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Great Falls CONNECTION



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Having a blast at the St. Patrick's Day Celebration at the Old Brogue in Great Falls, Sunday, March 17.

St. Patrick's Day At The Old Brogue

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Reporting on the Highs and the Lows

Members of Fairfax delegation deliver post-session wrap-up to McLean Chamber of Commerce.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

At the March monthly meeting of the Greater McLean Chamber of Commerce, local Virginia General Assembly representatives presented what they saw as the highlights, and lowlights, of the recently completed session.

With the Republican majority considerably reduced in the House after the 2017 elections, Democrats Sen. Barbara Favola (D-31), and Delegates Mark Keam (D-35), Kathleen Murphy (D-34), Marcus Simon (D-53), and Rip Sullivan (D-48) say there was “real progress made.”

“Passing a 5 percent pay raise for teachers was a real win,” said Favola, who also declared legislation that allows hiring of support personnel to address behavioral issues in schools and for training to spot and prevent human trafficking “critical to breaking the school-to-prison pipeline” and protecting our vulnerable youth.

THE SENATOR placed her bills to exempt contraceptives from insurance co-pays, support for solar power and stricter firearm safety measures in the loss column of the 2019 session.

Del. Simon, the House Parliamentarian, was pleased that Virginians would benefit from the State’s \$1.2 billion windfall resulting from changes in the tax laws.

“All Virginians will see some money back,” said Simon, and after much work on the budget and measures to align the Commonwealth’s tax codes with those federal changes, standard deductions for Virginians have also been increased.

Simon also celebrated the passage of several other of his bills, including one that expands the previously passed “revenge porn” legislation. The new bill goes after persons who create or alter and publicize images to intimidate or harass.

“We also had success on a bill to protect juvenile immigrants who have been abused, neglected or abandoned,” said Simon, although he noted the avoidable “back and forth” required to finally secure passage. “The word ‘immigrant’ was a real sticking-point ... a sensitive topic, but we got it through.” Youth so effected can now seek special status while applying for asylum.

Among Simon’s 2019 session regrets? “Virginia could have been the 38th state to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. We could have been the ones to push it over the edge for the whole country.”

Although the ERA bill passed the Senate and related bills garnered 52 co-patrons in



From left: State Sen. Barbara Favola (D-31) is first up to report on the just-completed 2019 General Assembly session to members of the Greater McLean Chamber of Commerce. Joining her were Delegates Marcus Simon (D-53), Kathleen Murphy (D-34), Mark Keam (D-31) and Rip Sullivan (D-48).



Members of the Greater McLean Chamber of Commerce join their Virginia General Assembly representatives for a photo after the “Legislative Wrap-Up” at J. Gilbert’s steakhouse restaurant on March 14. From left: Chamber president Paul Kohlenberger, Del. Mark Keam, MCC board member Jim Nelson, Del. Marcus Simon, Del. Kathleen Murphy, Sen. Barbara Favola, Del. Rip Sullivan, MCC chair Brian Potter.

the House of Delegates, “they never even made it to the floor for a vote. They were killed in committee.”

Del. Murphy was equally disappointed over the failure of the ERA, as well as the lack of progress on “common-sense measures to address gun violence,” but applauds passage of a bill, despite significant push-back from opponents, that requires a mandatory jail sentence for those convicted of a second violent domestic abuse offense.

Murphy did have wins to report that directly affect her local constituents, including reform on stormwater management

treatment in Great Falls, and provision for “residency stickers” that would allow exemptions for locals to pass through or enter areas that may be cut-off to through traffic as the result of transportation fixes under discussion in the area. Del. Mark Keam categorized the session as one of the most productive in his 10 years as a member of the House, if for no other reason than the increase in Democratic delegates “helped protect us from some of the more conservative bills that were introduced.”

AMONG THE SUCCESSES Keam high-

“Passing a 5 percent pay raise for teachers was a real win.”

—State Sen. Barbara Favola (D-31)

lighted – work on the Budget, taxes, redistricting, the Amazon deal, the raising of the age from 18 to 21 for the purchase of tobacco products, and reversing the “default” position on Blue Laws in the Commonwealth. Instead of having to “opt-in” to allow the sale of alcohol, with the passage of HB 2634, counties would have to pass local legislation via referendum to prohibit the sale of alcoholic beverages.

Keam praised freshman delegate Chris Hurst, who introduced the bill, calling him “a rising star” of the Party. Hurst, formerly the anchor for Roanoke’s WDBJ, only entered politics in 2017, motivated to action by the on-air murder of his girlfriend, journalist Alison Parker in 2015.

Another success, noted Keam, was the loosening of restrictions on absentee voting rights to become effective for the 2020 elections.

Basically, the bill would remove restrictive “reasons for the need to vote absentee-in-person.”

“There’s still some work to do on what periods of time will be allowed for absentee voting, but this will really help get more voters’ voices heard.”

Keam was also the first to speak to the “elephants in the room,” referring to the scandals that have plagued Virginia’s Democratic Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General, starting in February.

“In some ways, those events helped us focus on getting the work done,” he said, but also acknowledged that the situation meant that the Governor was not available or able “to exert his influence and help us negotiate or push when things were close.”

Keam’s remarks were accompanied by head nods of agreement from his colleagues.

“It would be dishonest to say that the situation didn’t have a policy impact,” said Del. Simon.

Del. Rip Sullivan rounded off the legislative presentation, pleased that the General Assembly “did its part to secure the Amazon deal for the benefit of all Virginians.”

Sullivan described another addition to the win column.

“We’ve been watching tuition costs in Virginia rise, year after year. Those institutes of higher education continue to ask for our financial support.” The General Assembly was willing to comply with their requests – but only for schools that *don’t* raise tuition costs.

All said and done, the elected officials were generally pleased by the forward movement on many policies and initiatives this year, but agree that the Nov. 5 elections could accelerate progress if there is a better balance of power in the Legislature, perhaps encouraging more bipartisan efforts.

PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION



The revellers enjoyed singing along to Irish tunes with Ted Garber in the Pub at the Old Brogue.



Claudia Fouty and Jessica Cline are great friends and great partiers at the St. Patrick's Day celebration.

PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

St. Patrick's Day at The Old Brogue

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

If you couldn't spend your St. Paddy's Day in the Old Country itself, the next best place to do so was obviously at The Old Brogue Irish Pub in Great Falls.

The 38th edition of the St. Patrick's Day celebration at Mike Kearney's establishment saw a packed house of revellers. They filled the reserved-seating "Snuggery" for two lunch shows and two dinner shows with traditional Irish fare and Celtic concerts by Tam McGeady and the Mostly Irish Band. They squeezed into the main Pub and restaurant where Ted Garber entertained them with rousing Irish tunes, and they spilled out into the back enclosed porch, the back patio and the front patio, as well.

After paying their modest \$10 cover charge, the 21-and-up crowd enjoyed plenty of Guinness and other beverages and Irish and American food favorites on a day that was made-to-order with plenty of sunshine, blue skies, and temperatures that were just right.

In the Snuggery, the diners enjoyed a guaranteed seat with their set-price menus,



Self-named "Country Mouse" Melissa and "City Mouse" Belinda are sisters who make a habit of celebrating St. Patrick's Day together, even if Melissa has to travel from their native New Zealand where "Country Mouse" still lives to hang with her local-living sister on the special day.

while in the Pub the partiers secured a spot where they could and waved their drinks high in the air while singing along to old time Irish favorites like "Whiskey in a Jar."

It seemed as if most of the residents of

Great Falls were present, but with the true spirit of an Irish hospitality, some of the celebrants came from far and wide and were warmly welcomed into the partying fold. Sometimes far was *really* far, like "Country

Mouse" Melissa" who travelled from New Zealand to enjoy the festivities with her "City Mouse" sister Belinda, who has been a resident of the region for more than twenty years. "It's great fun!" said Melissa, showing off the neon-green wig that she brought with her for the occasion.

"It belongs to our mother," Melissa explained. "She's always up for a bit of fun and a costume!" Seems that both Melissa and Belinda inherited mom's love of a good time. The event was an adults-only affair, but four-legged and furry well-behaved attendees were allowed, so Loki, a Working Line German Shepherd pup from Fairfax accompanied his best friend Bryan White to the celebration.

