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McLean CONNECTION

Benny Duback plays his brother Jonnah a tune on his new trumpet during the Fall Community Garage Sale hosted by the McLean Community Center on Saturday, Sept. 14.

A+
PAGE 8

Finding Treasures at McLean Garage Sale

NEWS, PAGE 3

Repairs to Kirby and Swinks Mill Roads Continue

NEWS, PAGE 4

Area Activists Demand: 'Defund Hate'

NEWS, PAGE 10

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 OPINION, PAGE 6 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 12 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 14

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Mother-daughter team, Michelle, Diana, and Ashley Reich had treasures flying off the table.



Steve and Henry Boehm set up their vintage military gear for sale.

PHOTOS BY OLIVIA ANELLO/THE CONNECTION

Shoppers Stock Up at McLean Community Garage Sale

BY OLIVIA ANELLO
THE CONNECTION

More than 100 people stood in line to enter the Fall Community Garage Sale hosted by the McLean Community Center, where more than 50 vendors had set up shop on Saturday morning. Residents from McLean and surrounding area in Northern Virginia shopped at the sale, and more than 500 customers had visited within the first two hours.

The sale was held in the parking garage on the corner of Beverly and Ingleside Road. Vendors young and old set up their booths with a variety of gently used items. Goods for sale ranged from baby necessities, jewelry, cooking pans, bicycles, books, board

games, clothing, movies, toys, and home decor.

When asked by a girl nearly twice her age how much a small set of animals was, 5-year-old Ashley Reich replied “three dollars,” and unzipped her fanny pack to make change for the customer. Ashley and her sister Michelle, 10, set up their own tables together with their mom, Diana. This year, Diana and her daughters were returning vendors because, “It’s such a great opportunity for them to sell their things and meet others,” Diana said. “The experience and learning how to handle money, it’s all so valuable for them.”

Among other vendors were brothers Henry, 16, and David Boehm, 13, and their father, Steve. Customers stopped in their tracks to look closer at their vintage maga-

zines and historical military gear for sale. Displayed at the front of their booth were U.S. Army hats and canteens from the Vietnam and Cold War Eras. Henry shared that his uncle “has a world class military hat collection” and that his “grandfather is a Holocaust survivor, which inspired [him] to really immerse [himself] in U.S. history.” It is a family affair of collecting historical military gear that all of the Boehm men find interest in.

“It’s a shared experience,” Steve said, “for us and for the customers... I enjoy watching the children pick up something from here that they may not have otherwise found interesting.” Steve appreciates that the MCC puts on events like the garage sale and said “McLean is a fortunate place to live and things like this help forge a real

sense of community.”

George Sachs, the Executive Director at the McLean Community Center, said that the Fall and Spring Community Garage Sales are going on 40 years of being offered to the public.

Vendors pay a small registration fee to have their tables set up at the sale, and everything that comes after is purely for the experience of the community. Sachs believes “there is a lot of good in McLean, and today [was] evidence of that.”

The Fall Community Garage Sale was just the beginning of this season’s events offered by the MCC, with more to follow in the coming weeks. Mark your calendars for Harvest Happenings, a family event on Sept. 28th and be sure to register for the McLean 5K on Oct. 5.



Julie Thatcher and Asma Sarwary conduct surveys with customers in exchange for a cookie.



Peyton Choi admires his new Emoji paint set.



Margaret Bryant was all business, selling five Halloween costumes in one hour.

Repairs to Kirby and Swinks Mill Roads Continue

Swinks Mill Road expected to reopen end of September; Kirby Road in mid-December.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) continues repairs and reconstruction on Swinks Mill Road and Kirby Road in McLean, both severely damaged by flooding this summer. The road closures remain in place during repairs but do not prevent resident access.

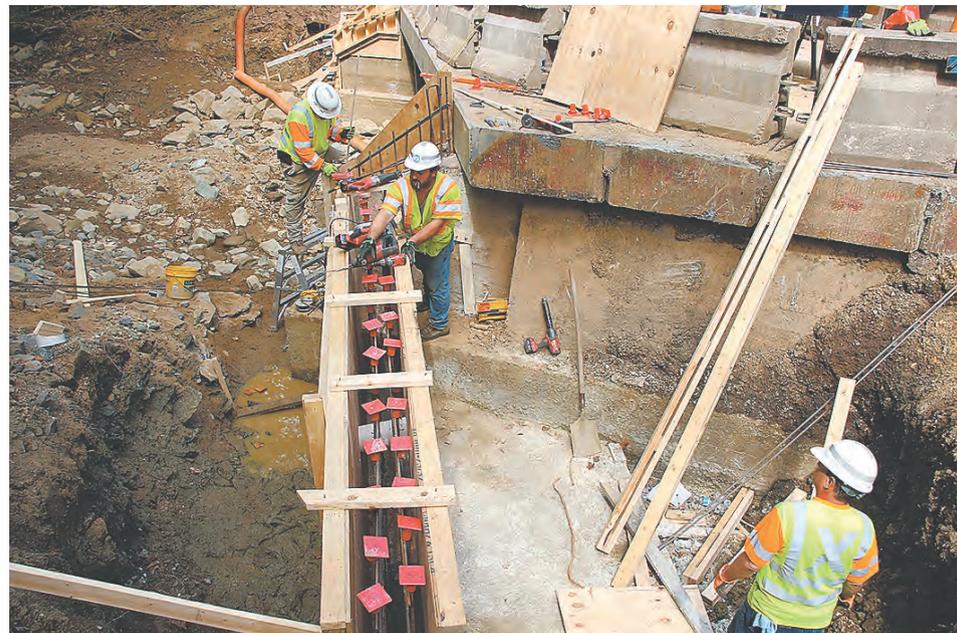
As many as 20 roads in Fairfax County were closed due to storm damage from July 8, and extensive repairs were made to twelve McLean-area roads in the days following.

An update on the final two locations needing long-term road and bridge construction:

Swinks Mill Road at Scotts Run (VA-685):

- ❖ Crews continue work to reconstruct the bridge deck, make extensive repairs to substructure and the approaching roadway.

- ❖ In the last month, crews excavated and poured concrete working surfaces on the downstream side on which the footers will be built, installed rebar and poured two footers on the downstream side, installed rebar and support for the stem wall, that joins the foundation to the vertical walls of the bridge, on the downstream right-side



Crews continue work to reconstruct the bridge deck, make extensive repairs to substructure and the approaching roadway at Swinks Mill Road at Scotts Run (VA-685).

abutment (leg of bridge), and partially installed rebar for stem wall on the down-

stream left-side abutment.

- ❖ Work is on schedule to be complete by

the end of September.

Kirby Road at Pimmit Run (VA-695):

- ❖ In total, hundreds of feet of the road and bridge saw extensive damage.

