

# Great Falls CONNECTION

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PHOTO BY MAGGIE GIORDANO/THE CONNECTION

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These Great Falls residents know that reading can be a great family activity. From left: Jenna Mostafa (seventh grade), Summar Mostafa (first grade), Amelia Mostafa (1 year old), and their au pair from Italy, Erika Mazzariol.



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# NEWS



Local high school and college students listen to a presentation at the fourth Annual Fairfax County Environmental Education Conference presented by Eco-Schools Leadership Initiative (ESLI) where they learn how they might teach children enrolled in school-aged child care programs at their local elementary schools about the environment.



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Raashi Chandra, 14 of Fairfax, Emily Allan, 16 of Fairfax and Lauren Elliff, 14 of Burke try out one of ESLI's Consumption and Waste projects, a T-shirt tote bag meant to illustrate how trash can be converted into useful items in everyday life.

# Not Your Average Conference

**County Environmental Education Conference brings together 100 ecologically-minded students.**

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

**A**lthough the first week of summer vacation had just started, on Thursday, June 21, 100 ecologically-minded high school and college students attended the fourth annual Fairfax County Environmental Education Conference presented by Eco-Schools Leadership Initiative (ESLI) held at the National Wildlife Federation building in Reston.

The students were there to learn how they might start an ESLI chapter in their local community. This is a youth-driven teaching program in which high school and college students would use curriculum-based interactive games and activities to present lessons about the environment to elementary school-aged children enrolled in after-school programs (SACC). Children enrolled in SACC come from diverse backgrounds some of whom may not have been exposed to environmental education. ESLI states online: "We believe that if we can educate students at such a young age, they can accomplish a great deal in the near future and become leaders in their community."

Kath Race is the K-12 program coordinator, education of the National Wildlife Federation. Race provided a statement describing how Leader Talia Schmitt, now a student at The College of William & Mary and an ESLI co-founder had been supported in her leadership through the National Wildlife Federation's Eco-Schools USA program and Eco Leaders program earning the Eco-Leader Certification.

"Through Talia's leadership, the ESLI network has reached over 325 students throughout Northern Virginia. The National

Wildlife Federation, headquartered in Reston, has served as the host of the annual conference for the last four years."

What made the ESLI Conference appealing to many Fairfax County attendees was its impact. The conference handout stated: "Being part of ESLI isn't just about helping the elementary kids in your community-it's about driving a larger movement that will change education from the ground up," starting with educating students at a young age.

Although termed an "education conference," keynote speakers were peers of the attendees, high-school and college-aged students not Bachelor or Master-degree certified educators. Among the many presenters and leaders were Jaden Ko of South County High School, Celeste Philips and Rania Milanek of Madison High School and Sophia Applegate and Wendy Gao of Oakton High School.

**THE PURPOSE** of the conference was not to teach the like-minded attendees about the environment but instead to show them how to teach children enrolled in school-aged childcare programs at their local elementary schools about the environment.

The conference opened with remarks by Serena Xia, Conference co-chair and rising senior at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Alexandria. After sharing how she had always been interested and involved in environmental issues and attended last year's conference, she knew when she left that day that ESLI was "a perfect opportunity for getting more involved ... I wanted to establish an ESLI chapter at my school."

Xia told how after overcoming some



**"What truly makes a difference is getting the younger generation to start caring about our environment," said Serena Xia, ESLI Conference co-chair 2018 and student at Thomas Jefferson School of Science and Technology in Alexandria.**

startup challenges, she and friends formed an ESLI chapter, mapped out the details and connected with a school. In January of 2018, Xia and others began teaching at the nearby elementary school using the ESLI prepared materials and reaching out to mentors as needed. Xia described how powerful the children's reactions were to the lessons. "When I see over 20 kids staring up at me as I explain the food web, or how carpooling is better for our environment, that's when I know I'm making a difference. You don't have to find a cure for the next rampant disease or invent something that will change the world. It's the simple actions, just like teaching kids how to make a reusable bag out of a T-shirt. What truly makes a difference is getting the younger generation to start caring about our environment."

Speakers at the conference stressed the youth-teachers would not be alone. Instead,



**High school and college students participate in an environmental education lesson geared to elementary school-aged children, one of the many lesson plans that would be made available to them if they choose to open an ESLI chapter in their community.**

they would become part of a network of students sharing their passions for the environment and environmental education. ESLI would provide them with a step-by-step guide. It detailed how to get involved and build a successful local ESLI chapter, one comprising a strong team and mentors to assist and meet monthly with them via conference calls and help guide them to map out set-up details such as choosing an elementary school, finding a teacher-sponsor and connecting with a SACC director. ESLI would provide resources such as online lesson plans, teaching tips and feedback.

During the conference, attendees had the opportunity to participate in various lessons they might be teaching, attend workshops and learn how to create an ESLI chapter at their school.

To learn more, visit [eslileaders.org](http://eslileaders.org) or email [ecoschoolleaders@gmail.com](mailto:ecoschoolleaders@gmail.com).

