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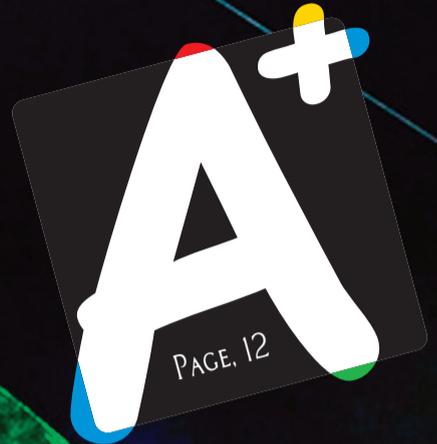
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McLean CONNECTION

Performing on Chinese Poles at Cirque du Soleil's 'Luzia.' Performances to June 17, 2018 under the Big Top at Tysons II.



Cirque du Soleil's Dazzling 'Luzia'

ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 11

Two Sides to Two And a Half Cents

NEWS, PAGE 3

'Natural Shocks' At 1st Stage

NEWS, PAGE 4

PHOTO BY MATT BEARD © 2017 CIRQUE DU SOLEIL/COURTESY CIRQUE DU SOLEIL OPINION, PAGE 6 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 10 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 14

NEWS

Executive Director of SafeSpot Named Ally in Prevention Award Winner

Bootsie Humenansky has been named a 2018 Ally in Prevention by SCAN of Northern Virginia. SCAN stands for Stop Child Abuse Now.

Humenansky's story begins as a volunteer. For 20 years, she made a difference for children in Fairfax County and beyond. She volunteered with the Washington Area Chapter of Childhelp USA as well as the Childhelp Children's Center of Virginia. Humenansky worked on everything from developing a program for student athletes who work with abused children to being a spokesperson for the center to mentoring youth at the residential center.

These accomplishments were all leading to 2012 when the Childhelp Children's Center closed unexpectedly, leaving Fairfax County without a Child Advocacy Center (CAC). Humenansky refused to believe Fairfax County couldn't sustain a CAC, and began to research requirements, recruit volunteers and gain IRS non-profit status. By 2014, SafeSpot Children's Advocacy Center of Fairfax was able to open its doors, ensuring that children who have been abused have a safe, child focused environment where they can receive support, guidance and treatment from a coordinated team of professionals and county agencies.

"When we had a vision of forming SafeSpot from scratch, we had no appreciation for the work required to pull together the number of moving parts and parties that had to be linked together at the federal and local government and community service organizations," notes Humenansky. "We were fortunate that numerous friends, volunteers, and organizations were willing to pitch in and provide guidance and help to be part of our vision." "Bootsie is tireless in her efforts," adds

her nominator. "She has enormous energy and her enthusiasm is infectious ... she inspires each person she meets to help build a better community."

While serving on the board, recruiting volunteers and raising funds to keep SafeSpot growing (last year it had four employees and served 425 children), she never lost "her zeal for awareness-building and abuse prevention education." Today she is an active participant in the Pinwheels for Prevention effort, inspiring pinwheel gardens from Great Falls to Mount Vernon. Bootsie also advocated for prevention education programs in FCPS elementary schools, and is now a volunteer instructor for the Speak Up Be Safe program.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

NBC4's Leon Harris (SCAN Honorary Board Member and emcee of the event); 2018 Ally in Prevention Award Winner Bootsie Humenansky from Fairfax; and Sonia Quiñónez, SCAN Executive Director.

BULLETIN

Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

FRIDAY/APRIL 20

Great Decisions Discussion Group. 10 a.m.-noon at Vienna Seventh-Day Adventist Church, 344 Courthouse Road, SW, Vienna. Discussion on China and America: The New Geopolitical Equation. Group meets from April 20, 2018-Nov. 16, 2018. To view topic schedule: www.scov.org/files/2018_great_decisions_flyer.pdf Cost is \$27 (includes briefing book). Registration required. Call 703-281-0538.

SATURDAY/APRIL 21

Teen Job Fair. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at South Lakes High School, 11400 South Lakes Drive, Reston.

The fair will focus on student job seekers (approximately 16-18 years old) looking for full time employment, after-school employment, seasonal positions, internship opportunities, or volunteer experiences. Volunteer opportunities and resume building workshops will be available for younger students looking to begin to build their resume. Free. Pre-registration for students is recommended (not required) and can be done online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/springfield/teenjobfairs. Call the Hunter Mill District Office at 703-478-0283 for more.

SUNDAY/APRIL 22

Service of Music. 11 a.m.-noon at Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Join for a "Worship Service of Music, A Thousand Ages: A Celebration of Hope." The Chancel and Westminster Choirs will sing. "A thousand ages in your sight," a line from Isaac Watt's hymn paraphrase of Psalm 90, provides the inspiration for this celebration of hope. Free and open to the public. Call 703-237-0358 or visit www.lewinsville.org.

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Two Sides to Two and a Half Cents

Supervisors to vote on proposed budget, possible real estate tax increase on May 1.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

James Parmelee was the seventh speaker before the Board of Supervisors on the proposed budget. Following school personnel, county employees and a speaker from the PTA, Parmelee was the first to oppose the proposed real estate tax increase.

"I figured somebody in the room should try to speak for the average taxpayer," said Parmelee, a perennial opponent of taxes, when he gave his opinion of the proposed budget on the first of three days of public comment.

More than 150 speakers testified, 158 signed up to speak, during the three days the Board of Supervisors allotted to hear from the public on the FY 2019 budget and proposed tax rate. The public comments lasted more than 11 hours and 20 minutes.

Advocates voiced passion on topics ranging from the environment, health and human services, people with disabilities and who are aging, early childhood education, fire and rescue services, pay for public safety personnel, the opioid epidemic, affordable housing, diversity, mental health treatment, school bonds and capital improvements, the triple A bond rating, the arts, libraries, competitive pay for teachers, and more.

But the issue for the board to decide on May 1 is whether to support County Executive Bryan Hill's proposed budget including a two and a half cent real estate tax increase. The board can accept the real estate tax increase or vote for a smaller amount but can not raise Hill's suggested increase.

"When the voters in Fairfax County have had an opportunity to vote on tax increases, you saw what happened last time," said Parmelee. "The voters of Fairfax County, on the very same day that they overwhelmingly voted for Hillary Clinton, they also overwhelmingly voted against the tax hike."

If the Board of Supervisors were to adopt the full two and a half cent tax rate increase, it would amount to an additional \$268 on the average homeowner's annual tax bill.

Only four speakers, and approximately 21 minutes, divided Parmelee from speaker No. 12, Kimberly Adams, of Clifton.

"As a mother, taxpayer and employee here in Fairfax County, my life and livelihood are impacted by every budget that this country adopts," said Adams.

"We have to remember that we are preparing the future for more than 185,000 students each year. I would encourage the



Helen Kelly, Herndon, League of Women Voters



Louise Epstein, McLean Citizens Association



Dale Stein, McLean Citizens Association



Kay Larmer, McLean, Commission on Aging



Leann Alberts, Springfield, Disability Services Board



James Parmelee, Centreville



Kimberly Adams, Clifton



Arthur Purves, Vienna



Phil Niedzielski-Eichner, Oakton



Kofi Annan, Fairfax County NAACP

Their Own Words, A Glimpse

Kofi Annan, Fairfax County NAACP

"Fairfax County's demographics are rapidly changing as you know. It is becoming increasingly diverse, and with these changes often come a unique set of challenges.

"The county's revenue outlook is the most promising it's been in years. However the rate of revenue increase is not reflected in the rate of investment in the poor and working class communities. The low income Fairfax residents, a disproportionate amount of whom are minorities, will not automatically benefit from the improved economy. Thousands will remain reliant on low-wage service sector jobs and many will not receive pay increases. Many of them will not be able to provide for their kids with pre-K education or have access to affordable housing. Therefore, we request that the county direct greater attention and resources to serving the needs of the less fortunate among us."

Annan expressed concern that the county is underfunding Pre-K education for needy families.

"This opportunity gap eventually turns into an achievement gap, and that widens over time.

"Fairfax County NAACP calls on the county to commit the resources to enroll at least 300 additional kids into Pre-K in 2019 budget and devise a long-term plan to fund at least 2,000 over the next five years.

"Expand access to affordable housing. Many low income residents will not be able to afford to live in Fairfax County. Many of these families will spend up to half or more of their annual budget" on housing.

"For the past few years, 40 percent of police use of force has been directed toward African Americans, who only make up about 10 percent of the county.

"And for the past few years, we have been asking the county to fund an outside organization to conduct a study to determine the causes of this disparity, so we can begin the process of reversing that trend."

Helen Kelly, Herndon, League of Women Voters

"We support the new property tax rate because we believe it gives you more flexibility in meeting unexpected challenges and we applaud your increased contributions to the reserve funds to satisfy the bond rating agencies. As taxpayers we appreciate your efforts to the county's triple A rating."

Kelly supported Diversion First, gang prevention, the opioid task force, the South County police station and the Office of Elections.

Dale Stein, president, McLean Citizens Association

"MCA is concerned about the context of the increases in spending and the apparent lack of cost savings. MCA feels that each budget should include new efficiency, in operations particularly in budgets of \$4.3 billion. ..."

Louise Epstein, chair, McLean Citizens Association's budget and taxation committee

"We really support teacher raises" while also expressing concern about allotting millions for raises for administrators in the school system.

Kay Larmer, McLean, Commission on Aging

"We applaud your commitment to making Fairfax a livable community for people of all ages.

"Currently in Fairfax County, about one in seven residents are older than 65. By 2020, the proportion will nearly be one in five.

"We will need more affordable and accessible housing, improved and more creative transportation services, increased home based and community based services, new communications technology, programs that promote ethnic and cultural diversity."

Leann Alberts, Springfield, Disability Services Board

"Working age people with disabilities make up nearly 15 percent of the Virginia's population and are far more likely to be unemployed and to live in poverty than people without disabilities. Supports for people with disabilities are vital to the fabric of our community. They are every bit as essential to Fairfax County as our roads, emergency first responders, schools and environmental services. They are value added services that empower people with disabilities to live and prosper in the community."