- ❖ Martins Construction Corporation has been awarded a \$2.1 million emergency contract for repairs, and work is anticipated to begin the week of Sept. 23. The work includes:

- ❖ Relocation of Little Pimmit Run to its previous stream alignment in compliance with federal/state permitting agencies;

- ❖ Rebuilding the washed-out section of Kirby Road with concrete and rip rap;

- ❖ Replacement of a more than 50-year-old 24-inch sanitary sewer line;

- ❖ Reconstruction of the bridge over Pimmit Run with work on the abutments, wing walls, parapets, bridge deck, and approaches;

- ❖ Access to all homes will be maintained during the work. The road is expected to safely reopen to through traffic in mid-December, and final asphalt and lane striping will continue through May 2020.

For ongoing updates, follow VDOT Northern Virginia on Twitter: @vadotnova

3,000 Jobs Added to Local Economy

In the second quarter of 2019, the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority (FCEDA) worked with a diverse group of 35 businesses that announced the addition of nearly 3,000 jobs to the Fairfax County economy.

The companies represent a variety of industry sectors and run from A to Z: employment staffing company Aerotek to business process management software firm Zimpatica.

Aerotek, which bases its Fairfax County operations in the Fair Lakes area, announced it would create 413 more jobs in the county. Zimpatica, which is based in the Merrifield area, said it would add 10 jobs

to the local economy.

Other notable announcements during the quarter:

- ❖ TekSystems, which specializes in information technology staffing services and bases local operations in the Merrifield area. It is adding 840 jobs.

- ❖ Inova Schar Cancer Institute, which opened in May in Merrifield is adding 500 jobs.

- ❖ EY, the multinational provider of advisory, assurance, tax and transaction services is adding 481 jobs based out of the Tysons office.

- ❖ OBXtek, a service-disabled veteran-owned business that provides technical and

logistical services to government agencies is adding 100 jobs based out of the Tysons office.

- ❖ Caboose Brewing Company, which opened Caboose Commons in the Mosaic District of Merrifield created 95 jobs.

- ❖ Furnace Record Pressing, which manufactures vinyl records in the Alexandria area of the county – one of just a handful of such operations in the nation – is adding 26 jobs.

Zach Sells, director of business operations (Northern Virginia and Winchester professional and industrial) for Aerotek, said the company continues to expand here because of the proximity to other growing companies and the talent they need.

“We were very intentional in having an established presence in Fairfax County to capitalize on the growing job market here,” said Sells.

Victor Hoskins, president and CEO of the FCEDA, noted the range of industries represented by the companies that announced expansions during the quarter.

“We want to continue to diversify the economy in order to withstand the next recession,” Hoskins said. “Having companies in everything from IT to life sciences to manufacturing creating thousands of jobs will help us attract and retain a broad range of talent and continue to strengthen our economic base.”

Business growth and innovation helps Fairfax County fund the nation’s top-rated school system and other public services that contribute to the quality of life of residents.

Fairfax County offers businesses a state-of-the-art telecommunications infrastructure, access to global markets through Washington Dulles International Airport, a vibrant investment capital community and a highly skilled, well-educated workforce.

The Fairfax County Economic Development Authority offers site location and business development assistance, and connections with county and state government agencies, to help companies locate and expand in Fairfax County.

In addition to its headquarters in Tysons, Fairfax County’s largest business district, the FCEDA maintains business investment offices in six important global business centers: Bangalore/Mumbai, Berlin, London, Los Angeles, Seoul and Tel Aviv.

George Mason University Placed in the Top 200 U.S. Universities

George Mason University placed No. 184 out of 801 universities nationally and No. 42 out of 209 institutions in the South Region in 2020 College Rankings by the Wall Street Journal and Times Higher Ed. In just two years, the university has risen 90 places, with a 47 spot climb this year. For 2019, Mason placed No. 231, and in 2018 the university ranked at No. 274.

“Our remarkable rise in the rankings is a great testimony to the progress Mason has made in providing an excellent education for all of our students,” said Mason Provost David Wu. “I am particularly pleased to see the rankings highlight our effective engagement with the students and our ability to create a positive learn-

ing environment for a diverse student body, which ultimately produces excellent outcomes for our graduates.”

The list evaluates universities based “on their educational impact and the lifetime benefit to students,” according to a press release. It also includes the results of Times Higher Ed’s U.S. Student Survey, which examines a range of issues including students’ engagement with their studies, their interactions with teachers and their satisfaction with their college experience. According to WSJ and THE, the methodology encompasses four key areas:

Resources (30 percent) – Does the college have the capacity to effectively deliver teaching?

Engagement (20 percent) – Does the col-

lege effectively engage with its students?

Outcomes (40 percent) – Does the college generate good and appropriate outputs? Does it add value to the students who attend?

Environment (10 percent) – Is the college providing a good learning environment for all students? Does it make efforts to attract a diverse student body and faculty?

Of these categories, Mason ranked highest in outcomes and placed in the top 20 percent of schools ranked.

“These rankings also recognize our dedicated faculty and staff who are working hard to prepare Mason students to have an impact on the world,” Wu said.



PHOTOS BY TOM MANNING/THE CONNECTION

The Fairfax County Police Unified Team 2 pulls an 82-ton FedEx Airbus A320.

Dulles Day Festival, Plane Pull Attract Crowds

The 27th annual Dulles Day Festival and Plane Pull was held at Washington Dulles International Airport on Sept. 14. The event, presented by the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and United Airlines, has raised more than \$2 million for the Special Olympics of Virginia since it began in 1992. This year, 59 teams competed to see how fast they could pull a FedEx Airbus A320 or a United Boeing 757 airplane 12 feet. The Chesapeake Sheriff's Office won for the twelfth consecutive year. The Chesapeake team completed their pull in 4.95 seconds, beating the team from the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office by just .01 seconds.



Elizabeth Jenkins, 6, along with her brother and dad, pull for team Freddie Mac of McLean at the Dulles Day Festival and Plane Pull on Sept. 14.



Visitors check out a FedEx race car and go inside a FedEx airplane.

SEE PLANE PULL, PAGE 9

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Police Reform in Fairfax—Four Years Later

BY JOHN LOVAAS
RESTON IMPACT PRODUCER/HOST



It's hard to believe it's been four years since the Ad Hoc Commission to Review Police Practices submitted its final report to Fairfax County's Board of Supervisors. The 202 unanimously agreed recommendations contained therein, if fully implemented as intended by the 40-member Commission, would be transformative of our Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD). While transformation would be an exaggeration of what has been accomplished so far, the progress to date is remarkable, thanks in no small measure to the leadership of Police Chief Edwin Roessler.

The Commission created by the Board of Supervisors in early 2015, fifteen months after an officer's fatal shooting of unarmed John Geer, divided its report into five areas: Communications, Recruitment & Diversity, Mental Health, Use of Force, and Independent Oversight & Investigations. In the 75 years since the Police Department was created, the men in blue controlled all that went on behind the steel blue curtain. Transparency and civilian review were foreign concepts. So, there was tension on a Commission made up of one-third police, including heavy hitters. Our unanimous decisions reflect their presence.

