time Traveler Tuesdays. 4:30 p.m. March 29-June 7. Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. This weekly series will take participants on an interactive journey through time, focusing on a different period in Virginia history each week. Register at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/colvinrunmill/events.htm>.

Scholarship. Deadline April 1. The Bull Run Civil War Round Table in Centreville is offering a \$1,500 scholarship to a high school senior who resides in Fairfax or Prince William counties and will attend college or community college in fall 2016. Information and application instructions can be found at <http://bullruncwrt.org>.

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.

Margaret Newton Original Oils. Through March 31. Modern History Collection, 8100 F Old Dominion Drive, McLean. Great Falls original oil paintings. Opening reception with artist, Thursday, April 7 from 6-8 p.m. 703-942-6507.

"Witness: Close Encounters of the Painting Kind." March 1-31. Katie's Coffee at the Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760 Walker Road, Great Falls. Jill Banks' solo exhibit of backyards, bars, beaches and other scenes keenly captured. JillBanks.com.

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

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.

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.

Goldstein Artist Showcase. March 1-23. Broadway Gallery, 1025-J Seneca Road, Great Falls. Great Falls Gallery will feature the pastels and mixed media paintings of local artist, Lynn Goldstein. www.broadwaygallery.net. 703-450-8005.

Reserve at www.cfnova.org/cocktails or call Tara Nadel at 703-879-7637.

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.

Cocktails and Conversation. 5-6:30 p.m. Capital Grille, 1861 International Drive, McLean. The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia invites you to a private event for substantial supporters and friends of the Community Foundation.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 16

McLean Newcomers and Neighbors Monthly Luncheon. 11:30 a.m. Peking Gourmet Inn, 6029 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Cabi clothing stylist, Allison Bateman, will speak, providing us with all the latest spring trends for 2016. \$24. RSVP by March 11 to Susie Osser at ssosser@verizon.net. McLeanNewcomers.org.

THURSDAY/MARCH 17

Spanish Storytime featuring CommuniKids. 11 a.m. Barnes and Noble Tysons, 7851 L. Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Give your child the love of language at a fun, engaging Storytime in Spanish. 703-506-6756. <http://stores.barnesandnoble.com/store/2238>.

Game Night: Splendor. 7 p.m.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 13

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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 12

Barnes and Noble Tysons, 7851 L. Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Bring friends, grab a snack from the Cafe and get ready for some board game fun. Free. 703-506-6756. <http://stores.barnesandnoble.com/store/2238>.

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.

McLean Art Society Meeting. 10 a.m.-noon. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Linda Maldonado, a painter who uses mixed media and creative collage, will be the presenting artist. Guests welcome. 703-790-0123.

SATURDAY/MARCH 19

Easter Egg Hunt at Colvin Run Mill. Starting at 10 a.m. Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Hunt for eggs filled with treats and treasures of the grounds of Colvin Run Mill Historic Site. Separate hunts by age group. Before the hunt, make egg-cellent crafts to take home. Bring your own basket; program will be held rain or shine. Ages 2-9. \$6/\$8. Register at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/colvinrunmill/events.htm>.

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



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Rescheduled performance of "The Importance of Being Earnest" will be at The Alden Theatre on Wednesday, March 30.

and visit with Easter Bunny, hosted by Historic Vienna, Inc. 703-938-5187.
Author Reading and Signing. 2 p.m. Barnes and Noble Tysons, 7851 L. Tysons Corner Center, McLean. New York Times bestselling children's author Jonah Winter will read and sign copies of his new picture-book biography "Hillary." Free. 703-506-6756. <http://stores.barnesandnoble.com/store/2238>.

SATURDAY/MARCH 26

Meet Biscuit. 2 p.m. Barnes and Noble Tysons, 7851 L. Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Special Storytime with one of the most beloved children's book characters of all time - Biscuit! A brief Meet and Greet with

Biscuit will follow Storytime. Free. <http://stores.barnesandnoble.com/store/2238>.

Easter Egg Hunt. Starts 9:30 a.m. Nottoway Park, 9537 Courthouse Road, Vienna. Special appearance by the Easter Bunny. Bring own basket and hunt for candy and eggs filled with treats. Ages 1-9. \$10 per child. Cash only. Information call 703-324-8566.

Springfest. 10 a.m.-noon. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Spring Fest is a special event that includes self-guided arts and crafts projects, entertainment and the opportunity for children to get a professional-quality photo with "Bunny." \$5, Free to children up to 36 months. mcleancenter.org. 703-790-0123.

Bring Back Bluebirds. 10 a.m.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Dylan Kurtz and principal Sara Harper

Great Falls Elementary Student Moves On to Next Round of Spelling Contest

Dylan Kurtz, a sixth-grader at Great Falls Elementary School, will face the best of the best in the Fairfax County

Spelling Bee, to be held at Lanier Middle School on Sunday, March 13. His winning word was "acetone."

Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Discover the world of bluebirds while making a difference. Build your own bluebird box and learn how to monitor for success. \$10 paid to instructor at class for each box. Meet at the Nature Center. <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend-park/calendar.htm>.

Native American Crafts and Games Workshop. 9 a.m. Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Shoot a bow and arrow, launch a spear and make cool crafts as you learn about daily Native American life long ago. Bring snack, lunch and drink. Register and download forms at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend-park/calendar.htm>.

MONDAY/MARCH 28

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NEWS

Battling Pain with Courage

Former Langley phenom deals with painful and potentially life threatening effects of UV rays.

BY DOUG DUENKEL

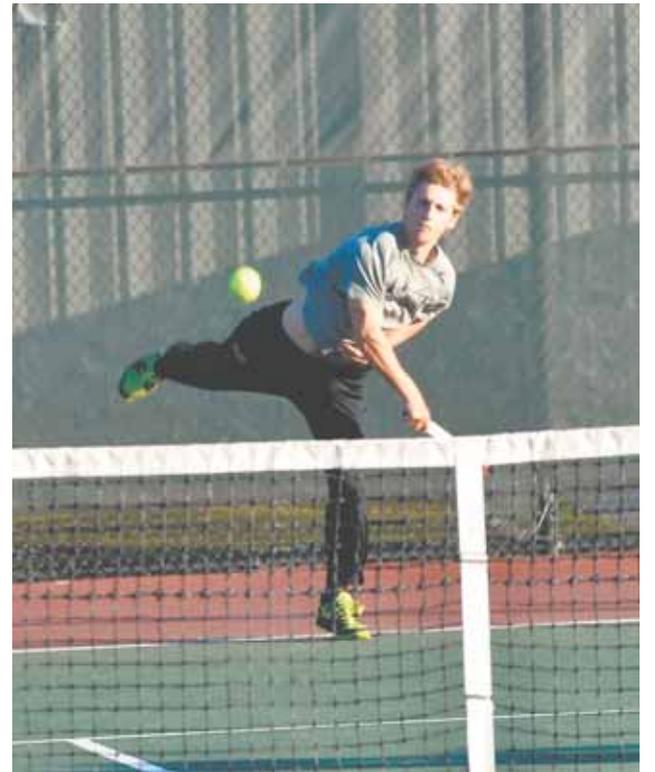
JT von Seggern knows how to deal with pain and adversity. He has lived with it every day by just walking outside into the sunshine. JT suffers from Erythropoietic Protoporphyrria (EPP), a rare and potentially life threatening disease. There is no cure for EPP and currently in the US, there are no effective treatments.

"Imagine sitting in your college quantum physics class, trying to stay focused on your exam, while your hands feel like they are continually being stung by bees, and someone is pouring boiling oil on your neck. That is what it is like for our son", said Gayle von Seggern. "Now imagine playing tennis outside in the most competitive environment. I'm amazed at his courage and resolve."

A FOUR YEAR LETTER WINNER at Langley High School, JT was twice a State finalist. He was recruited out of high school to play at Randolph College and was named MVP of the team his freshman year and as a sophomore was named to the All-ODAC tennis team – a first in Randolph history. All of this with zero protection from the sun.

