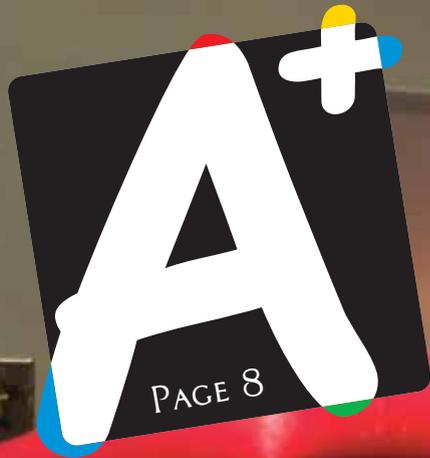




McLean CONNECTION



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McLean High School Assistant Principal Kate Stavish moderates and listens as panel members answer questions during the Q-and-A.

McLean Parents Dive Into 'Eye-opening Data'

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Oakcrest School Holds Veritas Awards Reception

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Edgy, Unconventional Dark Comedy

THEATER REVIEW, PAGE 9

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Nick Corsi, systems of support advisor for McLean High School, talks to parents about the Sources of Strength program that he advises, which is a national student-led program designed to change unhealthy norms and culture in schools with the goal of preventing suicide, bullying and substance abuse.



Paul Stansbery, director of student services at McLean High School, answers a question during the Q-and-A panel.

PHOTOS BY FALLON FORBUSH/THE CONNECTION

McLean Parents Dive Into 'Eye-opening Data'

Results from the Fairfax County Youth Survey presented on Thursday, Feb. 2, at the McLean High Auditorium.

BY FALLON FORBUSH
THE CONNECTION

More McLean students reported taking drugs and drinking alcohol last school year than the overall percentage of the county's public school system, according to Fairfax County Public Schools.

FCPS presented results about McLean students from the Fairfax County Youth Survey on Thursday, Feb. 2, at the McLean High School Auditorium.

The annual survey anonymously collects data regarding students' knowledge, attitudes and behaviors on health, health risks, substance use, eating disorders, obesity and sexual behavior.

Students in grades 8, 10 and 12 participate, unless parents and/or students choose to opt-out. Students in grade 6 also take a shorter, modified version that primarily differs in that it does not have questions about sexual behavior.

The latest survey, which was conducted in the fall of 2015, had 48,089 participants, which represented 88 percent of the enrolled students in the four grade levels.

"If you have one takeaway from the evening, this is the takeaway that we'd like you to walk out of the room with: What this says is students who have assets or protective factors are less likely to engage in risky behaviors," said Dede Bailer, coordinator of psychological services for FCPS, during the presentation.

The assets Bailer said the survey asks students about are whether they:

- ❖ have high personal integrity (example: Is it OK to cheat on a test?);
- ❖ perform community service;
- ❖ have teachers that recognize good work;
- ❖ have adults in community to talk to;
- ❖ participate in extracurricular activities;

VIEWPOINTS



Tracie Becker, President of the McLean High School Parent-Teacher-Student Association

"It's eye-opening data. I first attended one of these presentations six years ago and I was encouraged to see that so much of the risky behaviors are less frequent now."



Margaret Kaplan, McLean High School Parent

"I've come every year, so it's good to see some numbers go down. I'd like to see more parents here."

What did you think of the survey results?

and

- ❖ have parents available for help.

She said students who have three of these assets are less likely to engage in risky behavior than those who have none.

More McLean students reported drinking alcohol and using drugs compared to FCPS schools overall. These substances included painkillers and prescription drugs, like OxyContin, Vicodin, Percocet, Codeine, Ritalin, Adderall and Xanax, as well as hallucinogens like LSD.

This prompted Bailer to tell parents about another takeaway she wanted them to learn.

"What you think matters," Bailer said. "We don't think our kids are listening all of the time. We think our words fall on deaf ears, but it matters."

For students who believed that their parents thought it was very wrong to drink, 92 percent of those students did not report that they drank alcohol, according to Bailer.

For students who said their parents did not think it was wrong, 52 percent of those students reported drinking, according to Bailer.

Bailer drew a hard line in the sand. "Come right out and say it: 'You're underage, you may not drink,'" she said.

She encouraged parents to put more importance on parenting, rather than being friends with their children.

"So, we're parents. They already have friends ... You don't think your children want you to ask them where they're going? You feel like you're prying into their privacy? It makes a difference."

Students who report that their parents know of their whereabouts reported engaging in less risky behavior, said Bailer.

"It says to them: 'I care about you,'" she says.

Though McLean students reported higher drinking (18.6 percent) than overall FCPS schools (16.2 percent), McLean's percent-

age was nearly 3 percent lower than the previous year's survey (21.5 percent).

McLean students also reported less use of marijuana and synthetic marijuana that overall FCPS schools.

McLean Students Doing Better Than FCPS Overall

- ❖ McLean students reported a higher number of students (47.5 percent) getting an hour or more of aerobic activity five or more days per week than FCPS schools overall (41.8 percent).

- ❖ Fewer McLean students reported viewing TV for more than three hours (8.1 percent) and non-TV viewing like computer and video games for more than three hours (36.4 percent) on school days for reasons other than school work compared to FCPS schools overall (14.7 percent; 48.8 percent).

- ❖ More McLean students (31.2 percent) reported eating at least five fruits and or vegetables per day compared to FCPS schools overall (24.6 percent).

- ❖ Fewer McLean students reported using marijuana (8.9 percent) or synthetic marijuana (1.8 percent) in the past 30 days compared to FCPS schools overall (10.3 percent; 2.2 percent).

- ❖ Fewer McLean students reported bullying another student on (4.8 percent) and off school property (4.3 percent) during the past year compared to FCPS schools overall (5.5 percent; 5.9 percent).

- ❖ Fewer McLean students reported being bullied by another student on (12.8 percent) and off school property (9.3 percent) during the past year compared to FCPS schools overall (14.3 percent; 10.9 percent).

- ❖ Fewer McLean students reported saying something bad about someone's race or culture (36.2 percent), or who had some

SEE PARENTS, PAGE 7



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

The Nysmith "MATHCOUNTS" team, from left: Whitman Ochiai, Anand Advani, Anuraag Kaashyap, Kaien Yang and coach JoMarie Broccoli.

Nysmith School Students Excel in Competitions

The most recent accomplishments of individual students and student teams from The Nysmith School for the Gifted continue a string of competitive achievements.

Here are a few of the activities/results:

A total of 10 of Nysmith students have advanced to the National History Bee Regional Finals, April 24 in Richmond, where the top middle schoolers in the region compete head-to-head answering questions split evenly between United States and non-U.S. history. Coached by Philip Baselice of Fairfax, the team includes:

- ❖ Anuraag Kaashyap (eighth grader from Herndon)
- ❖ Andrew Chen (eighth/Fairfax)
- ❖ Justin Ward (eighth/Vienna)
- ❖ Vance Kreider (eighth/Herndon)
- ❖ Misha Brancato (seventh/Alexandria)
- ❖ Quinn Griffith (seventh/Oak Hill)
- ❖ Neal Gupta (seventh/Vienna)
- ❖ Elise Bejtlich (sixth/Manassas)
- ❖ Aaron Joy (sixth/Herndon)
- ❖ Irene Zhao (sixth/Fairfax)

The Nysmith "MATHCOUNTS" team finished second in its Chapter last weekend and will be participating in the Virginia State event on April 4 in Glen Allen, Va.

MATHCOUNTS is a national middle school competitive program that promotes mathematics achievement through a series of engaging "bee-style" events. The Nysmith team is coached by JoMarie Broccoli of Herndon and the advancing students include:

- ❖ Whitman Ochiai, top score on team (eighth grader from Great Falls)
- ❖ Kaien Yang (eighth/Chantilly)
- ❖ Anuraag Kaashyap (eighth/Herndon)
- ❖ Anand Advani (seventh/Herndon)

Several Nysmith debaters scored impressive results in recent competitions.

