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‘Plan B’ for Saving Marmota Farm

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Great Falls celebrated the Fourth of July with a day full of events for the whole family. The day began with a 5K Fun Run put on by the Great Falls Trailblazers. The Great Falls Friends & Neighbors club sponsored the next event, the Little Patriots Parade, and awarded prizes for the children sporting the best patriotic outfits and decorated wagons. The Main Parade around the Great Falls Village Centre featured floats, antique cars, and community organizations that was followed by festivities, food, and fun on the Village Centre Green. The day ended with a fireworks display at Turner Farm Park.

Photos by Tom Manning / The Connection
Special Session on Gun Violence

Eight proposed bills would make the commonwealth safer.

Members of the Virginia General Assembly were scheduled on July 9 to convene in a special session intended to address gun violence. After the May 31 mass shooting in Virginia Beach, Gov. Ralph Northam called for a special session of the General Assembly to address gun violence. Last week, he announced a package of eight bills for consideration during the special session.

- Legislation requiring background checks on all firearms sales and transactions.
- Legislation prohibiting all individuals subject to final protective orders from possessing firearms. The bill expands Virginia law which currently prohibits individuals subject to final protective orders of family abuse from possessing firearms, keeping guns out of the hands of domestic abusers.
- Legislation enhancing the punishment for allowing access to loaded, unsecured firearm by a child from a Class 3 Misdemeanor to a Class 6 felony. The bill also raises the age of the child from 14 to 18.
- Legislation allowing localities to enact firearms ordinances that are stricter than state law. This includes regulating firearms in municipal buildings, libraries and at permitted events.

These are in fact common sense proposals, and each one should get consideration and a vote. There’s a good chance that won’t be the outcome because Republicans narrowly control both the House of Delegates and the Virginia Senate.

But the special session will focus legislators and voters on the importance of these issues, and that focus will serve the effort well, whether or not any of the bills pass into law this month.

Pet Issue Photos

The Pet Issue, a twice-yearly special edition, will publish the last week of July, and photos and stories of your pets with you and your family should be submitted by Thursday, July 25. We invite you to send stories about your pets, photos of you and your family with your cats, dogs, lamas, alpacas, ponies, hamsters, snakes, lizards, frogs, rabbits, or whatever other creatures share your life with you.

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

Just a cute photo is fine too. Our favorite pictures include both pets and humans. Please tell us a little bit about your creature, identify everyone in the photo, give a brief description of what is happening in the photo, and include address and phone number (we will not publish your address or phone number, just your town name).

Email photos@connectionnewspapers.com or submit online at www.connectionnewspapers.com/pets.

EDITORIAL

‘Plan B’ for Saving Marmota Farm

An open memo to the Great Falls community.

By John G. Colby, AIAE

Many of you already know me as the developer of such local communities as Deerfield Pond, Arnon Lake, Walker Woods Lake, Riverbend Farm, Riverscape, McLean Falls and many others. Four such communities were situated on property assembled in the 1950s and 60s by my client and friend, John W. Hanes, Jr. Marmota Farm, also once owned by John and his children, comprises 22.8 acres at the corner of Georgetown Pike and Innsbrook Avenue.

This bucolic former dairy farm is flanked by the Great Falls Grange Park and the Lift Me Up therapeutic riding center, appearing just as it did when I first came to, and fell in love with, Great Falls more than 50 years ago. Few such large, undeveloped Great Falls properties remain; none is more prominent.

I recently placed Marmota Farm under contract. I am now in the early stages of due diligence, seeking a partner, investor or subsequent owner(s) who share my desire to abandon a 2005 County-approved subdivision plan yielding eleven relatively small lots.

The 2005 “Plan A” imposes extremely negative impacts along the site’s prominent Georgetown Pike frontage and neighborhood. Indeed, the approved site plan has been a continuing source of local concern, fostering a 14-year long “Save Marmota Farm” initiative. (For background Google that phrase.) With its current $11 million tax assessment, the Park Authority has rebutted pleas to acquire Marmota Farm and annex it to its western neighbor, The Grange Park.