Mike and company strongly suggested a designated driver for each group of St. Paddy's partyers, but were willing and able to assist in procuring alternative methods of transportation back home if a patron had taken just a bit too much Guinness or Bushmills Whiskey on board before it was time to head off.

It's another Old Brogue St. Patrick's Day Bash in the books and folks are already talking about next year.

The luck of the Irish to you all. Slainte!



A group of local friends enjoy good times at the St. Pat's Bash at the Old Brogue. They identified themselves as, from left: Shawn Green & date, Barbara Gildea, Karen Gildea and "Donald Trump." Possibly the amount of Guinness that "Mr. Trump" had consumed caused a bit of a memory lapse as to his identity.



The Great Falls "Boys Club" enjoying a "bit of craic" at the St. Paddy's gathering. From left: Dirk Wykim, Ron Morgan, John DeMoors, A.J. Mushtaq, T. Dennen and Brandon DeCaro.

Colvin Run Fourth Grader Named State GeoBee Semifinalist

Orin Das, a fourth grader at Colvin Run Elementary School, son of Chandrani Ohdedar and Sumoy Das, has been notified by the National Geographic Society that he is one of the semifinalists eligible to compete in the 2019 National Geographic GeoBee Virginia State Competition. The contest will be held at Longwood University, Farmville, Va. on Friday, March 29, 2019.



Orin Das

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

cash, and other prizes, as well as a trip to Washington, D.C., to represent their state in the National Championship to be held at National Geographic Society headquarters, May 19-22, 2019. Students that come in second and third place will receive cash awards of \$300 and \$100, respectively.

Each State Champion will advance to the National Championship and compete for cash awards and college scholarships. In 2019, the national champion will receive a \$25,000 college scholarship, \$1,000 in cash, a lifetime membership in the National Geographic Society, and an all-expenses-paid Lindblad expedition to the Galápagos Islands aboard the *National Geographic Endeavour II*; second place will receive a \$10,000 college scholarship and \$1,000 in cash; third place will receive a \$5,000 college scholarship and \$1,000 in cash; and seven runners-up will receive \$1,000 in cash each. Visit www.natgeobee.org for more information on the National Geographic GeoBee. Follow the National competition at National Geographic Headquarters in Washington, D.C., on May 19-22 at natgeod.org/experiences.

This is the second level of the National Geographic GeoBee competition, which is now in its 31st year. School GeoBees were held in schools with fourth- through eighth-grade students throughout the state to determine each school champion. School champions then took an online qualifying test, which they submitted to the National Geographic Society. The National Geographic Society has invited up to 100 of the top-scoring students in each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Department of Defense Dependents Schools and U.S. territories to compete in the State GeoBees.

This year, National Geographic increased the prize money for all State GeoBees. State champions will receive a medal, \$1,000 in

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Fairfax County's Bold Housing Agenda

BY MICHELLE KROCKER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
NORTHERN VIRGINIA
AFFORDABLE HOUSING ALLIANCE

Last month, a panel appointed by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors representing a cross-section of community stakeholders and housing advocates finalized their recommendations for Phase II of the county's Community-wide Housing Strategic Plan. Not since 2005, when then Chairman Gerry Connolly convened the Affordable Housing Preservation Action Committee, has there been such a comprehensive analysis of the state of affordable housing in Fairfax County.

Over the last two years, advisory groups and ad-hoc committees have been engaged in a top-to-bottom review of administrative, land use and regulatory policies and programs that impact affordable housing preservation and production. The scope of the plan encompasses the entire continuum of housing needs from persons with disabilities, seniors on fixed incomes and formerly homeless households to affordable homeownership.

The Housing Strategic Plan process began in June 2017, when the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) conducted an online county-wide housing survey and four community outreach sessions. Phase I of the Plan, which was adopted by the board in June 2018, identified 25 strategies related to land-use and zoning policies, allocation of existing financial resources, and administrative processes that are outdated or in need of revision to expedite affordable housing approvals. A timeline for the work on these strategies shows a completion date of 2020.

In Phase II, the ad-hoc Affordable Housing Resources Panel focused on two board-defined objectives: identify an annual goal for the production of new affordable units; and recommend a source of funds for the financial resources needed to achieve that goal. When completed, the housing plan will be incorporated into one comprehensive county strategic plan that integrates multiple existing agency plans to chart a blueprint for the future of the county.

RECOMMENDATIONS include housing

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Is a Tax and Spend Mindset Driving People Out of the Area?

To the Editor:

Why is the Fairfax County government competing with private business? Fairfax County Supervisor John Foust failed to answer this question and twisted the issue into one of customer satisfaction at the Great Falls budget meeting held March 14. For example, Fairfax County owns and maintains 8 golf courses with 80 people (FTEs) supporting them eligible for full pension benefits and other rich County employee benefits. Other examples

include owning multiple water theme parks and wedding venue facilities. However, the County points out that the taxes collected are not sufficient to fund all the programs to the level they desire. Fairfax County is plagued by a 40 percent shortfall in pension expense funding for Fairfax County employees. Therefore, an ongoing increase in property taxes is inevitable with another 33 FTEs in the planning and development budget stating they have an "ambitious agenda" ahead.

This tax and spend mindset is driving people out of the area. Fairfax County is also proud to report they fund more park and rec activities than the rest of the entire County. Why, when we cannot afford to fix the roads are we hiring 109 new employees the County can't afford. Mr. Foust doesn't consider: 1) the continual burden of increasing property taxes, 2) unfunded pensions, 3) and the lost opportunity for private business to participate and pay those property taxes. Mr. Foust wants to

continue with the status quo and ride out the three-year State imposed moratorium so he can again push for the Meals Tax and other tax increases. Satisfaction surveys should ask: Are you willing to increase your Fairfax County property taxes to fund activities that could be transferred and delivered by a private business? I suggest we prioritize what taxpayers want after we fully fund the basics (what we need).

Ethel Pascal
Great Falls

strategies that have been promoted for some time by advocates. They include:

- ❖ A goal to produce a minimum of 5,000 new homes, affordable to households earning no more than 60 percent of the area median income over the next 15 years. (It should be noted that the analysis identified the need for 15,000 units over the next 15 years);

- ❖ Dedicate the equivalent of an additional penny of the real estate tax (approximately \$24 million) to support public investment in these units beginning in FY2021, as well as retain the current funding of a half penny to support preservation strategies;

- ❖ Consider a countywide policy on commercial contributions to affordable housing production. Currently, this policy exists only for the Tysons redevelopment area;

- ❖ A commitment of "no net loss" of existing market affordable units (those serving households up to 60 percent of area median income);

- ❖ Promote opportunities to co-locate affordable housing with county capital facilities.

We especially applaud the recognition of the need for more robust preservation strategies.

FORTHCOMING recommendations from the EMBARK Housing Advisory Group provide additional strategies for preservation incentives in both redevelopment and new construction proposals which could be a template for preservation efforts countywide. The arrival of Amazon HQ2 should heighten concern among county leadership for vulnerable communities in Fairfax County that are located in close proximity to Pentagon City. Areas like Seven Corners and Baileys Crossroad, as well as the Richmond Highway corridor have all been approved in recent years for transit enhancements, mixed-use development and increased density. Amazon's announcement could be the catalyst that triggers investment in these areas that are home to thousands of low-income, minority households who live in the older, market-affordable housing located in these corridors. Recent Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RHA) investments in Parkwood and Murraygate that preserved over 400 units in the Lee and Mason Districts are steps in the right direction, but much more is needed.

LOOKING AHEAD: Currently, the county has over 650 affordable units in the pipeline with a development in the Dranesville District

in Herndon, a senior housing project in the Lee District, and a development at the Huntington Metro Station in the Mt. Vernon District. Two sizeable parcels of county-owned land located in Lee District and Springfield District are being processed for transfer to the RHA as sites for housing development. And plans to refinance the Crescent and Wedgewood apartments will result in additional funds for housing development, or expansion of Bridging Affordability, the County's local rental subsidy program.

All this bodes well for housing affordability in Fairfax County. For too long, the county's budget has shortchanged investments in new construction and preservation. An inventory developed by Virginia Tech's Center for Housing Research shows that only 9,000 market-affordable units, affordable to a family of four earning approximately \$66,000 annually, remain in the county. However, more than 68,000 households in the county earn no more than \$50,000 annually. Rents are rising faster than incomes, and families are experiencing rent burdens, overcrowding or are being priced out of the county.