What has been accomplished? Nearly all recommendations to improve Communications, i.e., public information on police operations, have been implemented, including installing a civilian chief of communications. At

INDEPENDENT PROGRESSIVE

times getting out information on police shootings still is delayed, but it gets out. Transparency does not come easily in a Department with five would-be police unions, but forward movement to date is impressive.

Diversity, however, is the one area where there has been almost zero progress. The Police Department is not representative of the County it serves — especially in hiring and promoting Latinos and African Americans. The county is nearly 10 percent black and 16 percent Latino, but the Force is just over 7 percent black and 4 percent Latino, and worse higher up. It's hard to believe minorities don't apply for and cannot qualify for entry level positions paying \$55,000. The Chief says bad press for cops these days is a main obstacle. That may be, but institutional resistance also certainly plays a role.

Mental Health - a success! Persons with mental illness frequently conflict with police officers, usually involving minor offenses (e.g., disorderly conduct), sometimes with tragic consequences. Half of all fatal shootings by law enforcement involve people with mental illness. Officers are ill prepared to identify persons in crisis much less manage encounters with them.

Their only option for resolution is arrest and incarceration in the county jail, a lockup filled with people in crisis.

Crisis Intervention Training for all officers and a Diversion First program providing facilities to assess and treat (vs. jail) the mentally ill were adopted and are underway.

Use Of Force. Appropriately, 87 of 202 Commission recommendations involve use of force. They include adopting a new philosophy—the Sanctity of Life as the guiding principle for new police policy and practices.

Policies and practices were reviewed and have been overhauled to include de-escalation in confrontations, prompt reporting stressing transparency, emphasis of less lethal techniques, and employing new technologies (e.g., late model tasers and body cameras for all officers). Implementation is nearly complete.

New tasers are now on the way, and long-delayed body cameras are expected to be approved for funding by County Supervisors this month. FCPD could be a topnotch, more humane force if these Use of Force reforms fully sink in. Perhaps John Geer did not die in vain!

A final area, Independent Oversight and Investigation, has met strong resistance from police. Three activities were proposed. A recommendation to build independent investigative capacity with the Commonwealth Attorney was killed by the Supervisors.

However, the Independent Police Auditor (IPA) is in place and reviewing all officer involved shootings, deaths and serious injury investigations conducted by the Internal Affairs Bureau.

Last, the proposed Civilian Review Panel is in place to accept public complaints about police abuse of authority, hear them and review police investigations of them. CRP's power was diluted in the approval process. Still, the creation of the CRP and the IPA mark truly historical turning points in drawing back the steel blue curtain.

More at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/policecivilianreviewpanel/complaint-process>

Legislating by Skulduggery

BY KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM
STATE DELEGATE (D-36)



Last week while Democrats in the North Carolina House of Representatives were attending a 9/11 remembrance service, Republicans called a surprise vote to overturn the Democratic governor's veto of the state budget. While Democrats and media were told that there would be no voting during the morning session, Democrats' attendance at the vigil allowed Republicans to get the three-fifths vote needed to override the veto.

Reaction to the maneuver has been harsh. The Charlotte Observer in an editorial said that "the verdict is now plain. North Carolina's Republican legislative leaders — not actually leaders, but connivers — are beyond shame." The paper described what happened as a "stunning display of contempt for democracy ... but this isn't a case simply of hardball politics and sly legislative maneuvering. This is a case of breaking faith with the people..." The Senate must concur on the override before it becomes effective.

COMMENTARY

Before Virginians get too smug about what happened in North Carolina we must remember what happened in the Virginia General Assembly about a month ago.

With the continuing string of mass murders in the country — beginning about the time of the massacre at Virginia Tech that for a while was the largest ever and continuing through a mass shooting at a Virginia Beach municipal building — Gov. Ralph Northam called a special session of the General Assembly to consider several bills intended to reduce gun violence.

The special session convened on July 9 to take up bills related to gun violence but without notice to Democrats or media the Republican majority adjourned 90 minutes later without taking up any of the bills and with a return date scheduled after the elections.

There were no bills among those introduced to respond to gun violence that would have confiscated guns or altered the Second Amendment.

They were common-sense bills that according to all public opinion polls I have seen are supported by more than 80 percent and some by more than 90 percent of the public.

The experience in Virginia can be described by the same terms of that in North Carolina: contempt for democracy, a travesty of the process, legislative deceit. You may have seen news reports that the Republican floor leader in the Virginia House received a \$200,000 campaign contribution from the NRA several weeks later.

Partisan control of the Virginia House and Senate are on the line this Nov. 5 as all 140 seats are on the ballot.

There are numerous critically important issues on the ballot that it would take several columns to enumerate.

I do want to add one that gets too little discussion and that is legislative reform. Such reform includes independent drawing of legislative district lines, or getting rid of gerrymandering, that allows the abuses of legislative power in North Carolina and Virginia that are discussed here. As the Charlotte Observer said of the situation in North Carolina, "It was an illegitimate majority acting in an unethical way."

What happened in both states demonstrates once again that the speakership be defined not as the head of the majority party but as an impartial and fair leader. In both instances the speakers of their respective houses should have stopped these episodes of legislating by skulduggery.

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Park Foundation Board Director Emeritus Receives State Volunteer Award

Fairfax County Park Foundation Board Director Stephen Thormahlen was honored with the Distinguished Volunteer Service Award at the Virginia Recreation and Park Society's 64th Annual Conference this month in Tysons Corner.

Former Board Chair and Director Emeritus Thormahlen has provided 16 years of volunteer service to the Park Foundation, which supports the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) by raising private funds, obtaining grants and creating partnerships that supplement tax dollars to meet community needs for park land, facilities and services. During his tenure at the Foundation, numerous projects were completed due to his positive vision and steadfast guidance. Generous personal contributions from he and his wife, Adriane, inspired others to give as well. These gifts supported Rec-PAC summer camps, the Combo Classic Golf Tournament, and trails construction, improvement and maintenance. Thormahlen is a retired PNC Wealth Management Executive, and in addition to his personal giving for the Arts in the Parks performance series, the PNC Foundation has provided a decade of grants totaling \$92,500 that serve as the Signature Sponsor of the Children's Summer Entertainment Series. Going for-



Fairfax County Park Foundation Board Director Stephen Thormahlen receives the Distinguished Volunteer Service Award.

ward, the Burke Lake Park Improvement campaign will benefit from the largess of the Thormahlen Family Trust.