Enrique Carrero, Fairfax County employee

"I am proud to be the first one in my family to graduate from college, and I feel it's important to give back to the community through my job as a public employee. I help families in need get heating in the winter and air conditioning in the summer. I've heard some people say millennial workers don't care about retirement. So, let me clear that up. As a 23-year-old millennial, I care deeply about my future and believe that we all deserve to live comfortably when we're too old to work."

school system to go under a similar lines of business review that the county has gone through," said Adams, who suggested that savings from collaboration between schools and the county could be identified.

"If at the end of that exercise, savings are not identified, then we must move forward in a responsible manner that may mean raising taxes once more or looking for possible alternatives to property taxes that we have found to be so elusive here in the county," said Adams.

THE PROPOSED \$4.29-BILLION budget would transfer 54 percent of the total to the school system to fully fund FCPS's budget request. It would also fund pay increases for teachers and county employees.

Adams spoke for many others when she addressed quality of life.

"Like so many here, I am happy to have amazing schools, fire and rescue professionals, human services, parks and libraries within my reach. It is why my family lives here," she said, in the three minutes given to each individual speaker.

"All residents deserve an equitable opportunity to succeed if they work hard, but families that cannot afford homes in this area are a growing group. Many families are working hard but there are not enough good-paying jobs, not enough affordable care options, and certainly not enough affordable homes in this area. ... I appreciate it when you spend my tax dollars to support many who live in need alongside those of us who are doing well. We are Fairfax County and the people who live here want an inclusive and welcoming community for all."

BECAUSE OF VIRGINIA LAW, Fairfax County depends almost entirely on real estate taxes for revenue, putting a burden on homeowners in particular, whose increasing property values don't always demonstrate an ability to pay more.

"For nearly 20 years, this board has been raising real estate taxes two or three times faster than household income," said Arthur Purves, of Vienna.

"This goes on year after year," said Charles McAndrew, of Oak Hill.

Phil Niedzielski-Eichner is the Providence District Planning Commissioner and former school board member. But last week, Niedzielski-Eichner spoke as an individual from Oakton and was the 23rd speaker.

"The key, of course, is attracting and retaining high-quality personnel to both [schools and county]. This budget begins to recover our competitiveness in relation to compensation offered by other governmental jurisdictions. I also support the \$25 million annual increase in FCPS bonding authority to expedite its school renovation and support new construction that will alleviate severe overcrowding in some of the

SEE VOTE, PAGE 15

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NEWS

‘Natural Shocks’ at 1st Stage

Special reading of award-winning Lauren Gunderson’s “Natural Shocks” as part of national effort to raise awareness of gun violence.

By DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

Northern Virginia’s WSC Avant Bard, a professional theater company, will present a reading of “Natural Shocks,” a new play by Lauren Gunderson at 1st Stage. The reading is to raise awareness about gun violence.

The award-winning Gunderson, the most-produced playwright in America, has made “Natural Shocks” available royalty-free for local readings across the country to raise awareness and funds to address gun violence.

“Natural Shocks,” the Avant Bard’s presentation at 1st Stage, is the D.C. area’s participation in a national event by theater companies on issues surrounding gun violence and domestic violence. The event is free, but donations received will support a charitable cause that addresses issues of gun violence and domestic violence.

“Natural Shocks” is a 65-minute, one-woman play about a woman waiting out an imminent tornado in her basement. She reveals dark



PHOTO BY TERESA CASTRACANE
PHOTOGRAPHY/COURTESY OF WSC
AVANT BARD

Sara Barker, featured in “Natural Shocks” reading



PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVIE
ZIMMERMAN

Stevie Zimmerman, director, “Natural Shocks” reading

Where and When

Playwright Lauren Gunderson’s “Natural Shocks,” a reading to address gun violence performed at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Rd, Tysons. Performance: Monday, April 23, 2018, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are free. Information call 703-418-4808 or visit www.avantbard.org/naturalshocks. Note: Admission is free. Donations that are received will be provided to Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, a 501(c)4 and part of Everytown for Gun Safety. Moms Demand Action mission is to educate, motivate, and mobilize supporters to take action that will result in stronger laws and policies to save lives.

secrets that put gun violence front and center. The play is part confessional, part standup, and part reckoning.

The reading will be directed by Northern Virginia’s Stevie Zimmerman and will feature actor Sara Barker.

WEEK IN McLEAN

Public Invited to Comment on Proposed Park Land Exchange

The National Park Service (NPS) invites the public to review and comment on a proposed land exchange between Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) and the National Park Service. The public is also encouraged to review and comment on three proposed improvement options for Langley Fork Park, which would occur after the land exchange.

Langley Fork Park is a 52-acre park administered by the NPS, but maintained and operated by FCPA since 1980. Langley Oaks Park is an almost 102-acre FCPA park adjacent to NPS land. FCPA is proposing that NPS transfer Langley Fork Park to FCPA. In exchange, the FCPA would convey Langley Oaks Park to the NPS.

The proposed land exchange would facilitate improved recreational programming at Langley Fork Park by constructing additional athletic fields, enhancing existing facilities, providing upgraded parking and creating trails. The exchange would also ensure permanent protection of natural and cultural resources at Langley Fork Park and Langley Oaks Park. The NPS will hold an open house on Tuesday, April 24, from 6:30 to 8:30 pm at Franklin Sherman Elementary School, 6633 Brawner Street, McLean.

To comment:

- Review the documents and submit comments electronically at the National Park Service’s Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/langleyfork>

- Mail or hand deliver comments to: Superintendent, George Washington Memorial Parkway Headquarters, Attn: Langley Fork Park Project Environmental Assessment, 700 George Washington Memorial Parkway, McLean, VA 22101.

- Deadline for comments is Friday, May 11, 2018

RSVP Northern Virginia to Host Free Senior Volunteer Orientation

RSVP Northern Virginia will hold a volunteer orientation at Dolley Madison Library, Wednesday, May 2, at 2:30 p.m. The hour-long event is free and open to anyone 55-years-young or better.

RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) is the region’s largest volunteer network for people 55 and older and provides individualized support to seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria.

RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional

SEE WEEK, PAGE 8

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NEWS

Ed Swallow, K-12 STEM Symposium Chairman and SVP, Civil Systems Group, The Aerospace Corporation, moderates panel on what it takes to be a Superhero in STEM with Kristy Clark (Chief Engineer, Vencore), Renee Wynn (CIO, NASA), and Ted Davies (CEO, Altamira).



STEM Symposium Held in Herndon

The event attracted nearly 4,000 participants.

On Saturday, April 14, WashingtonExec hosted its fifth annual K-12 STEM Symposium at The Nysmith School in Herndon. The event attracted nearly 4,000 students, parents, industry leaders, government officials, non-profit executives and educators. Attendees enjoyed Altamira's "Girls in STEM" interactive wing, Vencore's flight simulator and a variety of other interactive exhibits. Among the biggest hits were the virtual reality showcase, 3D printers and slime creation stations.

In addition to the displays, attendees had the opportunity to hear from former NASA astronaut Cady Coleman, NASA Chief Information Officer (CIO) Renee Wynn and other STEM Superheroes.

New to the Symposium's programming this year, WashingtonExec presented several awards. The STEM Rising Star award was presented to Kavya Koppurapu and Kirthi Kumar, students at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science & Technology. Anne Swanson, U.S. education and workforce development coordinator at CGI Federal was named Most Inspiring STEM Executive of 2018. Boolean Girls, a non profit dedicated to educating girls to code, build, invent and animate took home STEM Non-Profit of the Year, while Business Women's Giving Circle and Northrop Grumman were awarded Best STEM-Supporting Businesses of the Year.

This year's WashingtonExec K-12 STEM Symposium brought together key players in the STEM field to enthrall students with the science and technology they learn in their classrooms. Elevating STEM education through events like WashingtonExec's K-12 STEM Symposium spurs the national conversation among leaders, parents and students about STEM's increasing importance to the future.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED
Washington Nationals mascot, George Washington, greets people headed into WashingtonExec's 5th Annual K-12 STEM Symposium.



Former NASA Astronaut Cady Coleman speaks to students at WashingtonExec's 5th Annual K-12 STEM Symposium.



Student is seen engrossed with Vencore's flight simulator at WashingtonExec's 5th Annual K-12 STEM Symposium.

ARLINGTON festival of the Arts

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April 21st – 22nd
Sat./Sun. 10am – 5pm

Artfestival.com
A Howard Alan Event
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Free Admission

Send in Mother's Day Photos

Mother's Day is Sunday, May 13 this year, and as every year at this time, This newspaper calls for submissions to our Mother's Day photo gallery.

Send photos of mothers, grandmothers, great-grandmothers, with children or without children in the photos. Please name everyone in the photo, the approximate date taken, describe what is happening in the photo and include your name, address, email address and phone number. We will not print your full address or contact information.

You can upload photos and information directly to www.connectionnewspapers.com/mothersday/ or email to editors@connectionnewspapers.com.

Mother's Day is just one of many occasions throughout the year that we would love to receive photos from our readers. Send us photos and notes when anything of note is happening in your family, neighborhood, school, club ... Be sure to include basic information: Name everyone in the photo, the approximate date taken, describe what is happening in the photo and include your name, address, email address and phone number. We will not print your full address or contact information. Send to editors@connectionnewspapers.com

Soon after we publish our Mother's Day

photo galleries, we will begin to ask for submissions for our Father's Day galleries. Father's Day is June 17 this year.

Each year we seem to receive many more photos for Father's Day. We're curious whether that is because it is the second of the set so readers are more aware or because mothers are more likely to send in images of the Dads.

Twice a year we ask you to send photos and tell us stories about your pets and how they have come into, touched and left your lives, publishing the last week in July and the last week in February.

In late summer, we invite readers to share what they know about their community for neighbors and newcomers alike.

And wrapping up the year, we gather writing and art from local students to fill our holiday edition. Each year, through an enormous effort by area teachers and school staff we receive an amazing display of student talent.

