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WELLBEING
PAGE 6

Manal Zarou (center), three-year-old Jayce and one-year-old Joelle at the last weekend's Middle Eastern Food Festival in McLean.

McLean CONNECTION

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PHOTOS BY CARLYN KRANKING/THE CONNECTION

People line up to purchase food at the Middle Eastern Food Festival.



Six-year-old Stephen Hayes interacts with the goats at the petting zoo area.

Celebrating Culture and Faith

Church holds 25th annual Middle Eastern Food Festival.

BY CARLYN KRANKING
THE CONNECTION

When Falls Church resident Donna Haseley's son was young, they used to go to a Greek festival at a local Greek Orthodox church. So when she heard about last weekend's Middle Eastern Food Festival, she thought it was a good idea.

"My son just went to college a couple days ago, and I was a little sad," said Haseley, who attended the festival with her friend. "My friend said she was coming, so I said, 'What a wonderful way to spend a day.'"

Cars filled the parking lot at Holy Transfiguration Melkite Greek-Catholic Church and spread up and down nearby neighborhood streets as thousands of people gathered to enjoy the church's 25th annual Middle Eastern Food Festival. The festival offered authentic Middle Eastern food including kibbeh, falafel, fattoush, hummus and roasted lamb, and had kids activities, church tours and dabke dancing.

Church volunteers worked tirelessly throughout the summer to make the food sold at the festival, including about 25,000 sweets like baklava, maamoul, namoura, ghraybeh and more.

"It is really about showing hospitality to our neighbors, to our friends and to people who just want to learn a little bit about who we are," Protodeacon David Barooty said. "We pride ourselves on this love of Christ and love of one another that we then want to share with everyone that comes in."

Attendees of the festival feel this hospitality from members of the church. Barooty said that guests will often comment on how welcoming the parish is, and festival attendee Hindy Mokhiber of Great Falls noticed it as well.

"We just love to come, because there's a lot of love in this church and at this festival," Mokhiber said. "The food is fantastic, and the people are wonderful."



Eight-year-old Evie Hayes enjoyed the balloons.



Dimitrios Komninos sold olive oil at the festival.



Dabke dancers at the Middle Eastern Food Festival.



Four-year-old Rafay Saleem, seven-year-old Jahanara Saleem, and three-year-old Zara Hasan at the food festival.

The festival is a yearly tradition that members of the parish take great pride in.

"To me, it is just so heartwarming to see it all come together and to see the pride of all the parishioners who are here to welcome our guests," said Sonia McCormick,

festival publicity chair. "It's a sense of accomplishment that we've all done something really amazing together that's going to benefit the church, but that's also going to introduce our parish to the greater Washington community."

Lebanese Nonprofit Spreads Awareness About Diabetes

Jackie Maalouf, Ph.D., traveled to the United States from Beirut, Lebanon to attend the Middle Eastern Food Festival and talk about the nonprofit she founded, which is in the process of being registered in the United States. Dr. Maalouf founded the organization DiaLeb with her daughter, Sylvie, after she was diagnosed with diabetes.

"Sylvie got diagnosed at an unconventional age. She was 24 when she got diagnosed," Dr. Maalouf said. "It was definitely a shock."

DiaLeb spreads awareness of diabetes and helps support people who have been recently diagnosed through summer camps, support groups and educational sessions.

At the food festival, Dr. Maalouf sought to spread information to attendees about diabetes and DiaLeb, whether or not they were of Lebanese background.

"Diabetes does not recognize a nationality or a religion or anything," Dr. Maalouf said. "I think overall it was very productive and positive for us, being here, and I think I would definitely do it another time."

OPINION

Do Something

BY WENDY GRADISON
CEO PRS



The news of Anthony Bourdain and Kate Spade as well as a number of our own community members whose lives were stopped short due to suicide underscores the challenges that exist in preventing suicide. These stories created considerable grief, and in fact, we saw a significant increase in calls and texts to our PRS CrisisLink hotline.

When losses like these occur, we have an opportunity to change the conversation about suicide from one of loss to one of empowerment and hope. To keep people talking, we are launching the #CallTextLive Campaign during September, Suicide Prevention Month.

Suicide is a serious issue locally and nationally, claiming the lives of nearly 45,000 people annually and is the 10th leading cause of death nationwide and the second leading cause of death for young people aged 15-24. But for every death, 278 people manage to move past thoughts of suicide and survive.

At PRS, a nonprofit running PRS CrisisLink, Northern Virginia's crisis hotline and textline, we know there is more we can do to bring awareness and tools to prevent future suicides. We are inviting the community to get involved in our 4th annual #CallTextLive Campaign.



Join #CallTextLive Campaign.