❖ Among the students competing in this past weekend's DC Urban Debate League Tournament, coached by Marlene Laro of McLean: Alex Joel (eighth grader from McLean) and Caroline Huber (eighth /Great Falls), placed first in the Varsity Division. Two sixth graders, Aaron Joy of Herndon and Ben Joel of McLean, emerged victorious in the Novice Division.

Another group of Nysmith debaters took third place in the Holy Trinity Public Forum Debate Tournament. Under the direction of coach Maria-Theresa Dragg of Herndon, the winning team includes McKenzie Hiek (seventh grader from Great Falls), Sarang Arun (seventh/Fairfax) and Emma Jing (seventh/Oak Hill).



Nysmith School debaters, from left: Aaron Joy, Caroline Huber, Alex Joel and Ben Joel.



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NEWS

Snapshot

Sunday, Feb. 12, approximately 9:30 a.m. on Westwind Way, McLean. No one was injured.



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WEEK IN MCLEAN

Fundraiser Supporting Timber Lane PTA

A fundraiser for Timber Lane PTA has been announced by HBC Group's (Keller Williams Realty) Community Charity Champions. Come to dinner on Tuesday, March 14, 2017 from 5-8 p.m. at Pulcinella Italian Host in McLean to support Timber Lane PTA. Enjoy dinner and know that approximately 70 percent of the proceeds from food and drink will go directly to Timber Lane PTA, as long as the diner brings the flyer for the event. Contact HBC Group at 703-734-0192 or visit www.HBCGroupKW.com to receive a flyer.

The Timber Lane Parent Teachers Association is a non-profit organization set up to benefit all of the families and school staff at Timber Lane Elementary

School. The PTA supports and supplements the excellent education provided by Timber Lane. Additionally, they host events that bring the Timber Lane community together. Funds raised from this event will go towards the enrichment activities and various school support purchases of which the PTA assists.

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

To date, Community Charity Champions has raised over \$53,000 for the local non-profits and organizations.

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Ending Gerrymandering Important to Region

Efforts appear dead for this session, but elections later this year provide new opportunities.

While three bills that could have reined in the runaway gerrymandering in Virginia made it through the Virginia Senate to crossover, they died on Tuesday morning in a House subcommittee, despite some vocal Republican support.

In Virginia, Democrats have won every statewide election since 2010, and notably Barack Obama won the state in 2008 by more than 52 percent of the vote. Many of these victories have been narrow. In 2009, Republicans won Governor, Lt. Governor and Attorney General by strong margins.

It is reasonable, given these results, to expect that representation at the state level would be approximately even, with either Republicans or Democrats holding a small advantage. Instead, Republicans control the House of Delegates 66 to 34, and the Virginia Senate 21 to 19.

There is little competition for these seats as a result.

According to OneVirginia2021, an advocacy group for ending gerrymandering, 56 candi-

dates in the House of Delegates faced no real competition in the last general election in 2013, with 22 Democrats and 34 Republicans facing no major-party challenger. In the end, only two seats changed parties.

These same lawmakers are set to redraw the the boundaries for state legislative and congressional districts after the 2020 census, and the just-killed proposed constitutional amendments would have required that these not be motivated by partisan politics. By far the best approach would be to turn the process over to a non-partisan commission to draw boundaries in the best interests of Virginia citizens.

One of the proposals, cosponsored by Sen. Jill Vogel (R) and Sen. Janet Howell (D), passed the Senate 31-9, but died in the House subcommittee on a 5-2 vote.

It matters more here in Northern Virginia. Virginia is a Dillon Rule state, which means that localities have only the power specifically given to them by the General Assembly. It means that the economic engines of the state in Northern Virginia provide most of the financial wherewithal but citizens in Alexandria,

Arlington and Fairfax County are often unable to govern themselves as they wish because of control by a far more conservative General Assembly.

Real change starts locally. Anyone seeking change should tune in for this year's elections in Virginia, including all the seats in the General Assembly, plus Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General. Every voter will choose one Virginia Senator and one member of the Virginia House of Delegates.

Nonpartisan redistricting could support the best interests of the population, not the politicians.

In 2016:
Hillary Clinton (D) 1,981,473 (49.75%);
Donald Trump (R) 1,769,443 (44.43%)

In 2013:
McAuliffe (D) 1,069,789;
Cuccinelli (R) 1,013,389
Northam (D) 1,213,155;
Jackson (R) 980,257
Herring (D) 1,103,777;
Obenshain (R) 1,103,612

In 2012:
Obama (D) 1,971,820;
Romney (R) 1,822,522
Kaine (D) 2,010,067; Allen (R) 1,785,542

— MARY KIMM

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EDITORIAL

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Human Cost of Repealing ACA

To the Editor:

Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-10) recently voted to repeal the Affordable Care Act as well as make cuts to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. The ACA provides subsidized private health insurance for those who cannot afford the incredibly high prices, including a healthy profit margin, that private providers charge. That is why the ACA came into existence in the first place. People were without health care because they could be turned down for pre-existing conditions and/or charged exorbitant monthly rates with incredibly high deductibles that they could not afford. Many have health care bankruptcy and debt stories to tell. The ACA now provides healthcare for millions who did not have it before. It also provides one-stop shopping for part time workers or freelancers who do not have job provided health care as well as for the self-employed.

What is this magical plan that the Republicans say will cover everyone at a lower cost? The answer, of course, is unsubsidized private, for-profit health insurance since they are vehemently against

a logical single payer system. It would definitely take magic for that to work this time since it didn't before! Remember the "death panel" scare—well that is what you can look forward to if you don't have affordable health insurance. They may try to dupe us with remedies such as Health Savings Accounts, but the catch is that you need money to put into such an account. If you don't have money for insurance how would you have money for an HSA? How would you be able to save enough in an HSA to afford a major operation and hospital stay or pay for extended cancer treatments.

They may say that you could buy health insurance across state lines. With only a few large health insurance providers operating in our country, it would not matter which state you bought a policy in. They say you can shop around for the best price which would lower health care costs. How many doctors must you have on speed dial so you can check prices while you are being rushed to a hospital in an ambulance? What if your appendix just burst or you had a stroke or a heart attack etc., etc. How will you be able to find the best deal if you are unconscious?

Our disjointed system of medical insurance, preventive care and prescription drug costs is the most expensive in the world. Why don't

we start treating this subject with some common sense and decency? Every person needs health insurance. We get sick, have accidents and injuries, give birth, age and die — it is the human condition. We all deserve care and compassion in this life.

In two years, we will be able to use our vote to elect someone who truly wants people to have affordable health insurance as well as someone who does not want to tear Medicare and Social Security apart.

Rebecca Horahan
McLean

Moms Demand Action Against Gun Violence

To the Editor:

This past weekend our quiet McLean community received the awful news of the murder-suicide of the Chen-Zhou family. Fairfax County Police reported that Hong Chen killed his wife, Shirley (48), and 16-year-old son, before shooting himself. We hear of awful stories like this one happening elsewhere, but this time it's our town. We know that the tentacles of this single act of gun violence reach far and wide.

As we offer thoughts and prayers to the family, friends, and all in the community whose lives were forever changed by this horrendous act, we must also direct our thoughts to our elected officials. The prayers they offer must be matched with their commitment to action. Demand their courage; demand they stand up to the gun lobby. Domestic violence ending in a fatal shooting is not rare. In America, most fatal domestic violence is committed with firearms. Fifty-two percent of American women killed with guns are killed by intimate partners or family members. Despite impressions from media coverage, 57 percent of mass shootings (defined as shootings in which four or more people are killed with a gun) are acts of domestic or family violence. While these numbers may sound overwhelming, there is something that can be done. First, readers should know that our current gun laws in Virginia are porous. Domestic abusers can purchase firearms without a background check (through loopholes at gun shows and online through classified ads like *Armslist.com*). Moreover, many abusers can keep their existing guns because not all protective orders result in a court ordered surrender of the firearm.

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 15



Parents Listen to Their Children's Voices

FROM PAGE 3

one say something bad about their race or culture (43.2 percent) during the past year compared to FCPS schools overall (36.5 percent; 48.8 percent).