NEXT STEPS: In March, recommendations from the Phase II Panel will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for their consideration and approval. Afterwards, the final package of housing recommendations will be given to the County Executive to be incorporated into the board's budget guidance for FY2021. This will occur when the Board adopts the FY2020 budget on May 7. Nothing is certain until board adoption. But advocates throughout the county feel that in this very consequential election year, when so many candidates for the Board of Supervisors have identified housing affordability as a priority issue, this is the year for significant housing wins. To be successful, housing advocates must build a coalition of support that encompasses the business community and anchor institutions like healthcare facilities, education advocates, supporters of coordinated multi-modal transit and land use planning, organizations promoting compact, mixed-use development and entities working for social justice and racial equity. This plan is bold and forward-thinking, and in this election year a community-wide campaign will be critical for adoption.

For more, see www.fairfaxcounty.gov/housing/communitywideplan.



PEOPLE

Great Falls Girl Honored For Fighting Kawasaki Disease

Brooke Dawn, Great Falls resident and Oakcrest School student, had much to celebrate with her parents on Feb. 16 at a Kawasaki Disease "From Your Heart to Theirs" event in La Jolla, Calif., where she and her family were honored. It was hosted by Rady's Children Hospital and the Kawasaki Disease research team from University of California, San Diego. Brooke and her parents, Don and Patty Dawn, have taken up the mantle to spread the word about this little known severe illness - Kawasaki Disease- that primarily affects young children and infants. It is now the number one way children acquire heart disease. If not diagnosed within a crucial ten day window and administered treatment some 25 percent of children develop life threatening abnormalities of the coronary arteries. As Brooke has matured, she has increasingly taken on the mission of spreading the word about Kawasaki Disease, as this timely diagnosis is so crucial. She has visited local pediatric practices in the area on Jan. 26, National Kawasaki Disease Day, to hand out pamphlets to remind doctors of the symptoms of this tricky disease. She, along with her parents, visited Capitol Hill in an attempt to obtain a senate resolution codifying the awareness of Jan. 26 as National Kawasaki Disease Day. She has worked as a KD Ambassador, sharing her personal story often through the KD Foundation's efforts and personally talking to KD parents at various events about her experience. She successfully launched an online fundraising site a few years ago, raising \$4,000 in small



Brooke Dawn

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

dollar donations. She then motivated her parents to help raise money to fund further research into the disease and to that end they issued a \$2.5 million dollar challenge grant through the Macklin Foundation, of which her father serves as president. As they celebrated with researchers and hospital administration at the event, Brooke mingled sharing her story with those in the room and hatching her plan for a "grassroots movement of teens who have survived the disease and together doing community education and outreach." She, with her family by her side, is dedicated to making a difference in her Great Falls community and the community of Kawasaki Disease families at large.

For more information, on the disease visit kdfoundation.org

WEEK IN GREAT FALLS

L'Auberge Chez Francois Hosts Luncheon for Great Falls Senior Center Members

The Great Falls Senior Center (GFSC) event for April 16 will be a luncheon hosted by L'Auberge Chez Francois, 332 Springvale Road, Great Falls, 11:45 a.m. to 2 p.m. Luncheon includes a choice of two appetizers (Onion soup gratinee or Organic mesclun salad, vinaigrette); choice of two entrees (Sauteed fresh trout with toasted almonds or Beef Bourguignon, Spaetzles and mushrooms); choice of two desserts (Tahitian vanilla ice crême brulee or Dark chocolate tart with vanilla ice cream).

Reservations may be made by sending checks made out to GFSC at a cost of \$45 per person, tip and tax included along with tea, coffee or soda, to Sondra Taylor, 752 Boehms Court, Great Falls 22066 by April 11. For additional information contact Sondra Taylor, 703-759-6204. Visit gfseniors.org.

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Explaining Death to Children

Breaking down a difficult topic and helping children grieve.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Rosalie Ward, recalls a hot and sticky summer evening in 1975. She was watching reruns of the television show “Bewitched” with her twin sister in the living room while her mother cooked dinner in the kitchen. Ward remembers hearing the ring of the family’s rotary telephone. The next sound she heard was a shriek and then violent sobs from her mother.

“My mom had gotten a call that her brother, my uncle, had been killed in a car crash,” remembers Ward. “I was six at the time, but most of my memories of that evening are of my mother crying uncontrollably for the hour or so until my dad came home from work. The two of them disappeared behind closed doors. I just remember being terrified and feeling alone.”

Whether prolonged or sudden, unforeseen or expected, experiencing the death of a loved one is never easy. While grief can weigh heavy on adults, it can overwhelm and confuse young children. And although death is an inevitable part of life, finding the words to discuss or explain it to young children can challenge many parents.

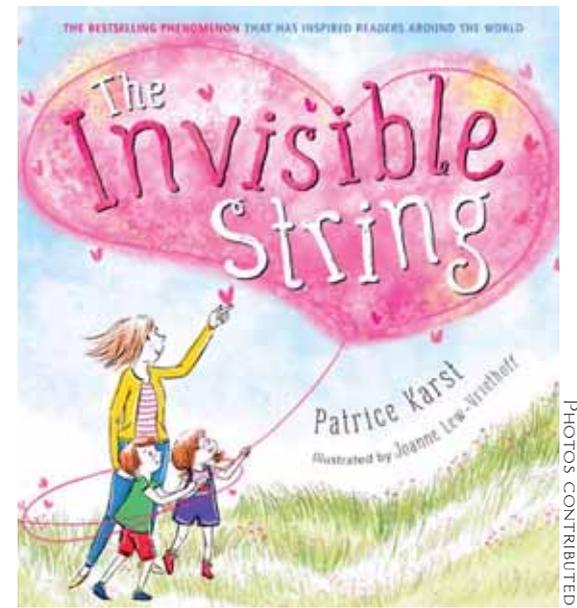
“Whether you’re talking about a family pet or a grandparent, it’s important that parents or caregivers understand that children grieve too and that death has to be discussed,” said Ward, who is a family therapist in Reston.

One of the most significant mistakes a parent or caregiver can make is not being honest with a child about death, said Carolyn Lorente, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Northern Virginia Community College. “My biggest worry is when people hide the fact that a loved one died by saying that they went on a trip, and then the child sees the adult crying or being sad,” she said. “That doesn’t give the child a chance to process it, but by including them in a developmentally appropriate way, we are teaching that we can feel big feelings, and with the support of friends and family, we can still thrive.”

Helping a child to understand they didn’t cause the death could be an important part of the conversation, suggests Carol Barnaby, LCSW-C, a therapist in Bethesda. “Children often see the world as revolving around them,” she said. “Reassure them that their loved one dying was not their fault and that the death didn’t happen because they had a mean thought, misbehaved, or didn’t visit enough.”

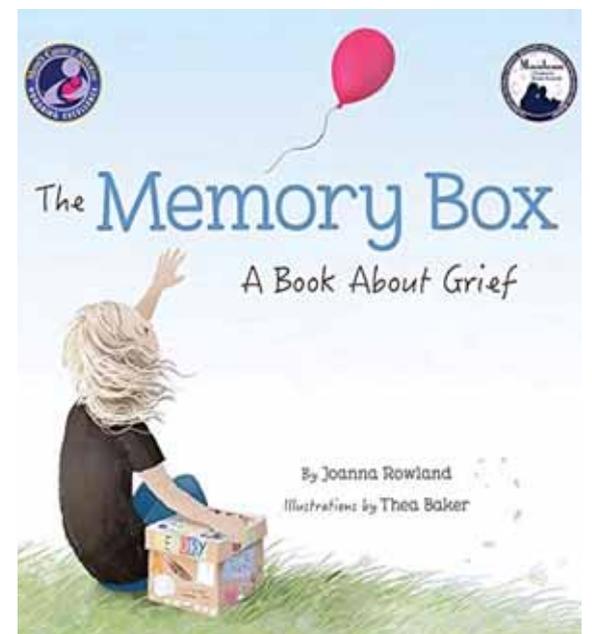
“Death often brings anxiety in children and they wonder if they will die too,” added Barnaby. “Explaining that although the loved one has just died, death is not contagious and that the child will likely live a very long life.”