Using the hashtag #CallTextLive, the campaign works to educate members of the community about resources available and actions they can take to bring awareness to suicide prevention and intervention. Campaign highlights include: an easy to use web-based interactive event calendar; great tips and resources to share via social media; a Facebook Live Q&A with experts; community training and tour of the PRS CrisisLink call center; a Selfie Day; a crowdsourcing fundraiser; t-shirts for purchase; and walk events. We will also explore special suicide prevention topics related to gun safety, veterans, older adults, LGBTQ, youth, and survivors.

It's time to challenge the stigma around is-

suues contributing to suicide and provide each other the tools to get help. #CallTextLive uses social media, activities and events to drive community conversation. We want people to visit our website—www.prsinc.org—to find simple ways to spark change through the #CallTextLive Campaign. Do one or do them all...but we definitely want everyone to do something.

If we are successful, even more people will find their way to community resources, including the PRS CrisisLink program, which handled nearly 80,000 crisis calls and text messages from the Northern Virginia region last year. In fact, a simple call or text to the crisis hotline or textline — (800) 273-TALK [8255] and text "CONNECT" to 85511 — provides the empathetic, trained voice that someone in crisis needs to reduce their pain and provide connections to care. Most of these voices are volunteers from our community — neighbors and friends — who share the gift of listening to those who hope to be heard.

Help us make it okay for more people to seek help. Join the #CallTextLive Campaign to broaden the conversation. Small or big ... do something ... we are listening and others will too.

Wendy Gradison is CEO of PRS, a mental health nonprofit in Northern Virginia.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Working with Better Angels

To the Editor:

Wow, I just read Mary Donaldson's inflammatory and incorrect letter ("Wake-up Election," Connection, Aug. 29-Sept. 4, 2018) referencing Secretary Kissinger's remarks made in a Dec. 18, 2016 appearance on Face the Nation. One can find a link to the actual video of the program. In this interview, that took place before Trump took office, Kissinger does say, "Trump is a phenomenon that foreign countries haven't seen," and hypothesizes that he could become "a very considerable president." He does not say, as Ms. Donaldson asserts, "He is the one true leader. After eight years of tyranny, we finally see a difference."

I might add that the word "tyranny" describes egregious actions of leaders with no ethical base and, regardless of one's politics, does not apply to any of our past presidents.

Please, could we check our sources before ramping up invective? Better yet, could we eliminate invective and stick with facts, wherever they may lead us. As

voting citizens, it is our duty to pay attention. That means comparing information from quality news sources with different leanings; recognizing opinions as different from facts; assessing the expertise and stature of the declarant; and logically analyzing what is presented.

Bias is too easy. Here's a test. State our complaints about an office holder or candidate; then redirect them at someone from the opposite party and see how judgments shift. Let's start working with our better angels. We have a great and blessed commonality to share: we are Americans.

Eileen Curtis
Great Falls

Fact-checking a Letter

To the Editor:

While I understand that you are not responsible for ensuring the accuracy of letters from readers, I felt compelled to offer a fact-check to Mary Donaldson's letter ("Wake-Up Election," published in the August 29-September 4 Connection). In it, she quotes Henry Kissinger - referring to President

Trump - as "the one true leader. After eight years of tyranny, we finally see a difference."

Henry Kissinger did not say that, ever. That quote was an editorial statement by the author of an article published in The Patriot Post and Liberty One News, two right-leaning websites. Discovering this was as simple as typing "Kissinger" + "one true leader" into a search engine: multiple sites popped up labeling the quote as false.

Spreading fake news drags down civil discourse, and in an age of electronic communication, avoiding it is one of the responsibilities of good citizenship. The News Literacy Project has excellent tools to make all of us better, more discerning consumers of news. I urge Ms Donaldson - and passionate partisans of every stripe - to visit www.newslit.org to learn more.

Karen E. Akers
Vienna

Misguided Decision

To the Editor:

Congresswoman Barbara Comstock (R-10) parrots President Trump's Iran deal posturing and

follows him down the rat-hole of know-nothingism. Despite her lack of expertise in foreign policy, she states in her May 8, 2018 press release that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is "misguided," ostensibly because it doesn't solve all Middle East problems in one fell swoop. The JCPOA is an historical nuclear nonproliferation agreement, nothing more, nothing less.

After forty years of distrust, the JCPOA was a first-step confidence builder between Iran and the rest of the world. With JCPOA as the cornerstone, professional diplomats could have worked with reform-minded Iranians to reduce their missile program and find peaceful solutions in Gaza, Syria and Yemen.