❖ Fewer McLean students reported being abused in a dating relationship (14.1 percent) during the past year compared to FCPS schools overall (18.9 percent).

❖ Fewer McLean students reported ever having sexual intercourse (14.4 percent) or oral sex (18.2 percent) compared to FCPS schools overall (17.6 percent; 20.3 percent).

❖ Fewer McLean students reported they had stopped doing usual activities due to feeling sad or hopeless almost every day for two or more weeks in a row (22.7 percent) during the past year compared to FCPS schools overall (25.9 percent).

❖ Fewer McLean students reported seriously considering suicide (13.1 percent) during the past year compared to FCPS schools overall (13.9 percent).

McLean Students Doing Worse Than FCPS Overall

❖ Fewer McLean students (30.9 percent) reported getting an average of eight or more hours of sleep on school nights than FCPS schools overall (31.6 percent).

❖ More McLean students (18.6 percent) reported drinking beer, wine or hard liquor during the past 30 days compared to FCPS schools overall (16.2 percent).

❖ More McLean students reported using painkillers (5.3 percent) or prescription drugs (4.7 percent) without a doctor's order during the past 30 days compared to FCPS schools overall (4.9 percent; 4.4 percent).

❖ McLean students reported equal or higher usage of heroin (0.4 percent) or LSD (2.3 percent) during the past 30 days compared to FCPS schools overall (0.4 percent; 2 percent).

❖ McLean students in grade 12 reported more texting (51.1 percent) or drinking alcohol (13 percent) while driving during the past 30 days compared to FCPS students in grade 12 overall (48.8 percent; 9.4 percent).

❖ More McLean students reported being sexually harassed by another student (13.2 percent) during the past year compared to FCPS schools overall (12.8 percent).

❖ More McLean students reported experiencing high levels of stress (36.6 percent) during the past 30 days compared to FCPS schools overall (35.9 percent).

"This is the voice of your children," Bailer told the audience.

Bob Fuqua, principal of Chesterbrook Elementary School; Jill Tucker, director of student services at Longfellow Middle School; and Ellen Reilly, principal of McLean High

School, also spoke to parents about some of the programming the schools are doing that promote assets for their students.

After the presentations, a Q-and-A panel took questions from the audience anonymously by collecting written questions. McLean High School Assistant Principal Kate Stavish and Principal Reilly moderated the panel.

Panel Participants

❖ Tzeitel Barcus, assistant director of student activities, McLean High School

❖ Bruce Walker, counselor, Longfellow Middle School

❖ Beth Werfel, psychologist, McLean High School

❖ Nick Corsi, systems of support advisor, McLean High School

❖ Jessica Grenfell, counselor, McLean High School

❖ Paul Stansbery, director of student services, McLean High School

❖ Jennifer Spears, educational specialist for mental wellness, FCPS

❖ Veronique Lilienthal, counselor, Haycock Elementary School

Questions included guidance on social media use and tips for handling stress, drug use, bullying and depression.

One question asked the panel to tell the audience about common things parents do that they wish they would not and things that parents do not do that they wish they would.

"I really wish parents wouldn't text their kids during the school day," Werfel said. "It's really distracting."

She also told parents that they should give their kids permission to take a break.

"Let them take more and more control of their own lives and their own education," said Stansbery. "Let them experience a failure or two now while they're in your care before they get out on their own."

Parents excel and are fantastic at pushing their students in McLean, said Corsi.

"If there was an area that maybe we fall a little bit short in, it's just being a little more cognizant of their mental health and for us to understand the amount of pressures that they put on themselves," he said. "When we push them in athletics, when we push them in academics, they themselves have a lot of internal pressure."

He encouraged parents to encourage activities that allow their kids to destress and to check in on their kids and ask how they are doing.

McLean High School recently deployed the "Sources of Strength" program, a national student-led program designed to change unhealthy norms and culture in schools with the goal of preventing suicide, bullying and substance abuse.

"I think the best way to treat any problem is to be proactive," Corsi, who advises the program, said. "That's one of the things that I love about Sources of Strength."

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Celebrating Black History Month

Educators say these lessons are urgently needed in current racial climate.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Even though Elavie Ndura knows that it is a daunting challenge to help children grasp the entirety of the African American experience in the shortest month of the year, each February she and other educators give it their best effort. This year, they feel it's more important than ever.

"With all of the racial experiences we're having these days, it's critical that children know their history and are not basing their knowledge on only what they see on television or what they hear from their friends," said Elavie Ndura, Ed.D., professor of education at George Mason University in Fairfax. "Research shows that children who understand their histories do better in school and in society, so it's critical that families teach their children about their history."

Ndura believes that the current racial climate in the U.S. gives this year's Black History Month additional significance. A study released last month by the Pew Research Center shows that among Americans, 61 percent of blacks, 58 percent of Hispanics and 45 percent of whites say that race relations in the United States are generally bad. Local educators say Black History Month offers opportunities to address issues of race by allowing the past to inform the present.

"We have seen for more than a year how people from different political viewpoints, but also races, sexes, cultures, religions, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic statuses related to each other in the present political climate, and it was troublesome," said Mika'il A. Petin, Ph.D., associate director of African and African American Studies at George Mason University. "Teaching the history of Black or African-heritage peoples in this month ... is necessary to starting difficult conversations about ... current race relations ... and social inequalities."

Race relations in our society have been deeply strained during the election and as America adjusts to a new presidential ad-

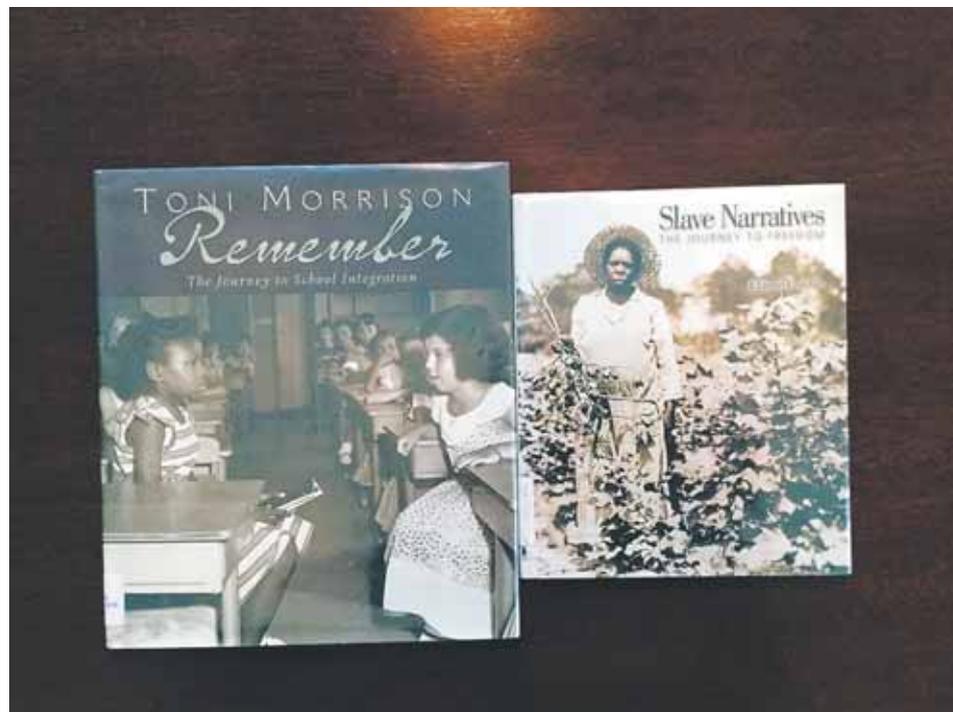


PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL/THE CONNECTION

Books that explore African American experiences are on display at libraries and bookstores during Black History Month.

ministration. These divisions make African American history lessons critical for all children, but particularly for black children, says Ndura. "As African American parents we have a serious duty to educate our own youth," she said. "Knowing your history grounds and anchors you firmly so that you are not wavered in the wrong direction because of whatever feelings might be caused by what you're seeing on the news."