Regular contributions to our entertainment calendars, community bulletin boards, school notes, and business notes help us to share news in your community. We also always welcome photos and captions from community organizations (Scouts, sports teams, faith groups, school activities, etc.) and local businesses.

Please start by sending in photos for Mother's Day, preferably by May 4. www.connectionnewspapers.com/mothersday/.

Virginia Press Association Winners

Connection writers and photographers garnered awards at the Virginia Press Association annual award banquet Saturday, April 14. Here is the list of our winners, with more details to come in the future:

First Place, Michael Lee Pope, Business and Financial Writing, Great Falls Connection
 First Place, Bonnie Hobbs, Public Safety Writing, Chantilly Connection
 First Place, Mark Mogle, Pictorial Photo, Great Falls Connection
 First Place, Mark Mogle, General News Photo, Arlington Connection
 First Place, Eden Brown, Public Safety Writing, Arlington Connection
 Second Place, Dan Brendel, Government Writing, Alexandria Gazette Packet
 Second Place, Vernon Miles, Feature Series or Continuing Story, Alexandria Gazette Packet
 Second Place, Fallon Forbush, Breaking News Writing, McLean Connection
 Second Place, Fallon Forbush, General News Writing, Reston Connection
 Second Place, Bonnie Hobbs, General News Writing, Fairfax Connection
 Second Place, Marilyn Campbell, Education Writing, Great Falls Connection
 Third Place, Shirley Ruhe, Personality or Portrait Photo, Arlington Connection
 Third Place, Fallon Forbush, Education Writing, Great Falls Connection
 Third Place, Mary Kimm, Editorial Writing, Great Falls Connection

EDITORIAL

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

It's Time to Give Volunteers the Credit They Deserve

To the Editor:

This week, April 15-21, is National Volunteer Week, an opportunity for organizations across the country to pause and recognize the importance and impact of the millions of selfless individuals who volunteer in our communities. Governor Northam recently honored some of Virginia's most remarkable individuals and organizations that have committed to service across the Commonwealth at the 2018 Virginia Governor's Volunteerism and Community Service Awards. Their stories of service were touching, uplifting, and an inspiration for all of us to do more for others. I encourage you to read more about these remarkable volunteers at VirginiaService.virginia.gov.

And yet, this amazing group of volunteers are just a fraction of the more than 2 million who serve annually in Virginia. Each day, individuals give their time and talents to make our communities safer, healthier and stronger. Whether it is the parents and grandparents volunteering in our

schools, community members collecting and donating food to our food banks, or busy professionals utilizing their skills to help individuals and organizations in times of need — volunteers are the force behind addressing our greatest challenges.

On behalf of the Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism, I would like to thank these fantastic volunteers. Thank you for caring. Thank you for committing. Thank you for understanding the power of service. We want you to know that we see you and we hear stories of how you are changing communities for the better. You provide hope to so many and inspire others to follow your lead to serve.

Jessica Bowser

Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism

Long Backups at Park Entrance

To the Editor:

With spring upon us, the weekend traffic problem at the intersection of Georgetown Pike and Old Dominion Drive (entrance to Great Falls Park) is causing long backups from both directions on Georgetown Pike and also north

on Old Dominion Drive. The lack of turn lanes increases the congestion.

In the absence of physical changes to the intersection, there should be police presence during busy mid-day hours on weekends to direct traffic and not allow long backups when the Park's parking is full.

As Great Falls Park is a National Park, one would assume that the responsibility for traffic management would belong to the US Park Police. No private venue would be allowed to avoid responsibility if their venue created this kind of problem. The alternative to the Park Police is the Fairfax County

Police Department. In any event, mitigation of this problem belongs to one or more of our governmental entities.

The Park is a treasure and a wonderful part of our community. We have visitors from all around the area who very much appreciate and enjoy the

Park. Reasonable traffic management would make their experience a better one and improve the quality of life for those of us who use Georgetown Pike and Old Dominion Drive for our normal weekend travels.

Peter Garahan
Great Falls

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers Needed

Volunteer Solutions provides meaningful volunteer opportunities to improve the lives of older adults and adults with disabilities in Fairfax County. We update our Urgent Needs list regularly. If you don't see what you are looking for, consider another opportunity or call 703-324-5406, TTY 711. Apply online at volunteer.fairfaxcounty.gov

Countywide Opportunities

❖ Mealtime Companion: Join a new and exciting endeavor to help ensure that Meals on Wheels recipients (who have memory loss) are appropriately heating and consuming their delivered meals. Volunteers are needed during lunchtime hours, 2-3 days per week, to assist participants with heating their food and to provide mealtime companionship. Guidance on working with older adults with dementia is offered.

❖ One-Time Opportunity in May - The Helping Hands Program provides an opportunity for individuals and groups looking for a time-limited community service project. Volunteers assist older adults with house and yard work including: deep

SEE VOLUNTEERS, PAGE 14



Small Victory Against Gun Violence

New state license plate bill calls motorists to action and “Stop Gun Violence.”

BY MARTI MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Although proponents of tighter gun control legislation are disappointed by the 70-plus firearms safety bills that died recently at the Virginia General Assembly, they celebrate one small victory: House Bill 287, a special state license plate that says “Stop Gun Violence.”

Chief patron of this measure that helps promote their cause is Del. Marcus B. Simon (D-53) of Fairfax County and the City of Falls Church. He and his co-sponsors introduced this bill January in Richmond. It met both House and Senate approval last month and was authorized April 5 by Gov. Ralph Northam.

THE NEW LAW, effective July 1, states motorists can purchase a standard \$10 tag or a \$25 revenue-sharing license plate. The extra \$15 will benefit a fund to help Virginians receive treatment for mental health, developmental and substance abuse issues. The \$10 vehicle tag expires July 1, 2020 the same day the \$25 revenue-sharing plate becomes effective. The Department of Motor Vehicles budgeted \$9,376 for tag production, Simon confirmed.

He credits Falls Church activist Carol P. Luten of the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence as the “driving force” behind this bill. She started the project two years ago and collected more than the required 450 prepaid applications needed to introduce the legislation at this year’s General Assembly. Luten said last fall the license plate is designed as a “moving billboard from city-to-city and state-to-state to help create awareness and a movement for change.”

She said Virginia motorists can buy the tag February 2019 at their Department of Motor Vehicles. Luten received help from other grassroots activists to educate nearly 6,000 Virginians throughout the Commonwealth from Fairfax to Roanoke, and Win-

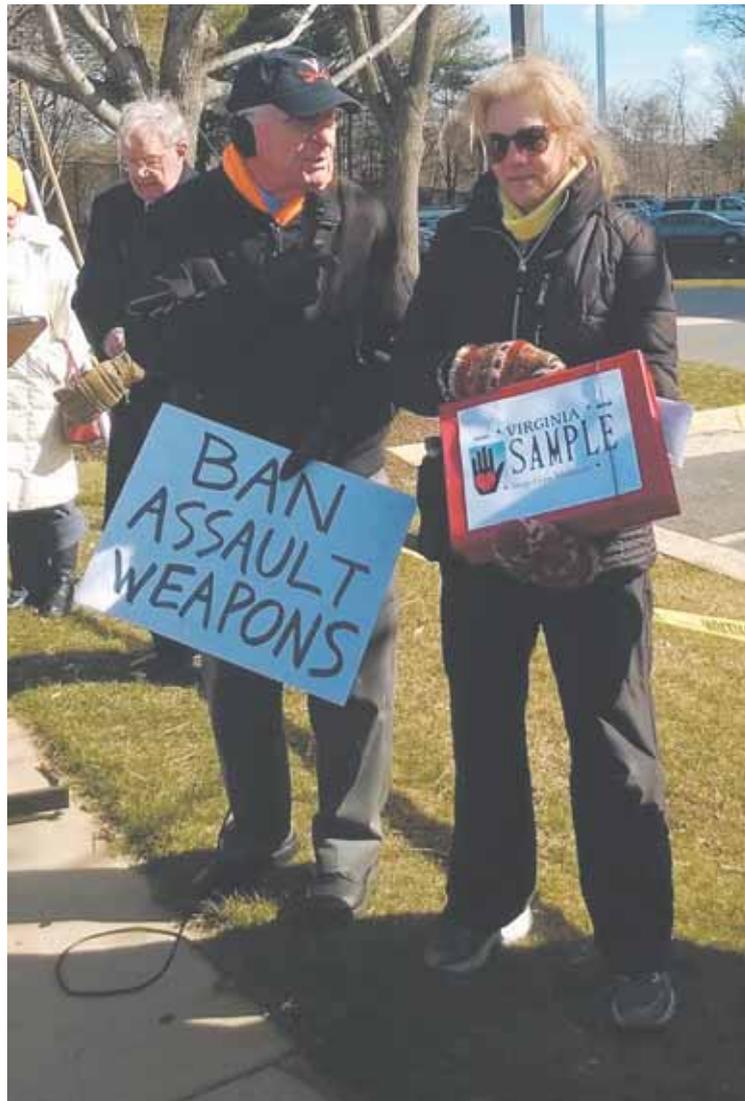


PHOTO BY MARTI MOORE/THE CONNECTION

chester to Williamsburg about gun violence prevention. She says former Falls Church resident Robin Bray is the professional artist who designed the graphic image a broken heart held in the palm of a hand displayed on the new specialty license plate.

Learn more about their effort online at www.stopgunviolence.info.

Virginia Sen. Janet D. Howell (D-32), who represents parts of Arlington and Fairfax counties, supported Luten’s effort March 14

at a monthly protest in front of the National Rifle Association headquarters in Fairfax at the same time students nationwide walked out of their classes for at least 17 minutes in memory the 14 teenagers and 3 adults slain Valentine’s Day at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla.

“Get your license plate,” Howell shouts to more than 160 adults who line the sidewalks along Waples Mill Road in near freez-

ing temperatures and 19 mile-an-hour winds on a cold Wednesday morning to stand up to the nation’s largest gun rights lobby for the countless lives lost to gun violence.

“Let everyone know where you stand,” she exclaims.