Congresswoman Comstock claims to be bipartisan, however she didn't consult with Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11), a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. In his June 13, 2018 statement, Congressman Connolly stated that Trump's abrogation of the JCPOA increases the probability of a nuclear Iran with the Saudis soon joining the club.

Greg Brandon
McLean

McLean
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What's New, Exciting in Area Schools

Principal's Back-to-School Report.

In the first week of the new school year, The Connection has asked the area school principals to respond to three questions:

- 1 - What are the most exciting developments in your school in the new school year?
- 2 - What would be your, one-sentence, message to parents, community?
- 3 - Any upcoming events, activities?

Here are their responses.

Ellen T. Reilly, Principal, McLean High School:



1 - McLean HS is excited to blend things up this year! Teachers are tackling Project-Based Learning and integrating tech tools like Padlet and Flipgrid. We are making our learning visible and fun!

2 - Join us for our monthly community sessions to learn more about blended learning and the FCPSOn initiative that will put a device in every FCPS high-schooler's hands in 2019-20.

3 - Sept. 6 - Back to School Night

Carole A. Kihm, Principal, Longfellow Middle School:



1. We have an amazing Sources of Strength program that develops peer leaders in our building

2. We promote the success and well being of each member of our Longfellow family by "inspiring excellence" every single day.

3. We are excited about welcoming our parents into our building for Back to School Night on Wednesday, Sept. 5.

Let us know about an upcoming event
www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar

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WELLBEING

Aiming for Long-Term Fitness

Study shows physical declines can be detected as early as age 50.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

I've been doing it since before I retired," said Rich White, a former accountant who lives in Alexandria. "It's easier to get up and get it out of the way so I don't miss it. Both of my parents died prematurely of heart attacks. That's when I decided to start running to get in shape. Eventually that turned into a habit of daily strength and aerobic exercise."

White's assumptions about preserving his physical health are underscored by a report from the Center for the Study of Aging and Human Development at Duke University School of Medicine which found that physical decline begins when people are in their 50s, much earlier than people might notice or expect.

The study looked at 775 adults ranging in age from 30 to 90 to assess changes in fitness abilities like endurance, balance, speed and strength. Researchers found that exercise efforts must begin before the age of 50 in order to help halt the decline and maintain mobility and independence longer in life.

"Our research reinforces a life-span approach to maintaining physical ability — don't wait until you are 80 years old and cannot get out of a chair," said lead author Katherine S. Hall, Ph.D. in releasing the study.

By having participants stand on one leg for 60 seconds to measure balance and sit and rise from a chair for 30 seconds to measure lower body strength, researchers were able to detect a decline beginning in

Emma Warner, 72, meets her trainer at a Montgomery County Recreation Center gym twice a week. Together they perform a combination of exercises aimed at improving her strength, balance, endurance and flexibility.

"We stretch and do yoga poses, sometimes we speed walk outside and I also do exercises with two or three pound dumbbells," she said. "But my mother is 98 and is in pretty good health, so I figure I have good genes. I just need to work on fitness to maintain."

As people age, change and decline is inevitable, but the rate and severity can vary based on genetics and the level of activity in one's lifestyle. Regular exercise can have a profound effect on the way in which one ages.

"People have their actual age, which they can't do anything about, and their biological age," said Martin.

"Someone could be 40 years old, live a very inactive lifestyle and not eat very well, which may cause them to be closer to 60 in terms of their biological age. And vice versa, someone who is 60 could be very active and eat a healthy diet and feel like they are much younger, perhaps a biological age closer to mid-40s."

Fitness instructor Amy Traum has clients who run the age gamut from college students to retirees, but her overarching advice to getting in shape is similar. "Everyone needs a well-rounded exercise program that includes stretching, balance exercises,

strength and cardio," she said. "I always begin and end classes with stretching and I try to add strength and balance elements like a weighted deadlift."

Those new or newly returning to exercise should start slowly and gradually, says Traum. "It sounds like common sense, but I can't tell you the number of people who come to my classes with no experience and try to work way above their fitness level

"Our research reinforces a life-span approach to maintaining physical ability — don't wait until you are 80 years old and cannot get out of a chair."

— Katherine S. Hall, Ph.D.

"Someone could be 40 years old, live a very inactive lifestyle and not eat very well, which may cause them to be closer to 60 in terms of their biological age. And vice versa, someone who is 60 could be very active and eat a healthy diet and feel like they are much younger, perhaps a biological age closer to mid-40s."

— Joel Martin, Ph.D., assistant professor of Kinesiology, George Mason University

one's 50s. The findings show the need to understand and preserve muscle strength.