## Great Fall Library Promotes Reading Adventure

Once the set number of books is read, the children and teens are given a coupon book as the prize.

BY MAGGIE GIORDANO  
THE CONNECTION

The Fairfax County Summer Reading Adventure has kicked off again this year and the Great Falls public library is joining in to give children the chance to turn summer reading into fun prizes.

"Reading Takes You Everywhere" is the theme this year of the program that began on June 15 and will continue until Sept. 1.

Preschoolers to 12<sup>th</sup> graders are challenged to read a set amount of books during the summer. Preschoolers through third grade read 15 books, fourth through fifth grade read 10 books and sixth through 12<sup>th</sup> grade read five books.

"The good thing about the program is that they can select any book that they want to read. It can be any book that we've suggested, a new book, or a friend recommendation or anything else. We just really want to promote the literacy with kids," said the Great Falls Library Youth Services Manager, Roxanne Ringer.

Once the set number of books is read, the children and teens are given a coupon book as the prize. The coupon book is filled with free and discounted offers such as a discounted half day row boat or canoe rental at Riverbend Park, one free round of FootGolf at Pinecrest FootGolf and a buy one admission, get one free at Splash Down Waterpark.

To register, children can sign up online at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library) or visit any Fairfax County library for a paper version of the reading log. They can bring in the paper log or show the online log on their phones to the librarians at the Great Falls Library.

"The goal of the program is to promote reading over the summertime and to keep kids interested in reading. It gives them something to look forward to when they can win a prize," said Ringer.

They have even more to look forward to throughout the summer. As part of the Summer Reading Adventure, the library hosts a variety of free events for children and teens of all ages.

Elementary students can join events such as a visit from My Reptile Guys on July 26 at 2:30 p.m. and Jacks are Wild! the performing Jack Russell terriers due on Aug. 1 at 2:30 p.m., while Middle and High School teens can learn hands on How to Draw Cartoons by Cartoonist Paul Merklein on July 25 at 2 p.m.



**"It's good for kids to come and read the books here because they are on their iPads and televisions a lot at home. I like him to come here to interact with the other kids,"** said Leydia Reyes, Alexandria resident and nanny of four-year-old Constantino. "We always find what we are looking for here. As long as it's about dinosaurs, he's happy."



PHOTOS BY MAGGIE GIORDANO/THE CONNECTION  
Ringer's selection books available for children to read this summer.



**The Great Falls library offers reading logs to children and teens at request.**

Preschoolers and families can participate in many activities as well such as Playdate Café on Fridays at 10 a.m. throughout July and August and PJ Storytime, which will have two upcoming meeting dates on July 31 and Aug. 28 at 6 p.m.

Ringer, who joined the Great Falls Library staff in January, said that morning events are more popular among the families and not many people have taken advantage of the evening events so far. She said she is really trying to encourage the evening activities this year. Before the summer ends, the library will be hosting a Summer Reading Ice Cream Social Celebration to celebrate the children of all ages who have participated in the program. The ice cream will be provided by the Great Falls Creamery and will take place on Aug. 23 at 1 p.m.

For a full list of calendar events, to sign up for the reading log, or any other information, visit the Great Falls Library at 9830 Georgetown Pike or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library).



**Children of all ages can take advantage of the Summer Reading Adventure and the great selection of books at the library.**



**These Great Falls residents know that reading can be a great family activity. From left:: Jenna Mostafa (seventh grade), Summar Mostafa (first grade), Amelia Mostafa (1 year old), and their au pair from Italy, Erika Mazzariol.**

# OPINION

# Local Newspapers Under Siege

## Need to address restraining orders and gun violence.

**E**ne member of Connection News papers staff is Kemal Kurspahic, who shares with us his first-hand experience of running a newspaper from a war zone when information was desperately needed by the besieged residents of Sarajevo. Kemal Kurspahic is managing editor for The Connection Newspapers. He was the editor-in-chief of the Bosnian daily Oslobođenje in Sarajevo, Bosnia Herzegovina, 1988-94. Under his leadership the paper published every day from an atomic bomb shelter during the siege of Sarajevo, maintaining high professional standards and Bosnian culture and tradition of ethnic and religious tolerance in the midst of terror. The paper published the names of those killed each day in Sarajevo.

He experienced first hand the horror of having staff members killed while out on assignment. He was critically injured himself when a vehicle taking him to his newsroom crashed as it traveled at high speed down "sniper alley." The International Press Institute named Kurspahic one of its first 50 World Press Freedom Heroes in 2000.

Journalism is a dangerous occupation in many other countries, usually not here in the U.S.

I tell this story now because of the newly minted fear that many journalists feel after the murders of five in the newsroom of the Capital Gazette in Annapolis. Police and survivors say the shooter had long held a grudge against the newspaper, and had sued for defamation. The targeted attack came very close to home.