JT had experienced years in pain: wringing his hands and crying in pain for no apparent reason while he was a toddler, swelling of his hands, forearms and face, swelling in his feet so extreme that the blood vessels in his feet ruptured and was rushed to the doctors, as well as painful scabby sores on his nose, lips, cheeks, neck and ears. His parents actively searched for the cause of such pain. They went to numerous dermatologists, several pediatricians, Johns Hopkins, all to no avail. Finally, when JT was in fourth grade a doctor at Georgetown University Hospital recommended a pediatric dermatologist. By that time his parents had assembled a three ring binder of pictures of all of the episodes, swelling, scabs, scars, etc. Dr. Silverman took one look at the binder and uttered the words that are forever seared in his parents' memory: "I think I know what your son has". Mere words could not express how the family felt finally knowing what was causing JT such pain. Tests later came back positive for EPP.

While this new knowledge gave the family an arsenal of information about how to keep JT from being in pain, JT quickly learned that his sports loving life would be forever altered. At the time, JT was playing both baseball and soccer. Knowing that he could only bear limited exposure to UV light, one of the outdoor sports had to go. JT dressed in sun protective clothing as much as possible, which allowed him to continue playing soccer. Most other normal childhood activities were challenging at best. Family trips to the beach meant JT had to stay inside until sunset, golfing with his grandfather could only happen in the very late afternoon and he had to wear protective clothing, and his new passion, tennis, had to be played indoors. Even trips to amusement parks



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

JT von Seggern plays tennis at Randolph College and was named MVP of the tennis team his freshman year.



Not letting pain define him: JT von Seggern.

were challenging and usually left JT in pain. Class field trips to anywhere outside usually ended with JT in pain and missing school for a few days while recovering.

While JT has handled this burden remarkably well, it has definitely made an impact in his quality of life and his psyche. All activities that are normally associated with pleasure — picnics, hikes, fishing, parks, sport — are a source of pain for JT. While playing in the State tennis tournament in high school, Dr. Silverman remarked, "I don't know how JT got through States, his ability to push through the pain is nothing short of incredible."

MIRACULOUSLY, there is now a drug, manufactured by Clinuvel, called Scenesse that is the first drug to treat patients with EPP. Scenesse provides EPP patients with their first taste of normalcy. Unfortunately for JT, and the approximately 500 other EPP patients in the U.S., Scenesse is not available in the U.S. The first phase II study of Scenesse was conducted in Switzerland in 2006. Since that time, there have been successful trials in the U.S. in 2010 but the FDA has not yet approved the drug for use in the U.S., although hopefully, that will happen in the next few years.

When John and Gayle asked JT about being treated with Scenesse, JT indicated that he thought it was too expensive. When they asked him if he could imagine going to school in the fall and not being in pain, he said, "No mom, I cannot even imagine that". As every parent out there knows, they could not bear to

SEE COURAGE, PAGE 15

SPECIAL CONNECTIONS CALENDAR

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday unless noted.

MARCH

3/23/2016.. Spring Fun, Food, Arts & Entertainment
FCPS Spring Break 3/21-3/25

APRIL

4/6/2016..... Wellbeing – Senior Living Pullout
Easter Sunday is March 27

4/13/2016..... Real Estate Pullout – New Homes

4/20/2016..... A+ Camps & Schools

4/27/2016..... A+ Camps & Schools Pullout

4/27/2016..... Mother's Day Celebrations,
Dining & Gifts I

4/27/2016..... Spring Outlook 2016

MAY

5/4/2016..... McLean Day Pullout

5/4/2016..... Mother's Day Dining & Gifts II

5/4/2016..... Wellbeing

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Jill Banks Exhibits at Katie's Coffee

"Witness: Close Encounters of the Painting Kind," award-winning oil painter Jill Banks' solo exhibit of backyards, bars, beaches and other scenes are waiting to be seen in Katie's Coffee House (also open for dinner) at the Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760C Walker Road in the Great Falls Village Centre, from March 1-31. See www.JillBanks.com for an online preview of the exhibit and more information or call 703-403-7435).

Free Painting Demo on Saturday, March 19, 1 to 4 p.m. at the Artists' Atelier and Arts of Great Falls Gallery and School space a few doors away at 756 Walker Road, Great Falls, in the Village Centre. RSVP for that event to Jill@JillBanks.com.

Banks' "Witness" exhibit runs concurrently with many exciting events being held at Katie's Coffee and the Old Brogue during the month of March, including the Annual Celtic Concert series and the Snuggery St. Patrick's Day Irish Concert, celebrating the Brogue's 35th Anniversary. Reservations



"Scene at the Bar," oil on linen-lined panel, 24"h x 18"w by Jill Banks.

required for these events. Go to oldbrogue.com for details.

See more of Banks' work at the Artists' Atelier, where she shares studio space with nine fellow artists. The Atelier is located at 756 Walker Road, Great Falls, and is open on Wednesdays, noon to 4

PHOTOS BY GREG STALEY



"Piano al Fresco," oil by Jill Banks, 20"h x 16"w. A borrowed backyard view painted plein air in the Brandywine Valley.

p.m.; Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; by appointment or by chance. Visit www.GreatFallsAtelier.com

Banks offers classes through the Arts of Great Falls, including Painting the Plein Air Landscape, Still Life and Evening Paint that will be starting in early April. And, from

June 26 to July 3, join her Paint with Me in Italy workshop held in the Piemonte wine region of Northern Italy. Beginners to advanced students welcome to come enjoy this trip of a lifetime. Read about the Places We'll Go on at www.JillBanks.com.

Courage

FROM PAGE 14

have JT continue in pain when they knew there was relief for him. The von Seggerns feel incredibly blessed to have found a doctor in Switzerland who is treating JT with the drug starting last August. He will hopefully receive the implantation of Scenesse every 2 to 3 months.

While traveling to Switzerland every few months for medical treatment may seem extreme, it is JT's only option to live pain free until the drug is approved in the U.S.

"Despite this disease that JT has had to live with his entire life, with no cure in sight and no treatments in the U.S., JT has fought his way through each and every painful exposure," says Gayle. "He has refused to let EPP define him or destroy who he is – an athlete and an incredible young man just trying to live his life like the rest of us."

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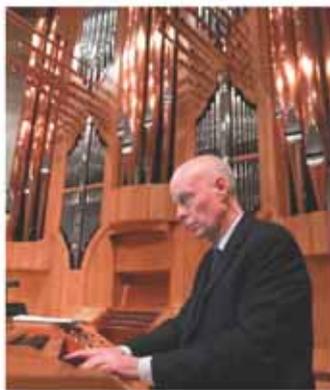
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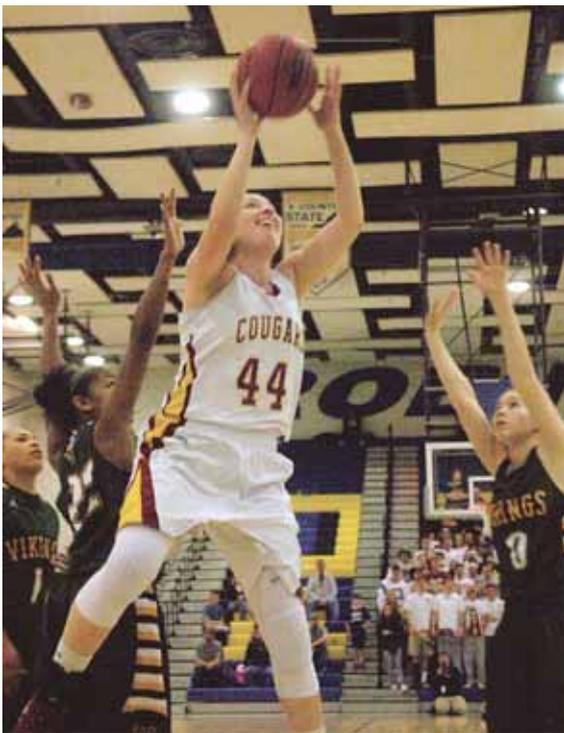
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Oakton junior Delaney Connolly finished with 15 points against Woodbridge on Saturday.



Maddie Royle and the Oakton girls' basketball team advanced to the state semifinals for the second straight year.

PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Hot Start Propels Oakton to State Semifinals

Cougars open with 20-2 run against Woodbridge.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

With the Oakton girls' basketball team having secured a return trip to the state final four, head coach Fred Priester explained what the Cougars learned from last year's semifinal loss to Bethel that could help during this season's quest for a state championship.