In addition to his monetary gifts,

Thormahlen has been generous with his time. He volunteered for more than 500 hours at various board meetings, executive committee meetings, presentations before

the Board of Supervisors and the FCPA, volunteering at special Park Authority and Park Foundation public events and at outside meetings. The VRPS program honors individuals, departments and organizations throughout Virginia who have demonstrated excellence during the previous year in 14 different categories. Applications are judged by a jury of peers. The mission of VRPS is to unite all professionals, students, and interested lay persons engaged in the field of recreation, parks, and other leisure services in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Candidates Forum To be Held on Sept. 23

The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area will hold a Candidate Forum for Fairfax County Chair of the Board of Supervisors and At-Large School Board candidates on Monday, Sept. 23, 2019 at 7 p.m. The event will be held at the Fairfax County Government Center; 12000 Government Center Parkway, in Fairfax.

All certified candidates for the Nov. 5, 2019 General Election have been invited. This event is free and open to the public, and questions for the candidates will come from the audience. Questions can be submitted in advance by accessing: www.surveymonkey.com/r/LWVFA2019.

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Normal Adolescent Moods Swings or Depression?

Making a distinction between the two can be difficult.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Stephanie Pironne says her daughter Lila was always a child who was well behaved. From preschool through elementary school, she was described by her teachers as having a kind and cheerful nature. When her daughter, now 13 years old and in eighth grade, began middle school, something changed.

"She now goes from goes from happy to grumpy to sad all within 15 minutes and with nothing around her having changed," said Pironne. "I'm always on edge when she comes down for breakfast in the morning because I never know what I'm going to get. She might be yelling at me for something I didn't know I'd done, giving me the silent treatment or happy and chatty or combination of all three.

Such emotional roller coasters are often a part of puberty. Hormonal changes that happen when puberty begins can cause not only bodily physical changes but mood swings that can feel out of control, say mental health professionals. It's often difficult for parents and those close to teens learn to distinguish normal changes in mood from a more serious mental health issue.

"It's really, really hard to do, because they can present in very much the same way, and aren't always two distinct categories," said psychologist Stacie Isenberg, Psy.D. "Also, sometimes [puberty-driven mood swings], do get treated with medication. I've had patients who were prescribed birth control and some who were prescribed antidepressants."

The severity of the symptoms, says Carol Barnaby, MSW, LCSW-C can help make the distinction," said therapist Carol Barnaby, MSW, LCSW-C. "Crying spells or deep sadness for no apparent reason is a sign. Displaying a loss of energy or isolating themselves from others and persistent low self-esteem are also signals."

"If your child's mood seems off with regularity or they are withdrawing or increasingly irritable, I would advise parents to get a professional assessment," added Isenberg. "You can start with you pediatrician, and based on their recommendation, you may want to have your child see a psychologist or psychiatrist."

The amount of time the symptoms last could also be a clue that professional help is needed. "Teen depression is normally indicated by a persistent change in mood that lasts two weeks or more," said Barnaby. "The change in mood seems to cause significant distress and problems that show up at home, school, during extra-curricular activities, and in social areas of life."

A desire to hurt oneself is an indicator of a mental health issue that is more serious than normal teen mood swings, said Barnaby.

"If your child ever talks about self-harm like cutting themselves, refusing to attend school or other activities they previously enjoyed those are sign that you should seek help immediately.

If your child talks ...or has thoughts about suicide or not wanting to be around, seek professional help immediately," added Isenberg.

"She goes from goes from happy to grumpy to sad all within 15 minutes and with nothing around her having changed. I'm always on edge when she comes down for breakfast in the morning because I never know what I'm going to get."

— Stephanie Pironne

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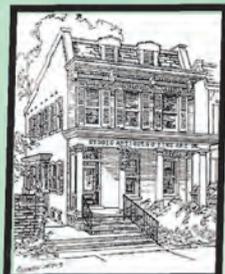
Virginia Schools Rank Third in Nation with B-minus

A leading education journal ranked Virginia's public schools as third in the nation in student achievement based on the performance of students on national assessments in reading and mathematics, graduation rates and achievement on Advanced Placement examinations.

Education Week's Quality Counts 2019 report awarded the commonwealth a letter

grade of B- for K-12 achievement. Only Massachusetts, with a B+, and New Jersey, with a B, earned higher grades. Superintendent of Public Instruction James Lane said: "I look forward to visiting as many schools as I can during the coming weeks and months and personally congratulating teachers, principals, administrators and support professionals for all they do as we strive to make the commonwealth's schools the best

in the nation." K-12 achievement comprises one third of Education Week's three-part Quality Counts rating system. Earlier this year, the publication awarded Virginia a B on its "Chance for Success Index" and a C for school finance. Today's grade for K-12 achievement resulted in Virginia earning an overall grade of B- from Education Week for 2019.



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Children take pleasure in trying to “Dunk a Cop!”

Plane Pull

FROM PAGE 5

Families explore the inside of a C17 Galaxy transport aircraft from Martinsburg, WV.

PHOTOS BY TOM MANNING THE CONNECTION



It's all smiles for the lead pullers of team Diplomatic Security Special Agents Association.

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Sunday, Sept. 22, 2019

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\$40 before Sept. 19
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Members of Herndon-Reston Indivisible (HRI) protest in front of the U.S. Capitol urging Congress to fight detention, raids and family separation by defunding them through the congressional appropriations process.



Members of Herndon-Reston Indivisible (HRI) prepare to enter the office of Congresswoman Jennifer Wexton (D-10), to deliver a letter urging her to fight detention, raids and family separation by defunding them through the congressional appropriations process.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Area Activists Demand: 'Defund Hate'

Congress resumes, local protestors stand with immigrants.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

On Monday, Sept. 9, members of Congress returned from recess. Four days later, on Sept. 13 in a doubleheader near their home turf, members of Herndon-Reston Indivisible (HRI) took to the streets of Virginia and the District of Columbia in a force of activism. HRI members from Reston — Carrie Bruns, Joanne Collins, Diana Smith, Sally Misenick and Leah Findlay; Herndon residents — Sharon Wunder and Sherry Blanton; and Vienna resident Meredith Haines; - stood with immigrants in a national day of action, part of the Defund Hate Coalition to fight detention, raids and family separation by defunding them through the congressional appropriations process.

At their first stop, HRI members met in front of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services building at 2675 Prosperity Drive in Fairfax. There they held their distinctive illuminated letters that spelled out the words, "DEFUND HATE."

Del. Kenneth R. "Ken" Plum (D-36) joined the protestors and held up a sign announcing for himself, "DEFUND HATE."

HRI member Diane Smith of Reston who took part in the protest explained the meaning of "Defund Hate" as "a nationwide action initiated by Indivisible to demand Congress stop the administration's un-American and inhumane policies against asylum seekers and immigrants, including separation of children from parents, mass incarceration, profiling, and other abuses."

Members of Herndon-Reston Indivisible (HRI) deliver their letter to the Washington D.C. office of Congresswoman Jennifer Wexton (D-10). In it, they urge her to fight detention, raids and family separation by defunding them through the congressional appropriations process.