Black history lessons work best when they're intentional and creative, advises Jessica Lewis, Ed.D., assistant professor of education and human services at Marymount University in Arlington. "Children benefit when they are exposed to a variety of perspectives, ideas and stories because it helps expand their view of the world and people living in it," she said. "The ability to understand and identify with others and their experiences is a powerful, life-long lesson."

Lewis advises making a trip to a local bookstore or library to find books that offer a glimpse of African American history and suggests that parents begin with books on subjects that interest their children. "[Parents] may start with readings on sports, or science, or biographies of the accomplishments and hardships of individuals who persisted throughout history to make a difference," she said. "Parents can ... select books by black authors

and illustrators and then take the time to read the story together, discuss the pictures, and ask questions about what the characters are feeling and experiencing."

Other ideas include exploring music with roots in African American history such as ragtime, jazz, gospel and blues, making a timeline of major events that occurred during the Civil Rights Movement, and reading speeches from civil rights leaders and then helping children write their own speech about what they are inspired to change in the world. Such activities can open a natural discussion and need not be complicated to be effective, says Lewis.

"Parents are their children's first educators," said Lewis. "It is important for parents to help their children understand the experiences of other children who are not like them because it builds empathy and a deeper sense of community."

One roadblock to such honest conversations, cautions Petin, is a discomfort with discussions of racial differences.

"Let's be frank, some white Americans who are politically and socially conservative become noticeably uncomfortable with the topic of race, and therefore find difficulty with Black History Month," he said. "Yet, Black History Month — similar to the Black Lives Matter movement — does not express superiority over others. Both the month of celebration and sociopolitical movement are forms of resistance to deliberate attempts to conceal the worthiness of Black or African-heritage people in this country."

Some people "may attack Black History Month and Black Lives Matter as political correctness and identity politics, but I would argue that they are not seeing the humanity in both efforts," continued Petin. He emphasized the importance of taking a purposeful approach to teaching children about black history. "I think that all parents must intentionally search for, study, and celebrate those who are on the margins, living in the shadows, perceived as voiceless, and regarded as invisible. Too often, black Americans were those marginal, shadowed, voiceless, and invisible people. All parents should be honest about that, and should have confidence in the U.S. only being great when they and their children educate themselves on this country's history in more inclusive terms."

Schools often play a significant role in the month's activities. Students at the Bullis School in Potomac, Md., for example, attend a Black History Month assembly each February. This year's event was led by several students who shared their thoughts, essays and other projects on a variety of topics. "Diverse literature is always a great idea," added Allison Ewing, chair of the social studies department at Bullis.

"Twenty-eight days of teachable moments" is one way that Petin characterizes Black History Month. "It is never too early to start preparing your kids for a world that is increasingly more connected and shrinking," he said. "When all parents teach their children how to develop skill sets to understand, value, empathize, and celebrate those who may be different than them, the children are better prepared to function in the world."



Bullis School fifth graders Elizabeth Martin and Will Simpson look on as their documentaries about the civil rights movement were presented to the school.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BULLIS SCHOOL

Edgy, Unconventional Dark Comedy in 'Trevor'

1st Stage at Tysons presents "Trevor."

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

A rewarding tale about miscommunications in a family generating plenty of laughs before a heart-wrenching turn of events makes "Trevor" at 1st Stage a moving exploration of one family's unusual bonds.

Inspired by true events, "Trevor" was written by Nick Jones, who wrote for the initial season of the television series, "Orange is the New Black." Directed by Alex Levy, "Trevor" is a sharp production opening layers of sentiments. Levy has a keen touch with the boisterous, then to steer the production into taut, tense events.

"Trevor" examines how a family of two individuals living in a small town can depend on each other mightily. They have many misunderstandings since they don't fully understand one another's language.

After all, Trevor is a 200-pound chimpanzee (played with a rambunctious, rowdy gusto by Doug Wilder). The audience listens in as he remembers being a celebrity performing with Morgan Fairchild (appear-

Where & When

1st Stage presents "Trevor" at 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons. Performances through Feb. 26. Thursday at 7:30 p.m. Friday at 8 p.m. Saturday at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Sunday at 2 p.m. Tickets: \$15-\$30. Call 703-854-1856 or visit www.1ststageatTysons.org Note: Venue is wheelchair accessible

ing as an apparition from a come-hither Amanda Forster) when he was younger. Trevor's owner is the middle-aged, widowed Sandra (Leigh Jameson completely losing herself in the role as a resolute, protective, conflicted woman). As Trevor's owner, Sandra presents as a forgiving "mommy." When Trevor acts out early on, she forgives him saying "he is just having a bad day." Later, just having a bad day is an understatement for Trevor's behavior.

Beyond Sandra and Trevor, the show's characters include a terrified neighbor who fears for her baby's life, as well as one of Sandra's few human friends and a local animal control officer. Each tests the tight connections between Trevor and Sandra. Trevor also has a jaunty, imaginary, Chimp friend named Oliver (Aaron Bliden), who appears from time-to-time, to commiserate with.

The production take place in a set designed by Kathryn Kaweck with a worn, rustic look and well-used props from Cindy



PHOTO BY TERESA CASTRACANE/COURTESY 1ST STAGE

Doug Wilder and Amanda Forstrom in "Trevor" at 1st Stage in Tysons.

Landrum Jacobs. Collin Ranney's costume design also gives off a worn-down essence.

"Trevor's" sound design by Sarah O'Halloran is mood-setting, beginning with pre-show music of melancholy banjo tunes from Abigail Washburn and Bela Fleck. Titles included "Nobody's Fault But Mine,"

and "What's You Gonna Do."

For those open to it, 1st Stage's "Trevor" is an empathetic production about human and animal intersections. It will test an audience for their sympathies with its final heartbreaking images and words. Who bears responsibility is left to the audience.

Always protect yourself by hiring a licensed contractor for your remodeling project!

DID YOU KNOW?

Enforced by Federal law all states must have a transparent website that clearly shows all contractors licenses. If they've ever paid taxes in VA, they're in there. Easily validate your contractor by going to <http://www.dpor.virginia.gov/LicenseLookup/>

Contractors are validated through their Class License and Specialty Licenses. Class C contractors can only perform jobs of a monetary value up to \$10,000.00 and ONLY \$150,000 yr. Class B contractors up to \$120,000.00, and no more than \$750,000 per yr. Class A there is no monetary limit.

For Bathroom or Kitchen remodels a number of different Specialty Licenses are required. BLD License covers framing, drywall, tile work. PLB covers all plumbing such as the replacement of shower and kitchen faucets. ELE covers electrical work such as the replacement of lighting. HVA covers the replacement of ventilation fans and range hoods.

How do I submit a complaint about my Unlicensed Contractor?

Due to code limitations in the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code, complaints regarding construction activity more than two years old cannot be accepted.

- If a person identifies him/herself as a licensed contractor and it is discovered the person is not licensed, it is a violation of State and County Code. Complaints/violations may be reported using the online complaint form; or
- Call the Department of Code Compliance at 703-324-1300, TTY 711, to start the complaint process and an investigator from the Code Enforcement Branch will contact you; or
- Call the Virginia State Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation at 804-367-8500, TTY 711.

What are the risks of Unlicensed Contractors?

In most circumstances, unlicensed contractors offer lower quotes because they do not pay a licensing fee, or obtain a bond to protect their work, and in many cases, don't purchase liability or workers compensation insurance. Without these

expenses, the unlicensed contractor can offer a lower rate.

Many things can go wrong on a construction site, from injuries to shoddy workmanship to destruction of power, sewer or water lines. Ultimately, all issues are the responsibility of the general contractor. The general contractor and their insurance carriers are the primary payers in the event something goes awry on the job.

What most people don't know is that if you don't hire a licensed and insured contractor to handle your project, **you're the general contractor!** If your unlicensed contractor breaks a sewer line, **you're responsible.** If a worker gets hurt and can't work for two years, and there's no workers compensation coverage in place, **you are on the hook** for that workers' medical bills and lost wages.

The implications of using an unlicensed contractor go beyond the risks associated with the property worked on and injury to the workers. A homeowner or association that hires an unlicensed contractor can also be liable for the negligence of the contractor.