About ten years ago I retired from my Great Falls-based career as architect, land planner and developer. I have come out of retirement in the hope of thwarting the unenforceable 2005 site plan. In its place, I have conceived a “gentle,” by-right subdivision (“Plan B”), initially creating four and eventually just eight parcels. Two 5-acre+ lots would back to Philip Diggles Dr. The two other parcels, each of more than six acres, would front on Georgetown Pike and be suitable for re-division into three 2-acre+ lots. I hope to sell any of the four large parcels, or combinations of them. My approach eliminates all the 2005 required infrastructure except for a desirable public trail along Georgetown Pike. No one appears to have thought of my alternative low-yield concept with its lots averaging 59 percent larger. My “Plan B” preserves most of the site’s tree cover and natural terrain by eliminating more than three acres of new public roads, a homeowner-maintained “dry pond” and 240 foot long dam on Georgetown Pike. I have met with my engineers and County staff to validate the feasibility of my approach, and met with a few reputable local builders and investors sympathetic to my vision.

As an alternative to near-term residential development, another option exists for an owner, or owners, to place Marmota Farm into a County Agricultural and Forestal (A&F) District. This involves holding the property intact for at least 8 years, during which an annual property tax liability of more than $130,000 would be mostly forgiven. (This, for instance, is how the nearby 57-acre Great Falls Horse Center is held.) Many of us Great Falls seniors will recall that the nearby Cornwell Farm community was so saved from extensive development when, back in the 70s, an ad-hoc group of neighbors was able to induce its resale (thus, “Ad Hoc Road.”)

My first objective is to rescue Marmota Farm from pending intrusive development. Although having already invested in the time and expense of my contract and due diligence, if my initiative proves unsuccessful I will regretfully have to exercise a right to withdraw from it. At that point it will be up to my successor to determine whether to pursue the old “Plan A,” my legacy “Plan B,” or go in yet another direction.

For site plans, pricing and terms, kindly contact me at the following address: John G. Colby, AIAE Email: marmotaplanb@gmail.com

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Senior Center to Host Talk on Stages of Retirement

Great Falls Senior Center (GFSC) has announced a guest speaker Stan Corey, who will talk about the stages of retirement and how to avoid serious pitfalls. Corey breaks “retirement” into five major stages. These largely chronological stages are when we transition from working, to go-go years, to no-go years and to end of life. Corey will place emphasis on the common pitfalls as he has witnessed at each of these stages. Everyone goes through these stages; it is just the amount of time in each that is different.

Corey has been a Certified Financial Planner (CFP), Chartered Financial Consultant (ChFC) and Certified Private Wealth Advisor (CPWA). He is retired but remains a sought-after expert who regularly provides financial commentary at national conferences, in print and online publications, and on TV. He has published two books: a novel, The Divorce Dance, and a non-fiction, When Work Becomes Optional.

Corey has also been an avid sailor, and navigating the seas has been his lifelong passion, competing in numerous sailing club and international regattas as skipper, helmsman, and tactician on a variety of boats from fifteen to sixty feet. He won the Naval District of Washington sailing championship in 1974 and became an ocean racing coach for the Naval Academy after his honorable discharge in 1976.

The July 16 event will be held at the Great Falls United Methodist Church, 10100 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and includes lunch to be provided by the United Methodist Church Women, a donation of $10 per lunch will be appreciated. Visit gfseniors.org for additional information and membership.

The event sponsor, once again is John Nugent & Sons Northern Virginia’s heating, air conditioning, plumbing, and electrical service experts since 1975. Give Back Donation for July is Non Sweetened Cereal and Peanut Butter is always needed.
When she moved out of her family home and into a dorm room at Marymount University, one of the obstacles that Grace McKinley faced was creating a sense of style and order in her new downsized dwelling.

“[My] biggest challenge was making a small space feel like a functional home,” said McKinley, an interior design major who now works as an intern at Case Design/Remodeling, Inc.

For students who are getting ready to head off to college next month, part of their preparation includes shopping for supplies to hold items ranging from jeans and t-shirts to laptops and books. Like McKinley, many will take on the task of finding pieces that will serve the dual role of adding both aesthetic appeal and efficient organization to a diminutive and austere room.

“First of all, since dorm rooms are really small, try to only take what you know you will actually need,” said Susan Unger of ClutterSOS. “If you can only take your clothes, choose items needed for the current season and then change them out when you return home for a visit.”

Even for those who choose to take only a limited amount clothing, finding the best use of space requires creativity and precision. “Use bed risers to make room for under-the-bed storage bins where you can house items such as extra food and clothing you don’t wear on a regular basis,” said Unger.

