

Great Falls CONNECTION

A life well-lived in pictures. Photos from the life of Kathleen J. Murphy, beloved community activist in Great Falls, were displayed at the celebration of her life at Christ the King Lutheran Church. Murphy died on Jan. 2, 2019.

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Education Issues Take Center Stage

Constituents tell lawmakers to increase teacher pay; pass ERA, \$15 minimum wage and more.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

Teachers deserve a pay raise, and Virginia desperately needs to hire more school counselors. These were two of the most prevalent concerns voiced by constituents to members of the Fairfax County legislative delegation, the largest in the Virginia General Assembly.

During a marathon public hearing at the Fairfax County Government Center last weekend, lawmakers heard about everything from raising the minimum wage to reducing restrictions on solar power. But it was the coordinated push for education funding that remained a common theme, as one speaker after the next called on members of the House of Delegates and state Senate to invest an expected windfall of new revenue into the classroom.

“K-12 funding is again our top priority for this legislative session,” said Fairfax Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova, speaking at her last public hearing before stepping down at the end of 2019 from a position she’s held since 2009. “We have over 55,000 students receiving free-or reduced price lunch, over 36,000 students learning English as a second language and over 26,000 students receiving special education services. We need adequate funding to provide services for these higher need students.”

Gov. Ralph Northam has signaled that education funding will be one of his top priorities this year too, a move largely prompted by a \$300 million windfall of new revenue from the Trump tax cuts. Because changes at the federal level create new incentives for high-income earners to take a standard deduction rather than itemizing, that means more state tax filers will be taking a standard deduction rather than itemizing — creating a new pot of money for lawmakers to spend. At the top of the agenda is a 5 percent raise for Virginia teachers.

“Obviously the governor’s budget seeks to retain the best educator workforce,” said Melanie Meren, a candidate for the Hunter Mill District on the Fairfax County School Board. “And that means pay increases for teachers.”

AFTER THE PARKLAND shooting last year, Republican leaders in the House created a select committee on school safety to come up with recommendations to increase school safety. The group did not consider any new firearm restrictions, choosing instead to look at hardening school facilities and creating a new tip line allowing students to alert authorities about potential problems. One of the key recom-



Speaking at her last legislative public hearing as chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Sharon Bulova told lawmakers her top priority is funding for schools.



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL LEE POPE/THE CONNECTION

SEIU512 President David Broder asked lawmakers to support raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour and ensuring workers have access to paid family leave.

“K-12 funding is again our top priority for this legislative session.”

—Fairfax Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova

mendations of the committee is reducing administrative duties of school counselors, freeing them up from duties like administering standardized tests. The committee did not recommend hiring any new school counselors though, even though Virginia falls far short of the recommended ratio of one counselor for every 250 students. That would cost about \$86 million, and Northam has a three-year plan to start moving toward that goal by spending \$36 million this year.

“Governor Northam recently said that our school counselors are the ears of the education system,” said Laura Jane Cohn, a candidate for the Springfield District of the Fairfax County School Board. “They are indeed the ears that hear about bullying and trouble at home.”

Specifics of one of the governor’s budget proposal that is troubling school officials here is to increase funding for a pool of money known as the “at-risk add-on,” a way to increase funding for school divisions with a high percentage of students who live in poverty. Although Fairfax County has 55,000 students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch, that’s only 29 percent of the student population — far below the statewide average of 41 percent. So the governor’s plan to add \$35 million to the at-risk add-on would not benefit Fairfax County.

“Because the at-risk add-on is based on division-wide percentages of poverty rather than our actual numbers of eligible students, Fairfax is disadvantaged by its overall size,” said School Board Chairwoman Karen Corbett Sanders.

HELPING LOW-WAGE workers was an-

other theme to emerge from the five-hour hearing. Several speakers from the Service Employees International Union 512 spoke about raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, ensuring workers have access to paid family leave and removing what they see as unnecessary restrictions on workers who want to unionize. They also spoke in favor of making the Earned Income Tax fully refundable. Virginia is one of the few states that does not make its earned income tax credit refundable, which harms families earning less than \$50,000 a year.

“The truth is that many working people across our community are struggling,” said David Broder, president of SEIU512. “The fastest growing jobs are often low-wage and lack basic benefits such as health care, paid leave and retirement plans.”

Carpenter Jose Frias appeared before lawmakers to urge them to take action against wage theft. Virginia is one of the few states that does not allow workers who are victims of wage theft to receive lawyers fees, which harms low-wage workers who would otherwise have no way to pay for a lawyer. Maryland allows for triple damages, and D.C. allows quadruple damages plus legal fees. But in Virginia, people who have not received all the money coming to them have a hard time finding a lawyer willing to work for free.

“Pass laws that give us the right to private cause of action,” said Frias. “We need these tools to defend our jobs and provide for our families.”

SEVERAL SPEAKERS urged lawmakers to scale back recently passed restrictions on homeowners who rent out their

houses short term through services like Airbnb.

Other speakers called for instituting universal background checks for people who purchase weapons at gun shows.

A handful of people arrived at the government center to ask lawmakers to “close the puppy mill loophole,” a legislative effort to create new restrictions on businesses that sell animals.

One speaker urged lawmakers to reject efforts to fork over up to \$1.1 billion worth of incentives to Amazon.

“This deal was conducted without any public input, and so this deal has no mandate,” said Helen Li, a Fairfax County resident who is part of a group known as For Us Not Amazon. “Please fight for a fair process instead of rubber-stamping a secret business deal that was made without Virginia residents in mind.”

Lawmakers also heard from several speakers on both sides of the Equal Rights Amendment. After Illinois became the 37th state to pass the ERA last year, advocates for and against started targeting Virginia as the potential 38th state — the magic number needed to put the ERA over the top and add it to the Constitution.

Arthur Purves of the Fairfax County Taxpayers Alliance raised concerns that the ERA might “make men’s and women’s bathrooms unconstitutional.” Many more speakers, though, said it was long past time for Virginia to join the other states that have approved the amendment.

“We have a historic opportunity this year to ratify the ERA and get it passed and include women in the Constitution of the United States as equal,” said Shyamali Hauth, a veteran who is active in Democratic politics. “I ask you to do the right thing and ensure equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex — those are the exact words of the Equal Rights Amendment.”

OPINION

Wish List

Things this session of the General Assembly, beginning Jan. 9., could/should accomplish.