"Last time, I don't want to say we came out timid, but Bethel dropped about five 3-pointers on us in the first minute-and-a-half," Priester said, "and we were playing scramble ball the rest of the time."

Judging by Oakton's performance against Woodbridge in the state quarterfinals, the Cougars have a firm grasp on what it takes to start a game in non-timid fashion.

Oakton, the 6A North region champion, opened Saturday's contest with a 20-2 run and defeated 6A South No. 4 seed Woodbridge 70-47 at Robinson Secondary School. The Cougars remained undefeated and advanced to the



Oakton senior Alex Marquis scored 12 points during the Cougars' state quarterfinal victory over Woodbridge on Saturday.

state semifinals, where they faced Langley on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline.

After a pair of Woodbridge free throws cut the Oakton lead to 6-2 with 5:29 left in the opening quarter, the Cougars scored 14 straight points, including a pair of 3-pointers by Maddie Royle. Oakton ended the first quarter with a 23-5 advantage and extended the lead to 27-5 with buckets by Alex Marquis and Delaney Connolly early in the second quarter. A Connolly 3-pointer gave Oakton a 34-14 halftime advantage and the Cougars led by as many as 27 points in the second half.

"We come out with a really high intensity every single game — a lot of energy," Connolly said. "We push the ball hard. We kind of adjust our speed depending on the

team that we're playing and all of us know our roles so we come out knowing what we have to do to score points." Marquis said the Cougars weren't taking Woodbridge lightly after Herndon, the 6A North region's No. 4 seed, upset 6A South champion Woodside the previous night.

"We knew that Herndon came out and beat the No. 1 ranked team of their region," Marquis said, "so we knew that anything could happen and we knew that we were going to have to come out strong and just play our game and we couldn't take anything for granted."

Royle led Oakton with 21 points, including 11 during the Cougars' dominant first quarter, and grabbed eight rebounds. Connolly finished with 15 points and nine rebounds. Kailyn Fee scored 14 points and knocked down four 3-pointers, and Marquis added 12 points.

Oakton finished with eight 3-pointers.

With so many scoring options, how does Priester decide who gets the ball?

"It's not a seamless process, I will tell you," the Oakton head coach said. "We have certain rules for certain people, but the fact of the matter is, if someone hits one, let's get them the ball again as quickly as possible. ... I always have had a rule for as long as I've been coaching, especially when you have shooters: I'll tell you when



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Paige Galiani, seen during the region tournament, and the Langley girls' basketball team advanced to the state semifinals with a win over Landstown in the quarterfinals on Saturday.

Galiani's Clutch Shot Sends Langley to State Semis

Paige Galiani is the Langley girls' basketball team's go-to offensive player and on Saturday she stepped up in the season's biggest moment.

Galiani knocked down a deep 3-pointer that gave Langley, the No. 3 seed from the 6A North region, the lead with less than a minute remaining and the Saxons held on for a 34-32 victory over 6A South runner-up Landstown in the state quarterfinals at Old Dominion University.

Langley advanced to the semifinals, where the Saxons faced Oakton on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline.

Trailing 32-30, Galiani saved Langley's season with a clutch shot from behind the arc.

"It was off a play we've run many times before, and the team ran it really well and Paige saw her window and took a gutsy shot," Langley head coach Amanda Baker wrote in an email. "... Taking into account that we are in the state

tournament and that shot helped send us to the final four, it's hard to think of a bigger shot this season."

Galiani led Langley with 17 points. Ari Aulisi finished with eight points and Jordyn Callaghan added four.

The victory improved Langley's record to 25-5.

"We kept our composure really well, especially after missing free throws and losing the lead," Langley head coach Amanda Baker wrote in an email. "I give the players a lot of credit for being able to bounce back so quickly during the game."

Langley advanced to face undefeated 6A North champion Oakton on Tuesday. The Cougars defeated the Saxons 44-41 in the region semifinals on Feb. 26.

On Feb. 20, Langley won its first conference/district championship since 1988, beating Fairfax 42-38 in the Conference 6 tournament final.

— JON ROETMAN

to stop shooting."

Oakton improved to 29-0 with the win over Woodbridge. It was the Cougars' 55th victory in their last 56 games dating back to December of 2014, including a pair of Conference 5 and 6A North region championships. Oakton's only defeat during that stretch was the 73-63 loss to Bethel in the 2015 state semifinals. Despite falling behind 17-4 in the first quarter, the Cougars had a chance to tie or take the lead in the fourth quarter.

"Last year was [our] first time ... going to the state tournament," Marquis said about the players on the 2015-16 Oakton roster, "so I think now that we've been there, we know what it's like and we know how it feels to lose in the semifinals and none of us want that to happen again, so we'll be ready."

Oakton's last state championship came in 2012, when the Cougars finished 31-0.

CAPPIES REVIEW

Truly 'Wunderbar'

Madeira School presents
"Kiss Me Kate."

BY KELSEY FRANKLIN
THOMAS S. WOOTTON HIGH SCHOOL



PHOTO BY C. STANLEY PHOTOGRAPHY

Faith Slaughter (left) and Emily Barré

Taking the themes of Shakespeare and putting them into an upbeat, lively show, the Madeira School's performance of "Kiss Me Kate" was truly "Wunderbar!"

"Kiss Me Kate" was written by Samuel and Bella Spewack in 1948, with music by Cole Porter. This play-within-a-play follows the on and offstage drama of a musical production of Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew." This particular production sets the show in the 1980s. Fred Graham stars as Petruchio alongside his ex-wife, Lilli Vanessi, who plays Katherine. Lois Lane and her gambling beau, Bill, play Bianca and Lucentio. Unfortunately, Bill's bad gambling habit causes a couple of gangsters to come into the scene. Chaos ensues.

With great humor, songs and dance numbers, this show was very entertaining. Everyone, even many in the ensemble, had a great energy. There is some Shakespearean language in the show, but most actors were able to portray the meaning through body language and facial expression. The first number started out a bit rough, but after that, the show found its rhythm.

Emily Barré was particularly impressive as Fred. Her performance was energetic and she owned the ego-

tistical character while tackling a traditionally baritone role. Faith Slaughter was equally as captivating as Lilli with a melodious singing voice and incredible ability to distinguish between her two characters, Lilli and Katherine, even though they're quite similar.

The group numbers were a joy to watch, particularly "Too Darn Hot," which featured Nicole Schwartz as Paul, along with the other actors and stagehands of Shrew. Schwartz's masculine mannerisms and voice made the scene very fun and upbeat. Although the ensemble was difficult to hear at some points, the dancing was excellent and lively. One of the more comedic elements of the show were the two mobsters, played by Mary Kate Gould and Kerstin Shimkin. Their wit was quick paced and their quips were well-timed.

As for the technical aspects of the show, everything was done well. While not entirely consistent, the scene changes were fairly smooth, especially with the use of a fly system. The costumes for the Padua scenes were beautiful and vibrant. The set was quite impressive. It was well built and the painting was bright and detailed.

The Madeira School did a superb job with "Kiss Me Kate." You'd be "So In Love" with this show!



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Cooper Science Olympians Go to State Competition

On Feb. 13, Cooper Middle School eighth grade students Anna Krause-Steinrauf and Jack Zurich placed third in Green Generation at the Science Olympiad competition in Charlottesville, Va. Cooper's Science Olympiad team did well and was invited back to the state competition on April 16.



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Pamplona, LLC trading as Pamplona, 3100 Clarendon Blvd. Arlington, VA 22201. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer On Premises; Mixed Beverage license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Naeem Mohd, President
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Basic Burger, LLC trading as Basic Burger, 2024 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA 22201. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer On Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Dave Diamond, Operations Director
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And It's Just So Happening Now



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

The day after my seven-year anniversary. And not that I want to stop recounting the years since February 27, 2009 – years for which I am most proud to have survived – and thrived even, I must look forward because it's the future that lies ahead, not the past. Medicine, science and nutrition are particularly evolving disciplines with revelations, discoveries and life-changing/life-saving/life-affirming research in the offing. Nevertheless, having beaten my original, extremely discouraging, life-expectancy odds/prognosis: "13 months to two years," (received at age 54 and a half no less), doesn't mean that I can rest on my unexpected and certainly unpredicted survival. I wish the past was indeed prologue but we're discussing cancer here; I'm more afraid the past may simply be a prelude and that my epilogue may suffer the consequences.