"Most tissues in the body respond to stress placed on them by becoming stronger or adapting to handle the stimulus you place on them," said Joel Martin, Ph.D., assistant professor of Kinesiology at George Mason University. "If you lift weights, your muscles get bigger and stronger. If you don't do any sort of physical activity to stimulate your muscles then they get smaller and become weaker. Use it or lose it."

and either get injured or discouraged," she said. "There's nothing wrong with starting out slow, sticking with it and making gradual progress. Also make it fun, like walk or jog with a friends or take a dance or Zumba classes."

"Eating a healthy and nutritious diet is also important," added Martin. "The antioxidants in foods, especially fruits and vegetables, can help to preserve and protect tissues from damage that occurs as part of the natural aging process."

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NEWS



PHOTO BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

Having their say: Several hundred attended the first public meeting to discuss the VDOT proposal to test closures on the Georgetown Pike ramp to I-495. Next meeting, 7 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 13, McLean High School, 1633 Davidson Road, McLean.

Ramp Closure Consultation Continues

Second meeting set for Sept. 13 at McLean High.

At 7 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 13, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will be holding its second public meeting on a proposed four-month pilot to close the ramp from Georgetown Pike to I-495 north from 1 to 7 p.m. weekdays. The meeting will be held at McLean High School, 1633 Davidson Road, McLean. The pilot is intended to test the viability of a plan to mitigate congestion and address safety concerns. Currently, drivers seeking to avoid heavy traffic on the beltway between Tysons and the American Legion Bridge are cutting through neighborhoods, which in turn, negatively impacts residents in the area. For Great Falls residents, the VDOT concept has the potential of reducing cut-through commuter traffic on Georgetown Pike. However, it would also mean that residents who wish to head north toward Maryland in the afternoon would need to take an alternate route in order to get on I-495 — at Route 123, Route 267 or Route

7. During the Aug. 2 meeting on this proposal, representatives from VDOT indicated that they felt that it was important to bring this “out-of-the-box” proposal to the community for input and stressed that the pilot would not go forward unless it has strong support. Feedback from residents will be used in determining if the pilot is undertaken as originally conceived, put on hold, or whether a modified version is implemented. While some residents at the meeting spoke in favor of the pilot, many felt that closure would negatively affect other roads and increase travel time to Maryland. Many indicated that they had chosen to live near the ramp precisely because of the easy access — to work, schools, doctors, friends, etc. For more information on this issue, including materials from the first VDOT meeting, see http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/mclean_traffic_analysis.asp. Great Falls residents are encouraged to attend the upcoming meeting and “weigh in” on this important issue. The Transportation Committee (TRN) also welcomes your feedback. Please send comments, including whether you support, or do not support, VDOT’s proposed pilot to TRN at transportation@gfca.org.

WEEK IN GREAT FALLS

Remembrance Ceremony at Freedom Memorial

On Tuesday, Sept. 11, at 7 p.m., the annual September 11 Remembrance Ceremony will be held at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial. Great Falls lost six residents to the attacks on September 11. The ceremony will honor them and all who sacrificed on that day and in its aftermath. The event will include a Marine Corps color guard, patriotic songs, remarks by Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Sharon Bulova, and a candle-lighting for each of the September 11 victims from Great Falls.

The Freedom Memorial is located behind the Great Falls Library at 9830 Georgetown Pike. The ceremony is open to all. Ample parking is available in the library parking lot. In case of rain, the ceremony will move to the library meeting room. Limited seating will be provided. Attendees are encouraged to bring portable chairs.

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NEWS

The Langley High School Bands and Color Guard will canvas area neighborhoods to raise money to support the LHS band program. Expect a friendly “Tag Day” visit on Saturday, Sept. 8.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



The Langley High School Band dresses the part as they perform at the Great Falls Spooktacular, the village’s annual Halloween parade.

Langley High Band to Hold Tag Day Fundraiser

On Saturday, Sept. 8, band and color guard members from Langley High School will participate in “Tag Day” throughout neighborhoods in McLean and Great Falls. Each year, the Langley High School Bands and Color Guard raise money through door-to-door fundraising, “tagging” neighbors for their monetary support. Monies raised during Tag Day are vital to the operation of the program, and support critical areas such as the hiring of sectionals instructors; purchase and repair of uniforms, instruments and equipment; and payment of transportation costs and competition fees.

In return, the Marching Saxons and Color Guard personally invite neighbors to attend Langley High School’s Friday night football games, where they provide music and half-time entertainment throughout the Saxon football season. Home games this year

are slated for Sept.7, Oct. 5, Oct. 26, and Nov. 2.

Band members also invite everyone to come and enjoy the Langley High School Band concerts, held in the school’s newly renovated auditorium. Concerts for the 2018-19 school year are slated for Nov. 13, Dec. 13 and 18, March 7 and 12, and May 9 and 24.