Before this session, every year for the better part of a decade, the most profound wish for the Virginia General Assembly session was the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, which could provide healthcare to as many as 400,000 poor Virginians who otherwise were living without coverage. Partisan obstruction prevented those people from gaining coverage for many years.

But coverage began this month for 200,000 new enrollees after Medicaid expansion came to Virginia in the last session. It arrived with the November 2017 election and Democrats taking 15 additional seats in Virginia's House of Delegates. The prospect for more awaits in this November's election with all seats in the General Assembly, both the House of Delegates and the Senate, on the ballot.

So we'll begin this year's wish list with gratitude that the entire Commonwealth, including the economy, will be healthier for provid-

COMMENTARY

ing healthcare to the previously uninsured. And a wish that we not complicate the coverage with work-reporting requirements. Please.

So in the new era of new hope for action in the General Assembly, here are some (not so modest) wishes for this session, acknowledging that some may wait another year for serious consideration.

- ❖ Establish a nonpartisan redistricting commission. This is urgent, as the General Assembly would have to act in this session to get a constitutional amendment on the ballot in time for a commission to be ready for redistricting after the 2020 census.

- ❖ Greater transparency everywhere. Move to allow fewer, not more, FOIA exemptions. Require that a reason be given for any FOIA denial.

- ❖ End suspension of driver's licenses for non-payment of court costs and fines.

- ❖ Pass the Equal Rights Amendment.

- ❖ Fund Community Services Board budgets.

Expand Medicaid waivers; clear the waiting list.

- ❖ Fund education fairly, Northern Virginia needs more help.

- ❖ Restrict predatory lending.

- ❖ Think about reform and civil rights when considering bills on law enforcement.

- ❖ Protect LGBT rights

- ❖ Involve local officials in fixing proffer regulation.

- ❖ Implement no-excuse absentee voting.

- ❖ Limit large campaign contributions.

- ❖ Prohibit personal use of campaign funds.

- ❖ Require reporting on solitary confinement.

- ❖ Push jails and prisons to adopt best practices for prisoners with mental health issues.

- ❖ Provide a tax credit for family caregivers, with income limits if needed.

Comments? Additions? Email editors@connectionnewspapers.com

There is an infinite amount of information at virginiageneralassembly.gov Click on "members and session" for quick links.

— MARY KIMM

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Claude Moore Colonial Farm Closed

Friends, Volunteers and Visitors:

The Claude Moore Colonial Farm at Turkey Run closed forever on Friday, Dec. 21, 2018. The Friends of the Claude Moore Colonial Farm at Turkey Run would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the millions of visitors to the Farm over the years. In addition, we deeply value the invaluable time and talents of thousands of adult and youth volunteers and the financial and in-kind contributions of our many benefactors.

The Board of the Friends will be taking some time during the holiday season to rest and reflect on the accomplishments of our volunteers and supporters for these last 37 years. When the New Year dawns we will be continuing our mission of history, agricultural and environmental living educational programs in another location. Please continue to follow us on our social media sites for updates.

The Friends of the Claude Moore Colonial Farm at Turkey Run,

which has operated the Farm for these last 37 years, is no longer fundraising or accepting donations. Any individual or organization purporting to raise money in the name of Claude Moore or the Claude Moore Colonial Farm is doing so under false pretenses. The Farm will not reopen at its former site in McLean under any name associated with Claude Moore or the Claude Moore Colonial Farm so any claims to the contrary from any party, including the National Park Service, are false.

The National Park Service has stated that it intends to hold community meetings to discuss future uses of the site. The Friends of the Claude Moore Colonial Farm at Turkey Run will not be involved in those discussions, although we encourage our former volunteers and supporters within the community to make your voices heard.

The Friends of the Claude Moore Colonial Farm at Turkey Run
www.1771.org

Public Safety Drones? Public Input Wanted

The Fairfax County Unmanned Aircraft Systems program will provide an enhanced level of operational capability, safety and situational awareness for first responders, other approved participating agencies, and decision-makers with high quality imagery, data, and customized geospatial solutions using unmanned aircraft while continuing to maintain the public trust.

Fairfax County is developing a comprehensive Public Safety Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) program and would like to hear from residents on what they think. We are hosting six public information meetings located throughout Fairfax County.

The draft program is designed to support a variety of government mission types including:

- ❖ Search and rescue
- ❖ Flooding assessments
- ❖ Pre- and post-disaster damage assessments
- ❖ Crash reconstruction

- ❖ Fire incident/scene management and investigations

- ❖ Hazardous materials responses

- ❖ Wildlife estimation

The draft UAS program would not be used:

- ❖ To conduct random surveillance activities

- ❖ To target a person based solely on individual characteristics, such as, but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, religion or disability

- ❖ To harass, intimidate or discriminate against any individual or group

- ❖ To conduct personal business or any other unauthorized use

Each public information meeting will include a static display of unmanned aircraft followed by a presentation outlining the program. After the presentation, there will be an opportunity to ask questions from representatives of the Office of Emergency Management, County Attorney's Office, Police

and Fire and Rescue Department. The formal presentation will begin at 7 p.m.

To find out more about the UAS program go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/uas. The draft public safety UAS program manual is located there along with a link to the email account.

Please send your feedback or questions to uas@fairfaxcounty.gov or through the link located on the UAS webpage. Written comments on the draft program must be received by the close of business Feb. 8, 2019 to be included in the official public record.

- ❖ Jan. 14, 2019 (6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.), Mason District Governmental Center (Community Room), 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale, VA 22003

- *Jan. 16, 2019 (6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.), South County Governmental Center (Room 221C), 8350 Richmond Highway, Alexandria, VA 22309

- ❖ Jan. 23, 2019 (6:30 P.M. – 8:30 p.m.), McLean District Governmental Center, 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean, VA 22101

- ❖ Jan. 24, 2019 (6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.), Sully District Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd, Chantilly, VA 20151

- ❖ Jan. 28, 2019 (6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.), Reston Community Center – Hunter Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston, VA 20191

- ❖ Jan. 30, 2019 (6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.), Braddock Hall – Kings Park Library, 9002 Burke Lake Road, Burke, VA 22015

Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Send to:

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NEWS

Celebrating a Life Well-lived

Community gathers to bid farewell to Kathleen Murphy.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

Kathleen J. Murphy lived a life of accomplishments, interests, faith and family devotion and service to the community. Surrounded by her loved ones, the resident of Great Falls died on Wednesday, Jan. 2, at the age of 71.