Clear, concise word usage is also important because young children might not have the language skills to discuss their feelings and emotions, adds Lorente. “Let the child engage in talking about fond memories of the deceased using pictures, making favorite recipes, or visiting a favorite place,” she said.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

“The Invisible String” by Patrice Karst is a book that could help parents explain death to their children.



Bethesda-based therapist Carol Barnaby, LCSW-C suggests “The Memory Box” by Joanna Rowland as a tool to help children understand the concept of dying.

Use concrete and authentic terms when discussing it, continued Barnaby. “Avoid euphemisms like ‘Grandma is resting’ or ‘has gone away,’” she said.

“These sayings confuse children and may cause them anxiety over [the notion] that they could die if they fall asleep; or that other loved ones may not come back.” Use clear language like ‘Grandma has died.’”

Young children often believe death is reversible, advises Jerome Short, Ph.D., professor of psychology at George Mason University. “You could describe how a body stops working and the person who died isn’t coming back.”

Be open to having an honest conversation about it, continued Short.

“Encourage children to ask questions and tell them you will help them handle any bad feelings or problems that happen,” he said.

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PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION

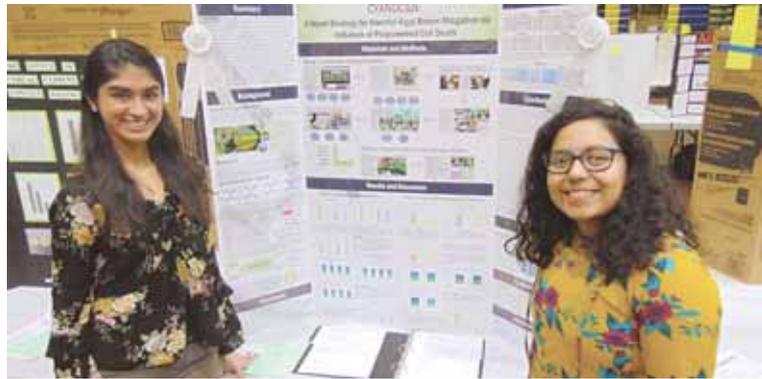
Visitors flock to the 64th Annual Fairfax County Regional Science and Engineering Fair, which was held Sunday, March 17, 2019, at Robinson Secondary School.

Talent on Display at Regional Science Fair

670 students from 27 high schools compete for nine grand prizes to go to International Fair in Phoenix.

By STEVE HIBBARD
THE CONNECTION

The gym at Robinson Secondary School resembled a mini version of the United Nations. At the 64th Annual Fairfax County Regional Science and Engineering Fair held Sunday, March 17, 2019, some 670 students from 27 high schools competed for nine Grand Prize slots and the chance to go to the International Science and Engineering



Hayfield Secondary School students Sarah Syed, Miamar Burgos-Rosario of Alexandria and (not present) Saijai Supanklang won first place in Microbiology and are grand prize nominees. Their project was “Cyanocide: A Novel Strategy for Harmful Algal Bloom Mitigation via Initiation of Programmed Cell Death.”

Fair sponsored by Intel in Phoenix, Ariz. later this year.

The categories ranged from chemistry to robotics, intelligent systems to mathematics, earth and environmental sciences, biomedical and health sciences, to STEM disciplines and engineering.

After a public viewing from 1-3

p.m., they held an awards program with members of the Fairfax County School Board and Region Superintendents where prizes were awarded to the Grand Prize winners and Corporate and Professional Organization award winners.

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Commonwealth's Attorney Candidates Face Off

NAACP and partners question the contenders.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

The two Democratic contenders for Fairfax County Commonwealth's Attorney traded barbs at a forum on Saturday, March 16, held at the Chantilly Baptist Church, presented by the Fairfax Branch of the NAACP with partners the ACLU People of Power Fairfax, the Northern Virginia Black Attorneys Association and OAR - Opportunities, Alternatives and Resources.

Incumbent Ray Morrogh has served in the County Commonwealth Attorney's Office office since 1983 and has held the top spot since 2007. He is being challenged by Steve Descano who spent six years as a federal prosecutor under the Obama Administration, first as a Special Assistant to the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia and then as a trial attorney in both the Criminal Taxation Division and the Consumer Protection Branch. Descano also served on the Fairfax County Police Civilian Review Panel.

In the two-hour session moderated by attorney Vanessa Jordan, a member of the Northern Virginia Black Attorneys Association, Descano lost no time in categorizing Morrogh's office as a "black box" devoid of significant data that can be used to develop policies and inform the public.

"The people I talk to, even personnel in our local government, say they don't know how to get hold of anyone in that office," said Descano. "That's not leadership."

Descano prides himself on "always being out and about in the community," saying that the public needs to see their leaders' values in action, in their lives, on a daily basis.

Morrogh shot back with examples of his involvement on numerous committees and task forces and with a number of civic organizations.

"My door is always open," he said, and maintains that he and his department continue to educate themselves on issues and best practices while engaging the community to learn of their concerns.

MORROGH HIGHLIGHTED what he describes as a lack of "relevant, realistic experience" by his opponent.

"In our department we handle thousands of cases with often life-and-death consequences. We don't have the years [that a taxation prosecuting attorney has] to build a single case. Our work is more immediate."

Morrogh alluded that some of Descano's "pledges" about what cases to prosecute and how to address certain issues, cannot be met, either because they are not within the scope of the position's authority, or they are



Vying for the top law enforcement slot in Fairfax County as the Commonwealth's Attorney, Steve Descano, the challenger and Ray Morrogh, the incumbent, face off at a forum hosted by the NAACP.



Organizing a number of questions submitted by the audience for the candidates are Derwin Overton, executive director of OAR - Opportunities, Alternatives and Resources, and attorney Diane Alejandro with ACLU People Power of Fairfax.

"simply not allowable under the law. And I am sworn to uphold that law for all citizens."

Moderator Jordan asked a series of questions on topics ranging from implicit bias in the criminal justice system and in local policing, dealing with undocumented persons, and those who come in contact with the courts with mental health and drug abuse issues, restoration of voting rights for convicted felons, cash bail inequities, the larceny dollar threshold, the handling of juvenile offenses in schools, and more. Each candidate was given 60 seconds to answer, and cautioned to stay on topic.

"Please don't use your time to present a rebuttal to your opponent's answer. The people here want to hear your answers to the questions we are posing," said Jordan.

Speaking on diversion programs aimed at keeping people out of jail, Morrogh insisted that his prosecutors work to do just that, but "I will not put violent offenders in such

programs." For those facing drug convictions, drug court is an option, but Morrogh noted that many choose not to enter the program and accept fines or jail sentences instead.

"That's understandable," responded Descano. "The program is hard. We need to offer incentives to people to help them choose the path of recovery instead of incarceration." Descano cites that lack of incentives as a reason why the numbers of offenders in such program is relatively low.

Descano also accused Morrogh of allowing offenders to languish in jails because they could not raise the cash bail imposed.

"People who have not been convicted of anything are kept from their families, their jobs, their lives, even though they have been declared eligible for pretrial release," he said. "Don't punt this ball. Don't ask for cash bail in those instances."

Morrogh countered: "We may ask for detention in serious instances where we be-

lieve the offender to be a danger, but I do not ask for cash bails and have not done so in 35 years."

Descano shot back that Morrogh had supported cash bail in a Washington Post article, to which the incumbent replied, "It's a complex issue, more so than you realize. We can't simply do away with cash bonds as you seem to suggest."

On the question of advocating to raise the dollar limit for which to prosecute a crime as a felony, Descano agreed to "take the pledge" that Jordan asked about.

"I will take that pledge, not to prosecute less than a \$1500 value as a felony."

While Morrogh says he has long advocated for raising the felony/larceny threshold, he declined to pledge to never prosecute below \$1500 as a felony.

"That would be a dangerous precedent," he warned, saying that from his many years of experience he can attest there are "people who steal, over and over again, or scam our elderly again and again. I cannot say that because of one instance of loss below \$1500 that it would not be appropriate to file charges as a felony offense."

The audience seemed to have no trouble following the arguments of the candidates on the question of Brady Material and discovery reform.

Brady Material comes from a 1963 Supreme Court ruling that says that "suppression by the prosecution of evidence favorable to a defendant who has requested it violates due process."

On this topic, again the two men differed and traded verbal jabs.

Once again, Descano made a pledge, saying that anyone on his staff who was caught failing to provide Brady Material for the defendant "would be gone."