The Langley High School Band program has grown tremendously in recent years, and consistently receives the highest possible ratings in Virginia assessment concerts.

Tag Day is the band’s biggest fundraiser, and Langley High School greatly appreciates the support from the McLean and Great Falls community to help achieve its fundraising goals. Please go to www.langleybands.org to donate, and to see the calendar of upcoming events.



The Langley High School Band performs internationally once every four years. This spring, the band traveled to Italy, where it was invited to perform concerts in Pisa and Siena.

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ENTERTAINMENT

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

WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 5

Newcomers & Neighbors Coffee. 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at in the Community Room of the Regency at McLean, 1800 Old Meadow Road, McLean. The McLean Newcomers and Neighbors will host a coffee for members and for non-members who might be interested in joining. Visit www.McLeanNewcomers.org or email McLeanNewcomers@yahoo.com for more.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/SEPT. 7-9

Tyson's Library Booksale. Friday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sunday, 1-4 p.m. at Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Large selection of books and media for all ages and interests. Half Price / \$10 per bag sale on Sunday. Email TysonsLibraryFriends@gmail.com or call 703-790-4031.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 8

Virginia Indian Festival. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Learn about the culture of Virginia's first residents when the Virginia Indian Festival returns to Riverbend Park. The festival features eight American Indian tribes from Virginia, including the Rappahannock dancers and drummers. Enjoy performances, hands-on activities and live demonstrations. Hear American Indian storytelling, try a bow and arrow, throw a spear and make stone tools. Help build a dugout canoe. Visit the marketplace for American Indian crafts, pottery and jewelry. Purchase a six-hour pass in advance online for \$8, \$10 at the gate. Call 703-759-9018 or visit fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend.

Freeman Store Vintage Market and Appraisal Day. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Freeman Store, 131 Church St., NE, Vienna. Set up a chair on the lawn to listen to foot-stomping Hickory Grove bluegrass music, shop the outdoor vintage sale, including antiquarian books, purchase crafts and observe spinning and beekeeping demonstrations, enjoy games for all ages, don clothes and props for a photo opportunity. Food and drink for sale by local Vienna merchants. Three appraisers will be on hand from 10-1. Call 703-938-5187 or contact historicviennava@gmail.com for an appointment, \$10 per item. Free and family-friendly. Visit historicviennainc.org for more.

Lahey Lost Valley Open House. Noon-3 p.m. at historic Lahey Lost Valley property, 9750 Brookmeadow Drive, Vienna. The Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) is preparing the historic Lahey Lost Valley property for the Resident Curator Program. The Resident Curator Program provides the opportunity for individuals, non-profit and for-profit organizations to secure long-term lease agreements in beautiful public park settings such as Lahey Lost Valley in Fairfax County. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resident-curator-program or contact Stephanie Langton at 703-324-8791.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 9

A Doggone Good Time. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at The Water Mine Family Swimmin' Hole at Lake Fairfax Park, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. The Water Mine will go to the dogs this September with a season-ending event benefiting the Fairfax County Animal Shelter and Fairfax County



Elaine Flynn portrays "Hemingway's Wives."

Hemingway's Wives

Join the Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna's (SCOV) Lunch N' Life. Entertainment: "Hemingway's Wives" with Elaine Flynn, who portrays Hemingway's four wives. Follow his career as the Hemingways move from Chicago, to Paris, to Key West, to Havana to Ketchum, Idaho. Learn about how the wives' lives intersected with one another. Event sponsor is Care with Love (a non-medical care agency). Lunch is \$15 per person. Monday, Sept. 17, noon-2 p.m. at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 2589 Chain Bridge Road, Vienna. Prepayment required by Wednesday, Sept. 14. No refunds. To register, call 703-281-0538.

Park Foundation. Dogs can swim in Rattlesnake River and splash in the playground area for a suggested donation of \$10 per dog. The event will also serve as a collection site for dog food donations for the Fairfax County Animal Shelter. A low-cost rabies clinic will be available in Lake Fairfax Park's Main Office from noon-2 p.m. Pets may receive 1-year rabies vaccinations for \$15 each (cash or check only). Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/rec/watermine/ or call 703-324-8662.

Countdown Concerts in the Park:

Superfly Disco. 5 p.m. in the McLean Central Park Gazebo, 1468 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean. Concert series tracks the history of the McLean Community Center from its opening in 1975 — revisit a decade as the McLean Community Center prepares for the reopening of the Ingleside Avenue facility. Visit www.mcleancenter.org/aldentheatre/ for more.