Students who, like McKinley, miss the comforts of home, can use nostalgic reminders to smooth out the transition. “I made sure to put up photos of friends and family on the wall to add a sentimental touch,” she said. “And I coordinated my favorite colors in my bedding and organization items.” McKinley said those items included stackable, plastic storage trays that held her jewelry and school supplies.

In fact, tools for keeping order are essential when trying to maximize the limitations of size-challenged rooms. “Always think of using available vertical space such as the back of doors,” said Unger. “You can actually use an over-the-door shoe bag for other things like toiletries or food instead of shoes.”

Even dorm-sized appliances can be multi-functional, said Unger. “If you have a refrigerator with metal sides you can use magnetized bins for office or kitchen supplies like condiments or eating utensils,” she said. “A shower caddy is also a good idea so that you can keep all your bathing supplies in one place.”

When it comes to breathing life into sterile, cramped quarters, a touch of vibrancy can have a big impact says Allie Mann, designer and senior interiors specialist at Case. “When decorating a small space, don’t be afraid of color,” she said. “The best small spaces are those that are the most colorful. So many times folks are afraid of too much color. Be bold and have fun.”

Accessories that Mann recommends include colorful peel-and-stick wallpaper. “Take any lamp and give it life and character with pom poms from a craft store,” she said.

While she encourages color creative, her advice comes with a caveat. “Be careful not to mix too much pattern,” she said. “Too much pattern in a small space could be a bit dizzying.”

Now working as Mann’s design intern at Case, McKinley says that, as she progressed in her major, she began putting her newly acquired skills to use in her dorm room. “In my interior design classes, we learned that balancing elements of design like color, shape, space, and texture creates the best spaces,” she said. “Adding interest with a unique throw pillow, patterned rug, or a fun lamp can make a simple dorm stand out from the rest.”
Taking High-school Science to New Heights

Higher Orbits launches students research and goals to space.

By Christina Tyler Wenks

Five students are traveling to Australia to represent the United States at the International Science School at the University of Sydney. One of those students is from Great Falls.

Scientists from all over the world converge in Sydney every other year to provide learning, lecture and laboratory challenges. Ninety of the 140 students are from Australia, but others are from countries around the globe.

In honor of the Apollo mission’s 50th anniversary, this year’s theme is space, but many sciences will be represented such as forensics and microbiology. One of the presenters is Michelle Lucas, who trained NASA astronauts for more than a decade and worked with International Space Station Flight Control Operations Planning. Lucas founded the Leesburg-headquartered Higher Orbits, the nonprofit requested to find the five American participants.

“The fact that Higher Orbits is all over the United States allowed us to bring students from different regions and with varied experiences,” Lucas said.

FOUNDED IN 2015, Higher Orbits is a nonprofit that uses spaceflight to encourage science, math, engineering, technology, teamwork, leadership, and communication. During the organization’s Go For Launch! events around the country, students assess real-world problems and generate research projects that could be benefited or amplified by microgravity.

“Growing up in Ohio during the early days of our space program, I heard a lot about what Ohio astronauts John Glenn and Neil Armstrong were doing in space. That inspired me to become an astronaut. Participating in Higher Orbits events gives me the opportunity to pass that inspiration on to the next generation,” said astronaut Mike Foreman, who flew on two shuttle missions, spent more than 26 days in space, and performed five spacewalks. Now Foreman works with Higher Orbits teams competing to launch projects into space.

For the chance to study in Australia, students submitted essays evaluated by space-industry leaders and letters of recommendation from the community, educators and Go For Launch! teammates to be considered for the intense study opportunity.

Each of the five Americans selected to study science in Sydney were part of teams whose Go For Launch! projects won regional competitions. A few have projects that have flown to the International Space Station.

“This is not a fluffy two weeks,” said Lucas about the Professor Harry Messel International Science School. “There will be a lot of data and hands-on for these students who are thirsty to get more.”

“I went to Higher Orbits for the first time in 2017, my freshman in high school, and since then I’ve been to rocket launches and Space Camp,” said Abi Youngker from the Phoenix, Ariz., area. “All of this came from a Higher Orbits three-day weekend, but the fact that I am going to Australia blows my mind.”

“There is a lot of forced learning in the classroom and we are limited by what we are allowed to do. There is not a lot of room for creativity,” said Zach Pickerel from Fort Collins, Colo. “Without Higher Orbits, I would never have learned about microbiology.”