Morrogh said "no system is perfect. We prepare Brady Material for the defense, but if there was an issue, I would investigate and weigh the circumstances before making a decision."

The two exhibited the most agreement during the "lightning round" of questions, most probably because Jordan allowed only a simple "yes" or "no" answer to less controversial questions and gave the candidates only one sentence to explain their responses. Both supported body cameras for police, decriminalization of marijuana, detox diversion for drunk in public; neither supported diversion for driving under the influence.

THE LAST SECTION of the forum posed written questions from the audience, and there were a lot of them.

The two tangled over the restoration of voting rights for felons. Descano accused Morrogh of being against the restoration, noting that the Commonwealth's Attorney had joined a lawsuit against then-Governor McAuliffe when he proposed such legislation.

"Read my remarks," countered Morrogh. He contends that he objected to the attachment of gun ownership rights to the legis-

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Rare Primary Race for Fairfax Commonwealth's Attorney

FROM PAGE 10
lation.

"There are too many guns, and too many victims of gun violence ... and I am not hearing the word victim mentioned enough here today."

Morrogh cited examples of released felons, convicted of violent crimes or paedophilia who were able to purchase guns upon their release from prison.

"I support restoration of voting rights, 100 percent," he said. "In fact, I think those incarcerated should be allowed to vote. Treason should be the only reason a person should be barred from voting."

On the question of police involvement in juvenile issues in school, both men supported allowing school authorities to handle the situations wherever possible, though Descano charged that Murrogh has not been visible on this front, while he has. He also indicated that juveniles have been threatened with "certification as adults" in some instances.

Morrogh disagreed. "We never threaten adult certification. We act if so warranted."

Wrapping up, the two again enumerated their own strengths and fitness for the office that holds significant power over the citizens of the community. Descano continued to deprecate the incumbent's leadership, saying it was "time to move beyond the same old, same old," while Morrogh emphasized his own experience and his opponent's lack in this arena.

As NAACP President Kofi Annan urged, voters should take every opportunity to listen to them as they outline their visions and explain their approaches.



PHOTO BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

The Commonwealth's Attorney forum was moderated by Vanessa Jordan, an attorney and member of forum co-sponsor the Northern Virginia Black Attorneys Association.

"You may not know the real role of the Commonwealth's Attorney. I admit that once I did not really understand the role of this job, but I have come to understand its importance and its impact as the gatekeeper to protect our citizens and our rights."

Increasing Access to Naloxone

BY SERENA FISCHER
CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Responding to the state's opioid epidemic, Virginia is expanding the number of people legally authorized to dispense and administer the overdose reversal medication naloxone.

Gov. Ralph Northam has signed into law bills allowing paramedics, school nurses and regional jail personnel to administer naloxone. The General Assembly passed the legislation during its 2019 session.

Northam signed:

❖ HB 2158, sponsored by Del. Kenneth Plum, D-Fairfax. It authorizes emergency medical services personnel and health care providers in hospital emergency rooms to dispense naloxone. The bill also allows organizations to charge a fee equal to the cost of obtaining the drug.

❖ HB 2318, filed by Del. John McGuire, R-Henrico. It allows school nurses, other school board employees and local health department employees assigned to public schools to possess and administer naloxone after they have been trained.

❖ HB 1878, introduced by Del. Scott Garrett, R-Lynchburg. It adds employees of regional jails to the list of individuals who may possess and administer naloxone, provided that they have completed a training program.

"It's imperative that we provide the proper tools to our public safety workers to deal with all aspects of the opioid crisis that Virginia is currently experiencing. Having naloxone in their possession could potentially save a life of one of their officers or an inmate in their care," Garrett said.

All three bills passed the House and Senate unanimously. Northam approved HB 2158 and HB 2318 on March 5 and HB 1878 on Feb. 22. The three measures take effect July 1.

Naloxone is an opioid antagonist used to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose, according to the Harm Reduction Coalition, an advocacy group for individuals and communities impacted by drug use. The medication allows an overdose victim to resume normal breathing by counteracting the depression of the respiratory and central nervous systems.

The substance is non-addictive and will work only on a person who has consumed opioids in some form. It can be injected like an EpiPen or administered via nasal spray, a form more commonly known as Narcan.

When dispensed correctly, the drug will immediately begin to take effect. Signs of an overdose include shallow breathing, unresponsiveness and a blue coloring of the lips and fingernails.

State officials estimate that last year, more than 1,200 Virginians died from overdoses of opioids, including heroin, fentanyl and prescription opioids. That number has doubled since 2011.

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ENTERTAINMENT

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

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 20

McLean Newcomers and Neighbors Luncheon. 11:30 a.m. at Nostos Restaurant, 8100 Boone Blvd., Vienna. Prospective members are invited. No reservations will be accepted after Friday, March 15. \$40 per person. To attend, pay at squareup.com/market/mclean-newcomers-club. Visit www.McLeanNewcomers.org.

Dining with Dorothy. 12:30 p.m. At P.J. Skidoos, 9908 Fairfax Blvd., Fairfax. Join with your friends or make new ones. Newcomers are always welcome. To reserve your space, contact event chair Dorothy Flood at dflood1706@gmail.com

Holy Happy Hour Recital Series. 6:15 p.m. at Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Featuring Seán Heely, a U.S. National Scottish Fiddle Champion, the 30-minute musical offering will be followed by wine, hor d'oeuvres and fellowship. Free and open to the public; a good will offering to support the music department will be taken. Visit www.Lewinsville.org or call 703-356-7200.

TEDxTysons OpenMic Night. 7-9:30 p.m. At McLean Community Center's Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. In an "American Idol" meets StorySLAM-style evening, aspiring TEDx Talkers will present their 2-3 minute pitch to a full house... and at the end of the evening one speaker will be selected to develop and present a full TEDxTysons talk. This is an all-ages event. A reception follows featuring McLean Project for the Arts artists. Tickets \$16/\$12 MCC tax district residents. Visit the website mcleancenter.org.

FRIDAY/MARCH 22

McLean Art Sociey Meeting. 10 a.m.-noon at The McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave. Dhamin Jassim, a graduate of the Institute and Academy of Fine Art in Baghdad will be the featured presenter. The artist will be doing a painting demonstration. Guests are welcome. Call 703-790-0123.

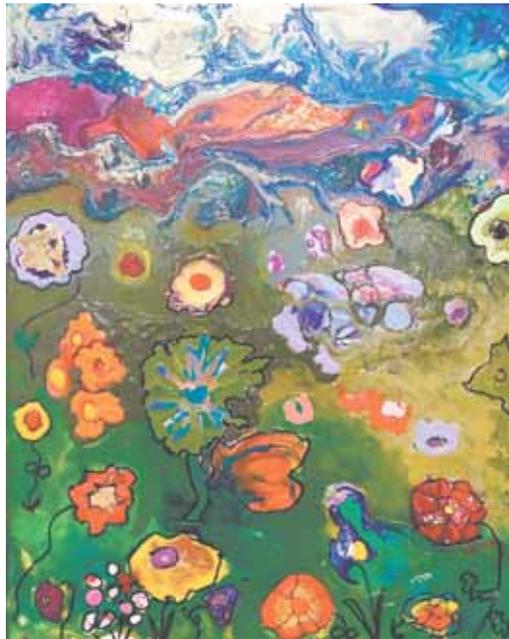
SATURDAY/MARCH 23

Spring Bazaar and Craft Show. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. in the Flame Room at the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department, 400 Center St. South, Vienna. The Auxiliary to the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department will hold their Spring Bazaar and Craft Show. Offered for sale will be crafts, holiday decorations, items for your home, clothing and gifts for that special someone. A lunch menu is planned, as well as a homemade baked goods table. Admission is free. For information, or to reserve a space, call Carol at 703-309-3468 or email Dancers1023@aol.com.

The Joshua Show (Family Friendly). 1 p.m. at The Alden Theatre at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. This award-winning family production features a modern-day Mr. Rogers with hipster appeal, live music, tap dancing, physical comedy and multiple styles of puppetry to take the audience on a journey to find the joy in being yourself. Cost is \$15/\$10 MCC tax district residents. Visit www.aldentheatre.org.