Youth Orchestra Auditions. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at at St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church, 1830 Kirby Road, McLean. Students in junior high schools and high schools in the area are invited to participate in the auditions for the McLean Youth Orchestra. The conductors are full time music directors at Fairfax County public schools and will lead the groups with practices planned on Sunday afternoons for the fall 2017-18 season. Visit mcleanyouthorchestra.org for more.

TUESDAY/SEPT. 11

Youth Orchestra Auditions. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at at St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church, 1830 Kirby Road, McLean. Students in junior high schools and high schools in the area are invited to participate in the auditions for the McLean Youth Orchestra. The conductors are full time music directors at Fairfax County public schools and will lead the groups with practices planned on Sunday afternoons for the fall 2017-18 season. Visit mcleanyouthorchestra.org for more.

9/11 Remembrance Ceremony. 7 p.m. at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial, located behind the Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Great Falls lost six residents to the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. Attendees are encouraged to bring portable chairs. Visit www.gffreedom.org for more.

McLean Historical Society Meeting. 7:30 p.m. in the Class/

Programs Office of the McLean Community Center, located in the McLean Square Shopping Center, 6645 Old Dominion Drive, McLean. The program will feature Debbie Watson and Sandra Smoot discussing the history of St. John's Episcopal Church. All are welcome. Contact Carole Herrick at 703-356-8223.

THURSDAYS/SEPT. 13, 20 & 27

Mah Jongg for Beginners. 6:30-9:30 p.m. at Temple Rodef Shalom, 2100 Westmoreland St., Falls Church. A three-session Mah Jongg class for beginners. Enrollment is limited. \$85 includes nine hours of lessons with a Mah Jongg card. Email iva.gresko@gmail.com or 703-328-1606 for more.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 15

Artists' Reception. 6-8 p.m. at Foundry Gallery, 2018 8th St., NW, Washington, D.C. Foundry Gallery presents à deux, a collection of collaborative works by local artists Ann Pickett, of McLean, and Charlene Nield. The exhibit runs Sept. 5-30. Free. Email annpickettstudio@gmail.com, call 202-232-0203 or visit www.foundrygallery.org/exhibits-events for more.

Paul Stanley Art Exhibition. 6-9 p.m. at Tysons Galleria, 1807 U. International Drive, McLean. Wentworth Gallery presents a collection of works from legendary musician and fine artist Paul Stanley of KISS. All artwork is available for purchase. RSVP to 703-883-0111 or tysons@wentworthgallery.com. Visit www.wentworthgallery.com for more.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 16

Breakfast Buffet. 8 a.m.-noon at Vienna American Legion Post 180, 330 Center St., N. Vienna. Get omelets, scrambled eggs, blueberry pancakes, bacon, sausage, biscuits and gravy and more. Adults \$10, children 12 and under \$4. Call 703-938-6580.

Countdown Concerts in the Park: Teäze. 5 p.m. in the McLean Central Park Gazebo, 1468 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean. Concert series tracks the history of the McLean Community Center from its opening in 1975 — revisit a decade as the McLean Community Center prepares for the reopening of the Ingleside Avenue facility. Visit www.mcleancenter.org/aldentheatre/ for more.

Here's What's Happening at MCC!

Countdown Concerts

SEPT. 9
Superflydisco, 5 p.m.
McLean Central Park Gazebo
1468 Dolley Madison Blvd.
Free and open to the public.

SEPT. 16
Teäze, 5 p.m.
McLean Central Park Gazebo
1468 Dolley Madison Blvd.
Free and open to the public.

SEPT. 24
Saved by the '90s, 5 p.m.
McLean Central Park Gazebo
1468 Dolley Madison Blvd.
Free and open to the public.

SEPT. 30
So Fetch, 5 p.m.
McLean Central Park Gazebo
1468 Dolley Madison Blvd.
Free and open to the public.

Fall Community Garage Sale

SEPT. 15
9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Parking Garage at 1420 Beverly Rd.
Free admission.

Unruly Theatre Project Improv Workshops

SEPT. 15
8-13 year olds, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
14-18 year olds, 12:30-1:30 p.m.
MCC Programs/Registration Office
6645 Old Dominion Dr.

Family Movie Night

SEPT. 21
"Mary Poppins" 7-9 p.m.
The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Rd.
\$3 per person.
Preregistration recommended.

Harvest Happenings

SEPT. 22
11 a.m.-2 p.m.
New location!
St. Luke's School, 7005 Georgetown Pike
Free admission.



The McLean Community Center
www.mcleancenter.org
Home of the Alden Theatre
www.aldentheatre.org
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PEOPLE

The five Austrian au pairs in green are, from left, Anna Pointner, Kerstin Hartl, Lena Wimberger, Kathi Gahleitner, and Anika Schuster with the Hodge family, Yuctan, left, wife Gillian and children Mackenzie, left, Ayden and Brooke.