But not to worry. I'm not weakening in my resolve, just being realistic and honest. Cancer is not the preferred diagnosis when one is planning one's future. Even so, rates of survival seem to rise every day now, and research studies, clinical trials (and tribulations) and non-Western alternatives, assure that presently, if not in the very near future, great promise exists that many more of us afflicted with this terrible disease can begin/return to live relatively normal lives, making cancer more of a chronic, treatable/manageable-type condition rather than what it is now, in many cases (not all, of course): a terminal one, or at least one with an abbreviated life expectancy.

Still, I'm not counting on any magic pill to cure what ails me. This whole cancer thing is my responsibility. I must do all I can to keep my own house in order. Relying, depending or anticipating even that some opportunity will present itself to rid me of my cancer cannot be my plan "A." Plan "C" maybe? As such, in the interim, I must steady on and stay the course and try to remain open to new and different strategies, all the while attempting to find calm in the midst of a very distressing set of circumstances.

And diagnosis-to-date, I think I've done a pretty good job of bearing the unbearable. Not that I had any training or experience in such endeavors (I had a relatively easy childhood in a middle-class home, with two loving parents, and minimal sickness and/or loss with which to contend). Nevertheless, through DNA or a nurturing environment or thousands of years of evolution, it turns out I'm made of sterner stuff than I might have imagined. As an effect, or so it seems, I have endured my challenges with aplomb and good humor; and if ever there were a situation that called for it, receiving a terminal diagnosis at age 54-plus would certainly qualify.

But just like, at a fairly young age, crying over spilled milk doesn't change the facts, neither does bemoaning the facts of a malignant diagnosis – in whatever alternative state you get to: denial and/or drink or disillusion, change anything. It may blur your reality, but the reality is: this particular problem is likely not going away, and the sooner you buck up and gain control, the sooner you can get on with your life. Granted, you have to allow for the shock of the diagnosis/prognosis to permeate your brain, almost like osmosis, and it definitely won't happen overnight, that's for sure. Probably it will happen when you experience your first chemotherapy infusion/radiation treatment. That's when you'll know you're not in Kansas anymore – unless you're actually in Kansas. And when symptoms and hair loss occur, you'll be one-hundred-percent convinced that you've officially entered your own "twilight zone."

And that's what this anniversary part two column has been about: moving forward somehow. Whether staying the course or changing protocols/treatment, maintaining a positive attitude in this constant cycle of wondering if you can still live long and prosper, the future likely holds out more hope than the past.

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

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HomeLifeStyle

Buying or Selling?

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

Here we are, once again right on the heels of the Spring/Summer real estate season when it seems like “For Sale” signs become the most common lawn ornament or condo window decoration. Television shows like “House Hunters,” “Property Brothers,” “Love it or List It,” and their like make the process of buying or selling a property seem mostly a breeze, filled with afternoons sipping cocktails at the Tiki Bar while you make one of the most important decisions of your life. Selling, and certainly *buying* a new home should be an occasion for celebration, but you might not be doing too much of that unless you understand the basics of either process and have them well under control.

With help from some knowledgeable sources like the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors (NVAR), the National Association of Realtors (NAR) and some respected local experts, here’s a bit of a primer on buying or selling a property. We’re going for the basics here with a few comments about our local market. We will give you some resources for more information before we sign off. Ready? Here we go!

Let’s start with our sellers, since for the most part, they have the most work to do to get the job done. First question. Use an agent or go it alone? Strictly a personal decision. You may think only saving the real estate agent fees is the basis for the answer, but if you decide to be your own agent, be sure you have done the homework on legal and regulatory requirements, and be prepared for the paperwork. Sadly, one misstep here could be pretty costly and there goes those potential savings. And are you ready to be your own marketer and be available night and day and weekends to show your property? Another thought...many potential buyers are not comfortable dealing directly, especially during negotiations, with the homeowner and would prefer the buffer of a trustworthy agent that they can really share their thoughts with. Statistics have also shown that properties for sale by owner more often receive lower initial offers, since the buyer might mistakenly believe that the seller is in a more difficult financial situation and may accept a lower-than-market value offer.

Let’s assume that you are working with an agent. Hopefully, you asked all the right questions before signing an agreement to sell. Don’t be shy. It’s okay to “interview” several agents and ask for references. Ask to make contact with their last two or three clients – not just the ones that they offer up as testimonials. What’s their typical “Days on Market” and how do their times compare to others. And a biggie – what’s the average variation between the initial listing price and the final sales price? The answer here may spare you some disappoint-



PHOTO BY ANDREA WORKER

What’s wrong with this picture? It’s a gorgeous kitchen, but real estate agents will tell you that the green plastic cup, the dishwashing soap and the drainboard should all vanish from the selling photos of your house, and certainly during any showings.

ments and provide some indication about your real estate agent’s skills at pricing your property and negotiation the best price.

Now what? Put on your thickest skin, open your wallet just a tad, listen to that agent, and before you even have that first showing:

Be realistic about your asking price. “Don’t be too aggressive,” cautioned real estate agent Jennifer Boyce of Long and Foster in Burke. Anita Lasansky, CRB, managing broker-vice president Long and Foster Reston North Hills-Herndon, agrees with that advice, and adds that sellers around the Wiehle Metro station in Reston shouldn’t expect a big bump in sales price just because of Metro’s arrival. Lasansky has seen sellers factor in 5-10 percent increases on that basis, but “it just hasn’t had that effect,” she said. Getting a pre-appraisal or advice from a lender can help in setting the best realistic sales price, since most buyers will need a mortgage.

Think about getting a pre-sale home inspection. This could cost a bit. Think at least \$500, depending on the size and age of the property. The buyer will have an inspection done, but being proactive could help locate potential problems that might stall, or even end a sale. Even if you don’t go for the professional inspection, take a look around and get on with those repairs or more affordable upgrades you’ve been meaning to tackle. If you think that bigger ticket items like a new roof or replacement of major appliances might be an issue, at least get estimates on costs to help in negotiating with your potential buyers. While you’re at it, locate those warranties and

manuals - something that really impresses those buyers, while last-minute searches could pose a problem at closing.

Clean and get organized. Here’s where you need that thick skin. Your agent isn’t casting aspersions on your personal taste or “dissing” your kids, pets, hobbies, etc. when she tells you to neutralize as much as possible, put away the toys and pet paraphernalia, and all the other stuff that is part of our comfortable living. Your agent is merely looking out for you, and making your home appealing to the widest pool of potential buyers. Pay special attention to closets and bathrooms, and no, don’t use the spare bedroom as the storage catch-all. If there isn’t space inside the house, consider the smallest space at a storage facility for the extra boxes, furniture, gadgets and whatnots while your property is on the market.

First impressions. That means check out curb appeal, from the condition of lawn and landscape to the front entryway. Trim those bushes. Edge that grass. Put down some new mulch, and clean up those oil spots on the driveway. Inside might await an affordable Taj Mahal, but if your buyers won’t cross the threshold because of what they see on the outside... Even adding a pot of bright flowers, a seasonal wreath, and maybe a new doormat can help.

Photos. Unless you are one gifted photographer, let the professionals handle this one. Most buyers today do their scouting online. Lots of quality photos attract the most visitors. Equally, photos that don’t show off each room to advantage, or con-

A primer for doing either and avoiding pitfalls.

tain pets wandering by, the piled-high laundry basket, or a reflection of the photographer can put your property on the “don’t want to see that one” list.

YOUR REAL ESTATE AGENT can give you a more comprehensive checklist and do a walk-through before an Open House or to prepare for showings, but here are some of the “musts” as advised by some of our area experts:

❖ Double check for **clutter**, and **CLEAN, CLEAN CLEAN!** A thorough cleaning by a professional service is much recommended. Don’t forget the windows and the carpets.

❖ Do the “**Sniff Test.**” This one is critical for homes with pets or smokers. Again, put on your thick skin armour. Refrigerators, garbage disposals, trash cans and carpets can be odoriferous stumbling blocks to a good showing. Give your home a thorough airing out before show time, especially in the kitchen.

❖ Double check for sticking doors, burned out light bulbs, loose knobs.