## The Welcoming Inclusion Network Making Fairfax County accessible to all abilities.

BY SUPERVISOR JOHN C. COOK  
BRADDOCK DISTRICT SUPERVISOR

**C**OMMENTARY One of Fairfax County's greatest strengths is in being a home to over a million people from all walks of life. While we have made great strides in bringing the community together, adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities can find it very challenging to participate fully in community life. After they leave school or home, many rely on employment or day services to integrate them into society and allow them to contribute by working or through other activities. This population is growing and deserves a seat at the table. Current services are helpful, but there remains a great deal of work if we want a truly inclusive society.



The Fairfax Falls Church Community Services Board established the Welcoming Inclusion Network (WIN) collaborative to address these pressing issues and devise long-term solutions to create an environment where everyone is valued.

I have the honor of chairing WIN, but the real work is done by my operations co-chair Lori Stillman, who is a former CSB official and parent. Joining us on the steering committee are a number of experts who have a great range of experiences with developmental and intellectual disability services. WIN stakeholders include county staff, parents of those with disabilities, special needs services providers, self-advocates, and employers. Together we work to achieve WIN's four key goals:

- ❖ **NETWORK:** Build opportunities for increased information and resource sharing
- ❖ **DESIGN:** Ensure service equity and effi-

## About This Week's Papers

Our papers go to press a day early due to the July 4th holiday. That means that this week's papers will not contain coverage of July 4th events. Watch for coverage next week.

## Submit Your Photos for the Pet Connection Now

The Pet Connection, a twice-yearly special edition, will publish the last week of July, and photos and stories of your pets with you and your family should be submitted by Friday, July 20.

We invite you to send stories about your pets, photos of you and your family with your cats, dogs, llamas, alpacas, ponies, hamsters, snakes, lizards, frogs, rabbits, or whatever other creatures share your life with you.

Tell us the story of a special bond between a child and a dog, the story of how you came to adopt your pet, or examples of amazing feats of your creatures.

Do you volunteer at an animal shelter or therapeutic riding center or take your pet to visit people in a nursing home? Does your business have a managing pet? Is your business about pets? Have you helped to train an assistance dog? Do you or someone in your family depend on an assistance dog?

Or take this opportunity to memorialize a beloved pet you have lost.

Just a cute photo is fine too. Our favorite pictures include both pets and their humans.

Please tell us a little bit about your creature, identify everyone in the photo, give a brief description what is happening in the photo, and include address and phone number (we will not publish your address or phone number, just your town name).

Email to [editors@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:editors@connectionnewspapers.com) or submit online at [www.connectionnewspapers.com/pets](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/pets).

For advertising information, email [sales@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:sales@connectionnewspapers.com) or call 703-778-9431.

## Great Falls CONNECTION

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## WELLBEING



A lack of swimming skills is one of the top factors increasing the risk of drowning.

PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

## Summer Water Safety

Supervision and learning to swim are top ways to prevent drowning.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

**B**lazing heat and sky rocketing temperatures often mean cooling off with a dip in the pool. As the summer is in full swing, safety officials are reminding the public of drowning risks and prevention methods.

"Learning to swim at any early age is all about being safe in and around the water," said Gina Bewersdorf, owner of Goldfish Swim School in Reston, Falls Church and Alexandria. "Undeniably we all will have an opportunity to visit a pool, lake or ocean at some point, and our goal is to equip our swimmers with water safety skills early on."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) cites a lack of swimming ability, failure to wear life jackets, alcohol use and a lack of close supervision while swimming as some of the top factors that affect drowning risk. According to the CDC, from 2005 to 2014 there was an average of 3,536 unintentional drownings. One in five people who die from drowning are children 14 and younger.

"A person can drown in a matter of seconds," said Aaron Schultz, a lifeguard in Arlington. "When I'm

at the pool, I notice that parents are often texting while trying to watch their children, but even if children look like they're playing they could easily go under and be in danger a less than a minute. This is especially important to remember at the beach."

Taking part in formal swimming lessons reduces the risk of drowning among children between one and four years old, but many people lack basic swimming skills, according to the CDC. "Beginning formalized lessons as early as 4 months old has shown benefit in children developing a love for water and foundation upon which to build water safety skills," said Bewersdorf.

American Red Cross swimming safety tips such as always swimming in a designated area attended by lifeguards, avoiding swimming alone, wearing life jackets, securing a pool with barriers and making sure everyone in your family is a strong swimmer, are among those that Mary Anderson of the Montgomery County Office of Health and Human Services says the county is reinforcing.

"There's a website that we put together called 'Summer of Safety,' and it's got everything from A to Z with summer safety and swimming pool safety."

Other suggestions include enrolling in courses to learn CPR, having appropriate equipment such as a first aid kit and cell phone to make emergency calls.

"If someone is around water and discovers that their child is missing, it's a good idea to check the water first because even seconds can make a big difference in stopping a drowning," said Schultz.

**"Learning to swim at any early age is all about being safe in and around the water."**

— Gina Bewersdorf, Goldfish Swim School

the water first because even seconds can make a big difference in stopping a drowning," said Schultz.