It’s the 63rd such gathering at the NRA since Dec. 14, 2012 when a 20-year-old gunman fatally shot 20 school children and 6 adults in Newtown, Conn., with firepower online reports say included a Bushmaster AR-15 rifle.

HOWELL says her father-in-law was murdered with a handgun in the 1990s. Since then, the state senator has tried to introduce at least one gun safety bill each year at the Virginia General Assembly. Howell authored two this year Senate Bill 797 that keeps people with protective orders from possessing firearms and SB 442 that prevents gun owners from leaving loaded, unsecured firearms in a reckless manner within easy access to people ages 18 and younger. Both measures were requested by the governor, “who has seen firsthand the damage guns have done to kids.”

Del. Kenneth R. Plum (D-36) of Reston was chief patron of four firearms bills he has tried to push through General Assembly four years in a row all of which have been killed in committee. Plum is a retired educator who remains steadfast in his effort to prevent more deaths from gun violence.

“We don’t give up. We don’t go away,” he said on March 14.



Graphic image of the new state license plate.

Del. Kenneth R. Plum (D-36) of Reston, left, congratulates Falls Church activist Carol P. Luten, right, of the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence for her push to get the only gun control measure passed March 9 through this year’s Virginia General Assembly, House Bill 287, a special state license plate that says “Stop Gun Violence.”

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Parenting Expert to Speak in McLean

Every parent has been there. What began as a mature, calm conversation between parent and child has been reduced to screaming, eye rolling, and loud sighing. The good news is that help is on the way.

The Safe Community Coalition will present Dr. Wendy Mogel, clinical psychologist, parenting expert, and New York Times best-selling author, on Wednesday, May 2, at 7 p.m. at Temple Rodef Shalom in McLean. In her new book, "Voice Lessons for Parents: What to Say, How to Say it, and When to Listen," Dr. Mogel offers an essential guide to the art of talking with children of all ages, showing us how a change in voice can transform communication and ease the relationship between parents and children. Her research-based guidelines help parents communicate with more warmth, respect, and sincerity, as well as foster open parent-child relationships that will help ensure our children's success in the classroom and in life.

Tickets are available from voicelessons.brownpapertickets.com for \$25 per person, \$30 at the door. A book signing will immediately follow the presentation. A limited number of copies of Dr. Mogel's newest book, "Voice Lessons for Parents: What to Say, How to Say it, and When to Listen," will be for sale as well as copies of her first two books.

Dr. Mogel is known for combin-

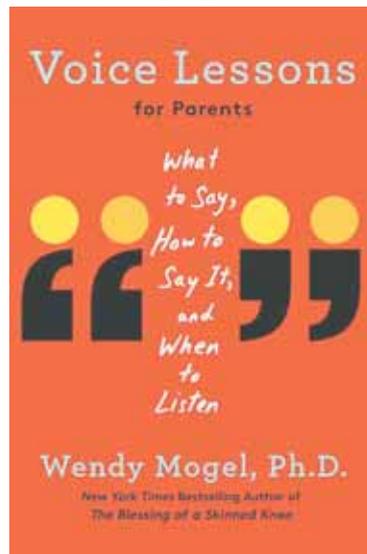


The Safe Community Coalition Presents Parenting Expert and New York Times Best-Selling Author Dr. Wendy Mogel speaking on May 2 about her new book 'Voice Lessons for Parents: What to Say, How to Say It, and When to Listen.'

ing cutting-edge psychological research in guiding parents through the rough waters of child rearing in today's competitive world. Drawing on insights from her 35-year career in clinical psychology, hilarious anecdotes (and sound advice) from school and camp counselors, and eye-opening conversations with middle and high school students, she helps parents support their children's intrinsic motivation and resilience.

A graduate of Middlebury College, Dr. Mogel completed an internship and post-doctoral fellowship in Psychology in the Depart-

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



ment of Psychiatry at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles. She currently serves as a research and policy advisor for Challenge Success—a program of the Stanford University School of Education and serves on the scientific advisory board of Parents Magazine.

The Safe Community Coalition thanks Temple Rodef Shalom for donating space and funds for Wendy Mogel's visit and for its ongoing support of SCC programs. Arrangements for the appearance of Wendy Mogel were made through Greater Talent Network, Inc., New York, New York.

to older neighbors, assisting local veterans in need and helping prepare the community for disasters.

The Dolley Madison Library is located at 1244 Oak Ridge Avenue in McLean. To sign up for the May 2, orientation, email RSVP Volunteer Specialist Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call the RSVP Hotline at 703-403-5360.

Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

program. The mentors provide opportunities for companionship, guidance and support to children who have been abused and neglected, or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Contact Ibrahim Khalil at Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-324-4547.

Volunteer Victims Needed. Virginia Task Force 1 (VA-TF1) is holding a full scale exercise and needs volunteers to act as victims in need of rescue. The exercise will take place from the evening of Monday, April 23

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 15



The Bitter Dose Combo (BDC)—DC's premier gypsy jazz band—kicks off the festivities on April 19.

MPA to Host Art+Music Series

Three-part live music experience kicks off April 19 at MPA@ChainBridge.

Local musicians will rock MPA@ChainBridge this spring as part of McLean Project for the Arts' (MPA's) Art+Music Concert Series, April 19, May 10 and May 12. Featured musicians include The Bitter Dose Combo, the Dave Kline Band and Sound Impact.

"Our MPA Art+Music series invites new audiences within the community into our space by marrying MPA's contemporary art exhibitions with an exciting listening experience featuring some of the area's finest musicians," said MPA Executive Director Lori Carbonneau.

From gypsy jazz to vibrant world sounds and an interactive family performance, MPA Art+Music offers something for all ages and interests. Before and after the performances, all are invited to browse MPA's current art exhibit, *Erratic Landscapes: Works by Artemis Herber*. At each show, MPA Director of Exhibitions, Nancy Sausser, will discuss the artwork.

The Bitter Dose Combo (BDC)—DC's premier gypsy jazz band—kicks off the festivities on April 19. Bringing a touch of Parisian hot club to McLean, the BDC combines Django-style guitar, musette accordion and upright bass. April 19, 7:30 p.m., Bullock Hitt Gallery in MPA@ChainBridge, 1446 Chain Bridge Road,

McLean.

The fun continues on May 10 as world-music chart toppers, the Dave Kline Band, take the stage. UK violinist Dave Kline and his international band perform high-energy music blending jazz, world, folk and rock. Recognized for its vibrant world sound, the Dave Kline Band unites a contemporary vibe with the ancient cultures of Africa, the Caribbean, Middle East, and Latin America. May 10, 7:30 p.m., Bullock Hitt Gallery in MPA@ChainBridge, 1446 Chain Bridge Rd, McLean.

MPA Art+Music final Spring event is on May 12, with a show for the whole family, starring the musical collective Sound Impact. Based on the children's book "The Trouble with Ben," the ensemble's educational program seeks to ignite positive change through live and engaging performance. MPA will offer a children's art activity reinforcing the multi-sensory art experience during the show. May 12, 4:30 p.m. on the Palladium Green, the outdoor family venue in the plaza in front of StarNut Gourmet, McLean. In case of rain, the event will move back across the street to MPA@ChainBridge in the Giant Shopping Center.

The MPA Art+Music Series is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served. RSVP at mpaart.org.

WEEK IN McLEAN

FROM PAGE 4

mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. RSVP offers its members more than 200 volunteer opportunities, many of which are located in Fairfax County, including providing rides, support and meals

BULLETIN BOARD

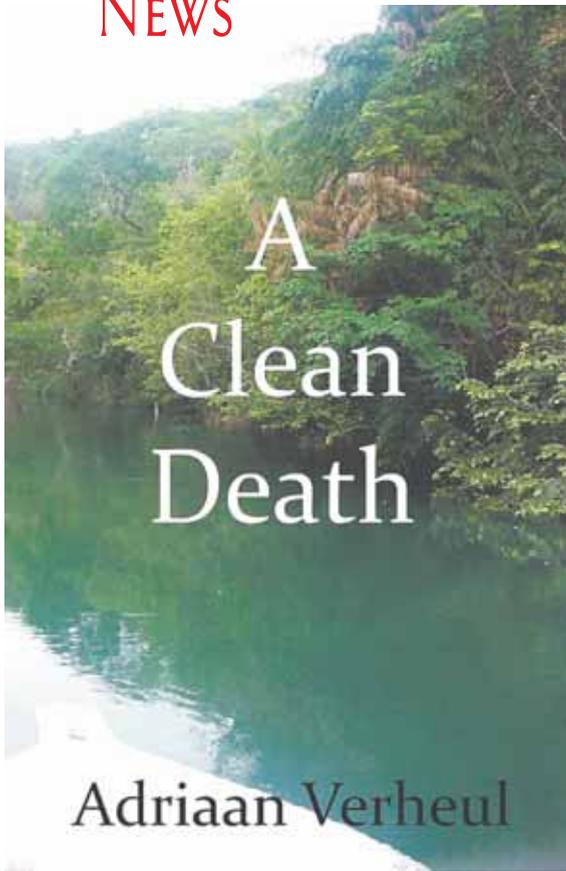
PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax or www.nam-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

STEM Professionals Needed. Help assist K-12 STEM teachers as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's STEM Volunteer Program, stemvolunteers.org, during the 2018-19 school year. In the 2017-18 school year, there are 85 volunteers in 6 Northern Virginia school districts. Contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488, or donaldrea@aol.com.

Volunteer Adult Mentors Needed. Help assist the Department of Family Services' BeFriendA-Child mentoring



'A Clean Death:' Book cover.



Adriaan Verheul

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Great Falls Author Reflects on Peacekeeping Experience

Mix of literary fiction, murder mystery, and political thriller.

“A Clean Death,” by Great Falls resident Adriaan Verheul (of Dutch origin), is a novel based on the author’s experiences as a United Nations peacekeeper in Africa and elsewhere. The book is a mix between literary fiction, murder mystery, and political thriller. It tells the story through the eyes of four very different characters, in an unnamed country that bears some resemblance to Eastern Congo or Northern Uganda.