❖ **Stage it** – Consider a professional “stager” or at least give each space a neutral, de-cluttered living “story” that helps buyers visualize themselves right at home. To highlight upgrades or bring attention to items/features in a room, you might add an attractive picture frame with a few well written and formatted sentences on classy writing paper. Of course, a little light music and a plate of yummy cookies make everyone feel welcome.

❖ **Put away small valuables, jewelry and medications.**

❖ **Don’t hang around** – and take Fido or Fifi with you if possible. If not, confine pets to crates or one room and be sure to warn agents in advance. Be sure you have left contact information in case of questions or issues. I speak from experience on this one. A potential buyer’s 3-year-old son decided to let my crated dog out for some “play time.” Thankfully, I left my cell number right there on the kitchen counter – along with those cookies – so the showing agent could quickly contact me before my poor pooch took to the hills.

❖ **Make your property accessible** – If potential buyers can only see your property from 10 a.m. until noon on Tuesdays and Thursdays, prepare for a long wait before a successful closing. Selling a home is often a numbers game. As disruptive as it can be, the more people who look, the better chance of a sale.

FOR BUYERS. Just as with the sellers, buyers should shop around for a trusted real estate partner. Again, ask those questions, get those referrals and be sure that your agent understands your needs and expectations and that you understand the process as they describe it.

SEE BUYING OR SELLING, PAGE 8

Nanny Suites Add Value

High-end live-in quarters attract au pairs and can increase property values.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

When Peggy Delinois Hamilton relocated to the Washington, D.C. area and began working full-time after spending eight years as an at-home mother of two children, childcare was one of her top concerns. She decided that a live-in au pair was the best choice for her family.

"I like the live-in because I don't have to worry about issues with transportation on the caretaker's part," said Hamilton. "I don't have to worry about them having competing obligations."

Finding and keeping a live-in nanny in a competitive childcare market can be a high stakes game. To lure and retain experienced, nurturing caregivers, many families shell out as much as \$100,000 to create stylishly appointed living space for their au pairs. From kitchens with marble countertops and stainless steel appliances to bathrooms with luxury showerheads and rich wood cabinetry, local designers create living quarters so enchanting and thoughtfully designed that a nanny wouldn't dream of leaving.

"If you're a live-in nanny, you want your own space. In fact, nannies won't take a job from a family that won't provide it," said Jackie Wood-Gobuluk, owner of Metropolitan Nannies in Herndon, Virginia.

The spaces most often used for nanny suites are the lower level or attic, says Christopher Dietz of Dietz Development. "We try to create a close mimic of the main house and the primary kitchen and bathrooms of the main house," he said. "We don't do Formica or IKEA cabinets. We generally use ... granite, marble or Silestone. You don't



PHOTO COURTESY OF TRUPLACE

The space serves as a nanny suite in an Alexandria home. Additional living areas can increase a property's value, say real estate agents.

want people to say, 'Wow, we can tell you really cut corners on this space.'"

Maintaining a continuity in quality while being budget conscious requires judicious planning. "We may splurge on custom window treatments and a bedskirt and save on things like furniture using retail pieces," said Marika Meyer, principal of Marika Meyer Interiors in Bethesda.

When an Arlington, Va. family enlisted architect J.P. Ward of Anthony Wilder Design/Build, Inc. to design an au pair suite for their home, they wanted him to maintain continuity in both color and materials. A cathedral ceiling, granite countertops, and under cabinet lighting were key as he blended the rich aesthetic quality of the original home with the new space. "We used

a higher end tile and materials that blended with the rest of the house," said Ward. "It turned out to be like a high-end studio apartment that you could get high rent for."

The au pair's space has a separate entrance, something that offers privacy to both the nanny and the family. "We made it so that the au pair has an independent way of

coming in and so they're not working 24 hours a day," said Ward.

Contractors say the cost of adding a nanny suite can range from \$5,000 on a property where there is an existing bathroom and space for a bedroom to more than \$100,000 on properties where plumbing must be installed or an small addition is required. "[A] bathroom is the biggest expense because of the plumbing," said Ward.

"We try to create a close mimic of the main house and the primary kitchen and bathrooms of the main house."

— Christopher Dietz,
Dietz Development

Because such an addition requires a significant investment, Kai Tong of Hopkins and Porter Construction in Potomac, Md. encourages clients to think long term. "One of the most important and useful realizations

SEE NANNY SUITE, PAGE 8



PHOTO COURTESY OF DIETZ DEVELOPMENT

The colors of this au pair suite bathroom are similar to those used in the rest of the house.

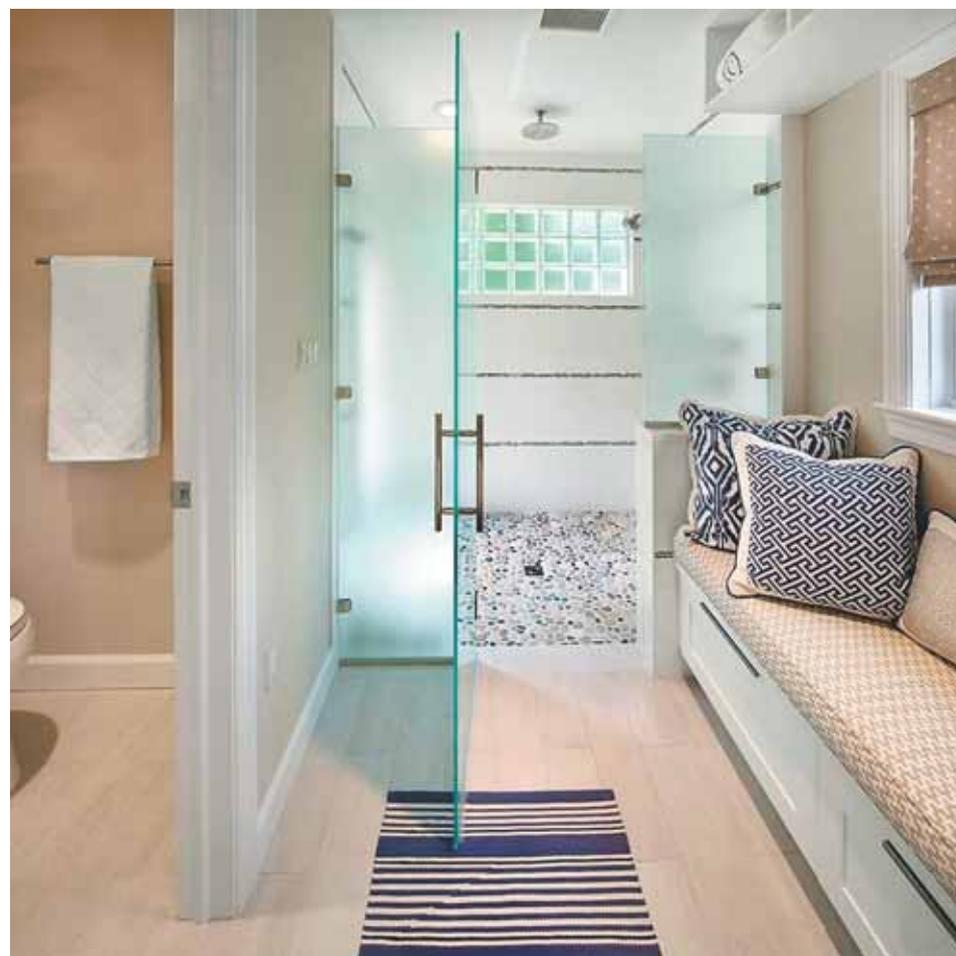


PHOTO BY MORGAN HOWARTH

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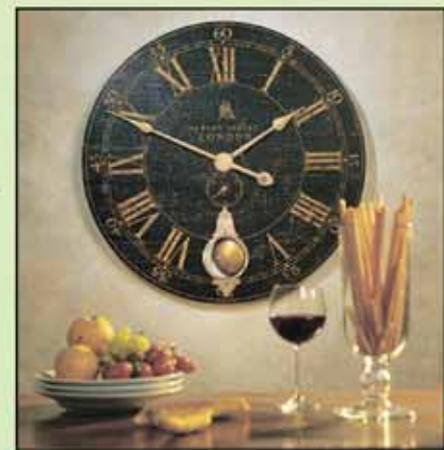
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Buying or Selling?