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## VIEWPOINTS

### Area Residents Reflect on July 4

What does the 4th of July mean to you?; How do you plan to celebrate the day?

#### Paul Cohen of Great Falls, United States Navy, retired

"When I get up, I'm going to pull out a copy of the Declaration of Independence and read it. It provides the mission and vision of the United States, and the Constitution provides the framework for how we will live it out. ... Later in the evening, we will go watch the fireworks."



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

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# CALENDAR

Submit entertainment announcements at [www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/). The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

## ONGOING

### Art Exhibit: "Too Much of Too Much."

Through Aug. 18, gallery hours in the Bullock | Hitt Gallery at MPA@ChainBridge, 1446 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. McLean Project for the Arts will open "Too Much of Too Much: Overstimulated, Overexposed, and Overextended," featuring works by mid-Atlantic artists whose works explore the ideas of overstimulation, excessiveness and bombardment, be it through too much information, activity, expectation, or by any other means. Visit [mpaart.org](http://mpaart.org).

**Row by Row Junior.** Through Oct. 31, local quilt shop proprietors like Jinny Beyer Studio (776 Walker Road, Great Falls) are welcoming children participating in Row by Row Junior to their shops. It's the junior version of the summertime travel event for quilt making fans known as Row by Row Experience. Kids visit shops in person, collect a free sewing pattern, and find inspiration in colorful, creative world of sewing. At home, families can find free tutorial support and activities online by visiting [www.rowbyrowexperience.com](http://www.rowbyrowexperience.com) or [jinnybeyer.com](http://jinnybeyer.com) for local quilting.

### Great Falls Farmers Market.

Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 778 Walker Road, Great Falls. Music, vendors, fresh produce, fresh prepared food, delightful bakery, spices from around the world, wild-caught fish, grass-fed, free-range meats, organic-fed poultry and eggs. Email [kathleen@greatfallsfarmersmarket.org](mailto:kathleen@greatfallsfarmersmarket.org).

**Free Tai Chi.** Every Saturday, from 7:55-9 a.m., Introduction and Beginners' Practice, meet on the outdoor basketball court located directly behind the Dolley Madison Public Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave. in McLean Central Park, McLean. Call 703-759-9141 or visit [www.FreeTaiChi.org](http://www.FreeTaiChi.org).

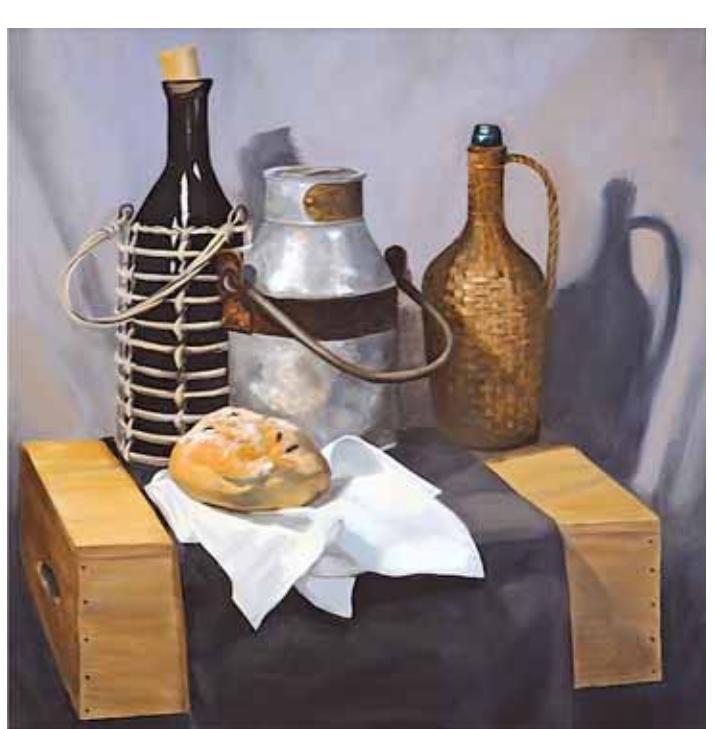
**Colvin Run Mill** open 11-4 p.m. daily, closed Tuesday. 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Fairfax County's operational 19th century water powered gristmill, offers recreational and educational activities for all ages through daily tours, school programs and special events. Fees: \$7/adult, \$6 students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

**Fishing Rod Rentals.** Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Rentals available during Visitor center hours. Fishing tackle and live bait are available for purchase. Reservations required for group rentals. \$6/rental (2 hour max). Valid driver's license required. Rod/reel combinations are perfect for beginners and children. A Virginia or Maryland freshwater fishing license is required for those 16 years or older. The park does not sell fishing licenses. [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend-park/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend-park/).