The main character, Oliver, is a junior banker who leads a comfortable and predictable life in a place like Great Falls. His suburban happiness is interrupted when his father Johan is murdered while on mission overseas. Oliver jumps on a plane to help repatriate his father’s remains and belongings.

“One of the things I tried to show in this book is how it affects somebody when you go from a place like Great Falls to a place like Eastern Congo, and back again,” Verheul said. “On another level, the novel is a critique of how well-meaning foreigners try to do good abroad, then hit moral snags and ultimately cause more problems than they solve.”

The book has received favorable editorial reviews, including a starred review from BlueInk Review, a site that provides professional editorial reviews for independently published books. BlueInk noted that “A Clean Death” was “a gripping novel ... writing style is crisp and witty ... fans of Graham Greene’s elegant writing and David Ignatius’s and Dan Fesperman’s topical thrillers will find similar pleasures here.”

Once overseas, Oliver is confronted with staggering corruption, gets distracted by a beautiful friend of his father’s, and doesn’t seem to get any straight

answers about who killed his father. One suspect is a cruel and evil warlord, who calls himself Captain Christmas. Johan was working for an international aid organization that was trying to disarm Christmas’s fighters and reintegrate them into society through employment or education.

Back in the US, Davey, a young and unemployed gun fanatic, hears about this disarmament effort and believes that it is part of an international conspiracy to take everybody’s guns away and establish a global world government. On a dare, Davey goes overseas to talk Christmas out of it. When Oliver, Christmas and Davey meet in the jungle, they all lose something of consequence: illusion, conviction or life itself.

“A Clean Death” is available on amazon.com in paperback and as e-book.

Great Falls Sales Associate Receives Company Sales Award

Mark Ackermann, president of Weichert, Realtors’ Capital Region, announced that sales associate Said Zangeneh of the Great Falls office was recognized for exceptional industry success in March.

A top producer, Zangeneh led the entire company in dollar volume for the month.

Zangeneh can be reached in Weichert’s Great Falls office at 731-A Walker Road, or call 703-759-6300 for more information.



Said Zangeneh

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

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CALENDAR

Submit entertainment announcements at www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

ONGOING

Art Exhibit. Through April 28 at The Frame Factory, 212 Dominion Road NE, Vienna. The Landscapes of Ten Artists features work by Sheila Blake, Marsha Gallo, Gary Goldberg, Linda Greigg, Barbara Johnson, Robert McBride, Be Sargent, Thomas Xenakis, Susan Yanero, and Ellen Zeland. Visit www.theframefactory1.com.

Art Exhibition: "Bon Appetit." Through May 6, during gallery hours at the Vienna Arts Center, 115 Pleasant St., NW, Vienna. Call 703-319-3971 or visit www.ViennaArtsSociety.org.

"Fly By Night." Through May 6 at 1st Stage in Tysons, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. It's 1965 in New York City and the lights are about to go out. But not before a melancholy sandwich maker becomes enchanted with two sisters in this bittersweet romantic tale about finding hope in a world beset by darkness. \$38 general admission, \$35 seniors (65+), \$15 students and military. Visit www.1ststage.org or call 703-854-1856.

"Trees, Trees, and Beyond." Through May 31 at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. Vienna Arts Society Exhibition. Free. Open 10-7 p.m. in April; 10-7:30 p.m. in May. Visit www.ViennaArtsSociety.org or call 703-319-3971.

Vienna Art Society Exhibition. Through late June at North County Government Center, 1801 Cameron Glen Drive, Reston. Visit viennaartsociety.org.

Oakton Farmers Market. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at Unity of Fairfax Church, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Year-round weekly farmers market in Oakton. Local produce, meats/eggs, dairy, baked goods, and more. Admission is free. Visit community-foodworks.org.

The Freeman Store & Museum Wednesday through Sunday noon-4 p.m. 131 Church St. 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

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

THROUGH APRIL 19

Vienna Idol 2018 Auditions. At Whole Foods, Wednesday, April 18, 7-8:30 p.m.; and Caffe Amouri, Thursday, April 19, 7-8:30 p.m. First Place is \$700 plus eight hours of recording time at CUE Studios. Second Place - \$500; Third Place - \$250. Visit www.viennaidol.org for more.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 18

Vienna's Energy Future. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Free. Sierra Club/Great Falls Group hosts a presentation about a growing movement in Virginia to stop two proposed pipelines posing a threat of damage to streams, rivers, and scenic views. Email s.weltz@yahoo.com or call 703-608-2471.

Pipelines in Virginia. 7-8:30 p.m. at Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Free. Learn how to make an impact to stop pipelines that will damage streams and rivers and



Colors of Change

Filmmaker Jenny Nichols, who grew up in Great Falls, explores Greenland through the eyes of an artist, a NASA scientist, and an Inuit elder. Each character represents a different way that humans internalize information: heart, mind and spirit. They demonstrate the intersection of art, culture and science in a region defined by climate change. Presented by Great Falls Studios. Thursday, April 26, 7 p.m. at Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Contact James Diedrich at james.jemail@gmail.com.

ruin scenic views. Sponsored by Sierra Club/Great Falls Group, 350 Fairfax, Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions. Visit the website virginia2.sierraclub.org/

TUESDAY/APRIL 19

MPA to Host Art+Music Series. 7:30 p.m. at Bullock Hitt Gallery in MPA@ChainBridge, 1446 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Free. The Bitter Dose Combo (BDC)—DC's premier gypsy jazz band—kicks off the festivities. RSVP at mpaart.org.

FRIDAY/APRIL 20

The Unruly Theatre Project. 7 p.m. at The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Free admission. Teen improv troupe offers a hilarious night of comedy. For Old Firehouse activities, call 703-448-8336.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/APRIL 20-21

"Blithe Spirit" Play Production. 8 p.m. at Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St., SE, Vienna. Noel Coward's famous 1941 comedy. Presented by Vienna Theatre Company and Vienna Department of Recreation. Tickets \$14. Visit www.viennatheatrecompany.org.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/APRIL 20-22

Mid-Atlantic Super Strength Weekend. At Tysons Playground Expo Hall, 8500 Tyco Road, Tysons Corner. Includes Drug Free Bodybuilding, Powerlifting, Olympic Weightlifting, Strongman/Strongwoman, Sports Modeling, Kid/Teen Fitness Challenges and other strength events. Will feature bodybuilder Jeremy Collins, age 38, who has Down Syndrome and had



PHOTO BY REBECCA SIGETY PHOTOGRAPHY

Lara Jae Evangelista, Dylan Kurtz and Evan Preta, the hosts and founders of the event, are pictured with Brian Varani, owner of Mookie's BBQ.

Paws4vets Day at Mookie's

Mookie's BBQ will donate 10 percent of all sales all day to paws4vets, a non-profit that places service dogs with veterans. Join your friends and neighbors at Mookie's or enjoy take-out at home. Check out the online silent auction to benefit paws4vets running from April 12-26. Visit www.biddingowl.com/paws4people to bid on gift certificates for local restaurants, jewelry, event tickets and more. Wednesday, April 25, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. at Mookie's BBQ, 1141 Walker Road, Great Falls. Contact Susan Kurtz at skurtzie@verizon.net or call 703-472-8079.

heart surgery when he was 6. Visit massweekend.com or the World Physique Alliance worldphysiquealliance.com.

SATURDAY/APRIL 21

Native Plant Sale. 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at Vienna Community Center's parking lot, 120 Cherry St., SE, Vienna. Hosted by the Town of Vienna Community Enhancement Commission. All plants are raised and sold by the Hill House Garden Nursery, which specializes in high-quality native plants. Plants include flowering perennials, native shrubs, and small trees. Cash, checks, and credit cards will be accepted at the sale.

Family Fishing Rodeo. 9 to 11 a.m. at Wolftrap Creek in Wildwood Park, 700 block of Follin Lane, SE, Vienna. Pre-registration and \$5 tickets required. Limit of six tickets per household. Remaining time slots are 9, 9:30, 10, 10:30 and 11 a.m. Tickets may be purchased online at viennava.gov/webtrac or in person at the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street SE. Participants over the age of 16 must possess a fishing license, available through the Virginia Department of Gaming and Inland Fisheries.

Bluebells and Bloodroots. 9:30-11:30 a.m. at Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Learn to identify spring ephemerals and discover their folklore while walking along the banks of the Potomac River. \$8 per person. Attendees should meet at the Visitor Center. Program will be canceled if it rains. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend/bluebells-bloodroots-2.

Traveling Players Open House. 1-4 p.m. at The Madeira School, 8328 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Traveling Players will hold an Open House for Advanced Theatre Camps. The summer theatre camp, in residence at The Madeira School, trains teens and pre-teens in Shakespeare and takes them on tour to perform their shows throughout Virginia. Visit www.travelingplayers.org or call 703-987-1712.

SUNDAY/APRIL 22

Grinding Mill. Noon-3 p.m. at Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Visit the historic site to see 19th century technology at work as grains are turned in flour and meal. The miller will be grinding, conditions permitting. No reservations are necessary for this free demonstration. Take a mill tour for \$7 for adults, \$6 for students 16 and older with ID, and \$5 for children and seniors. Call 703-759-2771 to confirm. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/colvin-run-mill.

TUESDAY/APRIL 24

Home & Garden Tour. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tour four homes and gardens in Great Falls, Vienna and McLean - from a "quilt garden" at a 1750 home to a garden and cottage designed for retirement. Advance tickets are \$40 by April 17; tickets on day of tour are \$50 at Meadowlark Gardens. Tickets sold at tour homes and the Great Falls Library. Contact Garden Club of Fairfax at fairfax@vagardenweek.org. Visit www.vagardenweek.org.

Social Security - Know Your Options to Maximize Your Benefits. 12:30-2 p.m. at 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Learn strategies that you can use to potentially maximize your benefit. Presented by Sarah Graham. One lesson for 1 hour, 30 minutes. Cost is \$7/\$5 MCC district residents.