FROM PAGE 3

Buyers don't have to do all that physical prep work until it's time to get ready for their actual move, but there are a lot of considerations to deal with on this side of the real estate fence, as well. The best starting place is making sure that you know what you are looking for. Single family house with an enormous backyard or a "zero lot?" A condo in an urban setting with Metro access, or a more resort feel with access to walking/biking trails or other amenities? The National Association of Realtors suggests developing a "Home/Neighborhood Wish List," prioritizing from "must have" to "it would be nice if ..." and reviewing the list after a few viewings to see if your thoughts have changed.

Some of the basics as advised by the NVAR and NAR and some of their area experts:

❖ **Get pre-qualified.** Better yet, get pre-approved by a lender before you start looking. That way you will know what you can afford, be ready to make an offer and be a more attractive buyer since the seller knows you can make good on that offer. In many markets within Northern Virginia, buyers still outnumber inventory, so pre-approval can help set your offer apart. Megan Bailey of Bailey Fine Properties says "Buyers must be pre-approved before going out to look at homes with me. It's important to know that they feel comfortable ... by having the lender provide them with a "Good Faith Estimate" to break down the costs and to make sure the lender can finance the home. Taking someone to look at homes out of their price range ... sets the client up for disappointment."

❖ **Be ready to move** – sounds simple, but buyers have lost out on deals because they weren't ready. Worse yet, they may put their "Earnest Money Deposit" at risk if they can't go through with a sale as contracted.

❖ **Think about resale.** This may sound

counter intuitive at this point, but especially for first-time buyers with an average of 10 years in the home, it's good to think ahead and consider what the area and the home might be like when it's time to move on.

❖ **Keep repair, maintenance and running costs in mind.** Even a brand-new home may require some work or customizing to suit your lifestyle, so consider those costs. You may have the approval for that attractive "McMansion" but are you prepared for the electric bills, mowing that acre, and the property taxes on top of the monthly mortgage? Ask the seller for details on utility costs and other maintenance that the property requires, i.e. pool upkeep.

❖ **Don't go "house-blind."** When you are so taken with the house that you might ignore factors that will ultimately make for a poor buying decision. Visit the property several times, inside and out, at various times of the day and on different days of the week to get a real feel for the neighborhood. It may seem like your peaceful oasis at 10 a.m. on Wednesday morning, but it could turn into the scene of the local playground by 4 in the afternoon. Or maybe it's the only cut through for traffic heading to a major commuter route. Maybe you didn't notice on that first visit that the neighbor three doors down seems to be operating a kennel in their backyard, or that the next street over is a major commercial zone? Track travel distance for more than your work commute. What about your favorite stores and activities? Take a ride through the entire neighborhood and even its surroundings to see if you like what you will be seeing for a long time to come.

❖ **Research.** Your agent can direct you to resources where you can check out local schools. Even if you don't have school-aged children, it's something to think about for re-sale down the road or any kids you may be adding to the family.

For those buyers considering a condo or

property with an HOA (Home Owners Association) there are even more questions to ask and things to be considered. These can get pretty specific and detailed, so your best bet is to ask that agent.

Now, about the local market. Checking the data from RealEstate Business Intelligence (RBI), an arm of the local MLS system, Fairfax County had the most closed sales in 2015, up 14.6 percent from the previous year. Alexandria, Fairfax City, Arlington and Falls Church round out the top five markets in the area for closed sales last year. The figures for January 2016 show an uptick in sales volume, but a slight decrease of 2.5 percent in median sales price across the Metro region. Average DOM in January was 44 days, an increase from last year, but analysts feel much of that number can be attributed to the effects of Storm Jonas. The best news for sellers was that the homes sold in January averaged 96 percent of their asking price. Maybe even more pleasing for sellers to hear is that RBI forecasts inventory growth in 2016 will likely turn negative at some point. Buyers be prepared. This could lead to those multiple-offer wars we have seen in the past. Sellers be cautioned. That doesn't mean your best strategy is to over-price your property. "A properly priced property in good condition is still the fastest mover," are the words to the wise from Anita Lasansky CRB, managing broker-VP, Long and Foster Reston North Hills-Herndon with her more than forty years of local experience.

Whether you are the potential buyer or the seller, there are plenty of resources out there to get you started. For the financial and statistically inclined researchers, check out RealEstate Business Intelligence at www.RBintel.com or the data supplied by George Mason University's Center for Regional Analysis at www.cra.gmu.edu. The National Association of Realtors and the Northern Association of Realtors websites

Good Advice:

"I let sellers know that they need to expect that some of their privacy will be compromised...their home needs to be in showing condition every day before they leave, clean kitchen, beds made, everything put away, pets secured and comfortable, and that the home smells clean and fresh. I always suggest they visit model homes to see examples of what buyers fall in love with and why."

– **Megan Bailey, Bailey Fine Properties, Megan@bailefineproperties.com**

"Some of my absolutes ... for buyers, please be careful what you say. There could be a recording device in the house. Not unusual anymore with today's security technology. For example, don't look at pictures and say that their children look creepy. Yes, I have had this happen, but luckily it wasn't recorded. Sellers, put away medications and jewelry. It's rare, but prescription drugs are the number one item that 'goes missing' during open houses or showings."

– **Smita Lal, Long and Foster Reston North Hills-Herndon**

"Recently had a listing that needed a bit of updating. The seller was fine with spending some money to get their home in selling condition, but balked at my suggestion to replace the fluorescent lighting in the kitchen. Four months later, the seller finally agreed to spend the \$1000 to replace the light. We ratified a contract 5 days after the work was done. Moral of the story: If you are hiring a pro to help you buy or sell a home, listen to their advice. They do this for a living, not once every 5 – 10 years. By the way, lighting is super important. Current and bright, please."

– **Andy Krumholz, Keller Williams Realty, Utopian Homes**

"I always tell my sellers, 'To be clear, I will give you a list of customized items to prepare your home. It will be in order of importance. You may not agree with the list, and I understand that, but I assure you, the more you complete, the fewer days on the market, and of course at the right price.' So far I haven't missed."

– **Lisa Carlisle, Long and Foster Reston North Hills-Herndon**

both offer helpful information and guidance for buyers and sellers at www.realtor.org and www.nvar.com. Most of the real estate inventory sites also include sections on how to gather neighbourhood information, as well as details on the sales history of a particular property, condo and association fee information, taxes, and lots more than just the pretty pictures. www.realtor.com, www.zillow.com, and www.trulia.com are just a few to explore.

Nanny Suites Add Value

FROM PAGE 4

when considering nanny suites is that, unlike your kitchen or bath or bedroom, the nanny suite will only be a nanny suite for a finite amount of time in your lives," he said. "As your children grow, the nanny will move on, and the nanny suite is destined to become something else."

In the Washington, D.C. area, adding an au pair suite to one's home can make a property more appealing. "Particularly in neighborhoods with lots of young, affluent families, nanny suites are a popular, although not essential,

amenity," said David DeSantis, Partner and Managing Broker of TTR Sotheby's International Realty. "Ideally these suites are somewhat separated from the family sleeping quarters and have their own entrance so the nanny can come and go freely."

A nanny suite can offer a good return on investment. "The fact that it could be used as a nanny suite is a plus, but it's the same sort of thing as an in-law suite. It offers the ability for multigenerational living with some level of privacy," said David Howell, Executive Vice President and CIO of McEneaney Associates in McLean. "Because these



The materials and fixtures used in this nanny suite by Dietz Construction mimic those in the in the main part of the home.

suites are pretty uncommon in this area, it's a real draw for those who really need one."

Having a nanny suite, particularly one with high-end amenities, can increase a property's value. "I would say that they may make a difference in price from 5 to 10 percent as they ... would count as an additional bedroom," said Nancy Itteilag, of Long and Foster Christie's International Real Estate.