## WEDNESDAY/JULY 4

### 5K, Parade and Hometown

**Celebration.** 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at Great Falls Village Centre. 5K Walk/Run begins promptly at 8 a.m. See the registration site for the route map details. INOVA Blood Drive at Great Falls Volunteer Fire Department, 8 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Everyone who completes the donor screening procedure will receive a free Donor T-shirt. Photo ID required. Allow 1 hour for donor visit. Little Patriot Parade at the Gazebo, 9 a.m. Babies and Toddlers up to age 5 are welcome to parade their finest patriotic display around the Green. Main Parade at the Great Falls



## Naz Akbar Exhibits at Katie's Coffee House

A Great Falls artist Naz Akbar is exhibiting at Katie's Coffee House, 760 Walker Rd, Great Falls, July 2-31. Her work has been exhibited widely and seen world wide.



**Backtrack (family friendly)** performs in McLean Central Park on Sunday, July 8, 5 p.m. Known for pushing the limits of a cappella, Backtrack's repertoire spans past and present pop covers to classical and electronic music.

Village Centre, 10 a.m. See the floats, horses, antique cars and pets making a loop in the Main Parade. Festivities, Food & Fun at the Village Centre Green, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Enjoy burgers, dogs and snow-cones along with music, field games and festivities on the Village Centre Green with your Great Falls neighbors. Visit [www.celebrategreatfalls.org/4th-of-july-celebration-parade](http://www.celebrategreatfalls.org/4th-of-july-celebration-parade).

### Journey to the Potomac River.

10:30 a.m. at Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. This 90-minute program includes a wagon ride through the woods and along the river. Learn about Riverbend Park's wildlife and the American Indians who once lived there. \$7 per person. Children must be accompanied by an adult registered for the program. Call 703-759-9018 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend) to register.

**Sprinklers and Sparklers.** 2-4 p.m. at the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St. SE, Vienna. Children can enjoy a makeshift waterpark on the Vienna Community Center grounds that offers a variety of water-based and other amusements. Water slides, slip 'n slides, snow cones, balloon twisting, and more are

teed up for a good time. Be warned: participants will get wet. Visit [viennava.gov](http://viennava.gov).

**Fireworks & Fun.** 6 p.m. at Turner Farm Park, Great Falls. Pack up the family and come tailgate with neighbors at Turner Farm Park. Live music, games, contests and food trucks will entertain until the Big Show gets underway just after dusk. Visit [www.celebrategreatfalls.org/4th-of-july-celebration-parade](http://www.celebrategreatfalls.org/4th-of-july-celebration-parade).

### Fireworks Celebration.

6:30 p.m. at Churchill Road Elementary School, 7100 Churchill Road, McLean. The McLean Community Center (MCC) will present its 4<sup>th</sup> of July Fireworks and Independence Day Celebration. Fireworks show begins at sunset, approximately 9:15 p.m. There will be musical entertainment and food trucks. Parking is not available at Churchill Road Elementary or Cooper Middle School. Beginning at 6:25 p.m., free shuttle buses will run to and from three satellite parking sites. Admission is free. Call 703-790-0123, TTY 711, or visit [www.mcleancenter.org/special-events](http://www.mcleancenter.org/special-events).

**Fireworks and Festivities.** 7:15 p.m. at Yeonas Park, 1319 Ross Drive SW, Vienna. Celebrate with live music by Mars Rodeo. The Vienna Little

League concession stand will be open for business. Fireworks blast off at approximately 9:30 p.m. Bring chairs and blankets to enjoy the show, but no alcohol or pets please. Visit [viennava.gov](http://viennava.gov).

## FRIDAY/JULY 6

### Tysons Concert Series: O-Town.

6:30-8 p.m. on the Plaza at Tysons Corner Center. Tysons Corner Center's 5th annual free Summer Concert Series offers a variety of musical guests and has proven to be a popular event for families, couples and teenagers. The Plaza is located off of The Tysons Corner Metro Station of the Silver Line. Guests are encouraged to arrive early. Visit [www.tysoncornercenter.com/events/SummerConcertSeries2018](http://www.tysoncornercenter.com/events/SummerConcertSeries2018).

### Contest Entry Deadline.

11:59 p.m. Singers are invited to submit an acapella video singing The National Anthem to [tysonsmallinfo@macerich.com](mailto:tysonsmallinfo@macerich.com). The top three submissions will be invited to perform in front of a panel of industry judges and live audience at the Ocean Park Standoff concert on Tysons Corner Center Plaza, Friday, July 20. The winner will perform the National Anthem at Nationals Stadium prior to the Sept. 3 game versus the St. Louis Cardinals. Visit [www.tysoncornercenter.com/Events/NationalAnthemComp](http://www.tysoncornercenter.com/Events/NationalAnthemComp) for details.

McLean. After weeks of learning classical theatre, practicing movement and vocalizing, and roasting s'mores over the fire, Traveling Players' youth ensembles will present a festival of three classical plays. \$10 tickets available at the door. For directions to Madeira, visit [www.madeira.org/about-madeira/contact-us/](http://www.madeira.org/about-madeira/contact-us/). Visit [www.travelingplayers.org](http://www.travelingplayers.org) or call 703-987-1712.

**River Fishing by Boat.** 5:30 p.m. at Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Get an introduction to fishing and boating in the "River Fishing by Boat" program.