Del. Kenneth R. "Ken" Plum (D-36) joins Herndon-Reston Indivisible protestors in show of solidarity with immigrants as he holds up a sign saying, "DEFUND HATE" in front of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services building at 2675 Prosperity Drive in Fairfax.

U.S. Capitol in Washington D.C. where they stood once again in protest with their letters spelling out, Defund Hate. Car horns sounded in support of the protestors; verbal remarks sounded against the support of the protestors. Through it all, the demonstrators remained firmly planted for their second hour.

Standing in their yellow t-shirts, the phrase, "It's a "Marathon, Not a Sprint," showed when members turned around. "We knew, even in the early days of the Trump administration, that our fight would not be accomplished quickly. We are in for the long haul, to defeat policies against immigration. ... This motto reminds us not to become discouraged and to never give up in our efforts," said Carrie Bruns of Reston.

Shortly after 3 p.m., HRI members lowered their letters, bagged them and walked to the offices of U.S. Rep. Jennifer Wexton (D-10) and U.S. Rep. Gerald Connolly (D-11). HRI members left letters addressed to Wexton and Connolly demanding they and other members of Congress defund hate.

MEREDITH HAINES OF VIENNA is a member of HRI. Haines is also an immigrant and participated in the #DefundHate campaign. Asked why she attended, Haines stated, "The #DefundHate campaign speaks to the cruelty of the administration's actions regarding immigrants and refugees. I am an immigrant, like one-third of Fairfax County residents, so my perspective on the issue is not unique... Indivisible has written a manual, literally, for grassroots progressives on how to be effective, and seeing a campaign move the needle on an issue is invigorating, as is being around like-minded people. It is always a good time to be on-site with the Herndon-Reston Indivisible crew."

Visit www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/hr3931/text for additional information.

PHOTO BY ROBIN KENT

NEWS

Protecting Environment, One Book at a Time

Local Langley ninth graders in Girl Scout Troop 5420 Grayton Simanson, Amelia Lee, Samantha Brunjes, and Charlotte Carbaugh established Little Library for Environmental Awareness earning their silver award in Girl Scouts.

They chose to create an environmentally themed Little Library and placed it at 9409 Fair Pine Lane. This location was chosen for easy accessibility to the public. Their Little Library was created with recycled plastic milk jugs and contains many environment themed books which include handmade bookmarks that give tips about caring for the environment both locally and globally.

The inspiration for this project took an environmental turn when this group visited the Difficult Run Nature Reserve. There they saw the impact of humans on our nearby environment realizing that with more awareness, they could have both a positive impact on nearby nature and promote awareness within their own community on the little things that could be done to help our environment such as:

Ditch plastic bags for canvas totes; REFUSE and turn down what you don't need; Buy in bulk and skip the packaging; Wrap food in beeswax paper; BYO reusable bottle; Say no to disposable utensils; borrow books from the library or our little library; REPAIR. If it's broken, fix it;

REUSE. Join swap groups in you area; RECYCLE ANYTHING ON: EARTH911.COM

This troop's Little Library is not complete without



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Troop 5420 earns Silver Award by creating Environmental themed lending library: Langley High ninth graders Samantha Brunjes, Amelia Lee, Grayton Simanson and Charlotte Carbaugh.

books. This team of girls has donated/collected books, but the motto of the Little Library is 'Take A Book. Share A Book.' Feel free to share your books as well and take some time to learn about saving our environment.

C'MON, BE HONEST. WHAT WOULD YOU RATHER BE DOING THIS SUMMER?



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CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

Senior Olympics. The Northern Virginia Senior Olympics features more than 60 events that challenge the mind as well as the body. New games this year: jigsaw puzzle and line-dancing. The public is invited, free of charge, to all NVSO events. The games run through Sept. 28. Visit www.nvso.us.

Countless Shades of Black. Through Oct. 12, Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at The Frame Factory Gallery, 212 Dominion Road N.E., Vienna. Countless Shades of Black features local artist Alfredo Milian and Discovery Graphics. Free. Visit www.theframefactory1.com for a slideshow.

Pop-Up Scream Selfie Museum. Through Nov. 3, on select dates and times at Tysons Corner Center, Lower Level near Lord & Taylor. The American Scream Selfie Museum will feature interactive exhibits that will make visitors laugh and scream and the star of eye-popping selfies. The museum will feature an array of custom-built Halloween themed sets individuals can interact with: sit on the Iron Throne and rule the Seven Kingdoms, stand in an ancient Egyptian tomb and face the Mummy; visit a gruesome morgue; and more. \$15-\$18. Visit www.american-scream.com for timed tickets

Oak Marr Farmers' Market. 8 a.m.-noon at Oak Marr RECenter, 3200 Jermantown Road, Oakton. Every Wednesday through Nov. 13, rain or shine. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/oak-marr for more.

McLean Farmers Market. Fridays, through Nov. 15, 8 a.m.-noon at Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/mclean.

Great Falls Farmers Market. Year-round, Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 778 Walker Road, Great Falls. Email kathleen@greatfallsfarmersmarket.org

Oakton Farmers Market. Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at Unity of Fairfax Church, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Year-round weekly farmers market in Oakton. community-foodworks.org.

Mah Jongg Cards. Order cards through Jan. 15, 2020, from Temple Rodef Shalom, 2100 Westmoreland St. 2020 Mah Jongg cards are \$8 for small cards and \$9 for large cards. Official cards and will be sent directly from the National Mah Jongg League in late March/early April 2020. Go to bit.ly/mahjonggcards2020 or email iva.gresko@gmail.com to order.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 20

Application Deadline: Vienna Halloween Parade. The 2019 Vienna Halloween Parade theme is "Famous Children's Books and Fairy Tales Brought to Life." To apply as a parade entrant, submit a completed registration form, narrative, waiver, and float policy form with a detailed sketch and description. Forms at viennava.gov/halloween.

Batty Myth-Busting. 7-8:30 p.m. at Lake Fairfax Park, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. Separate fact from fiction with the "Let's Get Batty" program at Lake Fairfax Park. Park staff will debunk some common myths about our friendly bat neighbors and provide information about a deadly fungus that is threatening their population. The program also includes a short naturalist-led hike. Designed for participants age 7-adult. \$7 per person. Call 703-471-5414 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/lake-fairfax.

Young Adult Game Night. 7:30-9:30 p.m. at Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. The Young Adult Ministry will be hosting its first Game Night of the program year. All young adults are invited to gather in the chapel for some games, snacks, and fellowship. Bring friends and games you are interested in playing. Newcomers welcome. Free. Visit www.lewinsville.org/events/young-adult-game-night/ or call 703-356-7200.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 21

Annual Walk for Mental Health. 9 a.m. check in; walk starts at 10 a.m. Tysons Corner Center on the Plaza 1961 Chain Bridge Road, Tysons. In addition to live music, face painting, interactive music and art stations and information booths, participants will be celebrating hope and raising mental health awareness. Visit www.nami-northernvirginia.org/ to register.