See Great Falls Students. Page 9
**Seussical The Musical**

The McLean Community Players return to the Alden Theatre with the musical “Seussical,” which opens July 12, 2019, and runs weekends through July 28. “Seussical” brings together many beloved Dr. Seuss characters. Running weekends: July 12-14, July 19-21 and July 26-28; Friday-Saturday, 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, 2 p.m. at Alden Theatre, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. $15-$28. Email info@MCleanPlayers.org or visit www.MCcleanPlayers.org for more.

**open house at the Vienna depot each month and on Vienna celebration day, including Viva! Vienna and the Vienna Holiday stroll. Free admission. Call 703-938-5117 or visit www.viennava.gov/fairfaxcounty/gov/parks/riverbend.**

**Bring picnic baskets, chairs and blankets for an evening of live music. Free. Visit viennava.gov for more.**
Great Falls Student Explores Science in Australia

Leia Spaniak, from Deerfield, Ill., participated in two Go For Launch! events. In fall, her all-girl team created a project that measures an antioxidant produced by algae is expected to launch to the ISS from Virginia’s Wallops Flight Facility.

“There is no large natural source, which is expensive,” Spaniak said. “But if in microgravity it works efficiently, we can make the antioxidant naturally, which would be helpful.”

Spaniak and the others say Higher Orbits helped them identify friends, education and professional goals.

“I’ve been trying to get kids at school to do it so they can find something or a group that you connect with,” she said.

“Higher Orbits inspired me to pursue STEM,” said Youngker, who wants to study aerospace engineering in college. “These people give me hope that I’m going to be okay in the future. I respect myself more as a thinker.”

“This is not just a STEM experience, but a cultural experience. They will spark new thought, but they will learn more about themselves,” said Lucas.

On Aug. 7 and 8 at the Arlington’s Lockheed Martin Global Vision Center, Higher Orbits conducts a Go For Launch! sponsored by the American Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics. That event is one of six in the Apollo Series from which an experiment will be selected and launched into microgravity during a future ISS resupply mission. Scholarships are available to those who apply, too.

CAROLINE WENKS from Great Falls says a future in space is a must. “Other people see it as exploration, which I fully support, but it’s imperative that we as a people also consider life elsewhere.”

Wenks and the other American science ambassadors plan to write and blog about learning experiences with a global solutions-based mindset.

“I do not believe we can completely fix some problems on this planet, such as human-caused climate change, but we must make greater effort to make these problems less extreme,” said the Langley High School junior.

Leia Spaniak, from Deerfield, Ill., feed red kangaroos in Sydney, Australia, before attending the Harry Messel International Science School at the University of Sydney.
**News**

**Development Authority Names New Leader**

Victor Hoskins named president and CEO of Fairfax County Economic Development Authority.

**THE FCEDA helps businesses start, expand and relocate in Fairfax County by promoting the county as one of the world’s best business locations. Fairfax County already is home to 10 Fortune 500 companies, more than 100 companies on the Inc. 5000 list and 8,400 tech companies. It also has one of the nation’s most educated workforces with top-ranked schools and nearly 150,000 technology workers, or one in four jobs in the county. Hoskins will assume his new role Aug. 5.**

“Victor has been an economic-development dynamo in our region for years. We are thrilled he is bringing his experience and expertise to Fairfax County,” said Catherine Lange, Chair of the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority Board. “After an extensive search, Fairfax County found the right leader in our own backyard. Victor will be a tremendous asset as we launch new initiatives to strengthen and broaden our workforce and grow our commercial enterprises. With his energy and wide-ranging contacts, Victor will step up our efforts to attract and retain top talent and increase business investment in Fairfax County.”

FCEDA did not include Hoskins salary as its new leader with its initial release. Hoskins was paid a reported $221,900 for his role in Arlington.

Hoskins said he is eager to start his new job. “I couldn’t be more excited to join the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority as its new leader,” Hoskins said. “Fairfax County is well known for its top-ranked schools and nearly 150,000 technology workers, or one in four jobs in the county. Hoskins will assume his new role Aug. 5.”

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

CAMPS
Camp Invention. Monday-Friday, July 22-26, at Wolftrap Elementary School, 1903 Beulah Road. 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., $265. Camp Invention challenges children in grades K-6 to find their inner inventor. Various hands-on activities and at the end of the program, each camper will bring home a robot. Visit invent.org/camp.