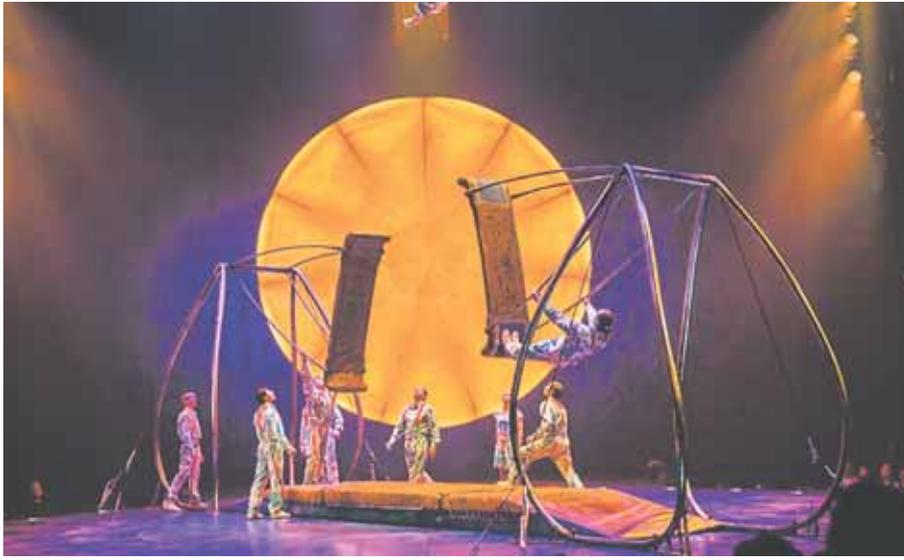
Family Fun Night at the Telescope. 8-9 p.m. at Turner Farm Park, 925 Springvale Road, Great Falls. Visit Observatory Park at Turner Farm and

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 14

NEWS

Performing with the 'Swing Team' at Cirque du Soleil's 'Luzia.'

PHOTOS BY MATT BEARD
© 2017 CIRQUE DU SOLEIL/
COURTESY CIRQUE DU SOLEIL



Cirque du Soleil's Dazzling 'Luzia'

Performances to June 17, 2018 under the Big Top at Tysons II.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

Where and When

An amazing world awaits patrons as Cirque du Soleil's newest touring tent show, "Luzia," is under the famous blue-and-yellow Big Top at Tysons II until June 17, 2018. "Luzia" promises to be a wonderful journey meant to open the imagination as a waking dream of Mexico.

"Luzia' aims to bring audiences to a fantastic imaginary world where light and water are blended together," said Cirque's Francis Jalbert. Patrons will travel to an imagined Mexico; a place of traditions and modernity by way of breath-taking acrobatic performances. Some acts are performed high up, perhaps 30 feet or more, while others are at eye level on the stage. The production includes music with a Latin flavor.

The production includes more than 50 performers, more than a dozen bold acts, and a story that connects them. "Performers will be in spectacular costumes with make-up that can take up to 90 minutes to apply before a show," added Jalbert.

"One of the newest features for the 'Luzia' show are indoor waterfalls, pouring showers and pools inside the Big Top," said Jalbert. The water features are used during a number of the acts; often drenching the performers.

During a recent backstage tour, several acts were at various stages of rehearsal. Cyr Wheel artists were warming up; spinning hoops around their bodies with smooth ease. Chinese Pole performers were rehearsing in costume high-up on flexible poles with show lights adding flair to the atmosphere.

Cirque du Soleil presents "Luzia" at Tysons II, 8025 Galleria Drive, Tysons. Performances to June 17, 2018. Tuesday at 8 p.m. (no performances, Tuesday, May 8 or June 12), Wednesday and Thursday at 8 p.m., Friday, 4:30 & 8 p.m. (except June 1 & 8, 8 p.m. only), Saturday 4:30 & 8 p.m., Sunday, 1:30 p.m. & 5 p.m. No performances on Mondays. Tickets start at \$38. Special tickets packages such as VIP Experience, Behind The Scenes, Producer seats and Family Pack are available. For groups of 12 or more there are also special offers. For detailed ticket information visit www.cirquedusoleil.com/usa/washington/luzia or call 1-877-924-7783. Note: There is paid parking available with discounts if reservations are made in advance. No event parking will be available at The Galleria. More information at: <https://www.cirquedusoleil.com/en/offers/shows/luzia/washington-dc/directions-luzia-washington-dc.aspx>

Then it was time to meet with one of the fearless "butterflies" featured in the finale. The butterfly was Shelli Epstein, who at 24, is a veteran with Cirque. She began her career as a gymnast living in London. Now a performer with the heart-stopping Swing Team routine, the fearless Epstein "loves the hustle and bustle" of the Cirque world.

Epstein spoke of the meaning of audience reactions to a performer. There is the absolute hush when she is propelled 30 feet into the air from one swing to land on another moving swing. The hush becomes cheers and applause for the Swing Team teamwork when she lands. The entire Swing Team is full of joy and pride that the audiences is thrilled and happy.

Why is Epstein in a butterfly costume? She is representing monarch butterflies that travel from Canada to Mexico each winter. She concluded our interview this way, "This is a dream job. Who won't want to perform in a circus?"

Performance of 'Cyr Wheels' at Cirque du Soleil's 'Luzia.'



McLean Community Center
The Center of It All

Here's What's Happening at MCC

The Old Firehouse Family Events The Unruly Theatre Project



Friday, April 20, 7 p.m.
The Old Firehouse
1440 Chain Bridge Rd.
Free admission

The area's hottest professional teen improv troupe brings you a hilarious night of comedy.

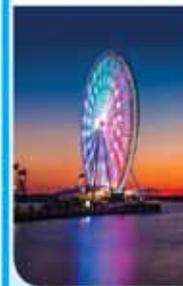
MCC Governing Board Meeting

Wednesday, April 25, 7:30 p.m.
MCC Administrative Offices
6631 Old Dominion Dr.

All Governing Board meetings are open to the public.



The Old Firehouse Friday Night Trips Night Out at the National Harbor



Friday, April 27, 3:30-11:30 p.m.
The Old Firehouse
1440 Chain Bridge Rd.
\$55/\$45 MCC district residents

For 5th-9th Graders
View Washington D.C. from the Capital Wheel and explore a range of culinary options.

The Old Firehouse 5th & 6th Grader Party "May the 4th Be with You"



Friday, May 4, 7-9 p.m.
1440 Chain Bridge Rd.

\$35/\$25 MCC district residents

This Star Wars-themed party includes music, an open dance floor and free catered food and beverages.

Sponsored by Friends of MCC Meet the Candidates Reception

Sunday, May 6, 2-4 p.m.
The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Rd.
Free and open to the public

Meet the nine Dranesville District 1A residents who are running for seats on MCC's Governing Board.

The McLean Community Center
www.mcleancenter.org
Home of the Alden Theatre
www.aldentheatre.org
Administrative Offices
6631 Old Dominion Dr.
McLean, VA 22101
703-790-0123, TTY: 711

Teaching Lessons in Money Management

April is Financial Literacy Month.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

In an era when consumers can purchase merchandise and deposit money into a bank account using a smartphone, teaching money smarts to children can be fraught with complications. April is Financial Literacy Month and local financial advisors say teaching children how to manage their money responsibly is a necessary part of becoming a financially responsible adult.

“How a parent treats cash is the way their kids will treat cash; lead by example,” said Andrea Foster, professor and department chair of Business, Economics, Accounting, Computer Applications and Paralegal Studies (BEACAPS) at Montgomery College. “If your kid sees you cutting coupons and budgeting, when they grow up they will do the same. They will see the benefits and the value of your thriftiness.”

One of the most important financial lessons that a parent can teach is how to save, advises Foster. “Teach them how to budget so that they can learn how to save for what they want,” she said.

Children pay attention to and learn from the ways in which their parents manage money and it’s critical that they learn financial literacy at home, suggests Victoria G. Henry, assistant vice president at West Financial Services, Inc. in McLean.

“Explaining the concept of savings early to children is key,” added “It is natural to want to spend everything right away, so it may be hard to understand why it is important to set a little aside for future expenses.

“Explaining the concept of savings early to children is key. It is natural to want to spend everything right away, so it may be hard to understand why it is important to set a little aside for future expenses.”

— Victoria G. Henry,
West Financial Services, Inc.

Perhaps it could be explained by saying the savings will come in handy if a favorite toy breaks or is lost.”

An ideal time to offer a lesson in saving is when a child receives money as a present for a birthday or other occasion, says Henry. “It is a good practice to have them save even 10 or 20 percent of the

gift, and let them have the rest to spend how they want,” she said. “If they decide to



PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Teaching young children about the concept of saving money is a critical part of financial literacy.

spend their fun money on something and then quickly return asking for money for something else, it is a good to remind them that maybe they should think more carefully about how they want to spend their money in the future. This will help them get into the practice of making wise choices with spending and saving down the road when they start earning money as well.”

Foster also suggests helping children develop savings goals. “[Whether] by piggy bank, envelope, can, or jar, a vessel is an important tool for teaching kids how to save for major milestones,” said Foster. “Identify a goal for the saving and have them save towards that goal.”

Transparency builds enthusiasm, adds Foster. “Using a clear jar for saving creates

enthusiasm and motivation as the kids see it fill up with the coins,” she said. “[Saving] also teaches then self-reliance and not counting on their parents to help them for everything. By giving a reward, kids can learn the value of money and how to spend money.”

Foster also suggests encouraging children to keep a spending diary and limiting the amount of money they can spend or the number of items they can purchase when shopping for themselves. “Show them that stuff costs money,” she said. “Have them keep track of all the money that mom and dad spend on them in one month, from food to clothing and other things. They will realize how much it costs to maintain them and how much all the stuff that they want costs.”

Involve children in a family’s charitable donations, advises Henry. “Ask your children to think about what kinds of charitable efforts the family should support,” she said. “Have them research and pick a charity and then make a small contribution to that organization on their behalf.”

“Have children earn their allowance and let children experience the pain of not having enough money if they don’t budget correctly,” said Dr. Brian Hollar assistant professor of Accounting, Economics & Finance at Marymount University. “Experience is a good teacher and learning when the stakes are low is invaluable.”