Global Hunger Banquet. 6 p.m. at Church of the Holy Comforter, 543 Beulah Road NE,



PHOTO BY DIANA EICHLER

Opening day of ValeArts Fall Show

ValeArts "Colorful Journeys"

The 27th ValeArts Fall Show will feature more than 150 original works by nine local artists in various media, styles, and sizes. Three days fine art exhibition, a family friendly neighborhood event. Friday, Sept. 27, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. (reception, 7-9 p.m.); Saturday-Sunday, Sept. 28-29, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. at Historic Vale Schoolhouse, 3124 Fox Mill Road, Oakton. Free admission. Visit www.valearts.com or call 703-860-1888.

Northern Virginia Senior Olympics

The Northern Virginia Senior Olympics features more than 60 events that challenge the mind as well as the body. New games this year: jigsaw puzzle and line-dancing. The games run through Sept. 28. The games will be hosted at more than 25 venues, many of which are located in and around Fairfax and Arlington counties and the City of Alexandria. There will be no on-site registration for competitors. Spectators are welcome at all events and admission is free. For event details, go to www.nvso.us, call 703-228-4721 or email nvso1982@gmail.com.

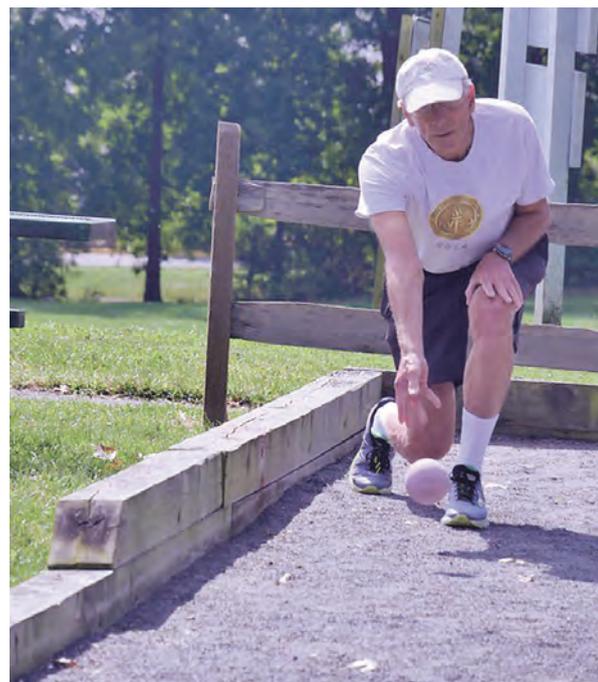
Vienna. An intergenerational education event and meal, illustrating the global division of food portions and supplementing the Vienna CROP Walk. Free tickets at www.eventbrite.com - enter "hunger banquet" in the events button. Free, but there will be an opportunity to donate to the CROP Walk at the event.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 22

Nature Nook-Turtles. 10-11 a.m. at Clemyjontri Park, 6317 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Join a naturalist to learn about the region's native turtles. In this program for children ages 3-5, participants will take a short park hike, meet a live turtle and make a turtle craft. \$9 per child. Call 703-388-2807 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/clemyjontri.

Gyotaku at Lake Fairfax. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at Lake Fairfax Park, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. Get in the swim about "Gyotaku," the ancient Japanese custom of fish printing, with a program at Lake Fairfax Park. Learn about the fish living in Lake Fairfax and give Gyotaku a try by on a T-shirt or fabric bag that you can take home. Designed for participants age 5-adult. \$9 per person. Call 703-471-5414 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/lake-fairfax.

Cider Fresh from the Press. Noon-3 p.m. at



FILE PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE

Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Learn about the distilling process, how ciders are made, and why these activities are mill-related. Watch the cider press in action and see how a still operates. This will be a water-only operation, no alcohol is involved. visitors can enjoy samples of non-alcoholic apple cider. \$5 per person. Designed for participants age 3-adult. Call 703-759-2771 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/colvin-run-mill.

"Broadway Princess Party." 3 p.m. at The Alden, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Brush off that tiara for this concert direct from NYC, featuring Tony-nominee Susan Egan (Broadway's original Belle in "Beauty and the Beast," voice of Meg in the movie "Hercules"), Grammy-nominee Courtney Reed (original Jasmine in Disney's "Aladdin" on Broadway) and Christy Altomare (Anastasia in "Anastasia" on Broadway) singing every princess song in the book, sharing hilarious and heartfelt stories of their royal antics backstage, on stage and beyond. \$50; \$45 students and seniors; \$35 MCC tax district residents. Visit www.mcleancenter.org or call 703-790-9223.

Performance: Amadeus Orchestra. 4 p.m. at Saint Luke Catholic Church, 7001 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Mendelssohn's powerful and

rarely-heard Overture in C ("Trumpet"), op. 101, raises the curtain on a new season. Four Amadeus veterans (oboist Wesley Nichols, clarinetist Anne Ament, bassoonist Eric Dirksen, and hornist Karin Berkley) step to the front with Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante. And hear a foreshadowing of Beethoven's 250th anniversary year with his Eroica Symphony. A pre-concert lecture by Music Director A. Scott Wood will begin at 3:15 p.m. and a reception will follow the concert. \$40 at the door or www.amadeusconcerts.com. Students 17 and under and active military are admitted free charge.

Deeper than Skin. 7-9 p.m. at Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. A musical exploration of race: "Deeper Than the Skin" is an experience of singing and listening, of experiencing a connection so deep that it makes you laugh, smile, cry, and reconsider what you know about our history. \$25. Email music@unityoffairfax.org or visit deeperthantheskin.eventbrite.com/.

MONDAY/SEPT. 23

The Ayr Hill Garden Club Monthly Gathering. 12:45 p.m. at the Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 2589 Chain Bridge Road, Vienna.

The meeting features Erica Carter, Fairfax County Recycling Coordinator. There is a lot of talk about recycling these days - what can be recycled? Where does it go? Is China still buying? What can one do to minimize the amount of waste created? Free and open to the public. Email emilielarson@rcn.com.

WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 25

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

NOVA ScratchEd Meetup. 4:45-7:45 p.m. at Thinkabit Lab, 7054 Haycock Road, Falls Church. In the first NOVA ScratchEd Meetup ever, educators will have the opportunity to make, learn, share, and connect with others around the topic of creative computing. Free. Refreshments will be served. Email james.h.koontz@gmail.com or visit www.meetup.com/ScratchEd-NorthernVA/events/263667456/.

Holy Happy Hour. 6:15-7:15 p.m. at Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. An "Autumn Leaves" Jazz themed program will feature Christopher Ziemba and Lena Seikaly, performing a piano and voice duet. The short concert begins at 6:15, followed by wine and cheese in Fellowship Hall. Free and open to the public. Visit www.lewinsville.org/events/holy-happy-hour/

FRIDAY/SEPT. 27

20th Anniversary Celebration. 4-8 p.m. at Club Phoenix Teen Center, 120 Cherry St. SE, Vienna. Vienna's rallying point for afterschool games, food, and good company will celebrate its 20th year with music, games, inflatables, food trucks, and special guest appearances. Free and open to the public. Club Phoenix is open Monday-Thursday, 2:30-6:30 p.m. and Fridays, 2:30-10 p.m. Visit www.viennava.gov/index.aspx?NID=80 or call 703-255-5736.