Ann Dozier Michael, an Alexandria-based associate broker with McEneaney Associates, has a current listing that includes a nanny suite. "When you have a property listed that can serve the various needs of buyers, then that will add value because you have a larger buying pool," she said.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DIETZ DEVELOPMENT

Fairfax County REAL ESTATE

2016 Assessments by Area

Also home values for members of
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

Hunter Mill Supervisor **Cathy Hudgins (D)**
2015 — \$638,100
2016 — \$674,430
5.69%



Dranesville Supervisor **John Foust (D)**
2015 — \$2,939,290
2016 — \$2,788,330
- 5.14%



Mason Supervisor **Penelope Gross (D)**
2015 — \$462,630
2016 — \$478,490
3.43%

Great Falls
0.72%
\$1,055,259

Reston
1.03%
\$428,378

McLean
0.99%
\$894,285

Herndon
0.60%
\$475,057

Vienna
1.85%
\$698,974

Chantilly
2.78%
\$462,509

Oakton
1.19%
\$694,101



Sully Supervisor **Kathy Smith (D)**
2015 — \$579,780
2016 — \$607,140
4.72%

Centreville
0.90%
\$385,089

Fairfax
1.28%
\$482,115

Falls Church
3.17%
\$447,822



Lee Supervisor **Jeff McKay (D)**
2015 — \$774,620
2016 — \$728,080
- 6.01%



Providence Supervisor **Linda Smyth (D)**
2015 — \$611,280
2016 — \$617,810
1.07%

Clifton
1.70%
\$659,408

Burke
1.96%
\$447,099

Springfield
2.79%
\$428,503

Alexandria
2.06%
\$428,621



Braddock Supervisor **John Cook (R)**
2015 — \$664,480
2016 — \$677,950
2.03%



Springfield Supervisor **Patrick Herry (R)**
2015 — \$599,600
2016 — \$587,370
- 2.05%



2016 Countywide average for all homes — \$527,648

Single family-detached homes — \$632,507, up 1.69 percent

Townhouse/duplex properties — \$392,951, up 2.05 percent

Condominiums — \$261,792, up 0.73 percent



Fairfax County Chairman **Sharon Bulova (D)**
2015 — \$645,830
2016 — \$665,090
2.98%



Mount Vernon Supervisor **Daniel Storck (D)**
2015 — \$579,700
2016 — \$585,460
0.99%

ZIP CODE AREA	2015 MEAN	2016 MEAN	PERCENT CHANGE
Alexandria/Mount Vernon	419,966	428,621	2.06
Annandale	436,194	444,426	1.89
Burke	438,919	447,099	1.86
Centreville	381,645	385,089	0.90
Chantilly	450,015	462,509	2.78
Clifton	648,374	659,408	1.70
Fairfax	476,037	482,115	1.28
Fairfax Station	643,207	647,290	0.63
Falls Church	434,062	447,822	3.17
Great Falls	1,047,755	1,055,259	0.72
Herndon	472,236	475,057	0.60
Lorton	381,572	390,687	2.39
McLean	885,556	894,285	0.99
Oakton	685,967	694,101	1.19
Reston	424,021	428,378	1.03
Springfield	416,853	428,503	2.79
Vienna	686,293	698,974	1.85

for single family, townhouses and condominiums

The average assessed value of a
single family home in Fairfax County
for 2016 is \$632,507, up 1.69 percent

SOURCE: FAIRFAX COUNTY

Remodeled Home Tour Set for March 12

Home evolves from center hall colonial to open plan with boldly original finishes.

BY JOHN BYRD
THE CONNECTION

A dramatic “kitchen-centric” first floor interior design solution in a 30-year-old Colonial-style production house will be featured on a “Remodeled Home Tour” sponsored by Sun Design Remodeling on Saturday, March 12.

The house at 7990 Oak Bridge Lane in Fairfax Station is owned by Andrew Smith and Madelyne McCarthy. The residence will be opened to the public from noon-4 p.m.

Purchased by Smith and McCarthy in 2002, the original house was a traditional center hall Colonial with four bedrooms. The couple, now in their late 50s, have occupied the home for 14 years.

While the 4,000-square-foot house (the couple’s second) has been satisfactory to the owners in many respects, the first floor’s comparatively small rooms, narrow doorways and builder-grade finishes had come to seem dated and cramped as the couple looked ahead to retirement years.

“We wanted our house to be more of personal residence that reflects our tastes,” Andy Smith said. “A place we can really enjoy for another 10 years, or more.”

As longer occupancy became a consideration, the production house limitations seemed glaring.

“The kitchen was space-constricted and pretty drab,” Smith said. “There was a small island with a cooktop that didn’t provide a useful working surface. Doors to the hall closet and powder room frequently obstructed traffic at the kitchen archway,



PHOTOS BY GREG HADLEY

Fairfax Station homeowners Andy Smith and Madelyne McCarthy relocated an adjacent dining room in order to gain 78 feet for a gourmet kitchen that accommodates a large food prep island and a three-stool wine bar a few steps from the back deck. The island surface is “blue flower” granite.

which was too narrow. The kitchen clean-up area was too exposed from the family room. Overall, we wanted a more balanced, aesthetically-pleasing interior.”

An addition off the back of house was an earlier space-enhancement consideration.

“We had plans to remove the rear wall and add 800 square feet,” Smith said, “but when we looked more closely at our real requirements this approach didn’t make economic sense. Fundamentally, we just wanted a larger kitchen and pantry, and a

warmer interior that would work well for entertaining; we weren’t sure how to accomplish this.”

A seminar by Sun Design Remodeling last year unveiled to a new way of assessing priorities.

“The program prompted us to explore ideas of re-purposing space within the home’s existing footprint,” Smith said. “I suddenly recognized we were getting almost no use from our 200-square-foot formal living room. It was just wasted space.”

Details

Sun Design Remodeling will be sponsoring tour of a recently remodeled Fairfax Station home on March 12, 2016. Headquartered in Burke, the firm has a second office in McLean. Call 703-425-5588 or visit www.SunDesignInc.com.

Soon after the seminar, the couple contacted Craig Duroske at Sun Design Remodeling for an on-premise meeting.

“A center hall Colonial has long been one of the most popular floor plans in northern Virginia” said Craig Duroske, Sun Design’s founder and chairman. “The way people now use their homes, however, has changed dramatically in the past few decades. There’s a movement towards open, well-defined, interactive spaces, and departure from interior walls that may not be strictly necessary.”

Duroske sees his role as one of helping owners develop a plan tailored to how they want to use their home in the foreseeable future — one that will also present an appropriate interior design solution.

Once Smith and McCarthy established that the front-facing living room could be incorporated into a broader floor plan reconfiguration, Sun Design’s team began re-assigning “use zones” within the existing first floor template.

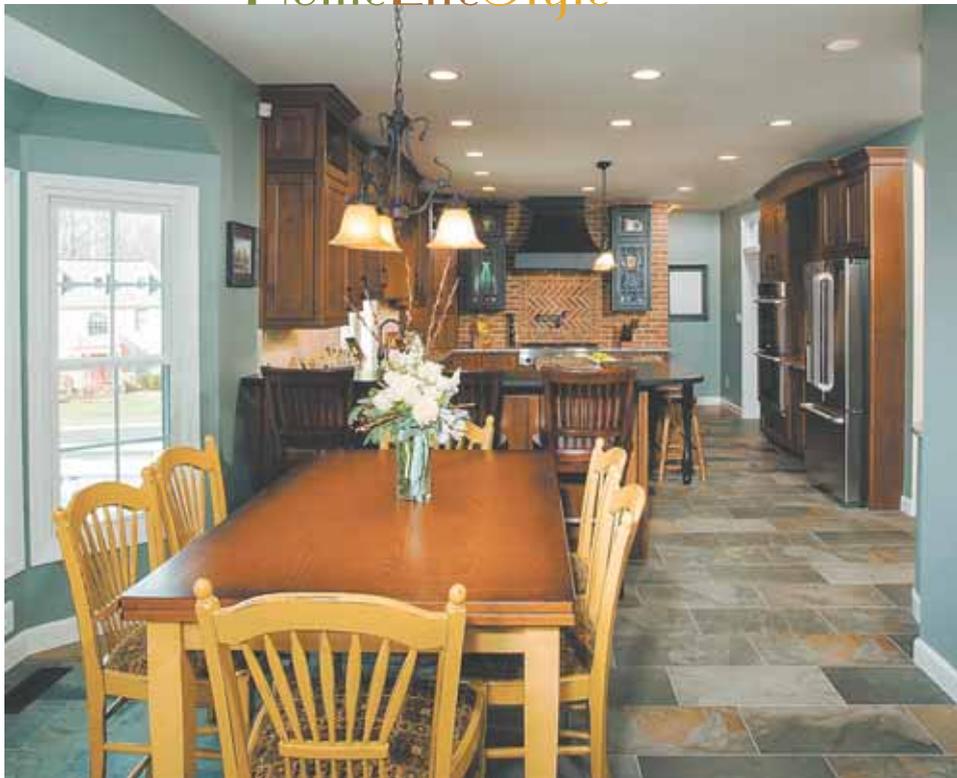
Several critical decisions followed in rapid



The bow front farm sink, six-burner stove and food prep island form the three sides of a work triangle that facilitates cooking and clean-up tasks. The custom-designed barn door (right) leads into the new formal dining room.