Hollar underscores the importance of teaching solid math skills. “It’s hard to develop strong financial literacy without understanding exponential growth,” he said.

Admissions to TJ Continue to Exclude Poor and Black Students

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) has offered admission to 485 students for the Class of 2022 at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST).

A total of 3,160 students applied for admission.

❖ White students made up 870, or 27.5 percent of the applicants, and 111, or 22.9 percent of accepted students.

❖ Black students made up 220, or 7.0 percent of applicants, but only 10 black students were admitted, making up 2.1 percent of the incoming class.

❖ Latino students made up 276, or 8.7 percent of applicants; 23 Latino students were 4.7 percent of the incoming class.

❖ Poor students made up 336, 10.6 percent of applicants, with seven students who receive subsidized meals admitted, for 1.4 percent of the incoming class. About 28 percent of Fairfax County Public School students, or more than 51,000 students qualify for Free or Reduced Meals, a measure of significant poverty.

❖ Asian students made up 1,633, or 51.7 percent of the applicants and 316, or more than 65 percent of the incoming class.

Approximately 71.9 percent of the stu-

dents offered admission reside in Fairfax County and 28.1 percent are from Arlington, Loudoun, and Prince William counties and the City of Falls Church.

Approximately 94.8 percent of students offered admission are currently attending public schools.

Established in 1985, TJHSST is a governor’s school offering a comprehensive college preparatory program emphasizing the sciences, mathematics, and technology, and is often cited in rankings as the top high school in the country.

Specialized technical laboratories, including a technological computational center, enhance the academic curriculum and provide students with experience in state-of-the-art technology, opportunities for independent research and experimentation, and interaction with professionals from the scientific, technological, engineering, and industrial communities.

The selection process for admittance to TJHSST involves a holistic review of each candidate’s semifinalist essay, teacher recommendations, and student-authored information sheet, as well as consideration of grades and test scores on the admissions examination. A summer round of admis-

TJHSST Admissions Statistics for Class of 2022

	Applicants	Percent	Admitted	Percent
Reduced Fee or Waived Fee Paid	336	10.6%	7	1.4%
GENDER				
Male	1,683	53.3%	278	57.3%
Female	1,477	46.7%	207	42.7%
Total	3,160		485	
ETHNIC				
White	870	27.5%	111	22.9%
Black	220	7.0%	10	2.1%
Hispanic	276	8.7%	23	4.7%
Asian	1,633	51.7%	316	65.2%
Multiracial/Other*	161	5.0%	25	5.2%
Total	3,160		485	
SCHOOL TYPE				
Public	2,996	94.8%	460	94.8%
Private/Home	164	5.2%	25	5.2%
Total	3,160		485	

* This category includes students who checked “Multiracial” on their application and/or students whose ethnic designation numbered ten or fewer.

sions for eighth graders newly moved to a participating district after Sept. 30 of the previous year will add to the 485 offers at

the end of June. For more information, contact the TJHSST Admissions Office at 571-423-3770.

ENTERTAINMENT

Holly Waters (Millie) and Francisco Morandi (Jimmy) in Marshall High's production of 'Thoroughly Modern Millie,' opening April 26.



Marshall High to Present 'Thoroughly Modern Millie'

Speakeasy and prepare to laugh as Marshall High School celebrates the frivolity and excess of the 1920s with its production of "Thoroughly Modern Millie" opening Thursday, April 26. Based on the Academy Award winning 1967 film and the Tony Award Winning Broadway musical, "Thoroughly Modern Millie," has it all: a beautiful ingénue determined to make her way in the big city, fun-loving flappers always looking for a party, dashing leading men ready to sweep everyone off their feet, and a human-trafficking ring in a New York City hotel for girls.

When small-town girl Millie Dillmount arrives in New York City, she is determined to be a "modern" 1920s woman who will marry for money rather than love. She throws herself into the flapper lifestyle, finds a job and a rich boss to marry, and feels she's on her way to make her dreams come true. What Millie doesn't realize is that others, including the charming young salesman, Jimmy Smith, and her colorful landlady, Mrs. Meers, have other plans for her.

"This show hopes to challenge people's ideas of first impressions," said Director Jason Tamborini. "Sometimes we are the last ones to know what we really want or need—which Millie and her friends soon find out."

Show dates and location: George C. Marshall High School, 7731 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church; Show Times: April 26 - 28 & May 4 - 5 at 7:30 p.m. plus April 28 & May 5 at 2 p.m.: Tickets are \$10 students / teachers / seniors and \$15 adults.

Note: Due to some content, this show is considered similar to a PG-13 film.

Visit <http://statesmentheatre.org> for more information or to purchase tickets.

What About Controversial Depictions of Asian Characters?

The Statesmen Theatre Department invites you to participate in an important presentation and discussion on April 17, 2018 at 7 p.m. In seeking answers to questions surrounding the sometimes-controversial depictions of Asian characters in the musical "Thoroughly Modern Millie" and other celebrated



Jimmy and Millie take on New York in the roaring 20s in Marshall High's production of 'Thoroughly Modern Millie,' opening April 26.

theatre productions involving stereotypes, a larger challenge arose.

How do we come to grips with oversimplified characteristic traits and wrongly-held perceptions of the past that are still present in society, and when portrayed in the arts, are hurtful to some but are meant to be "funny" and "harmless entertainment"?

With this in mind, the school and local community is invited to join the discussion on Race and Stereotypes in Theatre: A Community Forum on Tuesday, April 1 at 7 p.m. in the cafeteria.

Panelists include: Marshall HS Principal Jeffrey Litz; Marshall HS Alumnus Jon Jon Johnson (Class of 2004), professional actor and writer; Priya Doshi, professorial lecturer, Strategic Communication, The American University; and current theatre students.

Can't Vote at McLean Day for the 2018-2019 MCC Governing Board?

Vote by Absentee Ballot Now – May 16 at either:

McLean Community Center (MCC)

Administration Office:
6631 Old Dominion Drive
McLean, VA 22101
703-790-0123/TTY: 711

Class Programs/Registration Office:

6645 Old Dominion Drive
McLean, VA 22101
703-744-9365

Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. – 11 p.m.

Saturday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Closed on Sunday

Old Firehouse Center (OFC)

1440 Chain Bridge Road
McLean, VA 22101
703-448-8336/TTY 711

Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.
(closed on weekends)

OR

Absentee voting affidavits and ballots must be returned to one of these locations by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, May 16.

Requesting Absentee Ballots:

You can pick up absentee ballot packages and vote at both MCC offices or OFC. You can also request absentee ballot packages by email at elections@mcleancenter.org or by telephone at 703-790-0123/TTY: 711.

Returning Completed Applications and Ballots:

You can return your absentee voting affidavits and ballots to the front desk at either MCC location or OFC. You may also mail them using the pre-addressed envelope enclosed in the absentee ballot package. Mailed affidavits and ballots must be received by the due date.

Absent voting ends promptly at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, May 16.

Hand delivered absentee voting affidavits and ballots must be received at either MCC location or OFC by that time.

If you have questions:

Contact 703-790-0123, TTY: 711 or email elections@mcleancenter.org



The McLean Community Center

703-790-0123/TTY: 711

www.mcleancenter.org



Smithsonian Women's Committee

SMITHSONIAN CRAFT SHOW 2018

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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

ake a guided tour of the heavens. See the color of stars, open and globular clusters, nebulae, and galaxies. The cost is \$6 per person. Call 703-324-8618 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/turner-farm/family-fun-night-telescope-3.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 25

Restaurant Fundraiser. 11 a.m.-9 p.m. at Mookie's BBQ, 1141 Walker Road, Great Falls. Mookie's BBQ will donate 10 percent of all sales all day to paws4vets, a nonprofit that places service dogs with veterans. Join your friends and neighbors at Mookie's or enjoy take-out at home. Check out the online silent auction to benefit paws4vets running from April 12-26. Visit www.biddingowl.com/paws4people to bid on gift certificates for local restaurants, jewelry, event tickets and more. Contact Susan Kurtz at skurtzie@verizon.net or call 703-472-8079.

Wolf Trap History. 7-8 p.m. at Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Join Ken Bigley of the National Park Service for "Performing Arts, Partnerships, and Public Lands: The Story of Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts." This program will discuss the history of Wolf Trap and its visionary benefactor, Catherine Filene Shouse, and trace the path of Wolf Trap's development as our country's only national park for the performing arts. Contact Ken Bigley at ken_bigley@nps.gov or call

703-255-1809.

THURSDAY/APRIL 26

Art Exhibition: Aware. 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at ServiceSource Headquarters, 10467 White Granite Drive, Oakton. In celebration of Autism Awareness Month, ServiceSource is hosting AWARE., an art exhibition featuring artists on the autism spectrum to raise awareness of disability advocacy efforts in the NoVA community. BBQ will be served. Free. Call 703-970-3653 or visit www.servicetech.org.

Nobody's Girl. 7:30-9 p.m. at Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave., East, Vienna. Featuring BettySoo, Grace Pettis, Rebecca Loeb. The all-female group offers delicate and complex harmonies and innovative songwriting. \$20. Visit www.jamminjava.com or call 877-987-6487.

THURSDAY-SUNDAY/APRIL 26-29

"9 to 5, The Musical." April 26, 27, and 28 at 7 p.m.; with matinees April 28 and 29, 2 p.m. at McLean High School's Burke Auditorium, 1633 Davidson Road, McLean. Get up and work as McLean High School's "TheatreMcLean" presents Dolly Parton's hit musical comedy, "9 to 5." Tickets are \$12/online; \$15/door. To order tickets, visit theatremclean.org.

FRIDAY/APRIL 27

Night Out at National Harbor. 3:30-11:30 p.m. Meets at The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Part of the Old Firehouse Friday Night Trips. Cost is \$55/\$45

MCC District Residents. Take in extraordinary views of Washington, D.C., on the Capital Wheel, dinner and discover much more. Admission and dinner are included in the fee. Visit www.mcleancenter.org.

