

In spite of the many ways that COVID-19 has made life unpredictable, Oakcrest students have continued in their dedication to service: In November, Helping Hands, which serves the homeless and needy, created care packages for senior citizens.

Oakcrest Students Committed to Service

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NEWS

McLean, Langley High Communities Weigh in on Boundary Adjustment

Capacity relief sought with eyes on Langley High School.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County Public Schools presented three possible options and a no change option for capacity relief at McLean High School during a virtual community meeting held Mon., Dec. 7. One hundred eighty people tuned in at the start of the presentation to learn more about the adjustment process to move students from McLean High School to Langley High School. In her welcome, Eileen Tholen, School Board Member Dranesville District said they were continuing the boundary process now “in preparation for the fall.” Overcrowding has remained an ongoing issue at McLean for the past decade, even with mitigation measures.

School officials emphasized the presentation of Options A, B, and C was step two of a five-step boundary adjustment process. There would be no vote that evening. The School Board would vote to approve the boundary adjustment at a later date, proposed to be Spring 2021.

FCPS Assistant Superintendent, Region 2, Fabio Zuluaga, said that staff included feeder middle school information in the evening’s presentation based on input collected during earlier boundary scope meetings. That included information on Longfellow Middle School feeding into McLean and Cooper Middle School feeding into Langley.

“The bottom line here is we are overcapacity at McLean High School,” said Zuluaga. McLean currently has a population of more than 2,350 students in a school designed for a capacity of 1,993 students. In comparison, Langley High School has 1,972 students and completed a recent renovation to accommodate 2,370 students.

Zuluaga said the School Board makes boundary changes based on one important policy, School Board Policy 8130. “The school board makes boundary adjustments based on what is the effectiveness in how we are using our buildings, how the boundary change would improve instruction, safety and security for the schools that are involved and what are also the implications... for families and students moving from one school to another school,” he said

FCPS Facilities Special Projects Administrator Jessica Gillis said that over the past decade, McLean increased its capacity deficit from “slight” in SY 2009-10 to “substantial” in SY019-20, increasing membership by 487 students. Even with Schools adding temporary classrooms, removing hallway lockers to reduce crowding, and installing a modular 12-classroom unit to replace some

property trailers, overcrowding continues and is expected to increase.

“It is important to recognize that our current enrollment at Longfellow Middle School is 1,334, and the school was designed for 1,374. We all know that Cooper is going to be renovated...The current enrollment for Cooper is 992 students, and the renovation (to be completed around 2023) will design the school for 1,120 kids,” said Zuluaga.

Gillis presented three possible boundary options using estimated SY 2019-20 student numbers. She emphasized enrollment estimates did not show phasing/grandfathering and no current students attending Longfellow/Cooper or McLean/Langley would be reassigned.

❖ Option A - Reassigns 131 students from McLean to Langley and 53 students from Longfellow to Cooper in the Colvin Run ES split feeder area and a portion of Westbriar ES.

❖ Option B - Reassigns 190 students from McLean to Langley and 78 students from Longfellow to Cooper in the Colvin Run ES split feeder area, a portion of the Spring Hill ES split feeder area and a portion of Westbriar ES.

❖ Option C - Reassigns 240 students from McLean to Langley and 113 from Longfellow to Cooper in the Spring Hill ES split feeder area.