All That Jazz Dinner. 4:30-6:30 p.m. at Sunrise of McLean, 8315 Turning Leaf Lane, McLean. Food, fun, raffle ticket and All That Jazz. Proceeds of the dinner will be donated to the Alzheimer's Association. Dinner: \$25, adults; \$15, children 12 and under. RSVP by Wednesday, Sept. 24 to McLean.Conc3@SunriseSeniorLiving.com or 703-734-1600.

After 7 Dance Party. 7-10 p.m. at The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. For 7th-10th Graders. The Old Firehouse presents After 7, a can't-miss party that includes raffles, tournaments, catered food and drinks. With hip-hop, Top 40 and dance hall tracks plus requests. \$5 admission. Preregistration is recommended. Visit www.mcleancenter.org or call 703-448-8336.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/SEPT. 27-29

ValeArts "Colorful Journeys." Friday, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. (reception, 7-9 p.m.); Saturday-Sunday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. at Historic Vale Schoolhouse, 3124 Fox Mill Road, Oakton. 27th ValeArts Fall Show will feature more than 150 original works by nine local artists in various media, styles, and sizes. Free admission. Visit www.valearts.com or call 703-860-1888.

BULLETIN

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

THROUGH OCT. 23

How to Build a Better Budget. At the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The McLean Community Center (MCC) Governing Board invites residents of Small District 1A-Dranesville to engage with planning Center's fiscal year 2021 budget. All meetings of the Governing Board are open to the public. The preliminary consolidated budget will be posted on the Center's website and available at the Center's reception desk a week prior to the public hearing on Wednesday, Sept. 25. Visit www.mcleancenter.org/news-items/404-board-holds-meetings-on-fy2021-budget-proposal for more.

- ❖ The Public Hearing on the FY2021 Budget, will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 25.
- ❖ Residents may submit written comments through Monday, Oct. 21 - by mail to McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean VA 22101; fax 703-653-9435; or email to george.sachs@fairfaxcounty.gov.
- ❖ The Board will approve the FY2021 budget when it meets at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 23. The final budget will be approved by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in spring 2020.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 19

Adventures in Learning. 10 a.m.-noon at Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, Program Building, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. The Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna (SCOV) presents their Adventures in Learning (AIL) Open House/Registration for the fall 2019 semester. During the AIL Open House (11-11:30 a.m.) honor and share memories of long-time AIL Chair, Kathy Tugendhat. Light refreshments provided courtesy of SCOV. Fall classes run Thursdays, Sept. 26-Nov. 14. \$45 tuition covers all AIL classes (students may attend as many as they wish). Students may sample one class for free. Visit www.scov.org or call 703-281-0538.

Students and Volunteers Wanted. 7-8:30 p.m. at St. Mark Christian Formation Center, 9972 Vale Road, Vienna. Students and Volunteers Needed! St. Mark's Catholic Church English as a Second Language (ESL) Ministry is seeking students and new volunteers to participate in their upcoming fall 2019 term, Sept. 24-Dec. 5. Call Monica at 703-980-9380, email stmarkesl@gmail.com, or visit www.stmarkesl.org.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 20

Fall Equinox Celebration. 6:30-8 p.m. at Unity of Fairfax (Meditation Garden), 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Join in prayer to balance and heal oneself and Mother Earth. Participants prepare with smudging, chanting, drumming, singing, and joining with others in celebration of harvest. Bring a drum, flute, rattle, a chair if needed, and an object to represent what you are harvesting. Meet at the Medicine Wheel, in the Meditation Garden. In case of inclement weather, meet inside Unity. Free. Register at uof-2019-fall-equinox.eventbrite.com/.

MONDAY/SEPT. 23

Candidate Forum. 7 p.m. at Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Pkwy, Fairfax. Candidates for Countywide offices: At Large School Board and Chair of the Board of Supervisors. These

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 15

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PUBLIC NOTICE

**Public Hearing on the
McLean Community Center's
FY 2021 Budget**
(July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021)

**McLean Community Center Governing Board
Wednesday, Sept. 25, 7:30 p.m.**

Residents who wish to speak at the Public Hearing are asked to call 703-790-0123, TTY: 711, to be placed on the speakers list. The draft budget proposal is available on the Center's website. Copies will be available at the Public Hearing.

Written comments may be delivered to the McLean Community Center (see address below) marked "Attention: Executive Director," or sent by email to george.sachs@fairfaxcounty.gov. Written comments may be provided after the Public Hearing up through Monday, Oct. 21.



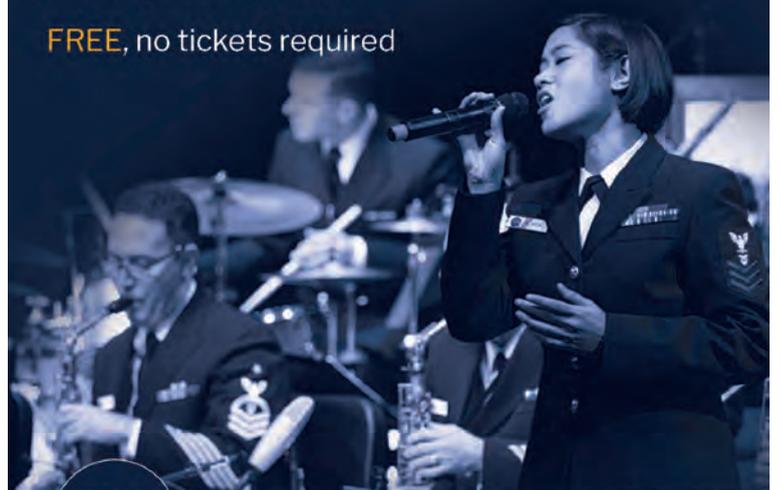
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Announcements

Announcements

Convention Coin, Currency and Stamp Show

September 27, 28 & 29

Fredericksburg Expo & Conference Center

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NEWS



PHOTOS BY TOM MANNING/THE CONNECTION

Runners pass a United 787 Dreamliner parked on the runway.

Running On Runway

The 7th annual Dulles Day 5k/10k on the Runway took place on Sept. 14. The races were held on a closed runway at Dulles Airport, giving runners a flat course which made for fast races. All proceeds raised from the races benefit Special Olympics Virginia, the Committee for Dulles Community Outreach, and the Washington Airports Task Force.



Jack Potter, CEO of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, and 10k finisher, Rajesh Reddy from Chantilly.



Solomon Haile from McLean finished seventh among male 10k runners with a time of 36:03.