Arbor Day Ceremony. 5 p.m. at the W&OD trailhead on Park Street across from the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St., SE, Vienna. Join Mayor Laurie DiRocco, Town staff, and Cub Scout Pack 1116 for a ceremonial red bud tree planting to commemorate Arbor Day 2018.

Artist Reception. 7 to 9 p.m. Free. For the ValeArts Show. At Vale Schoolhouse, 3124 Fox Mill Road, Oakton, VA. "Spring into Color" features 150 original works in various media. Visit info@valearts.com or www.valearts.com. Call 703-860-1888.

SATURDAY/APRIL 28

Fairfax Run for the Children. 8 a.m. at Fairfax County Courthouse Complex, 4110 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax. Join Fairfax Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for the 8th Annual 8K and 3K races. The superhero-themed race attracts nearly 1,000 runners and walkers, 250 volunteers, and raises almost \$85,000 each year to support Fairfax CASA's advocacy work with abused and neglected children in the community. Participants can enjoy the after race celebration, including superhero meet and greets, a DJ, free food, face painting, kids' crafts, photo booth, and more. Visit www.fairfaxrunforthechildren.com/.

VOLUNTEERS

FROM PAGE 6

cleaning, organizing and decluttering. Contact Emily Thomas at Emily.Thomas@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Older adults are missing important medical appointments due to lack of transportation. Drive older adults Monday through Friday, generally between 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Opportunities available throughout Fairfax County.

Senior Centers – Technology Educators to provide support to participants in groups and one-on-one. Basic knowledge of MS Word, Phone Apps, Facebook, Digital books, etc. Schedule and location will vary based on center location and volunteer availability. Centers are looking for support between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Apply online

Respite Care volunteers give family caregivers of a frail older adult a well-deserved break so they can go shopping, attend a doctor's appointment or just have coffee with a friend. Volunteers visit and oversee the safety of the older adult for a few hours each month. Support and training are provided. Contact ElderLink at 703-324-5374, TTY 711. Apply online

The Chronic Disease Self-Management Program needs volunteer leaders to co-facilitate 2-hour workshops that help people with chronic illnesses. The 6-week program meets in Fairfax County. A 4-day training is provided. The next training to be held in the Spring 2018. Contact ElderLink at 703-324-5374, TTY 711. Apply online

Falls Church/McLean

Falls Church Meals on Wheels Driver Coordinators needed to schedule drivers and manage the monthly meal delivery calendar. Apply online

The Lewinsville Adult Day Health Care Center in McLean is looking for musicians for one hour a week at 3:30 p.m., Bingo Helpers and a Kikuyu-Speaking Social Visitor. Flexible schedule, anytime between 10 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday. Apply online

The Bailey's Senior Center in Falls Church is looking for Front Desk Assistance and a Jewelry-Making Instructor to teach a class once a week. Apply online.

The James Lee Senior Center in Falls Church is looking for one or two Line Dance Instructors to teach a class, open to all levels, between the hours of 10 a.m.-12 p.m. on Wednesdays. Apply online.

The Pimmit Hills Senior Center in Falls Church is looking for General Administrative Volunteers, and a Ceramics Assistant. Apply online.

Vietnamese Meals on Wheels urgently needs drivers in Falls Church-Annandale to deliver meals midday dur-

ing weekdays. Non-Vietnamese-speaking volunteers are welcome. Apply online.

The Lewinsville Senior Center in McLean needs Instructors for the following classes: Spanish, Italian, Ballroom Dance and Basic Guitar. Apply online.

Reston/Herndon Area Opportunities

The Herndon Senior Center is looking for Knitting Instructors. Apply online.

The Herndon Adult Day Health Care Center is looking for Lunch Assistants, Monday-Friday, and a Spanish Instructor to teach basic Spanish words to a small group of seniors, Monday, Wednesday or Friday, 10-11 a.m. once a month. Apply online.

More Volunteer Opportunities

Adult Day Health Care and Senior Centers – Visit centers to assist with fitness activities, arts and crafts, meal time, entertainment and much more.

Caregiver Respite – Respite volunteers give family caregivers of older adults, who cannot be left alone, a well-earned break. Volunteers are matched with families in or near their own neighborhoods. Volunteers receive training and support. Apply online.

Grocery Shopping – Shop for an older adult or accompany them to the grocery store. Commitment: two hours every other week. Apply online.

Household Services – Unpack boxes, change light bulbs, paint small areas, straighten cupboards or closets, organize paperwork, write letters. Commitment: varies. Apply online.

Meals on Wheels – Transport meals to older adults or adults with disabilities Monday, Wednesday and Friday, midday. Program also needs driver coordinators and group coordinators. Commitment: two hours/month and longer. Volunteer opportunities are available near where you work or live. Employee groups are welcome to share a delivery commitment. Check us out on YouTube now!

Senior Centers – provide assistance to program managers or offer activity programming.

Social Visits – Visit older adults who need company. Commitment: once a week visits for one hour at a time. A one-year commitment is requested. Apply online.

Transportation – Drive older adults to and from medical appointments, pharmacy, bank, library, grocery shopping etc. Apply online.

BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 8

through afternoon of Thursday, April 26. A minimum shift of six hours is expected – overnight volunteers are especially needed. “Victims” will need to be able to crawl in and out of rubble piles, capable of sitting or lying in place for extended periods of time, and don’t mind getting dirty. Contact Christopher Yorty at christopher.yorty@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Operation Paws for Homes, a Virginia based 501(c)(3) organization seeks volunteers, especially to foster dogs. See www.ophrescue.org for information and all volunteer opportunities.

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Child turning 5 years old by Sept. 30? If so, contact your child’s school to make arrangements for kindergarten enrollment. Most schools begin getting information together now for parents of incoming kindergartners, and many host an orientation or open house. All kindergarten programs are full-day and located in FCPS elementary schools. Check your school’s webpage or contact the school directly for specific enrollment information and dates of orientation or visit www.fcps.edu/registration/kindergarten-registration.

Vote on Budget on May 1

FROM PAGE 3

county’s fast developing areas,” said Niedzielski-Eichner.

“As one who was on the front lines advocating for passage of the Meals Tax, I find this reality ironic in light of the significant voices arguing against the meals tax due to its regressivity. Since each one percent of the property tax rate is projected to generate approximately \$25 million in revenue, the proposed 2.5 cent increase in the real estate tax rate will generate about \$62.5 million. The meals tax was projected to generate a \$100 million per annum, with almost a third of this revenue, \$28 million, to be paid by tourists and visitors to Fairfax.”

Kofi Annan, president of the Fairfax County NAACP expressed concern that the county is underfunding services to low income families, including housing and Pre-K education for needy families.

“This opportunity gap [of not having access to PreK education] eventually turns into an achievement gap, and that widens over time.

“Fairfax County NAACP calls on the county to commit the resources to enroll at least 300 additional kids into Pre-K in 2019 budget and devise a long-term plan to fund at least 2,000 over the next five years.”

Annan asked the supervisors to fund an outside study of racial disparities in police use of force.

“For the past few years, 40 percent of police use of force has been directed toward African Americans, who only make up about 10 percent of the county,” Annan said.

“And for the past few years, we have been asking the county to fund an outside organization to conduct a study to determine the causes of this disparity, so we can begin the process of reversing that trend.”

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If Only It Were That Simple



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Though I immerse you regular readers in the excruciating details of my cancer-affected life, rarely do I bombard unsuspecting conversationalists who unknowingly yet sincerely wander into territory with which many of you are intimately detailed. Not that I don't have stories to tell, and/or perhaps even unsolicited advice to offer; generally speaking, if I can avoid it, I don't want to drag the conversation into a cancer-centric black hole.

It's not because I'm uncomfortable talking about cancer, or that I would feel it an inappropriate invasion of my privacy, or that I would feel the need to blather on non-stop. Hardly. But I would see it as the end of an innocent inquiry undone that then takes on a more empathetic, sympathetic and possibly even pathetic tone, some of which might make me uncomfortable.

The reason being: part of what feeds my self-preservation and sense of well-being is reading and reacting to the feedback I receive from others when the subject matter turns to cancer, however well-meaning their intentions may have been.

Sometimes the reactions I get aren't helpful ("Tell me Ken, how's it feel to know you're going to die?"). Sometimes, I find myself rationalizing, explaining and revisiting issues and experiences more helpful and of interest to the party that asked the question rather than to yours truly who's now having to answer the question. Not that I don't want to be helpful or have difficulty empathizing; nothing could be further from the truth.

It's more that I don't want to see their expressions/hear their apologies when their innocent question ("So what do you do?") elicits an extremely unexpected answer. "Not too much. I have stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer."

Then I have to decide how I involved I want to get them in my life. Since I'd just as soon not get them involved for all the reasons I've outlined, usually I deflect their questions and/or redirect them away from me and back to them. I don't exactly shut them down. It's more like a gentle closing. I'm not rude or the least bit off-putting. I'm more like a traffic cop re-routing emotions to avoid any accidents – for all parties engaged.

My experience has been that responding to an innocent question with a "I have terminal-cancer"-type bombshell tends to take the conversation in an entirely different direction than likely intended. The seriousness of my response/situation and the emotions – maybe even memories it stirs in the person who asked the question, can hijack an evening and cause at least for a few minutes anyway, a rather dreary dynamic. All of which I don't want to happen and more so, don't need to happen. As a cancer patient, I don't need dreary. I don't need pity. I don't need negativity. I need humor. I need encouragement and compliments. I need to be made to feel, as Tony the Tiger might say: "Not just good, but GREAT!"

When I assess my nine-plus years post-diagnosis; having lived now years beyond my original "13 month to two-year" prognosis, I can't quite attribute my amazing good fortune to anything in particular. However, I will admit to this: trying not think about my diagnosis/prognosis too much, trying to remain positive, trying to be funny and self-effacing, and trying to avoid people and situations where I might feel bad, are all components. Are they working to keep me alive more than the medicine, my pills and my miscellaneous non-Western alternatives are?

Yet another question or two I'd rather not answer.

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



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