PHOTOS BY KATIE FRANCK

Au Pair Reunion in McLean

Wedding next year in Austria is next stop for the Hodge family.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

The au pair phenomenon has hit the Hodge family in McLean this summer, where they had an au pair reunion of five past au pairs they've hosted, immersing the family in the Austrian culture like they've never experienced before.

Starting in July, a new au pair, Lena Wimberger, 19, came over to replace the previous au pair, and the others came to stay for nearly a month making it a summer to remember for the Hodges.

"We've had such a positive experience," said Gillian Hodges, "for us they totally have become part of our family." In addition to Wimberger, the group included Anna Pointner, Kerstin Hartl, Kathi Gahleitner and Anika Schuster, all au pairs from Austria that worked at the Hodge's in the past few years through the au pair company Cultural Care Au Pair. During their stay this summer, they all hung out, went to the pool, ordered pizzas, went on a night bike ride in Washington, D.C. and just did regular activities that screamed American. "We try to introduce them to the American culture," Hodges said.

WIMBERGER is the au pair that's staying for the next year, and she arrived July 9. "I wanted to see the U.S." she said, and from what she's seen through the media, the country has been pretty much what she expected. Although she's never experienced child care to this extent, "I have a lot of fun with the kids and family, so it's not tough for me," she said. Before coming over, Wimberger talked her best friend into it, and it worked out for the best. "My best friend Jana came here and she lives next door," she said. The family next door is the brother of Gillian Hodge, so there is a close family connection.

Gillian was first exposed to the au pair culture as a child when she was cared for by an au pair from the Netherlands. She now teaches at a nearby country school and works part-time at Culture Care helping other families with their au pair experience. Her husband Yuctan works in finance, and sees it as a positive experience all around, financially and culturally.



The au pair reunion brought Kerstin Hartl, left, Anna Pointner, Anika Schuster, Kathi Gahleitner, and Lena Wimberger to McLean this summer.

It's been such a good experience, the Hodge family is travelling to Austria next year to be in the wedding of a former au pair Anika Schuster.

"The kids will be in the wedding, both our girls will be flower girls and our son will be the ring bearer even though he will be a little older," said Gillian Hodges.

The au pairs typically benefit from the experience too. After the stay in the U.S., the au pairs return to their home countries and many are sought after in careers that require fluency in English, according to the Culture Care representative Skye McIvor.

THE PROGRAM has provided childcare to more than 130,000 families around the country, and is designed to give young people an opportunity to experience the U.S., McIvor said. Au pairs, who are young adults (both women and men) between the ages of 18-26, can live in the country for up to two years on a J-1 visa, she said.

"Our au pairs come from over 20 different countries - Germany, Brazil, Italy, Austria, Thailand, South Africa, France, and Sweden are just a sampling," she said.

Annually, an au pair from Cultural Care Au Pair costs the host family \$19,053.25, and a portion of that is paid to the au pair in cash every week, according to company information on the website.

This is comparable to structured childcare for more than one child, said Yuctan Hodge. "I'm a big fan of the cultural exchange."

BULLETIN

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

REGISTRATION OPEN

Girls on the Run Fall 2018 season will begin the week of Sept. 24. The program serves approximately 5,000 girls annually with over 900 volunteer coaches throughout the Northern Virginia region. Fall 2018 registration and team sites for Girls on the Run of NOVA, visit www.gotrnova.org.

VOTER REGISTRATION AND ID EVENTS

The Fairfax County Office of Elections (12000 Government Center Parkway Suite 323, Fairfax) is open daily during normal business hours to provide county residents the opportunity to register to vote or obtain a free voter photo ID if needed. Applicants will need to complete a photo voter ID application, have a photo taken and sign a digital signature pad. Call 703-222-0776.

The following special events will also provide opportunity to register to vote and/or get a photo Virginia Voter card.

- Monday/Sept. 24, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Goodwin House Bailey's Crossroads, 3440 South Jefferson Street, Falls Church.
- Thursday/Sept. 27, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Lewinsville Retirement Residence, 1515 Great Falls Street, McLean.
- Tuesday/Oct. 9, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Arleigh Burke Pavilion at Vinson Hall Retirement Community, 1739 Kirby Road, McLean.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide is looking to expand its team of volunteers for the upcoming tax season. Tax-Aide, now in its 51st year, offers free in-person preparation and assistance to anyone, especially those 50 and older, who can't afford a tax preparation service. To learn about volunteer opportunities, visit aarpfoundation.org/taxaide or call 1-888-OUR-AARP (1-888-687-2277).

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. 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).