SUNDAY/MARCH 24

Coffee and Culture. 4-6 p.m. at Caffe Amouri, 107 Church St. NE, Vienna. Travel the word through this demonstration and taste experience. Learn about the important part coffee



Heralds of Spring

Mary Ellen Mogee's exhibit of abstract floral paintings is full of blooms exploding with color and light and brings spring to Great Falls a little early. Through March 29, library hours in the Great Falls Library large meeting room, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Free. Visit www.maryellenmogee.com or call 703-785-5784.

"Heralds of Spring" by Mary Ellen Mogee, 14"x11" poured acrylic on panel.

plays in these varied cultures as you taste your way to Global Coffee Understanding. \$45. Call 703-938-1623 or visit www.caffeamouri.com/store/p47/coffeeandculture/3-24-2019.html.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 27

Holy Happy Hour Recital Series. 6:15 p.m. at Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Featuring Seán Heely, a U.S. National Scottish Fiddle Champion, the 30-minute musical offering will be followed by wine, hor d'oeuvres and fellowship. Free and open to the public; a good will offering to support the music department will be taken. Visit www.Lewinsville.org or call 703-356-7200.

THURSDAY/MARCH 28

Langley Lacrosse Youth Night. 6 p.m. at Langley High School Stadium field, 6520 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Warm up with varsity players at 5:45 p.m. JV game starts at 6 and varsity at 7:30. Langley High School Girls Lacrosse is hosting Youth Night. Raffles, door prizes, and free youth t-shirts for the first 60 fans. Free admission for youth lacrosse players wearing their jerseys; \$5 for others. Email jmuwaits98@yahoo.com.

SATURDAY/MARCH 30

NoVaTEEN Book Festival. 9:30 a.m. at Marshall High School, 7731 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. The NoVaTEEN Book Festival is back with a day full of panels, games, and signings with over 30 bestselling and emerging Young Adult authors. Learn more on the official festival website. The event is free and open to the public; tickets and a full schedule are available at novateenbookfestival.com.

Craft Beer and Wine Festival Fundraiser. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at L'Auberge Chez François, 332 Springvale Road, Great Falls. Chef Jacques Haeringer, of L'Auberge Chez Francois and Jacques' Brasserie, hosts a fun and delectable craft beer and wine festival fundraiser to support a group of firefighters, police officers, and first responders representing the United States of America in the top division of volleyball at the World Police and Fire Games in China in 2019. \$75. Call 703-759-3800 or visit www.lauberagechezfrancois.com.

Sophocles' "Antigone." 2 p.m. at The Alden Theatre at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Sophocles' drama from 441 B.C. holds startling relevance today, examining divinity,

obedience, and law—and how love overcomes them all. Cost is \$40/\$30 MCC tax district residents. Visit www.aldentheatre.org.

Black History Concert. 3 p.m. at Historic Pleasant Grove Church, 8641 Lewinsville Road, McLean. The Washington Revels Jubilee Voices ensemble will perform at Historic Pleasant Grove Church's free annual Black History Celebration. The Jubilee Voices will present traditional African-American song, poetry, and dance tailored to the unique story of Pleasant Grove. Free. Visit www.HistoricPleasantGrove.org.

Shakespeare's "The Comedy of Errors." 7:30 p.m. at The Alden Theatre at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Two long-separated twins, their two tricky servants (also twins), a jealous wife, and her lovelorn sister romp through this fast-paced comedy. Cost is \$40/\$30 MCC tax district residents. Visit www.aldentheatre.org.

VOCE Chamber Singers. 8 p.m. at Church of the Holy Cross, 2455 Gallows Road, Dunn Loring. VOCE Chamber Singers presents Rachmaninoff: All-Night Vigil (Vespers). Rachmaninoff's All-Night Vigil (Vespers) is widely regarded as the "Mt. Everest" of the cappella choral repertoire. Tickets \$10-\$25; under 18, free. Visit www.voce.org or call 703-277-7772.

SUNDAY/MARCH 31

Langley/Cooper 5K. 8 a.m. at Langley High School, 6520 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Join the "Bands on the Run" 5k run/walk, benefitting Langley High School and Cooper Middle School Band programs. \$30 through March 15; 3/15; \$35 through Race Day. Visit www.langleyband.org/bands-on-the-run to register or sponsor. Sponsorships are tax-deductible.

Shakespeare's "The Winter's Tale." 2 p.m. at The Alden Theatre at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Shakespeare's magnificent late play is a roller-coaster ride from romance to tragedy to comedy and, finally, to a place of transcendent beauty that few other works of art have ever gone. Cost is \$40/\$30 MCC tax district residents. Visit www.aldentheatre.org.

VOCE Chamber Singers. 4 p.m. at Church of the Holy Comforter, 543 Beulah Road, NE, Vienna. VOCE Chamber Singers presents Rachmaninoff: All-Night Vigil (Vespers). Tickets \$10-\$25; under 18, free. Visit www.voce.org or call 703-277-7772.



PHOTO BY LAUREN ROGERS PARKER
COURTESY AMERICAN SHAKESPEARE CENTER

Constance Swain appearing in American Shakespeare Center's "Antigone" at McLean's Alden Theatre

Shakespeare at Alden

American Shakespeare Center returns to McLean's Alden Theatre.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

American Shakespeare Center has a loyal following of devoted fans who can't always make it to the Center's home in Staunton, Virginia, said Sarah N. Schallern, Director, Performing Arts, McLean Community Center. "Bringing ASC to The Alden affords this Shakespeare-loving town the opportunity to see authentic performances close to home.

"I love how visceral their productions are," said Schallern. "ASC makes Shakespeare accessible in a way that even the best producers of the Bard cannot. I see presenting such vital productions as a huge benefit to the community — our patrons get a deeper understanding of Shakespeare and other classics."

ASC will perform three different classics at the Alden. The productions include:

Sophocles' "Antigone," an ancient tale about the aftermath of war. Antigone is torn. Her brother Eteocles will be honored, but her brother Polyneices will be shamed and denied funeral rites. What will Antigone do?

Shakespeare's "The Comedy of Errors" is a boisterous comedy of twins, mistaken identity, a jealous wife, and more. Slapstick humor and happy confusion abound.

Shakespeare's "The Winter's Tale" is a ride from romance to

tragedy to comedy to a place of transcendent beauty. A sad tale "best for winter," that Shakespeare conjures into spring's miraculous rebirth.^o

Artistic Director Ethan McSweeney said that ASC is a "true believer in the power of Shakespeare and the classics to improve lives. The productions have the ASC unique outlook that includes 30 minutes of live pre show music as a bridge into the shows. There is also live music performed by the actors during intermissions.

American Shakespeare Center is nationally known for its quality repertory style as actors show their versatility performing many different roles, noted McSweeney. ASC also is known for its authentic "lights-on, no set" approach to a classic theater production. "With lights on, the audience can be more engaged in the production," added McSweeney.

"ASC residency at The Alden will be seen nowhere else. Due to some repairs in the theatre, much of the stage is inaccessible. ASC loves performing for McLean audiences so much that they offered to restage all three productions so that they would fit on the space we have available.

This makes the Shakespeare weekend even more special," said Schallern.

More than one Alden patron has provided feedback such as "the interactions between the cast and the audience made the play come alive; I was captivated."

McLean Community Center presents American Shakespeare Center on Tour, at The Alden Theatre, McLean Community Center. "Antigone," March 30, "The Comedy of Errors," March 31, and "The Winter's Tale," March 31.

Elite Science Fair at Robinson

FROM PAGE 9

The students' 428 projects were judged three times Saturday by 200 category judges. About 250 students won awards from 50 corporate and professional organizations that were sponsored by government agencies, nonprofits and think tanks. Prizes ranged from \$1,000 cash awards to scholarships and internships, gift cards and even a Raspberry Pi Zero Starter Kit. One project on Cystic Fibrosis Wearable Technology from Madison High students Thaisa Peixoto and Alex Gurski won a patent preparation and filing from the law firm Hunton and Williams LLP in the District.

FOR THE GRAND PRIZES, nine projects were allotted slots in the International Science and Engineering Fair sponsored by Intel Corporation in Phoenix, Ariz. Because of the size and reputation of Fairfax County, those projects can go straight to the International Fair without having to go through state competition. This includes an all-expense paid trip for students to compete for up to \$4 million in prize money.