On Saturday, family, friends, colleagues, and the many whose lives were touched and enriched by knowing the community activist, gathered at Christ the King Lutheran Church on Georgetown Pike in Great Falls to pay their respects at a viewing, followed by a Celebration of Life service.

Murphy was born the oldest of six children in New York City. Armed with a BA in Sociology from Marymount Manhattan College, a Masters degree from New York University and immeasurable intelligence and a curiosity about everything and everyone around her, she built a career as a management consultant that spanned three decades and included domestic and international assignments for firms such as McKinsey & Company, Andersen Consulting, Hagler Bailey in Arlington (which brought her to her adopted home of Northern Virginia) and CSC in Falls Church.

Somehow, in between job responsibilities and the work of being wife to Konstantine Tsombikos and mother to sons William and John and daughter Marika, and authoring 14 publications, Murphy began to employ her energy and talents to the betterment of her Great Falls community and the surrounding area.

From 2011 to 2017, Murphy served as the president of the Great Falls Historical Society. With the Great Falls Citizens Association, Murphy chaired the Long-Range Planning and Development Committee from 2006-2011, dedicated to preserving the semi-rural character of Great Falls while working to make the changes needed to keep the community healthy and vibrant.

MURPHY HELPED SHAPE the future of the community with her work on the Great Falls Vision Project and the Great Falls 2020 Vision Plan, as well as her membership on the Dranesville District Task Force.

Dranesville Supervisor John Foust was a friend and often had occasion to work with Murphy. At the viewing, he said that she was “a real force and a champion of the community and the people in it. She will be missed by so many. She will be missed by me.”

Her family noted that among Murphy’s most loved projects was her involvement with the Great Falls Community Farm Market, serving as its manager from 2012 until her death. With her team, Murphy strove to revive the space and create a village atmosphere where neighbors could come together not only to purchase local products



FAMILY PHOTO

Kathleen Murphy

“Her soul was the most beautiful thing I ever knew.”

— Daughter Marika Tsombikos

and healthy fare and enjoy a morning of music and other entertainment, but meet and greet each other and strengthen their bonds of community.

At the viewing, it was stories of Murphy in each of these roles that dominated the conversation. After paying their respects, it was laughter and happy reminiscing that outweighed the tears for this first portion of the gathering. Friends shared favorite memories of their times with Kathleen, as they stood before a table laden with pictures from her life, from childhood to recent days.

But the tears did come as the casket was finally escorted into the church proper, with her family as pallbearers and lead by the sounds of a Scottish bagpiper.

MURPHY’S DAUGHTER Marika Tsombikos gave the main remarks, focusing not on Murphy’s many accomplishments or even on her service to the community, but simply as “Mom” and the life lessons she taught to all her family, to friends and colleagues, “even strangers were included in the circle of her light.”

Murphy will never meet the granddaughter that Marika will be bringing into the world in April. “And she was so excited to get to meet you,” said Marika, who vowed to raise her daughter as she was raised, “to find the wonder and goodness in the world and the people around you.”

“Her soul was the most beautiful thing I ever knew,” said Tsombikos, adding that her mother was known as someone who could “see the talents and strength in others even before they could themselves.”

“That was the common thread I heard from everyone I spoke to about her,” agreed Rev. Henry Langknecht, Pastor at Christ the King Church who presided over the celebratory services. “Each one eventually said the same thing. Kathleen was that rare person who could find your talent, draw it out, and give you confidence.”

Kathleen Murphy will be interred in her native New York, but her impact on her adopted home of Great Falls will long be felt.

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HomeLifeStyle

Beyond The Resolution

Keeping a home in order all year long.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

For those who resolved to keep a neater, cleaner home in the new year, the issue of how to keep it that way through December can be challenging. After the excitement of the fresh start that January offers, the reality of one's day-to-day life emerges. How to keep that newly purged closet neat when rushing to get to a meeting on time? By February, that cleaned-out sports bin might look a bomb went off at Modell's. From shredding or recycling unwanted mail each day to loading the dishwasher after each meal, adopting a few daily cleaning tips can help maintain that tidy home all year long.

"In general, I recommend keeping up with household duties on a daily basis so none of them become a bigger project," said professional organizer Susan Unger of Clutter SOS.

One of the most basic tasks is making one's bed first thing in the morning. "I think that kick starts you into cleaning and organizing mode and sets the tone for the day," said Preston Taylor of From Chaos to Order. "I also recommend keeping a dust cloth nearby so that you can give your dresser and nightstand a quick dust off so dust accumulation would be one less thing you have to worry about."

Piles of clothing, whether clean or dirty can accumulate quickly and send a home in into disarray. Dedicating five to 10 minutes every evening to rehang clothes and separating items that need to



Wiping down bathroom showers, sinks and counters each day can help keep a home tidy all year long.

PHOTO BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG

be dry cleaned can help prevent a backlog. "Be sure to put all clothes away on a daily basis rather than leaving in a chair or floor," said Unger. "Clean clothes should be hung up or put in drawers and dirty clothes in the laundry basket."

Taylor recommends tackling laundry every evening if necessary. "If you start a load when you first arrive

home from work, you will have time to dry and even fold it before you go to bed, so you're not faced with a mountain of dirty clothes at the end of week," said Taylor.

When it comes to the bathroom, brief, daily attention to detail can keep dirt from spiraling out of control. Rehanging towels, and then wiping it down one's shower each time you take a shower are suggestions from Carmen Garcia of CG Green Clean. "Keep

a container of disinfecting wipes in your bathroom and wipe down your counters and sink before going to bed each evening," she said. "Also each night, add a squirt of toilet cleaner to your toilet bowl, wipe down the seat and then flush the toilet. It takes less than five minutes to do all of this but you'd be amazed at the difference it makes at the end of the week, especially in children's bathrooms."

"If you start a load when you first arrive home from work, you will have time to dry and even fold it before you go to bed, so you're not faced with a mountain of dirty clothes at the end of week."

— Preston Taylor of From Chaos to Order

After Holiday Visits, Some Questions

Recognizing signs, early detection empowers families to plan for the future.