Summer Choir Camp. Monday-Friday, Aug. 12-16 and Sunday, Aug. 18 at Church of the Holy Comforter, 543 Beulah Road NE. $125 fee includes lunches, recreational activities, music education and camp t-shirt. All children in rising 2nd-7th grade are welcome. No prior music experience or training required; solid reading skills are highly recommended. Scholarships are available. Download registration forms at www.holycomforter.com.

THURSDAY/JULY 11
Caregivers Support Group. 10-11:30 a.m. at UUCF Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax - Program Building, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. For caregivers to adult family members with dementia. First and third Thursdays of every month. Hosted by Shepherd’s Center of Oakton-Vienna, scov.org. Contact facilitator Jack Tarr at 703-821-6838 or jtarr5@verizon.net.

Tysons Regional Chamber of Commerce New and Prospective Member Orientation. 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Tower Club, 8000 Towers Crescent Drive, Suite 1700, Vienna. Learn more about the Tysons Regional Chamber and how to make the most of a membership through the various events, committees, member to member benefits and marketing opportunities. Meet the Chamber staff and hear from Board Members how membership benefits small, medium, large and non-profit companies. Registration is required. Free for new and prospective members. Sandwiches provided. Visit www.tysonschamber.org.

SATURDAY/JULY 13
Car Seat Safety Check. 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at the McLean district police station, 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean. Fairfax County Police Department offers free safety check and install events throughout the year to ensure children travel safely. In preparation for inspection, install the seat using the instructions that came with the car seat. Trained officers will review the car seat instructions and car owner’s manual to be certain that they are being followed as they should.

WEDNESDAY/JULY 17
Fairfax Commission on Aging Meets. 1-3 p.m. at McLean Governmental Center, Rooms A & B, 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean. The public is welcome to attend and join in the comment period that begins each session. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/family/services/older-adults/fairfax-area-commission-on-aging. Call 703-324-5403, TTY 711 for meeting access needs.

THURSDAY/JULY 18
Caregivers Support Group. 10-11:30 a.m. at UUCF Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax - Program Building, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. For caregivers to adult family members with dementia. First and third Thursdays of every month. Hosted by Shepherd’s Center of Oakton-Vienna, scov.org. Contact facilitator Jack Tarr at 703-821-6838 or jtarr5@verizon.net.

Memory Cafe. 2-4 p.m. at Andrew Chapel United Methodist Church, 1301 Trap Road, Vienna. Connect with others living with loved ones with dementia. Helping those with dementia and their caregivers find fun, resources and “family.” Email Carol Blackwell at lovriver@aol.com or call at 571-236-6933.

WEDNESDAY/JULY 24
Fairfax County Park Authority Board Meeting. 7:30 p.m. in the Herrity Building, 12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 941, Fairfax. The public is welcome to attend and speak in the comment period that begins each session. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/boardagn2.htm or call 703-324-8662.

Great Falls Connection ❖ July 10-16, 2019 ❖ 11
My Bi-Weekly Honeymoon
By KENNETH H. LOUIE

Granted, I’m not getting on a plane and flying to wherever isn’t here but, when you’re “failing” every other way, buying a plane and flying to and from while “not” sitting in infusion being infused at the Infusion Center every other week, the week off hormones in the weeks of my life getting away, just not on Southwest Airlines.

And when attempting to plan a “honeymoon” of this sort, juggling availability of accommodations, transportation and attending to one’s own health issues– all the while aware of the possibility of a relapse due to one’s problematic liver– that showed no improvement than actually accomplished.

One preventative step I am now pre-paying for, and going to a place where my quality of life is a stake, and whose life-saving treatment comes at a cost, is extraordinary pruned to anticipate the worst and work some financial flexibility into your wallet.

Unfortunately, when your oncologist says infuse or not to infuse, there is no question. That being said and most definitely true, my oncologist has regularly been concerned over my quality of life.

And, by “quality of life,” I mean he has been willing to not infuse me whenever I’ve said I did not need to go out of town/attend to family mat/see/visitances. And yet the increase of arterial infusions in treatment to accommodate these kinds of obligations/opportunities. He has always been sensitive to the needs of my life, and he’s been willing to accommodate the treatment has taken and which can never be replaced.

And though I’ve never actually taken advantage of doing this, having felt it was better, if I was physically able, to keep the pedal to the floor–cancer metal, I have worked it into my equation. An equation that has worked for me (gave me alive 2 plus years past diagnosis), but might not have worked for others. There is no recipe for success here. It is to each patient’s own, realities of my/your/cure and the treatment has taken and which can never be replaced.

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