According to Dr. Jenay Sharp Leach, fair director and Pre-K-12 Science Coordinator: "In Fairfax County Public Schools, we pride ourselves on providing students with a rich, inquiry-based science experience in the classroom so all of our students have the opportunity to experience science as real scientists where they are asking questions, they are collecting data and analyzing that data and forming their own conclusions. And Science Fair is a really beautiful manifestation of this inquiry process in that the students truly have access to open inquiry and can explore what they want to explore."

She added: "So, the students who come to the fair represent the best of the best from all of our high schools as well as our private schools in Fairfax County. And they are the elite level of scientific investigation."

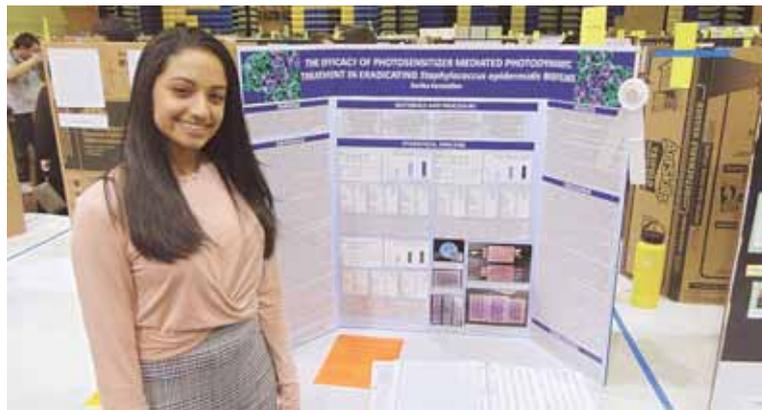
DR. SHARP LEACH said one of their traditions is to choose a quote from a famous scientist or engineer to inspire the work of the fair. This year's quote comes from Stephen Hawking who said, "Scientists have become the bearers of the torch of discovery in our quest for knowledge."

She continued: "There are cancer cures in this room right now, there are climate change advocates who are going to stop climate change in this room right now and

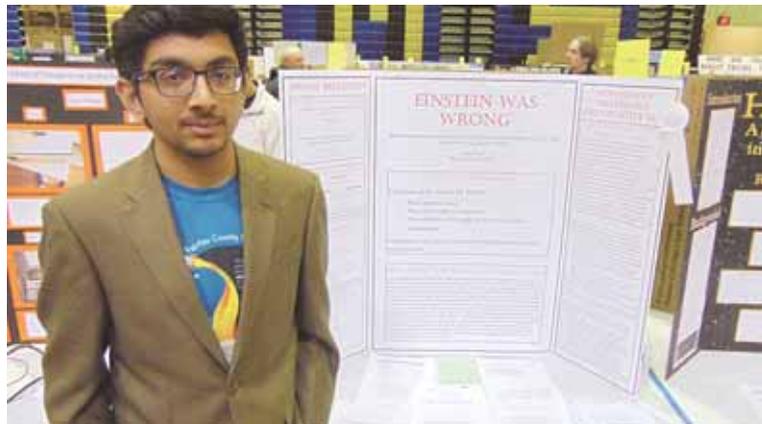


PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION

South Lakes High School students Ryan Ferzoco and Spencer Harris won first place in Material Science and were grand prize nominees. Their project was "The Effect of Microgravity on Self-Healing Concrete."



Sanika Karandikar, a student at Thomas Jefferson High School, won first place in Microbiology and was a grand prize nominee. Her project was "Using Photodynamic Treatment in Eradicating S-Epidermidis Biofilms."



McLean High School student Abrar Syed of McLean won first place in Physics and Astronomy and was a finalist for the grand prize. His project was "Einstein Was Wrong."

it's very inspirational."

Added Tim Harazin, Elementary Science Specialist with Fairfax County Public Schools who helped coordinate the fair: "At our Regional Science Fair we are proud to have so many professional organizations and companies provide judges and awards.

The benefit is, first, there is an award for the students, many times monetary, but other options, but I think the bigger issues is these organization judges are role models for the students. They

show the students that a science fair is not just a one-shot deal, but it could lead to a career in science, engineering or related fields, and I think it's really great that the students get to see the people who are living those careers and get advice from those people. So, that's what I see is the really big advantage.

That's why I'm not as concerned that every organization gives us money because I know they're giving us time and they're giving us role models."

SOPHOCLES' "ANTIGONE"
MARCH 30
2 P.M.
Live music starts 30 minutes before curtain.

SHAKESPEARE'S "THE COMEDY OF ERRORS"
MARCH 30
7:30 P.M.
Live music starts 30 minutes before curtain.

SHAKESPEARE'S "THE WINTER'S TALE"
MARCH 31
2 P.M.
Live music starts 30 minutes before curtain.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Hearing on the McLean Community Center's FY 2021 Programs

Wednesday, March 27, 2019, 7:30 p.m.

The governing board and staff of the McLean Community Center seek **input from residents** of Dranesville Small District 1A at a Public Hearing on Programs for FY 2021 (which runs July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021).

This is an opportunity for residents to suggest class offerings, community events, theater programs, art exhibits, tours, youth events and teen activities that are meaningful to the community.

If you would like to speak at the hearing, call the Center to have your name placed on the speakers' list. You may also submit comments in writing to holly.novak@fairfaxcounty.gov.

The McLean Community Center
 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean VA 22101
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-Werner Heisenberg

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PEOPLE

Potomac School Senior Takes Fifth Place in National Science Competition

Carolyn Beaumont, a senior at The Potomac School in McLean, ranked fifth in the 78th Regeneron Science Talent Search, the nation's oldest and most prestigious science and mathematics competition for high school seniors. Her achievement, which comes with a \$90,000 award, was announced on March 12 at a black-tie gala at the National Building Museum in Washington, DC.

Carolyn was named a Top 40 Finalist in January. She and her fellow finalists spent Sunday, March 10, presenting their research projects to the public, as well as to a number of leading scientists. The following day, the finalists divided into groups by state of residence and met with government officials and staffers. Carolyn and the other Virginians spoke with a member of Sen. Mark Warner's staff about their work and the importance of government support for STEM education.

As a student in Potomac's Science and Engineering Research Center (SERC) program, Carolyn spent two years working on her geochemistry research project. She examined the way water reacts with magma, with the goal of testing the theory favored by geologists about the composition of water during a volcanic eruption. In addition to her Potomac research advisor, Dr. Isabelle Cohen, Carolyn worked with an outside mentor, Dr. George Cody at the Carnegie Institute of Science's Geophysical Laboratory. There, she used technology that allowed her to create models of magma and observe its reaction with water. Ultimately, Carolyn's discoveries turned out to be remarkable: She showed that volcanoes react differently depending on the

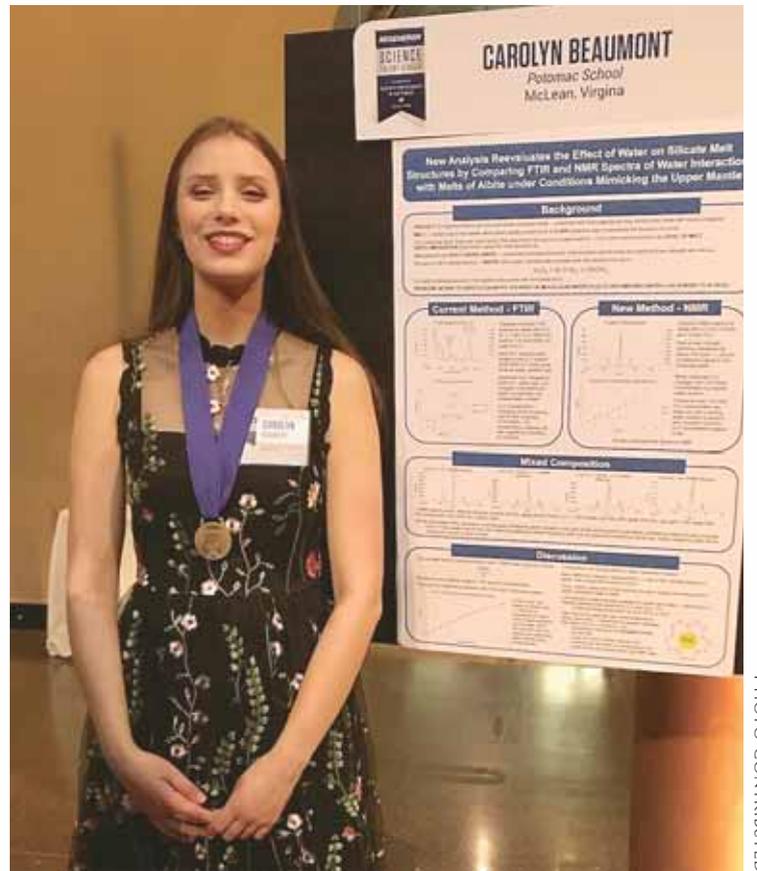


PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Carolyn Beaumont, fifth place winner in the 2019 Regeneron Science Talent Search.

amount of water present in the magma. This runs counter to the thinking of professional geologists, making Carolyn's project a source of new and important information.