A neighboring property, a passerby or other property that is negligently damaged by the contractor can lead to liability to the person that hired the contractor. As the contractor's employer the hiring party is responsible for the contractor's actions during the course of that employment.

When a general contractor takes on a job they have overall responsibility for legal compliance, safety, quality of workmanship and just about everything else that happens on the job site. What's more, your homeowners insurance or landlord liability insurance isn't going to cover you for these events.

All policies exempt damage caused by the use of illegal or unlicensed contractors. Fire and water damage can be... expensive. If an unlicensed contractor improperly installs an appliance, such as a water heater that leaks and in rare instances explodes, your insurance will not cover it. If an unlicensed contractor installs an appliance, such as a dishwasher, and so on, the product warranty will be voided.

If you knowingly enter into a contract with an unlicensed contractor, you are not allowed to use the fact that the contractor is unlicensed as a defense for non-payment. Note that an unlicensed contractor can still file suit for fraud and deceit.

Those who are caught contracting without a license likely will have to appear before a District Court Judge and DPOR investigator to answer to misdemeanor charges that can carry a potential sentence of up to six months in jail and/or a \$5,000 fine, as well as an administrative fine of \$200 to \$15,000.

If illegal contracting continues, the penalties become more severe. A second offense results in a mandatory 90-day jail sentence and a fine of 20 percent of the contract price or \$5,000. <https://vacode.org/54.1-1115/>

Felony charges are filed against anyone who illegally uses another person's contractor license or who tries to mislead consumers into believing that he or she is a licensed contractor. Anyone who contracts for work in a state or federal natural disaster area without an active state contractor license also could face felony charges. If convicted of a felony, a person may have to serve time in state prison.

Furthermore, your state contractor board will not "typically" help you to make a warranty claim "Contractor Recovery Fund" against an unlicensed contractor. So if you are trying to recover at all, you will need to go to civil court. Even if you win in civil court, without a bond, there's a good chance the unlicensed contractor will not be able to pay your damages.

Recently, Fairfax County has been using sites like Zillow and Realtor.com to see if improvements have been done when selling ones home! AGAIN, the days of hiring an unlicensed "Friend", or "Neighbor" to work for monetary purposes is strictly prohibited and is easily verified through <http://www.dpor.virginia.gov/LicenseLookup/>.

All in all, it's not worth it! Always protect yourself by hiring a licensed contractor for your remodeling project.

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CALENDAR

Send announcements to connection newspapers.com/Calendar/. Deadline is Friday at noon for the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged.

ONGOING

The Golden Girls of Northern Virginia, a senior women's softball league, is looking for players. Any woman over the age of 40 is encouraged to join. All skill levels are welcome. Play on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings in Vienna. Visit www.goldengirls.org.

McLean Community Players "Company." Fridays-Sundays/ Feb. 3-19 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays. Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave. McLean, VA 22101. A 1970 musical comedy based on a book by George Furth with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim. The original production was nominated for a record-setting fourteen Tony Awards and won seven. \$25/\$23 MCC tax district residents. Visit <http://www.mcleanplayers.org/>.

The Freeman Store & Museum Wednesday through Sunday noon - 4 p.m. 131 Church Street NE Vienna. The Freeman Store & Museum is dedicated to Preserving and promoting Vienna's heritage through the identification, preservation, and interpretation of history significant places, events, and persons. Historicviennainc.org

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

Bingo Night. Sundays. 4 p.m. Flame Room, Vienna Volunteer Fire Department, 400 Center St. S, Vienna. \$10. www.vvfd.org/bingo.html.

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 flexibility, improve breathing and health, reduce 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.

Fishing Rod Rentals 8700 Potomac Hills Street, Great Falls. Rentals available during visitor center hours. Fishing tackle and live bait are available for purchase. Reservations required for group rentals. \$6/rental

(2hr max). Valid driver's license required. Our rod/reel combinations are perfect for beginners and children. A Virginia or Maryland freshwater fishing license is required for persons 16 years or older. The park does not sell fishing licenses. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend-park/

Colvin Run Mill open 11-4 p.m. daily, closed Tuesday. 10017 Colvin Run Rd, Great Falls. Fairfax County's operational 19th century water powered gristmill, offers recreational and educational activities for all ages through daily tours, school programs and special events. Fees: \$7/adult, \$6 students 16+ with ID, \$5 children & seniors. Winter Hours: January & February, 11am-4pm, last tour 3pm. Admission to park is FREE except for some special events.

THURSDAY/FEB. 16

Live Music. 7 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. East Vienna. Fred Eaglesmith will be performing. Visit jamminjava.com.

FRIDAY/FEB. 17

Mayor's Walk. 9:30 a.m. at Town Hall, 127 Center St. S. Meet Mayor Laurie DiRocco in front of Town Hall for a stroll through Town as well as conversation and camaraderie. Free. Call 703-255-6304 for more.

SATURDAY/FEB. 18

1964 Beatles Tribute Band. 8 p.m. at the Barns at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road. Recreates the Fab Four's early '60s concerts, complete with period instruments, clothing, hairstyles, and onstage banter. \$38-42. Visit www.wolftrap.org/ for more.

SATURDAY/FEB. 18

Cars & Coffee. 6-9 a.m. at Katie's Coffee House, Village Centre, 760 Walker Road, Great Falls. Antique, classic, and new cars are on display, share stories over morning coffee with car owners, neighbors, and friends. Visit katiecarsandcoffee.com/ for more.

SUNDAY/FEB. 19

Concert: The Daraja Ensemble 4 - 6 p.m. at Saint Francis Episcopal Church, 9220 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. This fellowship woodwind quintet from the University of Maryland takes its name from the Swahili word for "bridge." Coming together from around the country and abroad, their wide-ranging performances include ongoing outreach to Tanzania. \$30 at the door or season pass \$150. Visit amadeusconcerts.com/

MONDAY/FEB. 20

Contacts Create Cash 9:45-11 a.m. Potbelly Sandwich Shop, 1577 Spring Hill Road #100, Tysons. Contacts Create Cash is an OPEN networking group for professional salespeople, business owners, and networking marketing professionals who wish to build a referral based business. Our meeting format is as follows: 1/3 sales/marketing/business training, 1/3 discussion/learning exercise, 1/3 60 second attendee introductions with open networking before the meeting and after the meeting. Cost: Free. Contact discussion moderator David Hillelsohn at david@dhilfinancial.com. RSVP to Marie Benoit at Marie@DrMarieBenoit.com.

TUESDAY/FEB. 21

Gardening with Native Plants. 10 a.m. at Vienna Presbyterian Church, 124 Park St. NE. David Roos will provide insights on plants and gardening. Free. Visit viennapres.org/ for more.

Discussing C&O Canal Companion.

11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at the Dranesville Church of the Brethren, 11500 Leesburg Pike. Guest speaker at the The Great Falls Senior Center event, author Mike High, has cycled in many places around the world but the trail along the C&O Canal is his favorite. Contact Polly Fitzgerald at pollyfitz1@verizon.net or call 703-759-4345. Visit gfseniors.org.

FRIDAY/FEB. 24

Unruly Theater Project. 7-9 p.m. at the The Old Firehouse Teen Center, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Professional teen improvisation company offers a night of comedy, and more. Free. Visit www.mcleancenter.org/teens.

FEB. 24-25

Scrapbooking Weekend. 6 p.m.-midnight at the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary, 400 Center St. S., Vienna. Snacks included, vendors on-site so you can purchase supplies or get expert advice. \$60. Contact Lisa Emerson at lisaemerson3@verizon.net or 703-981-4504.