AUG. 26-SEPT. 9

Pool Closure: Providence RECenter. Four Fairfax County Park Authority RECenter pools will be closing for regular, periodic cleaning and maintenance next month. Consider trying out another county pool during the temporary shutdown. RECenter passes are valid at all nine Park Authority RECenters. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/recenter

AUG. 27-SEPT. 23

Pool Closure: Spring Hill RECenter. Four Fairfax County Park Authority RECenter pools will be closing for regular, periodic cleaning and maintenance next month. Consider trying out another county pool during the temporary shutdown. RECenter passes are valid at all nine Park Authority RECenters. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/recenter

THURSDAY/SEPT. 6

Capital Region Business Forum. 7:30-9:30 a.m. at Hilton McLean Tysons Corner, 7920 Jones Branch Drive, McLean. Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam, Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan and D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser. Visit www.bot.org/upcomingevents/dmvmvforum for more.

Public Hearing. 7 p.m. in the Oaks Room at Twin Lakes Golf Course, 6201 Union Mill Road, Clifton. The Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) and the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NOVA Parks) will hold a joint public hearing on the proposed adoption of an amendment to Park Regulation Section 1.17, Remote-Control Devices and Powered Models or Toys. The full text of the proposed amendment is available at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/model-aircrafts-drones. Anyone wishing to speak on this subject may call Judy Pedersen, FCPA Public Information Officer, at 703-324-8662 or email parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov, to be placed on the Speakers' List.

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Poise Under Pressure - Or Not



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I don't want to self-indulge too much, but given the potentially life-changing seriousness of my upcoming Sept. 26 CT scan, I'm having a little trouble getting myself started in the morning - and throughout the day also, if you must know the truth? (I realize you all have your own lives to lead so that last sentence-ending question was more rhetorical than actual.)

Nevertheless, if you're still reading, you're still interested so I'll try to string together some "insightful commentary and thoughtful humor," (an original characterization of my columns) to keep you on the page. Although, given the subject of this week's column, it might be hard to tiptoe through the tulips.

The difficulty I'm having is being unable to ignore, "totally," (my mother loved to mimic the generation that popularized that word) the reality of my situation.

Typically, I've been able to maintain a relative calm and detached disposition as I go from one cancer-related thing to another. None of the tasks I must perform or the responsibilities I've assimilated into a routine (24-hour urine collection, pre-chemotherapy lab work, chemotherapy, quarterly CT scans, annual brain MRI, quarterly appointments with my oncologist, have changed who I like to think I am compared to who I was pre-cancer diagnosis, 2/27/09; despite having the weight of a "terminal" diagnosis/original "13 month to two year" prognosis on my shoulders/literally in my lungs.

To quote Popeye the Sailor Man: "I y'am who I y'am." (And I still don't like spinach, certainly not out of a can.)

And though I've done a pretty good job of flicking these flakes of pressure and anxiety off my shoulders like unwanted dandruff, the fact is - as with dandruff shampoo or any other personal hygiene product for that matter - unless one is diligent, vigilant and cognizant of its likely recurrence, nothing will change.

Unfortunately, cancer doesn't quite react that way. It will change and it can overwhelm even your best efforts and can cause harm not only internally but externally as well (emotionally). Fending off these emotional pressures is challenging and dare I say, presents as many problems as the growth and movement of one's tumors and the side effects of one's treatment does.

What makes my present situation feel different and a bit off-putting is that what has happened has happened after nearly five years of relative peace and quiet (I was never characterized as in "remission," by the way). It seems the possibility of having to go back, so to speak, and return to the scene of the crime - against my body/life expectancy; and moreover, having to restart the process, ratchets up the stress to previously unknown heights.

And part of me is wondering (worrying actually) if I'm up to the challenge again, emotionally and of course, physically as well; whether my body can sustain the damage its likely to experience if we have to reload.

I use the word 'reload' for a reason. Without invoking too many war metaphors, being diagnosed with cancer is like being drafted into the Army, except you have little training for the battles you're about to fight. And as much as fighting against cancer is a battle, it's more a war against attrition in which the bad guys (cancer) regularly defeat the good guys (people diagnosed with cancer). In general, the cancer experience is no picnic.

It reminds me of a long-ago M*A*S*H episode in which the doctors operated through a particularly difficult surgical session after which Henry (Lt. Col. Blake) and "Hawkeye" (Capt. Pierce) went outside the operating room/tent for some relief. "Hawkeye" clearly agitated over a patient he couldn't save; Henry tried to offer him some comfort with the following words: "There are certain rules about war. And rule number one is young men die. And rule number two is, doctors can't change rule number one."

What scares me about cancer is, it follows no rules and like war, leaves devastation in its wake. I just hope I'm not about to be another casualty.

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



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