Dr. Cohen observes, "Not many high school students can say that they have disproved a scientific theory. That accomplishment indicates the magnitude of Carolyn's potential as a scientist."

Reflecting on the competition's final days, Carolyn notes, "All of the questions that the judges asked were really interesting. I got to meet some professional geologists - one of them actually works in the same field that I've been studying, and I loved hearing her per-

spective on my research. It was amazing to have my work recognized in a way that allowed me to have an impact on the scientific community!" She adds, "This was one of the best weeks of my life. I didn't feel pressured to make the top 10. All I was hoping to get out of the experience, I had already gotten."

"It was great to be able to share my research, and I loved talking with so many people who are passionate about science. I was really happy about the entire process; winning fifth place was just the icing on the cake."

Carolyn will attend Harvard University in the fall.

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Let us know about an upcoming event

connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar

BULLETIN

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

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 20

Lenten Brownbag Lunch & Book Discussion.

12:30-2 p.m. in the Library at Church of the Holy Comforter, 543 Beulah Road, NE, Vienna. Bring a bag lunch and join a study of Rowan Williams' book Resurrection following the 12:10 p.m. Lenten Midweek Eucharist on Wednesdays. Join for worship in the Chapel beforehand or just come for the book discussion. Visit www.holycomforter.com for more.

IEP Parent Workshops.

6:30-8:30 p.m. At Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services, 2334 Gallows Road, Dunn Loring, Entrance 1, Room 100. Collaborative IEP Meetings: Parents as Partners. Workshop for parents of children receiving special education services. Strategies to support a parent's role in a child's IEP meetings will be shared.

THURSDAY/MARCH 21

Coal Ash Success.

6:30 p.m. at Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Join the Potomac Riverkeepers as they discuss recently passed legislation requiring Dominion to clean up 28 million tons of toxic coal ash, a crucial victory for keeping Virginia waterways clean with a screening of the film Coal Ash: "An Unacceptable Gamble." After, the Sierra Club will update the status of the pipeline battle in Virginia. Free. RSVP recommended. Email norbetsierra@aol.com or visit act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7010Z0000027SDIQAM.

Spring Equinox Celebration.

7-9 p.m. At Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Join in a celebration of the first day of Spring, with an indoor medicine wheel and prayer tie crafting. Visit uof-2019-spring-equinox.eventbrite.com.

FRIDAY/MARCH 22

Technology Fridays in March.

10 a.m.-noon at the Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services, 2334 Gallows Road, Dunn Loring, Entrance 1, Room 100. Join the Parent Resource Center for this series of technology workshops presented by FCPS Assistive Technology Services. Register for one or all of the workshops. Explore a variety of technology tools to support student success and independence with reading and writing in the digital classroom and at home. Register at www.fcps.edu/index.php/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center. Call 703-204-3941 or email prc@fcps.edu March 22 - Assistive Technology to Support Communication

Film: "From Paris to Pittsburgh."

6:30-8:30 p.m. At Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. From coastal cities to America's heartland, "Paris to Pittsburgh" celebrates how Americans are demanding and developing real solutions in the face of climate change. Email lgrowe@verizon.net for more.

SATURDAY/MARCH 23

Lenten Quiet Study.

9-11:30 a.m. in the Lillian Croy Room at Church of the Holy Comforter, 543 Beulah Road, NE, Vienna. A blend of traditional and modern interaction, this study will begin with the history of the Stations of the Cross and end with an experiential meditation on Jesus' path from Pontius Pilate to the cave with contemporary prayers and reflections. Visit www.holycomforter.com for more.

SUNDAY-TUESDAY/MARCH 24-26

Lenten Study Series.

Sunday 9:45-10:45 a.m. and again at 6:30-8:15 p.m.; Monday, 7:30-9:15 p.m.; and Tuesday 7:30-9:15 p.m. at Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Christine Roy Yoder, Professor of Old Testament Language, Literature & Exegesis at Columbia Theological Seminary will be the speaker. Visit www.lewinsville.org or call 703-356-7200.

TUESDAY/MARCH 26

Lenten Services: Centering Prayer.

7-7:45 p.m. in St. Mary's Chapel, Church of the Holy Comforter, 543 Beulah Road, NE, Vienna. Join a brief teaching on centering prayer and 20 minutes of silence. Visit www.holycomforter.com for more.

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Eight Daze and Seven Sleepless Nights



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

On Monday, I take one of our "Buff Boys" (beige-colored cats), "Chino," to the vet for his bi-weekly glucose-monitoring day. This is his new routine as "Chino" was recently diagnosed with diabetes.

In addition, since his diagnosis, I've been injecting him with insulin twice a day, subcutaneously ("sub-q") going on six weeks now. Though he's eating well, he's lost weight; apparently, it's related.

Without getting too sad, too soon, he looks frail and the stares and meows he gives me seem to be pleas for help which, other than providing food, water and touch, I am clueless as to what else I can do. I'm not anticipating the worst yet, but when I pick him up at the vet later in the day, I'm not expecting the best either.

On Wednesday, I go for my first CT scan in eight weeks. More significantly, it will be my first "CT" since I began immunotherapy. I don't quite know what to expect; although I know what I hope.

The fact is I've neglected to ask my oncologist what his expectations were: specifically relating to a time frame about the immunotherapy's effectiveness; and as we've moved on, we have a few other questions: Will the infusion have any effect after just eight weeks, generally? Is there a protocol/length of treatment which a patient is supposed to have before success or failure is determined? Are there any indications other than scan results which might contribute to an assessment of the drug's impact on my tumors? Is it possible that the tumors in my lungs might have a different reaction (shrink, stable, grow) than my "Adam's apple" tumor? If so, then what? Are there any side effects from my bi-weekly infusions which could cause my treatment to stop?

Beyond these types of questions, my oncologist prefers not to discuss scenarios. The short summary is: we're looking for some kind of clarity and/or guarantee. Unfortunately, for cancer patients, clarity and guarantees ended on the date of your diagnosis.

On Friday, I have my next scheduled infusion (with pre-infusion lab work on Wednesday). Door to door, depending on how busy the Infusion Center is, and depending how long it takes the pharmacy to mix/prepare my drug, it will be approximately three hours until I'm back home. The experience is not tedious nor is it torture.

Compared to the eight-hour days I had to endure in the early, heavy-duty days of chemotherapy, this time commitment is a breeze. And when one considers the relatively minor side effects – so far, the routine is quite bearable. (I just need the immunotherapy to be effective.)

On the following Monday, we see my oncologist. Typically, we don't see him until later in the week on Friday. In the 10-day interim, my oncologist will email results of the scan – with his assessment – and attach the radiologist's report so that when we see him, we're aware and prepared.

However, in this week's particular instance he had availability on Monday, five days post-scan, and not on Friday. As such, we are seeing him so soon after the scan occurs that he might not have any results to email us before our appointment.

This means that we'll be going into the appointment cold, so to speak. Which means we'll be extremely anxious as we sit in the examining room waiting for his knock asking if it's OKAY for him to come in. And then staring at his face as he enters looking for any kind of hopeful sign that the treatment has worked.

And that's what this week-plus-one-day will be: a struggle; about me, for my wife, about our life together and about one of our cats.

Each of the four days/four events itself would be stressful and thought-provoking enough. Having them occur one right after the other, simultaneously almost, is like adding insult to injury. It's bad enough to begin with and it's potentially even worse how it might end with – really bad news.

Through it all, somehow we must remain positive. There's no future in being negative.

To invoke the late Yogi Berra, who said in 1973 while managing the last-place New York Mets: "It ain't over 'till it's over." (And of course they went on to win the National League pennant.)

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

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