Holiday visits with family members or friends not seen as frequently during the year may raise questions about their cognitive health. Although some change in cognitive ability can occur with age, serious memory problems are not a part of normal aging. The Alzheimer's Association encourages anyone who has a question or concern about the state of an aging family member or friend to call its free 24-hour Helpline, 800-272-3900. Recognizing the difference can help identify when it may be time for a loved one to see a doctor. The Alzheimer's Association has a check list of warning signs, along with examples of normal aging. Every individual may experience one or more of the warning signs in different degrees.

- ❖ Memory loss that disrupts daily life.
- ❖ Challenges in planning or solving problems. \

❖ Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at leisure.

❖ Confusion with time or place.

❖ Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships.

❖ New problems with words in speaking or writing.

❖ Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps.

❖ Decreased or poor judgment.

❖ Withdrawal from work or social activities.

❖ Changes in mood and personality.

Although the onset of Alzheimer's disease cannot yet be stopped or reversed, an early diagnosis is an important step in getting appropriate treatment, care and support services allows people with dementia and their families. For more information, visit the Alzheimer's Association web site at alz.org or call their toll-free 24/7 Helpline at 800-272-3900.

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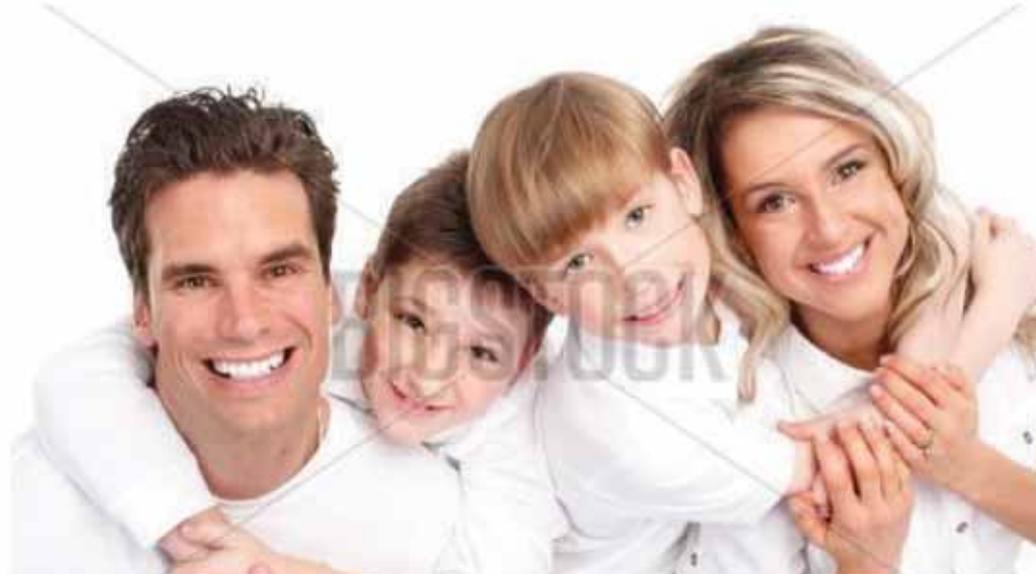


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MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY! Run for a Seat on the McLean Community Center Governing Board



PUBLIC NOTICE OF ELECTIONS MCLEAN COMMUNITY CENTER GOVERNING BOARD SMALL DISTRICT 1A OF THE DRANESVILLE DISTRICT FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA



This **OFFICIAL NOTICE** of elections to select members of the 2018-2019 Governing Board of the McLean Community Center (the Governing Board) is given to residents of Small District 1A of the Dranesville District, Fairfax County, Virginia (referred to as "Small District 1A"). The McLean Community Center (MCC) operates as a Special District Agency of the Fairfax County Government through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the Governing Board. On February 8, 1984, the Board of Supervisors approved the Memorandum of Understanding, which authorizes the elections. The MCC is funded by residents of Small District 1A in Greater McLean for their use through a real estate tax surcharge, the result of a 1970 Small District 1A bond referendum.

Elections are held on **McLean Day** at Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road, McLean, Virginia. This year, McLean Day is on **Saturday, May 19, 2018. Voting on McLean Day takes place from 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

Candidate Qualifications:

Each resident who lives within Small District 1A is eligible to run for a seat on the Governing Board within the appropriate category. If you need help determining whether you reside in Small District 1A, please contact the MCC at 703-790-0123, or by emailing elections@mcleancenter.org.

ADULTS: Candidates must be residents of Small District 1A and must be at least eighteen (18) years of age on or before May 19, 2018.

TEENS: Candidates must be 15, 16, or 17 years old on or before May 19, 2018, live within Small district 1A, and live in the boundary area for either Langley or McLean high schools. You **do not** have to attend either high school. You may attend another school, including one that is outside of Small District 1A, or you may be home schooled. You can only run for the seat representing the high school boundary area where you live.

Available Governing Board Seats and Terms:

Three (3) adult Governing Board seats will be filled through the election. The candidates who receive the three (3) highest numbers of votes will serve three-year terms on the Governing Board.

One (1) Governing Board youth seat for teens living within the Langley High School boundary area will be filled for a one-year term.

One (1) Governing Board youth seat for teens living within the McLean High School boundary area will be filled for a one-year term.

Candidate Petitions Requirements:

ADULTS: Must get the signatures of ten (10) residents of Small District 1A who are 18 years old or older on or before May 19, 2018.

TEENS: Must get the signatures of ten (10) residents of Small District 1A who are 15, 16, or 17 years old on or before

May 19, 2018, and who live within the same high school boundary area as the candidate.

Petition Packets containing a petition, instructions, and all pertinent paperwork may be obtained at the McLean Community Center Administrative Office, 6631 Old Dominion Drive, McLean, Virginia, 22101. Candidates must pick up and return their own petitions.

DEADLINE: Each resident seeking election to the Governing Board shall file a completed petition with the MCC at the address shown below by **5 p.m. on Friday, March 16, 2018:**

**McLean Community Center Administrative Office
6631 Old Dominion Drive
McLean VA 22101**

For more information about the elections, please call 703-790-0123, go to www.mcleancenter.org/about/candidates, or email the MCC at elections@mcleancenter.org.

Kat Kehoe, Chair
Elections & Nominations Committee
McLean Community Center Governing Board

NOTICE: Due to the ongoing renovation of the Ingleside Avenue facility, MCC has temporarily relocated to the McLean Square Shopping Center. The majority of MCC's classes will be held at 6645 Old Dominion Dr., McLean, VA 22101. MCC's administrative offices are located at 6631 Old Dominion Dr. (on the first floor of the Century 21 New Millennium building).