Participants age 5-adult will fish for smallmouth bass and sunfish from a canoe or jon boat. The two-hour lesson starts with an introduction to boating and fishing basics. Previous experience rowing or paddling is not required. Boats, personal flotation devices (PFDs), fishing rods and bait are provided. \$16 per person, and each participant must register. Call 703-759-9018 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend).

### Tysons Concert Series: Matt Nathanson.

6:30-8 p.m. on the Plaza at Tysons Corner Center. Tysons Corner Center's 5th annual free Summer Concert Series offers a variety of musical guests and has proven to be a popular event for families, couples and teenagers. The Plaza is located off of The Tysons Corner Metro Station of the Silver Line. Guests are encouraged to arrive early. Visit [www.tysoncornercenter.com/events/SummerConcertSeries2018](http://www.tysoncornercenter.com/events/SummerConcertSeries2018).

**Summer on the Green: Mary Lou & the Drugstore Lovers.** 6:30 p.m. area residents can catch a new and diverse musical act at the Town Green or at Chillin' on Church. Bring blankets and chairs, but please leave Fido and any other pets at home. The concerts are free and open to the public. Visit [www.viennava.gov](http://www.viennava.gov).

## SATURDAY/JULY 14

### Teddy Bear Picnic.

10:30-noon at Freeman Store and Museum, 131 Church St., NE, Vienna. Bring a blanket and your favorite bear or other stuffed creature (dolls are welcome, too) and picnic on the Freeman Store grounds or inside the Freeman Store if it rains with a lunch just for Bear Lovers. Partake in Bear-Friendly activities. Aged 9 and under. \$5 per child; no charge for Bears. Parents are asked to stay to accompany their child. Call 703-938-5187 or email [stuntzag@aol.com](mailto:stuntzag@aol.com). Reservations and prepayment required by Wednesday, July 11.

### Model Railroaders Open House.

1-5 p.m. at the Vienna Depot, 231 Dominion Road NE. Northern Virginia Model Railroaders hold an open house at the Vienna Depot each month and on Vienna celebration days, including Viva! Vienna and the Vienna Holiday Stroll. Free admission. Call 703-938-5157 or visit [www.nvnr.org](http://www.nvnr.org).

## SUNDAY/JULY 15

### Alden Summer Concerts: Oh He Dead.

5 p.m. in McLean Central Park, 1468 Dolley Madison Blvd. Free parking at Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave. The Alden's 2018 Summer Sunday Concerts in the Park expand this year to include a "welcome, summer" concert on Sunday, June 3, and then seven concerts from July 1 through Aug. 12. Visit [www.aldentheatre.org](http://www.aldentheatre.org).

**Concerts on the Green: The Unfinished.** 6-8 p.m. on the Great Falls Village Centre Green. Sundays throughout the summer, bring a picnic and chairs for an evening of free, live music. Visit [www.celebrategreatfalls.org](http://www.celebrategreatfalls.org).

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## NEWS

# Intersection Options Presented to Community

Residents hear about plans to improve Balls Hill Road and Old Dominion Drive intersection.

BY STEVE HIBBARD  
THE CONNECTION

The intersection of Balls Hill Road and Old Dominion Drive is one of the worst in McLean—often taking drivers more than three minutes to pass through it during peak morning and evening rush hour. On Thursday, June 28, 2018, more than 50 residents got to hear about a \$20.5 million plan showing four different options to improve that intersection by Project Manager Gibran Abifadel of the Fairfax County Department of Transportation held at Cooper Middle School.

It all started with the Transportation Priorities Plan in 2014, which cost \$200,000. The study started in March 2016 and includes conceptual design and analysis showing four alternatives to improve the traffic flow of the intersection through better configuration, signal operations, accessibility and safety. Residents will have the opportunity to weigh-in on which of the four options they prefer and offer their feedback. Comments are due back to the county by July 13.

THE EXISTING CONDITIONS of the intersection

include three-minute backups in the a.m. and p.m. rush hours; poor sight distance at all legs of the intersection; left turns that act as U-turns from Old Dominion Drive onto Balls Hill Road; and right turns that act as U-turns from Balls Hill Road onto Old Dominion Drive. Crash data indicates there have been eight crashes on Balls Hill Road and 21 crashes on Old Dominion Drive. The speed limits on those roads are 35 mph and 45 mph.

According to John Foust, Dranesville District Supervisor: "Balls Hill and Old Dominion is one of the worst intersections we have in the McLean area in terms of delay. We've been looking at it, studying it, and now have the funding to improve it. Fortunately, there are options that would dramatically improve the ability of the intersection to handle the traffic."

Foust said after showing the options to the community, they'll take feedback from the residents and then try to address them. Next, they'll come back again to the community, address some of the concerns that have been raised and make a recommendation as to which of the four options is best and see how the community reacts.

SEE COMMUNITY, PAGE 10



PHOTO BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION

The intersection of Balls Hill Road and Old Dominion Drive.