From left, Mahshid Alizadeh #3384 from Oakton, Jessica Paul #3740 from Vienna, and Beverly Marsters #3839 from Fairfax run the Dulles 10k together on Sept. 14.

FROM PAGE 13

candidate forums are nonpartisan. The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area does not support or oppose any party or candidate and invite all certified candidates in their respective districts. After a moderated discussion, meet the candidates. Volunteers, including students, are welcome. Visit www.lwv-fairfax.org/candidateforum for more.

WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 25

Community Conversations. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Marshall High School in Tysons/Falls Church. Fairfax County is planning for the next 10-20 years in the community and they want to hear from everyone. Share thoughts, insights, opinions and experiences that will be used to help further shape a countywide strategic plan. Register via www.fairfaxcounty.gov/strategic-plan-community-conversations. Arrangements for child care, transportation assistance, interpretation services and reasonable ADA accommodations can be made by calling 703-324-5302, TTY 711, or by emailing Angela.Jones@fairfaxcounty.gov.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 28

Community Shredding Day. 9 a.m.-noon in the Parking lot between Patrick Henry Library and Whole Foods, 133 Maple Ave East, Vienna. Gain peace of mind by bringing outdated documents to an on-site shredding service provided by TrueShred. Enjoy snacks and visit with Ameriprise advisors and staff who will also be collecting non-perishable items for donation to Food for Others. Free and open to the public. Email mary.bowen@ampf.com or visit www.ameripriseadvisors.com/matthew.t.felber/ events for more.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 29

Parish Picnic, Blessing of the Backpacks, and Ministry Fair. After the 10 a.m. service at Church of the Holy Comforter, 543 Beulah Road, NE, Vienna. Enjoy grilled hot dogs and hamburgers, old-fashioned games, music, a bounce house, and fun activities for all ages. Bring backpacks, bags, briefcases, or whatever is used to carry school or work items (or no bag needed). All are welcome. More at www.holycomforter.com.

MONDAY & WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 30-OCT. 23

Community Emergency Response Team Training. 7-11 p.m. at the Fire and Rescue Academy, 4600 West Ox Road, Fairfax. The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program trains county residents in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. Using the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help. Emphasis on hands-on skill development and Fairfax County protocols and procedures. Instructor will provide syllabus with class schedule at first session. This training does not require any special physical strength or agility. Visit volunteer.fairfaxcounty.gov/custom/1380/#/opp_details/184991 to register.

TUESDAY/OCT. 1

Entrepreneurship 101. 8-10:30 a.m. in the First Floor Conference Center at 8300 Boone Boulevard, Tysons. Starting a Business in Fairfax County – the workshop provides an overview of start-up basics (licenses and permits), workforce services and training programs, and SBA resources including financing and certification programs. Free. Registration required at www.vahcc.com/events.

SATURDAY/OCT. 5

Mental Health and Wellness Conference. 8 a.m.-4 p.m. at Fairfax High School. The morning will focus on social and emotional learning, with a keynote address given by Dr. Marc Brackett, founding director of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. A special session for high school students, the Our Minds Matter Teen Summit, will take place in the morning as well. Attendees are encouraged to stay for Inova's Act on Addiction Summit, which will be held from 12:30-4 p.m. Breakout sessions, exhibit tables, and resources will be available to all attendees throughout the day. Lunch will be provided. Visit www.fcps.edu/resources/student-safety-and-wellness/mental-health-and-resiliency/mental-health-and-wellness to register.

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Medicare Is In The House



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

More like in my wallet. After worrying for the past 18 months about possibly losing my health insurance, I finally hit pay dirt – and it didn't hit back.

I have received my Medicare card and after I "disenroll" from my interim "Obama Care" within the next week or so, I will officially join the ranks of the millions who have insured their health – so to speak, with the Federal Government.

No more will I if-and-or-but about hospitals, doctors ("medical" actually) and prescription drugs (parts "A", "B" and "D" for those of you unfamiliar with the alphabet soup). Dental and vision coverage I'm not so sure about, but at present, I can live with the coverage that I know I have now because the worst case scenarios have been addressed.

And, as a former insurance broker, solving and/or protecting against worst case scenarios was always my main concern.

To invoke "Speedy" from those long-ago Alka Seltzer commercials: "Plop, Plop, Fizz, Fizz. Oh, what a relief it is." And even though I'm not plopping or fizzing, I am effervescent nonetheless at my arrival.

Reaching milestones (even destinations, sort of) is a way I've measured and evaluated my cancer experience. Not that I keep a chart or even a calendar with Xs marking the days but "I've looked at life from both sides now" (heck, I've looked at life from all sides now – and in between, too) and my glass is still half full. I remain positive about my negative and despite having never having seen Joni Mitchell in concert (although I did have tickets to see her at Cole Field House in the '70s – once on stage however, she realized she was too sick to perform and stage right she went) occasionally her songs have spoken to me.

Right now, The United States Government is speaking to me in the form of a red, white and blue card. They are telling me that I have made it to the promised land, a land whose existence was proposed in 1965 and which became law in 1966 fulfilling promises made to all Americans who reach age 65 that health insurance is their right and not because they were privileged.

Nevertheless, I feel privileged to be "Medichere." For 10 years, 10 months and 20 days, dating back to late December 2008 when I first experienced the pain in my rib cage which precipitated my visit to the Emergency Room, I have been under the proverbial gun.

Sometimes, it's been holstered. Other times, it's been locked and loaded. So far, no shots have been fired, even though occasionally I've been in very close range.

I can't say for sure whether I thought I'd actually get here, but let's be realistic, we all had our doubts. But now it's time to gear up.

A tremendous weight has been lifted from my shoulders. All I have to do now is live with the fact that I have stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer, an incurable disease if there ever was one. But here I am, alive and reasonably well.

No more will I have to worry about who, what and where I'm going to be treated. From now on, I'm in charge. (Like Charles.) As a result, I feel as if I've regained a little control of my life.

And for a cancer patient originally diagnosed as "terminal," this control is an extraordinarily wonderful feeling.

I wish I could bottle it like "Brighto." "Brighto, Brighto, makes old bodies new. We'll sell a million bottles, woo, woo, woo, woo, woo, woo." (The Three Stooges in "Dizzy Doctors," 1937.) And that's just the kind of silly enthusiasm I'll need living forward.

Hardly is the lung cancer I have on the run. I wouldn't even say I have it on the walk. A stagger, maybe. (Or maybe that's me who's staggering when I lose my balance because of the neuropathy in my feet.)

Cancer is an adversary unlike any other. It's going to do what it does. I doubt Medicare is going to scare it into remission.

Moreover, my not worrying about having health insurance anymore probably isn't going to have much effect on "the cancer" ("Forrest, Forrest Gump") either. The biggest effect will be on me, emotionally.

I just hope that's enough. Because I'm going to need all the ammunition I can muster.

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



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