ENTERTAINMENT

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

FRIDAY/JAN. 11

The Old Firehouse 5th and 6th Grader Parties. 7-9 p.m. at The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. The Snow Ball – these popular parties are themed and the Old Firehouse is decorated accordingly. Participants will enjoy free catered food and beverages, an open dance floor with music played by a popular DJ and a variety of party attractions. \$35/\$25 MCC district residents. Preregistration is highly recommended. Call 703-448-8336 or visit mcleancenter.org/teens.

SATURDAY/JAN. 12

NVMR Model Train Open House. 1-5 p.m. At Vienna Train Station, 231 Dominion Road, NE, Vienna. The NVMR open house has model trains and trolley activities that realistically depict an actual railroad that existed in North Carolina in the 1950s, the Western North Carolina (WNC). Locomotive, rail car, and town industry in this layout is modeled after those places and things as they looked in that era. Thomas and Friends are there, too. Visit www.nvmr.org.

AAUW Presents Dr. Dwandalyn Reece. 2 p.m. (doors open at 1:30) at Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. Dr. Dwandalyn Reece is Curator of Music and Performing Arts at National Museum of African American Culture and History. Reece created the museum's award-winning inaugural exhibition, Musical Crossroads, and co-curated the grand opening music festival, Freedom Sounds: A Community Celebration. The public is invited. Free. Visit vienna-va.aauw.net/ for more.

Klondike Campfire Cookout. 3:30-5 p.m. at Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. How did Native Americans prepare a meal in the middle of the winter cold in ages past? Find out while making a own meal at the "Klondike Campfire Cookout" at Riverbend Park. Prepare a winter meal using colonial and indigenous cooking techniques around a campfire. Food and drink are provided. Bring a flashlight and wear warm clothes. \$15 per person. Call 703-759-9018 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend.

Astronomy Festival. 5-8 p.m. at Turner Farm, 925 Springvale Road, Great Falls. After the sun sets, soak up some starshine at an "Astronomy Festival" that will include guided stargazing and telescope viewing. Listen to ancient stories about the constellations around the campfire,

and participate in other activities and games throughout the evening. \$8 per person. Hot chocolate and snacks will be available for purchase. Canceled if it rains or snows. Call 703-324-8618 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/turner-farm.

MONDAY-TUESDAY/JAN. 14-15

Audition for "Winnie-the-Pooh." 7-9 p.m. at The Alden, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The Alden in McLean is holding open auditions for its spring production, "Winnie-the-Pooh;" call backs will be held from 7-9 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 16. Walk-ins are welcome if space permits, but it is recommended to schedule an audition in advance by emailing Danielle.VanHook@fairfaxcounty.gov. Call 703-790-0123, TTY: 711, or visit www.aldentheatre.org for more.

FRIDAY/JAN. 18

"Dining With Dorothy." 12:30 p.m. At Westwood Country Club, 800 Maple Ave., E, Vienna. Join with friends or make new ones. Newcomers are always welcome. To reserve a space, contact event chair, Dorothy Flood at dflood1706@gmail.com.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/JAN. 18-19

"Peter Pan." 8 p.m. at Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St., SE, Vienna. Presented by the Vienna Theatre Company and Vienna Department of Parks and Recreation. In this adaptation, based on the original J.M. Barrie script, Peter will be portrayed as a girl by a female actress. The dynamics change, but the story remains the same. General admission is \$14. Tickets may be purchased online at www.viennatheatrecompany.com/ordering-tickets-online/, in advance at the Vienna Community Center or at the door by cash, credit card or check prior to each to each performance (if seats are still available). Visit www.viennatheatrecompany.com.

SATURDAY/JAN. 19

Nova Polar Plunge. Noon at the Mosaic District in Fairfax. Get set to get wet at the NOVA Polar Plunge Festival benefiting Special Olympics Virginia. Costume contest for the fanciest plungers, free hot drinks to warm everyone up and tons of shops and restaurants to visit nearby. Plunges will take place into icy above ground pools on the corner of District Avenue and Penny Lane starting at 1 p.m. It's \$100 to Plunge and those who raise \$300 will get a nice warm towel to dry off with. The 2019 NOVA Polar Plunge is presented by



Annual Salzman Lecture

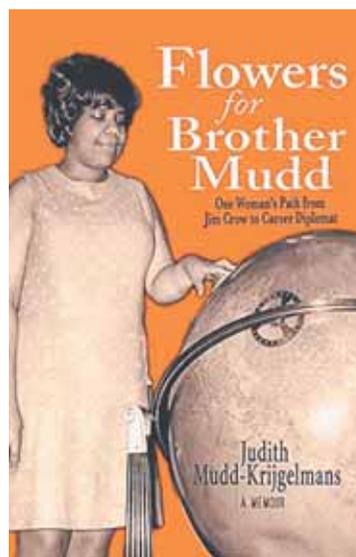
This year's speaker will be Susan Wharton Gates, PhD, author of "Days of Slaughter: Inside the Fall of Freddie Mac – and Why It Could Happen Again." She will share experiences and insights as a former vice president of public policy at Freddie Mac in the lead up to the 30-percent collapse of house prices and subsequent government takeover of her company in 2008. The Salzman lecture series was established in 1998 to honor the memory of Lewinsville elder and outstanding Presbyterian layman, Howard Salzman. Sunday, Jan. 13, 6 p.m. in the Sanctuary at Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Visit lewinsville.org.

the Fairfax County Police. Register to plunge right up until plunging starts. Visit www.polarplunge.com/mosaic-district/ or call Ellen Head at 703-359-4301, ext. 1, for more. Visit www.specialolympicsva.org.

Better Angels Workshop. 1:30-4 p.m. at Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. How to Talk Across the Political Divide: Learn tips on how to listen to and respectfully talk with people you disagree with on political issues. It's not about persuading, it's about hearing each other. This workshop involves roleplaying with someone of the same political persuasion; independents choose a side for the sake of practice. Registration requested. Call 703-938-0405 or visit librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/4543251.