SATURDAY/FEB. 25

Cars & Coffee. 6-9 a.m. at Katie's Coffee House, Village Centre, 760 Walker Road, Great Falls. Antique, classic, and new cars are on display, share stories over morning coffee with car owners, neighbors, and friends Visit katiecarsandcoffee.com/ for more.
Meet Me in Paris. 8 p.m. at The Alden

Saint Ann Catholic Church

SUNDAY LITURGY SCHEDULE:
Saturday Vigil: 5:30 PM
Sunday: 7:30, 9:00, and 11:00 AM
1:30 PM Spanish Liturgy

DAILY EUCHARIST:
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TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

SUBMIT YOUR LETTER TO THE EDITOR HERE

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com/contact/letter

Call for Candidates

McLean Community Center 2017 Governing Board Election

Qualification:
Must be a resident of Small Tax District 1A-Dranesville.

Petition to Become A Candidate:

- Candidate must pick up own petition packet at the Center, and return own petition.
- Adult candidate must have ten (10) signatures of adult tax district residents on petition.
- Teen candidate must be 15-17 years old as of McLean Day (May 20) and have ten (10) signatures of teens also 15-17 years old who live in the tax district and in the candidate's high school boundary area.

Positions:

- Three (3) Adult Seats - Three-year terms.
- Two (2) Youth Seats - One-year terms. One (1) each for the Langley and McLean High School boundary areas.

Key Petition Dates:

- **January 23:** Petition Packets are available at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean, VA.
- **March 17:** Completed Petitions are due at the Center by 5 p.m.

For more information visit the Center at:
1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean, VA 22101
call: 703-790-0123, TTY: 411
email: elections@mcleancenter.org
or visit: www.mcleancenter.org/about/candidates



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CALENDAR



Live Music

On Saturday, Feb. 25, the Hot Club of San Francisco's "Meet Me in Paris" brings an evening of gypsy jazz to The Alden in McLean, 1234 Ingleside Ave. Showtime 8 p.m., \$35 for the general public; \$20 for McLean tax district residents. Visit mcleancenter.org/alden-theatre or call 703-790-9223 for more.

in McLean, 1234 Ingleside Ave. The Hot Club of San Francisco's "Meet Me in Paris" brings an evening of gypsy jazz. \$35 for the general public; \$20 for McLean tax district residents. Visit mcleancenter.org/alden-theatre or call 703-790-9223 for more.

SUNDAY/FEB. 26

Southern Avenue Concert 8 p.m. at Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave E. \$12-\$20. Go to www.southernavenueband.com for more.

SATURDAY/MARCH 4

Wine Tasting River Bend Country

Club 7-10 p.m. There will be a selection of Hors d'oeuvres, cheeses and fine wines and mingling with long-time and new neighbors.

SUNDAY/MARCH 12

Chantilly Egg Hunt. Saturdays and Sundays. 26469 Ticonderoga Road, Chantilly. Join the Easter Bunny and search for candy and toy-filled eggs. Visit www.ticonderoga.com/about.

THURSDAY/MARCH 16

Vietnam Veterans Meeting. 7:30 p.m. at Neighbor's Restaurant, 262D

Cedar Lane. Volko Ruhnke will discuss the development of his successful board game, "Fire in the Lake, Insurgency in Vietnam." Call Len Ignatowski at 703-255-0353 or visit www.vva227.org.

SATURDAY/MARCH 19

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



McLean
Community
Center
The Center of It All



Here's What's Happening at MCC

The Old Firehouse



Unruly Theatre Project

Friday, Feb. 24, 7-9 p.m.

Free admission

The area's hottest professional teen improv company brings you a hilarious night of comedy, and more!

Concerts @ The Alden

Young Soloists Recital

Sunday, Feb. 26, 3 p.m.

Free admission; tickets not required.

Old Firehouse Family Movie Night

"The Secret Life of Pets"



Friday, March 3, 7-9 p.m.

\$3 per person; pre-registration recommended.



An Alden Production

"The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales"

Saturday & Sunday, March 11-12 & 18-19, 3 p.m.

\$15/\$10 MCC district residents

McLean Traveler Day Trip

2017 Philadelphia Flower Show



Wednesday, March 15

6:45 a.m.- 8 p.m.

\$136 per person/\$131 MCC district residents

Closing Notice



MCC and The Old Firehouse will be closed on Monday, Feb. 20, for the George Washington's Day holiday. The centers will reopen at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 21.



The McLean Community Center

www.mcleancenter.org

Home of the Alden Theatre

www.aldentheatre.org



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



McLEAN COMMUNITY PLAYERS Present Stephen Sondheim's Ground-Breaking Musical! Final Weekend!



Book by
George Furth

Music and Lyrics by
Stephen Sondheim

Originally produced and directed on Broadway by Harold Prince
Orchestrations by Jonathan Tunick

Directed by Sharon Veselic
Produced by Jerry Gideon and Claire Tse

Alden Theatre • McLean Community Center

February 17-19

Friday and Saturday, 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, 2:00 p.m.

Tickets: 866.811.4111 OR www.McLeanPlayers.org

The McLean Community Players, Inc. is funded in part by the Arts Council of Fairfax County.

See The Accessibility page at www.McLeanPlayers.org for dates of Audio-described and ASL-interpreted performances

Suitable for ages 17 and older

COMPANY is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. www.MTIShows.com

CONNECT WITH MCP: [FACEBOOK.COM/MCLEANPLAYERS](https://www.facebook.com/mcleancplayers)



Oakcrest Veritas Scholars (from left): Mary Grace Nugent, Angela Diaz-Bonilla, Sarah Nosrat, Jackie Pluta, Maria Luisa Bertolini, Makena Kiara, and Isabella Fowler.



Oakcrest students Hannah Lu, Giulia Ishi, Annaliese Anderson, Ruva Kiara, and Kateri Castillo.

PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION

Oakcrest School Holds Veritas Awards Reception

Awards consist of \$5,000 tuition remission for two student leaders.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE CONNECTION

Oakcrest School, an all-girl liberal arts school in McLean, held its Veritas Award Reception on Tuesday, Jan. 31, 2017, at the school. The award is given to two recipients, still unnamed, who display high academic achievement, leadership, and character. It is a merit scholarship open to students who are applying for admission for ninth grade in 2017-2018, and for current Oakcrest eighth grade students.

The award consists of \$5,000 tuition remission per year for four years at Oakcrest. To qualify, students who were being interviewed during the ceremony, had to submit an essay, art or video project that says what makes a good leader.

“By applying for the Veritas award, you have shown initiative, creativity and a willingness to take a risk. We commend you for the work and care that you have put in the application process. Every student at Oakcrest is a Veritas girl. Oakcrest engages with the parents to nurture, challenge and inspire the girls,” said Mary Ortiz, Ph.D. head of school, during the ceremony.

The role of the Veritas recipients is to speak to donors, as well as leading tours, talking about Oakcrest, and assisting with all kinds of admissions and school events. Their most important contribution is bringing people together and promoting unity, showing respect for all, and giving their best in academic pursuits, added Ortiz.

VIEWPOINTS

What are, for you, some of the top issues facing the country during this time of change?

Mary Grace Nugent, grade 10, of Herndon

“I’ve been raised a conservative and I think feminism, in the radical sense, has been really taking over the government positions. I’m very opposed to some of their platforms. I think it’s a good thing that they’re fighting for women’s rights. But some of the things they also fight for are a little detrimental to what is fundamentally right. So I think if we could turn around what they sometimes push for, a lot of things could change for the better.”



Mary Ortiz, Head of Oakcrest School

“Oakcrest’s mission is always timely so it’s always addressing the most important questions of the day. Teaching young women to be women of character, to know who they are, to have confidence, to go out and bring all of their gifts and talents to the world, to try to be good, to lead others to good, is always going to be relevant, and that’s what I love being part of.”



Makena Kiara, 11th grade, of Fairfax

“One issue I think facing the country is how divided we are and one way I think Oakcrest helps us to combat this once



we graduate and go into the real world is by being able to advocate for ourselves and truly know what we believe so that we can better communicate with others and form relationships so that we have a common understanding.”

Cecilia Marquez, Academic Dean at Oakcrest

“I think what we have seen in our society for the last few decades is the lack of engagement with people who



have different ideas, political ideas, philosophical ideas, how to listen to the others with respect with intellectual engagement, and how to present your own ideas with persuasiveness, with facts, and some feelings along the way because you want to come across as a charismatic person who is happy about your beliefs and why you believe that the long-term happiness is based on certain key virtues.”