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# NEWS

**Residents look over maps showing various options to improve the Balls Hill Road and Old Dominion Drive intersection at a transportation meeting held Thursday, June 28 at Cooper Middle School.**

PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/  
The Connection



## Community Studies Intersection Options

FROM PAGE 9

He added: "I hope we'll be able to come together and come up with a plan to address this and hopefully improve it dramatically."

According to Tom Biesiadny, Director with the Fairfax County Department of Transportation: "The current intersection at Balls Hill and Old Dominion is failing and it's resulting in a considerable amount of congestion pretty much in all directions during the peak period."

He continued: "So, the purpose of this effort is to look at several different options to improve the operation of the intersection. We have four different alternatives and we're looking at feedback from the public as to which ones they like and which ones they don't like."

Alternative A would be taking the existing intersection and splitting it into two intersections — one in the north and one in the south. At a cost of \$13.5 million, the community will gain a mile-and-a-half of 5-foot bicycle facilities and 3,000 feet of pedestrian facilities. It helps to solve the delay and queuing issues and is a small right-of-way footprint compared to Alternative B.

Alternative B is a roundabout option. The pros are that it reduces queuing, maintains VDOT design standard (horizontal curvature); offers the option to landscape and keep its historic look; has a traffic-calming effect; is the lowest cost (at \$12.1 million); and the community gains 2,000 feet of walkways; and it improves the alignment at Balls Hill Road and Old Dominion Drive.

Abifadel said the third option is to leave the intersection where it is, put two different slip ramps, provide additional storage bays to improve the intersection so it keeps the existing footprint of the intersection as it is but widening it out a little bit to help facilitate the traffic to get through the intersection.

Alternative C takes the existing intersection and widens it out at a cost of \$12.7 million. It adds a dedicated left-turn lane and the intersection would stay as it already is. The community would gain a mile of bike facilities, and 3,000 feet of walkways. It would have a smaller right-of-way footprint compared to Alternative B; and lower cost than Alternative A.

Abifadel added: "The fourth option is exactly the same as the first one where we're taking the intersection and splitting it into two but the bottom part of the intersection has a little more of a modification to improve it and make it a little bit better and efficient to facilitate the traffic at Balls Hill Road and Old Dominion."

Alternative A.1 offers an improvement on the first alternative A, by taking existing intersection and splitting it into two. At a cost of \$15 million, it solves



**Fairfax County Department of Transportation Project Manager Gibran Abifadel and Dranesville District Supervisor John Foust address the crowd at the meeting of the Balls Hill Road and Old Dominion Drive intersection.**

delay and queuing issues; has a small right-of-way footprint compared to Alternative B; and the T-intersection is improved. The community also gains a mile-and-a-half of bicycle facilities and 2,750 feet of walkway facilities, and there's space provided for storm water management.

**THE NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVES** are if the county does nothing, the intersection will fail and there will be an increase in delays with more congestion and aggravation for residents. It would have an "F" grade for level of service.

Two housing developments are located near the intersection: Mehr Farms with 10 homes is currently under construction, and Summerstone development with four homes was approved in April. Another unnamed parcel west of the intersection has the potential for development.

As far as the timing of the project, the Board of Supervisors approved \$20.5 million local funding for the intersection improvement on May 15, 2018. The county is now taking comments (due by July 13) from the community and will be finalizing a recommendation in the Fall to take to the Board of Supervisors. In the Spring 2019-Spring 2023, they'll do the preliminary engineering design; in the Spring 2021-Spring 2023, they'll do the right-of-way acquisition, and in the Spring 2023-Fall 2024, they'll be doing construction. So, the project may be completed in six years.

For more information on the project, visit the website: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/projects/balls-hill-road](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/projects/balls-hill-road)

Or contact Gibran Abifadel at email [Gibran.Abifadel@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Gibran.Abifadel@fairfaxcounty.gov).

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# BULLETIN

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

## WEDNESDAY/JULY 4

**Free Sober Rides.** Wednesday, July 4, 7 p.m. through Thursday, July 5, 4 a.m. Area residents, 21 and older, may download Lyft to their phones, then enter a code in the app's "Promo" section to receive a no cost (up to \$15) safe ride home. WRAP's Independence Day SoberRide promo code will be posted at 5 p.m. on July 4 on www.SoberRide.com. The SoberRide code is valid for the first 1,500 Lyft users who enter the code.

## MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

### The Fairfax-Falls Church Community

**Services Board's Merrifield Center** offers a new stand-up information kiosk. Part of a pilot project, the new feature aims to improve the customer service experience and decrease wait times for individuals who are seeking mental (behavioral) health services. To check in, individuals respond to five simple questions, then the CSB's Patient Track software alerts staff. Based on clinicians' schedules and availability, as well as the needs of the client, individuals are triaged and seen by the next available staff member. For more information on available services, call the CSB at 703-383-8500 (Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.). In an emergency 24/7, call CSB Emergency Services at 703-573-5679 or the Fairfax Detox Center at 703-502-7000 (TTY 703-322-9080).