SUNDAY/JAN. 20

Breakfast Buffet. 8 a.m.-noon. at Vienna American Legion Post 180, 330 Center St., N., Vienna. A Breakfast Buffet will be offered by the Vienna American Legion. Adults



Author Event: Judith Mudd-Krijgelmans

Meet the author of "Flowers for Brother Mudd: One Woman's Path from Jim Crow to Career Diplomat." Learn how a girl from Louisville's Smoke Town survived a segregated society and what propelled her to jet across the world for decades in a career chosen at age 16. Books available for sale. Free. Thursday, Jan. 17, 7-8:30 p.m. at Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. Visit librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/4534636.

\$10, children 12 and under \$4. Get omelets, scrambled eggs, blueberry pancakes, bacon, sausage, biscuits and gravy and more. Call 703-938-9535.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration: "Liner Notes." 2 p.m. at The Alden 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. For all ages. Collide with music's past and present through jazz standards, hip-hop samples and actual liner notes from musicians of the civil rights movement in this multimedia concert experience (video). \$25/\$15 MCC district residents. Visit www.mcleancenter.org for more.

Hot Cocoa Party. 3-5 p.m. At Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Take a walk through the winter wonderland with a naturalist and then slip inside to warm up with a hot cocoa party. Listen to some heartwarming winter stories and make a wintry craft to take home. This program is designed for participants age 4-adult. \$15 per person. Call 703-759-9018 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend.

Lunar Eclipse. 9:30 p.m.-12:30 a.m. at Turner Farm, 925 Springvale Road, Great Falls. Experience this total lunar eclipse as you enjoy a campfire, marshmallow roasting and constellation viewings. Get close-up views of the moon, Mars and the stars from the roll-top observatory. The park will stay open until the end of the eclipse. Designed for participants age 6-adult. \$10 per person. For more information visit www.analemma.org. Subject to cancellation based on weather and cloud conditions. Call 703-324-8618 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/turner-farm.

MONDAY/JAN. 21

Live Music: Danny Burns. 7 p.m. at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. Irish Americana songwriter Danny Burns is playing for his record release party. The guest list on the album includes Tift Merritt, Holly Williams, Mindy Smith, Cara Dillon, Sam Bush, Jerry Douglas, Tim O'Brien, Dan Tyminski, Critter Fuqua. \$15. Call 703-255-1566 or visit www.jamminjava.com for more.

TUESDAY/JAN. 22

Live Music: Tyrone Cotton. 7:30 p.m. at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. Tyrone Cotton's earliest musical revelation was listening to the raspy, inspirational voice of his grandfather, the Reverend Cleveland Roosevelt Williams, at his childhood home in Louisville, KY. \$12. Call 703-255-1566 or visit www.jamminjava.com for more.

MCC Governing Board Election. Residents of the center's tax district, Small District 1A-Dranesville, who want to run for a seat on the McLean Community Center's Governing Board can pick up petition forms beginning on Tuesday, Jan. 22. To have their names placed on election ballots, candidates are required to obtain the signatures of 10 McLean tax district residents in their respective categories (either adult or youth). Visit www.mcleancenter.org.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 23

Foreign-Language Film. 1 p.m. At The Alden, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Free admission. Come enjoy foreign films selected by The Alden staff, then stay after for a discussion backstage in The Alden's green room. All movies are shown in the original language with English subtitles. Foreign-language films will be shown at 1 p.m. on the 4th Wednesday of the month through May. These movies are chosen for adult audiences and may contain mature content, language and themes. Visit www.mcleancenter.org.

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REAL ESTATE

What's In Home Sales Numbers?

Year over Year Comparison 2018 to 2017 to 2008 for McLean and Great Falls.

BY KAREN BRISCOE



The statistics for 2018 real estate

transactions in McLean and Great Falls have been tallied. The numbers are down year over year, with 1,096 total transactions compared to 1,214 the previous year. The good news is the market is considerably improved over 2008, a decade ago, which totaled only 749.

The shift in the market is likely due to several reasons.

First, interest rates have bounced around, but are up over historic lows. As interest rates rise, buyer's purchasing power is affected. There can be a positive market effect as buyers have urgency to purchase and lock in their interest rate.

Second, in many price segments inventory levels are low relative to demand. In the lower price points, buyers do not have many choices available. Buyers are faced with several options in those market dynamics. In some cases home purchasers raise their price point, make concessions, or put the move on hold until more choices became available. Some sit on the sidelines and wait for prices to be in line with their purchasing power and/or for more homes to become available.

The midterm elections took place in November of 2019. Given that Northern Virginia is just across the Potomac River from

McLean & Great Falls Annual Market Analysis of Home Sales (Based on List Price):

2018 compared to 2017 and 2008						
2018 Total Sales: 1,096						
Zip Code	>\$3 Mil	\$2-3 Mil	\$1.25-2 Mil	\$1-\$1.25 Mil	\$750k-\$1 Mil	<\$750k
22101	21	45	132	68	161	60
22102	10	14	39	33	50	245
22066	1	5	59	45	75	33
Total:	32	64	230	146	286	338
Combined Total Upper Brackets: 326			Combined Total Lower Brackets: 770			
2017 Total Sales: 1,214						
Zip Code	>\$3 Mil	\$2-3 Mil	\$1.25-2 Mil	\$1-\$1.25 Mil	\$750k-\$1 Mil	<\$750k
22101	20	38	141	93	178	75
22102	10	17	44	31	43	277
22066	5	13	55	55	95	24
Total:	35	68	240	179	316	376
Combined Total Upper Brackets: 343			Combined Total Lower Brackets: 871			
2008 Total Sales: 749						
Zip Code	>\$3 Mil	\$2-3 Mil	\$1.25-2 Mil	\$1-\$1.25 Mil	\$750k-\$1 Mil	<\$750k
22101	14	19	57	38	67	144
22102	10	18	24	7	31	165
22066	4	10	47	28	42	24
Total:	28	47	128	73	140	333
Combined Total Upper Brackets: 203			Combined Total Lower Brackets: 546			

Washington, DC the election cycle has more impact on this market area. Uncertainty in many cases causes buyers to put moving decisions on hold. Now that the elections have concluded, in many cases, the market picks back up.

All brackets have improved considerably in comparison to the 2008 market a decade ago.

Inside the Beltway McLean zip code of 22101 continues to remain the strongest due to the most housing type options and proximity to DC metro center. Outside the Beltway McLean zip code of 22102 offers both condos in the Tysons market as well as estate style houses on large lots. That area is a bit down year over year. Great Falls zip code 22066 remains generally flat year to date 2018 over 2017.