Michael Barvick, Director of Institutional Advancement at Oakcrest, said, “We try to choose young women who are intellectually qualified who are humble leaders, who are servant leaders and who are going to represent the school for the four years that they’ll be attending Oakcrest in the upper school.”

“The Veritas award promotes an attitude where leadership is one of service. It is about using what we have to give back to the community and inspiring everyone else to do the same. What Oakcrest has taught me is that every act of leadership is an opportunity to grow through service,” said Isabella Fowler, a Veritas award recipient from the Class of 2017.

According to Makena Kiara, a Veritas award recipient from the class of 2018, “When I received the Veritas Scholarship award, I realized that I was representing something bigger than myself. I knew that when I would talk to prospective students and parents at admissions events, that I was showing what was to be an Oakcrest leader and what was expected of me.”

Added Jackie Pluta, a Veritas award recipient from the class of 2018, “The award isn’t as much recognizing the girls who won it but it’s more for seeing the girls who are able to have leadership in the school through small acts of service. It’s giving back to the school in ways that won’t be recognized as much but it’s still just as important as keeping the morale of the students and keeping Oakcrest a friendly environment and a very warm atmosphere.”

According to keynote speaker Dr. Alexis Gutierrez, Ph.D., Class of 1999, “I think Oakcrest does a fantastic job in teaching women how to think and how to lead. I feel that my Oakcrest experience gave me the ability to make a difference. I hope you take this opportunity to develop your intellect and your character because it will serve you for the rest of your life.”

“The Children’s Hour” runs in McLean High School’s Burke Theatre Feb. 16 through 19.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

‘The Children’s Hour’ at McLean High: More Than a Play

In connection with their upcoming production TheatreMcLean is hosting Mental Health Week.

In connection with TheatreMcLean’s upcoming production of Lillian Hellman’s “The Children’s Hour,” TheatreMcLean is hosting Mental Health Week with McLean High School’s Sources of Strength team and other local nonprofits working in the fields of suicide prevention, mental health, and anti-bullying.

Sources of Strength is a group dedicated to providing students with positive resources when they are struggling with their mental health. Due to the nature of “The Children’s Hour,” TheatreMcLean cast and crew felt that it was important to remind students of places they can go when in need of support. According to Sources of Strength, “This February we have partnered with TheaterMcLean to host a Mental Health Awareness Week Feb 13th-17th to coincide with their play, ‘The Children’s Hour.’ Immediately following the final matinee performance of the play, Sources of Strength will have a guest speaker deliver a 15 minute talk-back with the audience to address some of the themes in the play, but more importantly to highlight the Sources of Strength at McLean High School.”

Sources of Strength also indicated, “The speaker will be Bobby Donohoe, President and founder of a small DC-based non-profit, Strength In Our Voices, that procures original content, hosts events in the community, and raises money all with the vision of eliminating stigmas surrounding mental health. Their mission is to create an environment of trust and support for those impacted by mental health through open dialogue, education, empowerment, and positive change.”

Each night of the show, TheatreMcLean will host community members representing the Safe Community Coalition, Strength in Our Voices, and Sources of Strength. McLean High School student Haley Rose says, “It is so crucial for students to know they are not alone and do have ways to find

When & Where

Performances are at McLean High School, 1633 Davidson Road, McLean. Appropriate for mature audiences. Feb. 16, 17, 18 at 7 p.m. Feb. 18 and 19 at 2 p.m. Visit www.TheatreMcLean.org

help. Join TheatreMcLean in helping to prevent teen suicide, destroy the stigma around mental illness, and foster a welcoming, inclusive community for everyone at McLean High School and beyond.”

“The Children’s Hour is” TheatreMcLean’s entrant this year in the Cappies Awards program. Seventy-five Cappies critics from high schools in the Maryland, Virginia, and Washington D.C. area will come to review the show and cast votes in categories such as best actor/actress, costumes, lighting, props, sound, and set.

Student Jordan Prather, who portrays teacher Martha Dobie, believes that “this show is very important because it shows how words can have a long-lasting impact on people’s lives. It teaches you to think before you speak because you never know how much you might hurt someone just by what you say.” Anna Kate Womack, who portrays Dobie’s fellow schoolteacher Karen Wright, hopes that this impactful production can “reach the audience so that they too can be touched by the story and its message.”

Julia Luigs (Lily Mortar) explores how this show is particularly relevant to this day and age, “In this high tech day and age, anything we say or do is just a click away from being a part of our online profiles forever. Our words can still have impact days, months, years after we say them. I think that this show, with its message, and the time period, strips our choices to the barest they can be, and it’s definitely scary, but at the same time incredibly humbling. ‘The Children’s Hour’ should serve as a reminder to us all about the impact we have on others’ lives with what we say.”



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PET Connection
 Publishes: Feb 22, 2017 • Ads close: Wed, Feb 16, 2017
 Connection readers love their pets. This keepsake edition will feature photos, anecdotes, advice and more about beloved family pets. Reach pet owners where they live in a section sure to attract and hold their attention.
 The Pet Connection will publish on February 22, 2017, and photos and stories of your pets with you and your family should be submitted by February 16. We welcome short stories about how you got your pet, a noteworthy talent or anecdote about your pet, tales of the bonds between your family and your pet, plus drawings, paintings or other artwork of your pet by children or adults.
 Find more information about submissions online at www.connectionnewspapers.com/pets.
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"Idiot" No More; Well, Sort Of



By **KENNETH B. LOURIE**

For over two and a half years now, since June '14 — according to my most recent invoice, "idiot" lights on the dashboard of my model year 2000, Honda Accord have warned me that all was not right with our back-up car. But due to intermittent use, amazing self-discipline on my part and little new evidence to the contrary, the Honda has maintained its performance, if you can even call it that. Soon after this last visit to my local mechanic had cleared the pre-2014 dashboard indicators, the "SRS" (seat belt restraint system) came on suggesting that something was once again rotten in Denmark, and Burtonsville, too. Nevertheless, with the ink barely dry on my credit card receipt, and with our second car not being a priority, I decided to let it live and let live and hope for the best. Approximately 32 months later, my hope has been realized. No repairs have been required in the interim. However, over that same time, multiple additional "warning" lights have come on: "brake lamp," "maintenance due," and just recently, the infamous/scourge "check-engine" light to where four lights are now illuminated. And though, to my credit, I have been able to endure and ignore their constant reminders; but when that fourth light, the "check-engine" light came on, I feared my benign neglect had finally come home to roost. So I bucked up, called my local mechanic, and made the arrangements to drop off the Honda. Then I waited for a more detailed assessment of the damage done. A few days later, I got the call. I'll spare you the details since I can't explain them anyway; but the repairs were going to cost around \$1000, as good as could be expected for a 17 year-old car with 95,000 miles on the odometer.

However, what I am most excited about concerning this outcome is — yes 'excited' is the right word — that for the first time in years I won't have to face down warning lights in my car and alarm bells in my head about what potential car trouble and expense I've been putting off and likely making worse. And most importantly, no longer having to exercise the inordinate self-control required to ignore these warning lights and not to be corrupted by their relentless — literally and figuratively — reminders. It's almost as if I can face reality again, breathe normally and not feel under siege.

Having only driven the car barely two miles home since I picked it up from "Tony's," I can't yet say driving is fun. However, I can admit that driving will be less irritating, will require less mental discipline and when I look down at my car's dashboard, I will not long for a bygone era of dashboard neutrality. Once again, as if the Honda is under dealer warranty, I will not see any indicators/lights of something I've neglected to do or of repairs I'm unable to afford.

As much as I'd like to think I'm fairly well-adjusted and know how to process and prioritize things in my life, having cancer does seem to alter these processes and priorities. And when something simple and/or unexpected happens in your life which allows you to regain your composure and equilibrium, it helps that much more to assimilate the cancer-related conditions, effects and challenges you've come to expect. Not that I thought much about this eventuality when I dropped off the car at "Tony's," but now, having not seen any lights, I feel unburdened, as if a weight has been taken off my shoulders and out of my head.