With its coffered ceiling and Wedgwood interior treatment, the dining room explores 18th century (Colonial-era) themes. The circa-1890’s glass-and-wood barn door mounted on rollers was created by Sun Design. The innovation provides privacy, yet allows light from the home’s west-facing rear elevation.



The exposed brick, tile floor and raised square panel cabinet facings create a softly textured, elegant-but-casual interior. The floors conceal a radiant heating system which keeps the room comfortable in cooler temperatures.

Remodeled Home Tour Set for March 12

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE
succession:

❖ The wall between the kitchen and the dining room would be removed, extending the kitchen by 78 square feet while allowing generous square footage for a walk-in pantry and a new powder room;

❖ The hall powder room would give way to an enlarged and upgraded laundry room/mudroom linked to the garage and only accessible from inside the kitchen;

❖ All 200 square feet of the old living room would be re-purposed as a distinctively finished formal dining room accessed directly from the new kitchen;

❖ With the cluster of doors between the foyer and the kitchen relocated or replaced with pocket doors, front-to-back access from the foyer is now unencumbered and free

flowing, an effect aided by improved sightlines.

Simultaneously, a series of interior design conferences evolved into an inspired collaboration.

“In a finish work elaboration, the details are everything,” Smith said, noting that his enthusiasm for design extends from a life-long interest in architecture. “Maddie and I had done a lot of research into the kinds of materials, colors and textures we wanted, but Katie Coram at Sun Design really helped us narrow and refine our choices, assembling the pieces into a coherent whole.”

Some highlights of the makeover’s interior design solution include:

❖ **A custom-designed barn door between the kitchen and the new**

dining room. While the interior makeover generally explores rustic, early American sensibilities, a glass-and-wood barn door created to specification by Sun Design carpenters is an iconic stand-out that keeps the dining room private as needed while allowing light from the west-facing rear windows;

❖ **A dining counter/wine bar situated at the back door accessing the deck.** Equipped with a wine rack and wine refrigerator for easy access to the rear deck, the wine bar also obstructs sightlines from the family room to the kitchen sink, making the fireside space a visually-independent entertainment zone.

❖ **A food prep island and dining counter.** Topped with blue flower granite and equipped with an under-cabinet microwave and a warming drawer, the built-in is positioned for easy access to a circumscrib-

ing U-shaped counter completing useful work triangles in several directions.

❖ **Six burner gas stove with hood.** Designed in black mocha glazed wood, the distressed facing picks up several of the kitchen’s rustic themes, including the exposed brick, and flagstone-accented tile flooring which conceals a radiant heating system.

❖ **Dining room with coffered ceiling; Wedgwood interior design.** In a nod to the 18th-century (Colonial era) sensibilities, the new formal dining room’s elegant wall elevations include raised panels, crown molding and wainscoting.

“From room to room, the new first floor explores a lot of style elements in well-balanced combinations,” Andy Smith said, “It’s a much warmer, more inviting interior. People will enjoy seeing what we’ve done.”

John Byrd (byrdmatx@gmail.com; www.HomeFrontsNews.com) has been writing about home improvement topics for 30 years.



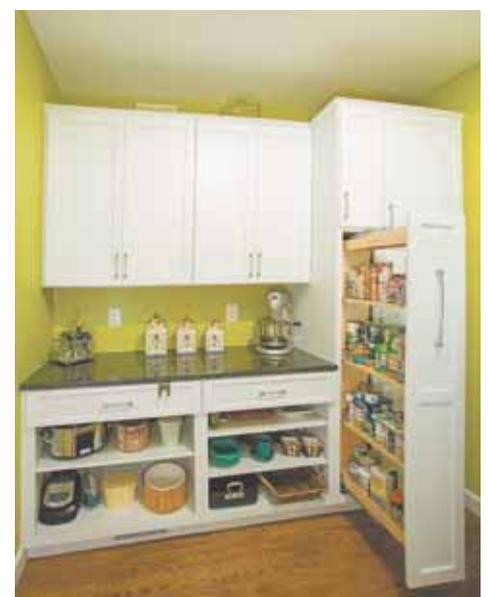
A wine rack and wine refrigerator are convenient to a serving counter convenient to the family room and back deck.



Exposed brick, a cooktop hood and glass-facing cabinets in distressed black mocha glaze are elements in the kitchen’s distinctively rustic interior design.



Relocating the hall powder room added square footage needed for a laundry and mudroom that links to the garage.



The home’s new rear footprint accommodates walk-in pantry with pull-out storage racks — as well as a larger powder room

Spring is Here...and My Fresh New Listings are Popping!



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Great Falls **\$1,795,000**
Extraordinary Custom Estate...with Attached Guest House!

Grand "Main House" with attached 2 Bedroom/2 Bathroom "Guest House" — offering a total of over 10K finished square feet. Impeccable all-brick construction featuring dramatic architecture & exquisite finishes. Custom-built with uncompromising craftsmanship & old-world elegance. Sprawling floor plan including 2-story double staircase Foyer, 2-story Family Room, Gourmet "French Country" Kitchen, sunlit walkout Lower Level, Sauna, Wine Cellar, 7 Fireplaces, 4-car Garage... & so much more! Total of 6 Bedrooms, 7 Full Bathrooms & 2 Half Bathrooms. Located on picturesque 2.64 acres — boasting a lavish oversized pool, flagstone surround & multiple patio areas. Top-rated Langley High School district. *The home of a lifetime!*

Great Falls **Lakefront Living at its Finest!**

Spectacular sun-filled Contemporary overlooking picturesque Lake Windermere. Breathtaking views & serene 1.72 acre setting. Soaring ceilings, multiple skylights & oversized windows create a unique & inspiring floor plan. Large, sprawling floor plan featuring over 7,400 finished square feet. 6 Bedrooms, 5 Full Bathrooms & 1 Half Bathroom. Main-Level Library, Solarium, Sunroom. Main-Level Bedroom & Full Bathroom. Walkout Lower Level with Entertaining Bar, Billiards/Game Area, built-in Home Theater System, mirrored Exercise Room, 6th Bedroom & Full Bathroom. Hardiplank exterior with extensive hardscaping, patios & stonework. Located on quiet cul-de-sac in upscale Great Falls neighborhood. Top-rated Langley High School. *A true nature lover's paradise!*



Leesburg **Majestic "Beacon Hill" Estate**

Magnificent estate home on nearly 4 acres in wonderful "Beacon Hill!" Majestically sited on beautiful hilltop with spectacular views & vistas. Dramatic open floor plan with upgrades & custom features throughout. 5 Bedrooms, 4 Full Bathrooms & 2 Half Bathrooms. 2-story Family Room, Solarium, Main-Level Library, 5 Fireplaces. Incredible walkout Lower "Game Level" featuring full Bar, Billiards, Media Area, Exercise Room, 5th Bedroom & Full Bathroom. Beautiful pool & spa overlooking private, fully-fenced backyard. *An entertainer's dream!*

Great Falls **The Best of "Fox Vale Farm"**

Stately, fully-renovated Colonial nestled in one of Great Falls' most beloved & sought-after neighborhoods! Thoughtfully updated both inside & out with high-quality finishes & exquisite style. Open floor plan boasting extraordinary natural light throughout. Recent Main-Level redesign boasting open Kitchen & Family Room. Main-Level Library. All renovated Bathrooms. Spacious Lower Level offering large Recreation Room, Entertaining Kitchen, Billiards/Game Area, Guest/Bonus Room, Exercise/Playroom & Full Bathroom. Resort-style exterior featuring Screened Porch overlooking newly-renovated pool, hot tub, multiple flagstone seating areas, and separately-fenced play area. Friendly neighborhood with sidewalks & abundant open spaces. Top-rated Langley High School district. *A true gem!*