As we move into the new year of 2019, there are strong indications that homes priced well and in good condition will sell for solid prices. If demand continues to remain strong relative to supply, some market segments may experience price appreciation.

Home buyers in the area can still purchase with the confidence that purchasing in an up market cycle frequently proves advantageous over time. Now is the time to work with professional agent to be in your new home in 2019.

Karen Briscoe with HBC Group at Keller Williams is an active and experienced Realtor® in the Northern Virginia marketplace. Karen, alongside her partner Lizzy Conroy and team, works with sellers, buyers, investors and builders in all price ranges. www.HBCGroupKW.com, 703-734-0192, Homes@HBCGroupKW.com.

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

BULLETIN BOARD

INPUT SOUGHT

Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Program.

- Fairfax County is developing a comprehensive Public Safety Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) program and would like to hear from residents. Each of six public information meetings will include a static display of unmanned aircraft followed by a presentation outlining the program. After the presentation, there will be an opportunity to ask questions. The formal presentation will begin at 7 p.m. To find out more about the UAS program go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/uas. Send feedback or questions to uas@fairfaxcounty.gov or through the link located on the UAS webpage. Written comments on the draft program must be received by the close of business Feb. 8, 2019, to be included in the official public record.
- ❖ Thursday, Jan. 14, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Mason District Governmental Center (Community Room), 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale.
 - ❖ Wednesday, Jan. 16, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at South County Governmental

- Center (Room 221C), 8350 Richmond Highway, Alexandria.
- ❖ Wednesday, Jan. 23, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at McLean District Governmental Center, 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean.
- ❖ Thursday, Jan. 24, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Sully District Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd, Chantilly.
- ❖ Monday, Jan. 28, 2019, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Reston Community Center – Hunter Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road.
- ❖ Wednesday, Jan. 30, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Braddock Hall – Kings Park Library, 9002 Burke Lake Road, Burke.

TUESDAY/JAN. 8-FEB. 19

Workshop Series: Mind in the Making. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services, 2334 Gallows Road, Entrance 1 – Room 100, Dunn Loring. Mind in the Making: The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs by Ellen Galinsky, encompasses an evidence-

- based list of life skills that are essential for children to succeed socially, emotionally and intellectually in the short and long term. Participants may register for one or all of the workshops and do not need to attend the previous class. Registration is limited. Call 703-204-3941 or visit www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center for more or to register.
- ❖ Tuesday, Jan. 8 – Focus and Self Control (part 1)
 - ❖ Tuesday, Jan. 15 – Perspective Taking (part 2)
 - ❖ Tuesday, Jan. 22 – Communicating (part 3)
 - ❖ Tuesday, Jan. 29 – Making Connections (part 4)
 - ❖ Tuesday, Feb. 5 – Critical Thinking (part 5)
 - ❖ Tuesday, Feb. 12 – Taking on Challenges (part 6)
 - ❖ Tuesday, Feb. 19 – Self-Directed, Engaged Learning (part 7)

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

Here's What's Happening at MCC!

Presented by The Alden



Movies for Kids and Families
Wednesday, Jan. 9, 12:30 p.m.
In the Community Hall
Free admission

The Old Firehouse 5th & 6th Grader Party



The Snow Ball
Friday, Jan. 11, 7-9 p.m.
The Old Firehouse
1440 Chain Bridge Rd.
\$35/\$25 MCC district residents

The Alden Spring Production



Open Auditions for "Winnie-the-Pooh"
Mon.-Tues., Jan. 14-15, 7-9 p.m.
For students ages 10-16 who reside in Small District 1A-Dranesville
Contact Danielle.VanHook@fairfaxcounty.gov to schedule an audition time.



Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration "Liner Notes"



Sunday, Jan. 20, 2 p.m.
\$25/\$15 MCC district residents
A moving, multimedia concert experience that delves into the music that powered the civil rights movement.

Presented by The Alden



Midday Movies: Foreign Language Films*
Wednesday, Jan. 23, 1 p.m.
In The Alden Free admission
*These movies are chosen for adult audiences and may contain mature content, language and themes.



The McLean Community Center
www.mcleancenter.org
Home of the Alden Theatre
www.aldentheatre.org
703-790-0123, TTY: 711

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COMMUNITY



Shepherds, Angels, and Wise Men Regale Great Falls Preschool Crowd

More than 50 St. Francis Creche Episcopal Preschool students donned halos, crowns, and shepherd's garb at their annual Christmas pageant. Cows, donkeys, royalty, shepherds, and the Star of the East paraded into the St. Francis sanctuary and sang a variety of carols, closing with a rousing rendition of Jingle Bells. "This is a wonderful way to involve our church school community in the Christmas story — every year's pageant is unique in its own right," says Creche Director Jane Keihn.



WEEK IN GREAT FALLS

Former KGB Agent to Speak at Great Falls Senior Center Event

Jack Platt, of the CIA, and Gennadiy Vasilenko, of the KGB, were assigned to corrupt each other. These two agents were to convince the other into betraying his country during the Cold War but instead became best friends for life.

The Great Falls Senior Center (GFSC) will host KGB agent, Gennadiy Vasilenko, who became friends with the late Jack Platt, a Great Falls resident, to tell their story.

The event will take place on Tuesday, Jan. 15, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the St. Francis Episcopal Church, 9220 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls.

Reservations are required so lunches can be ordered and seating provided for all. Boston Market will be catering this event and the cost is \$10 per person. Contact Polly Fitzgerald at pollyfz1@verizon.com or call 703-759-4345 to reserve your spot.

For more information about the GFSC, visit greatfallsseniorcentergfsc.wildapricot.org/.

Technology Workshop for Seniors

The Great Falls Senior Center (GFSC) and the Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services are teaming up to help seniors better understand the mobile technology world. Experts will help attendees learn how to incorporate smart technology into their homes, including how to use devices such as Amazon's Alexa.

Registration is required. RSVP to gfscitech@gmail.com by Jan. 9.

The event will take place Monday, Jan. 14, 1—3 p.m. at the Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls.