Moreover, when you're living in the cancer bubble, burdens expected — and otherwise — tend to pile up — and on — and when one is able to catch a break/brake along the way, the positive effect is disproportionate to reality. It means so much even though it may seem like so little. Whether it's regaining some control, solving a non-cancer-related problem or crossing an item off a to-do list; living one's life with as few distractions as possible, generally speaking, will likely result in some comfort and joy; not the movie, but the peace of mind.

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

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BULLETIN BOARD

To have community events listed in the Connection, visit connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline for submissions is noon on Friday.

Bag Sale \$10/bag. 7700 Leesburg Pike Falls Church. TysonsLibraryFriends@gmail.com; 703-338-3307.

FEBRUARY

- Free public service seminars**
- Downsizing: Feb. 14, Marshall H.S. 7731 Leesburg Pk., Falls Church.
 - Retirement Communities Feb. 22, Madison H.S., 2500 James Madison Drive, Vienna.
- For more information and seminar registration go to RetireeRealEstate.org, or call 703-772-3033.

TUESDAY, FEB. 21

Public Art Commission Meeting. 7 p.m. at Town Hall, 127 Center St. S. Advises and assists Town Council on matters relating to the advancement of public art in Town. Go to www.viennava.gov for more.

SATURDAY/FEB. 25

Community Tax Assistance Day. Deloitte presents its 10th annual Community Tax Assistance Day or Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Day (VITA) to serve qualified individuals and families. Deloitte employee/volunteers will assist families with 2016 Federal and state tax returns for households with a total income of \$54,000 or less. Translations services in Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese will be provided. In addition, American Sign Language interpreters will be available. Location is Fairfax SkillSource Center, Heritage Center, 7611 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Appointments are recommended: e-mail taxday@volunteerfairfax.org or call 703-246-3896. Walk ins are welcome. Visit www.nvacash.org. On tax preparation day, clients should bring all pertinent documentation. For a complete list, visit www.volunteerfairfax.org.

MONDAY/FEB. 27

Town Council Meeting. 8-10:30 p.m. at Town Hall, 127 Center St. S. Individuals are invited to attend and provide their input. Go to www.viennava.gov for more.

The U.S. Small Business Administration is reminding businesses in Virginia that working capital loans are still available to small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture and private nonprofit organizations affected by the severe storms and tornadoes on Feb. 24, 2016. Deadline to file is March 7, 2017. <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>. www.sba.gov/disaster. disastercustomerservice@sba.gov.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean continues to have an urgent need for new volunteers to help area senior citizens get to and from their medical and therapy appointments. To find out more about the Shepherd's Center and how you can volunteer to provide transportation and other services, call the Center at 703-506-2199 or e-mail the Center at info@scmaf.org. The Center's website is www.scmaf.org

THURSDAY-SATURDAY/MARCH 2-4

Friends of the Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library Quarterly Book Sale. Books and media for all interests and ages, Thursday, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Friday, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. Adult bag sale \$10/bag; Saturday, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Kids

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 6

Research shows that common-sense gun laws improve women's safety from gun violence. In states that require background checks for all handgun sales, 47 percent fewer women are killed with a gun by intimate partners. And state laws ensuring that convicted abusers or those subject to domestic violence restraining orders are separated from their firearms are also associ-

THROUGHOUT MARCH 2017

Free Public Service Seminars. March 1, 8, 15, 21, 29, at 7 p.m. on Selling Your Home, Aging in Place, Downsizing, Retirement Communities Seminars. Free public service seminars on Selling Your Home (March 1, McLean High School, 1633 Davidson Rd., McLean), Working With Builders (March 8, Falls Church HS, 7521 Jaguar Trail, Falls Church), Financing Your Retirement (March 15, Marshall HS, 7731 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church), Tax & Estate Planning (March 21, Madison HS, 2500 James Madison Dr., Vienna), and Decluttering & Organizing (March 29, Oakton HS, 2900 Sutton Rd., Vienna). For more information and seminar registration go to RetireeRealEstate.org, or call 703-772-3033.

ONGOING

The Golden Girls of Northern Virginia, a senior women's softball league, is looking for players. Any woman over the age of 40 is encouraged to join. All skill levels are welcome. The games are on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings in Vienna. For more information, visit www.goldengirls.org

Passages DivorceCare If you are experiencing the pain of separation or divorce, the caring community at Vienna Presbyterian Church invites you to attend Passages DivorceCare. This program offers a path toward healing. The next 15-week DivorceCare series will be held Tuesdays from 6:45 to 9 p.m. beginning on Feb. 21. Vienna Presbyterian Church is located on the corner of Maple Avenue (Rt. 123) and Park Street in Vienna. Cost to cover materials is \$20, scholarships available. For more information or to register call 703-938-9050, go to www.viennapres.org, or send an email to Passages@ViennaPres.org.

Are You A Caregiver? Shepherd's Center of Oakton Vienna Caregivers' Support Group takes place first & third Thursday of each month. February 2nd and 16th, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Join us at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax (UUCF) - Program Building, 2709 Hunter Mill Rd, Oakton, VA. For more info contact facilitator, Jack Tarr, 703-821-6838 jtarr5@verizon.net.

Volunteers Needed. PRS is looking for empathetic and caring volunteers to make phone calls to older adults who may be feeling socially isolated. The commitment is one 3-hour shift per week for one year. Located in Arlington. Ages 21 & up. Intensive training provided. Learn more and apply: <https://prsinc.org/caring-volunteering/>. Questions? Email lpadgett@prsinc.org.

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

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

The Lewinsville Senior Center in McLean needs a **Certified Arthritis Exercise Instructor.** For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults.

ated with reductions in gun violence against women.

The Virginia Chapter of Moms Demand Action is working statewide to end gun violence in America. I urge you to find out more about us at www.momsdemandaction.org.

Michelle Sandler
McLean

The writer is McLean/Falls Church Leader, Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America.

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21 Announcements 21 Announcements 21 Announcements 21 Announcements

Public Notice: Proposal to Voluntarily Remediate a Property

There is contamination from Petroleum impacted soil on site at Gilliam Place, 3507 Columbia Pike, Arlington, VA 22204

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is working with Gilliam Place LLC c/o Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing (APAH) to develop a Remedial Action Plan to address cleanup of petroleum hydrocarbons at the site. If you have any questions regarding the cleanup please contact Vincent Maiden, P.G., Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Northern Regional Office, 629 East Main Street, Richmond, VA 23218, Vincent.Maiden@deq.virginia.gov or Jason Beck, C.P.G, Senior Environmental Project Manager, ECS Mid-Atlantic, LLC, 703-471-8400, jbeck@ecslimited.com

As part of the remedial action process a Remedial Action Plan (RAP) was submitted to the Northern Regional Office of DEQ on January 10, 2017, which allows for corrective action at the property to begin immediately. If you would like to review or discuss the proposed RAP with the staff of DEQ, please feel free to contact the Corrective Action Project Manager, Vincent Maiden, whose contact information is listed above. You may also contact Jason Beck, the environmental consultant for Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing, whose contact information is listed above. DEQ will consider written comments regarding the proposed Remedial Action Plan until February 24, 2017 and may decide to hold a public meeting if there is a significant public interest. Written comments should be sent to DEQ at the address listed above. DEQ requests that all written comments reference the tracking number for this case; VRP Case # 00664.

Respectfully submitted,

ECS MID-ATLANTIC, LLC on behalf of ARLINGTON PARTNERSHIP FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The biggest things are always the easiest to do because there is no competition.
-William Van Horne

LEGAL NOTICE

Storage Line of Virginia, LLC (t/a APT Storage), Box 767, Haymarket, VA 20168, pursuant to the assertion of a lien for rental of a storage unit, will hold a public auction for the sale of all goods in storage unit #407B to take place at 11:30 am on Thursday, February 23, 2017, at storage unit #407B located at Sacramento Square, 5401 Claymont Dr, Alexandria, VA 22309, to satisfy the lien. All terms of the sale are cash. Call 800-217-4280 for questions.

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