## TUESDAY/JULY 10

**Story Time: Focus and Self-Control.** 10-11 a.m. at The Parent Resource Center Library, 2334 Gallows Road, Entrance 1 - Room 105, Dunn Loring. This Story Time will highlight books and activities to support focus and self-control in young children. Focus and self-control is an evidence-based executive functioning skill that involves paying attention, following the rules, thinking flexibly, and exercising self control. Registration is limited and required for children ages 4-6 and their parents. Visit www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center for more.

## WEDNESDAY/JULY 11

**Public Information Hearing.** 5-8 p.m. at Spring Hill Elementary School Cafeteria, 8201 Lewinsville Road, McLean. The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority is hosting a public hearing to inform and solicit comments from the community about proposed toll rate increases along the Dulles Toll Road. There will be informational exhibits related to the Dulles Toll Road and planned improvements that may be made, the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Silver Line Extension Project, the revenue projections associated with the proposed toll rate increases and how this additional revenue will be spent. Representatives from the Airports Authority will be present to discuss these items. Visit www.mwaa.com for more.

## THURSDAY/JULY 12

**Story Time: Perspective Taking.** 10-11 a.m. at The Parent Resource Center Library, 2334 Gallows Road, Entrance 1 - Room 105, Dunn Loring. This Story Time will highlight books and activities to support perspective taking in young children. Perspective taking is an evidence-based executive functioning skill that forms the basis for children's understanding of their parents', teachers', and friends' intentions. Registration is limited and required for children ages 4-6 and their parents. Visit www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center for more.

## TUESDAY/JULY 17

**Story Time: Making Connections.** 10-11 a.m. at The Parent Resource Center Library, 2334 Gallows Road, Entrance 1 - Room 105, Dunn Loring. Making Connections is at the heart of learning. This Story Time will highlight books and activities to support this evidence-based executive functioning skill in young children. Registration is limited and required for children ages 4-6 and their parents. Visit www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center for more.

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## Well Blow Me Down



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Ah. The whirr of chain saws finally cutting their way through the nearly two dozen trees in my front half acre knocked down during the March 2 wind storm. Given what this cut down and clean up will cost, it is not an expense to be paid out of petty cash. In fact, we needed a little help.

And considering the time allowed by Rigo (the man for the job), to come back and do the work; it's been approximately two months since we shook on the deal, it's enabled us to arrange for payment on a mutually beneficial schedule.

He'll do the work when he can (not a fixed time and date) and we'll pay him what and when we can; sort of a trade and sort of because he's doing some other regular work in our neighborhood (the adjacent property in fact).

Typically in the past, when I've received knocks on my door by other tradesmen saying they're doing similar work in the neighborhood to what I've needed – or appeared to need: yard clean up, tree maintenance, driveway repair/repaving, etc., offering me discounts because they're "working on the street," I've always resisted because I've never had the money (cash) or trust to pay them.

Well, I don't exactly have the money now, but neither did Rigo knock on my door. I had been given his name and number months ago by an extremely reliable former neighbor so I had the trust and the time seemed right. When I spoke to Rigo and told him who I was, he said he had been expecting the call, as my neighbor apparently assured him I would.

And so, almost four months since the trees "thudded" to the ground, Rigo and his men have hit the ground sawing. As Dennis Eckersley, a Major League Baseball Hall of Fame inductee and current member of the NESN/Boston Red Sox television broadcast so often says: "It's a beautiful thing."

And what makes this "treatment" a "beautiful thing" is not just the sense of accomplishment for work which most definitely needed to be started – and finished, but specifically work yours truly is incapable of doing.

As the homeowner of a registered historic property built in 1742 ("Belly Acres" I call it) sitting on two acres, constantly in need of something or other both inside and out, to say that I am – and have been overwhelmed since we took ownership in May of 1992, is an understatement.

The overstatement would be: I am in so over my head that to invoke a childhood expression that still doesn't make any sense: "I need to look up to look down."

Hearing multiple chain saws, even starting at 8:30 a.m., as I had been forewarned two days prior would occur, is music to my ears. Any progress I can make – or others can on my behalf – in stemming the tide of my maintenance malfeasance is huge. It's not exactly a sense of pride, it's more a sense of passing homeowner 101, the entry level course I've mostly failed going on 26+ years.

Needing the kind of help I do – in terms of time, money, tools, skillset and inclination – is an unrelenting burden of incompetence which I readily accept. Unfortunately, time does not lessen the responsibility. Nevertheless, I'm lucky to own such a unique and historic property.

If some maintenance suffers, it's not for lack of concern, it's for lack of ability and knowledge. Moreover, I just can't summon up the necessary fortitude. Throw in a stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer diagnosis and the prospects in the future for home-owning improvement are not great.

It's been my nine+ years experience that a cancer diagnosis (especially a "terminal" one) tends to rearrange your priorities/rewire your brain, so to speak. And even though I'm very happy seeing and hearing the trees being tended to, I'm more concerned about the forest.

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

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