For more information about the Great Falls Senior Center, visit greatfallsseniorcentergfsc.wildapricot.org/

BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 9

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 9

2019 Chairman's Breakfast. 7:30-10 a.m. at The Tower Club, 1700 Towers Crescent Drive, Tysons. Welcome the Tysons Chamber's new Chairman and Board of Directors; hear Community and Business Leaders discuss the future of Tysons and 2019 prosperity initiatives. \$65. Email info@tysonschamber.org, call 703-281-1333, or visit tysonschamber.org/events/details/2019-chairman-s-vip-breakfast-8087.

Active Aging Wellness. 11 a.m.-noon at Oakton Church of the Brethren (near Unity), 10025 Courthouse Road, Vienna. Active Aging Wellness Exercise Class for Older Adults focusing on low impact aerobics, balance, coordination and stretching. Wednesdays, for six weeks, Jan. 9-Feb. 27. \$40 for six week session due at first class, make checks payable to Sun Fitness LLC. Instructor will provide bottled water and towels. Call 703-850-4131 or email eileentarr1@verizon.net for more.

Grant Application Deadline. More than 50 artists have been recognized by ARTSFAIRFAX with an Artist Grant over the past decade. Artist Grants recognize outstanding achievement for work that has already been completed, the artist's commitment to an artistic discipline, their professional activity in Fairfax County and their contributions to the quality of life in Fairfax County. Learn more at ARTSFAIRFAX.org.

THURSDAY/JAN. 10

Adventures in Learning Open House. 10 a.m.-noon at Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, Program Building, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Adventures in Learning winter 2019 classes begin Thursday Jan. 17 and run through March 14. Classes are held at UUCF/Oakton. Students may attend one or all classes for one \$45 fee and are encouraged to create their own schedule – attend classes all day or attend only one class. Students are welcome to sample one class for free. For details call 703-281-0538 or visit www.scov.org/ail-open-house for an application and class schedule.

FRIDAY/JAN. 11

Coping Strategies for Anxious Children. 10 a.m.-noon at Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services, 2334 Gallows Road, Entrance 1 – Room 100, Dunn Loring. The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) will present this workshop for parents of anxious children ages 8-17. Highlights include how to help children with anxiety, when anxiety becomes a disorder, strategies for treating specific anxiety disorders and stress reduction tools. Call 703-204-3941 or visit www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center for more or to register.

SATURDAY/JAN. 12

McLean Area AAUW Branch Meeting. 10 a.m. at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The McLean Area AAUW branch meeting will feature a panel discussion on Title IX. Panelists Dr. Jennifer Hammat, Title IX coordinator at George Mason University and Karen Keys Gammara, at-large Fairfax County School Board member will discuss the history of Title IX and the current status of this important law. Open to the public. Visit mclean-va.aaup.net for more.

TUESDAY/JAN. 15

NARFE Chapter 1116 Meeting. 1 p.m. at the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St. SE, Vienna. NARFE (National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association) Chapter 1116 (Vienna-Oakton) meeting will feature guest speakers Arlene and Johnny Arthur, Virginia Federation Service Officers. Free. Members and guest welcome. Call 703-205-9041.

Scholarship Application Deadline. The Virginia Latino Higher Education Network (VALHEN) is now accepting applications for the 2018-2019 Scholarship program. This scholarship program is dedicated to assist Latinx/Hispanic students to pursue higher education within the Commonwealth of Virginia. Scholarship awards are for one-year and will be paid directly to the recipient's college or university. Email scholarships@valhen.org or visit valhen.org for more.

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The Road Very Much Traveled



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Not that I haven't been down this road before, random though its occurrence may have been, but when schedules collide: 24-hour urine collection, pre-chemotherapy lab work, every-three-week infusion, quarterly CT scan and semi annual brain MRI; and of course the follow-up appointment with my oncologist a week or so later to finish the fortnight-long festivities.

The daze leading up to that final Friday are hardly the stuff with which dreams are made. More like nightmares, actually; certainly sleepless nights.

But as you regular readers know from previous columns, there's no real point fretting about it. I mean, what's done is done (what's scanned is scanned) and though I may not want the chips to fall, for the moment, they've already fallen.

Not to be fatalistic, but sometimes, as a cancer patient, ceding control to the realities (you'll note I didn't say "inevitable realities") is part of the process; "going with the flow," as my wife, Dina would say.

At this point, all I can do is wait and hope. I can't do one thing about any of it. I'll know soon enough and if the news is discouraging, I'll deal with it then. I see no advantage in being miserable a week earlier than necessary.

Still, all of these diagnostic demands occurring simultaneously is a bit much. Unfortunately, there's nothing to be done other than to grin (a wry smile, really) and bear it. The calendar/schedule with which my life has become all too familiar (I'm also not saying "consumed"), can hardly be adjusted simply because I don't feel like it.

My life is at stake here. I can't treat it like a household chore. It needs to be adhered to. Wanting circumstances to be different serves no purpose. Accepting reality and integrating the cancer-patient responsibilities into your routine seems a more reasonable course of action.

A few years into my cancer treatment, I remember meeting some of the staff at an off-site cancer-centric function. After exchanging pleasantries, one staff member commended me as being a "very compliant patient."

Not being completely sure what she meant, I asked her to clarify. She said I made all my appointments inferring that some cancer patients don't. Incredulous, I asked further. She sort of half-smickered and said I'd be surprised, which of course I was.

She offered no statistics or anything empirical, but from her reaction, it was not an unusual occurrence. I remember thinking, how do you not be compliant when doctors are working to save your life? Seemed counter intuitive, almost.

So yes, I've been compliant. Extremely so, I'm proud to say.

After my initial diagnosis, I felt I had been given an assignment, so to speak; to save (at least extend) my own life, and I was going to follow doctor's orders accordingly. And even though over the years, I've integrated many non-Western alternatives into my routine, so far as my primary care team (internal medicine doctor and oncologist) was concerned, I've supplemented rather than replaced.

All of which leads me to where I am today: waiting to hear from my oncologist about last week's scans, while swallowing 60-odd pills a day, drinking alkaline water, standing in front of an infrared bulb, and trying to detoxify whenever possible in the hope that together, conventional and non-conventional pursuits will make my immune system stronger and create an environment less hospitable to the growth and movement of the cancer cells that have already been triggered somehow.

The only persistent problem I have is compartmentalizing the presumptive fact that since I was given a "terminal" diagnosis in late February 2009, how is it that I just keep on keepin' on?

Life goes on, generally, I realize, but that's not what I was told would happen. After nearly 10 years, I suppose I'm just a little road weary.

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

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