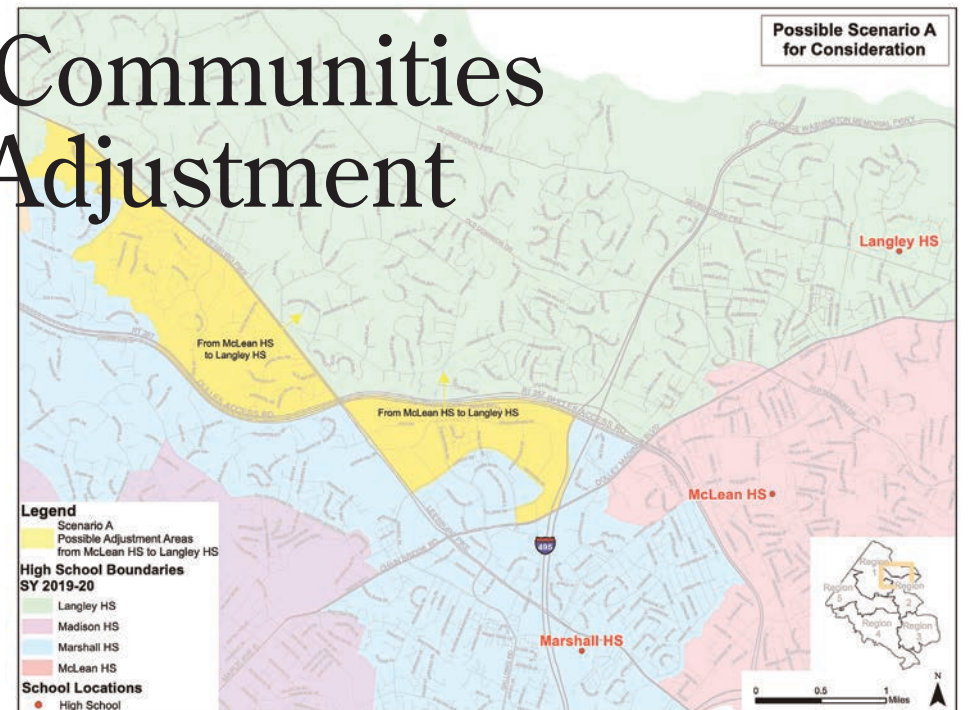
No Boundary Change Option. Projections showed a five-year capacity increase at McLean and Longfellow while Langley’s student enrollment decreased from 1,972 to 1,855.

“At the end of the day the School Board will decide, any other phasing plans, other than attrition,” Gillis said. The next steps in the boundary process are the evaluation of comments through Dec. 2020. Dates will be determined for staff recommendation to the School Board, School Board Public Hearing, and School Board Action. The anticipated effective date of the boundary adjustment is SY 2021-22.

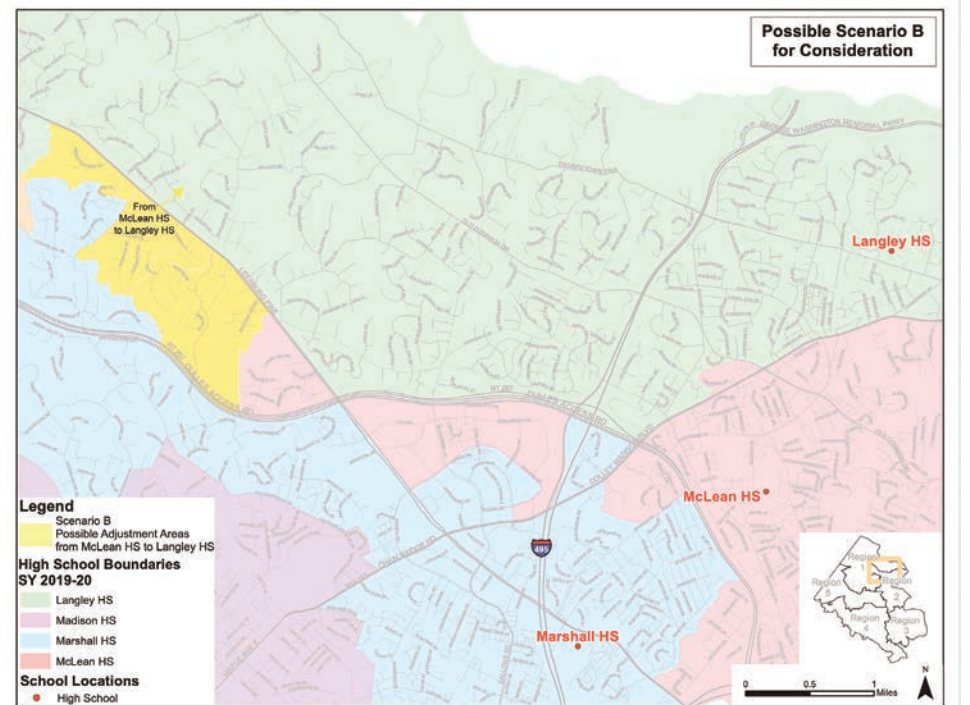
A small group discussion followed with feedback posted anonymously on the website. It will be shared with the school board.

For more information about the McLean High School boundary adjustment process, visit Information on the McLean High School Boundary Adjustment and Feedback on the Dec. 7 meeting found online.

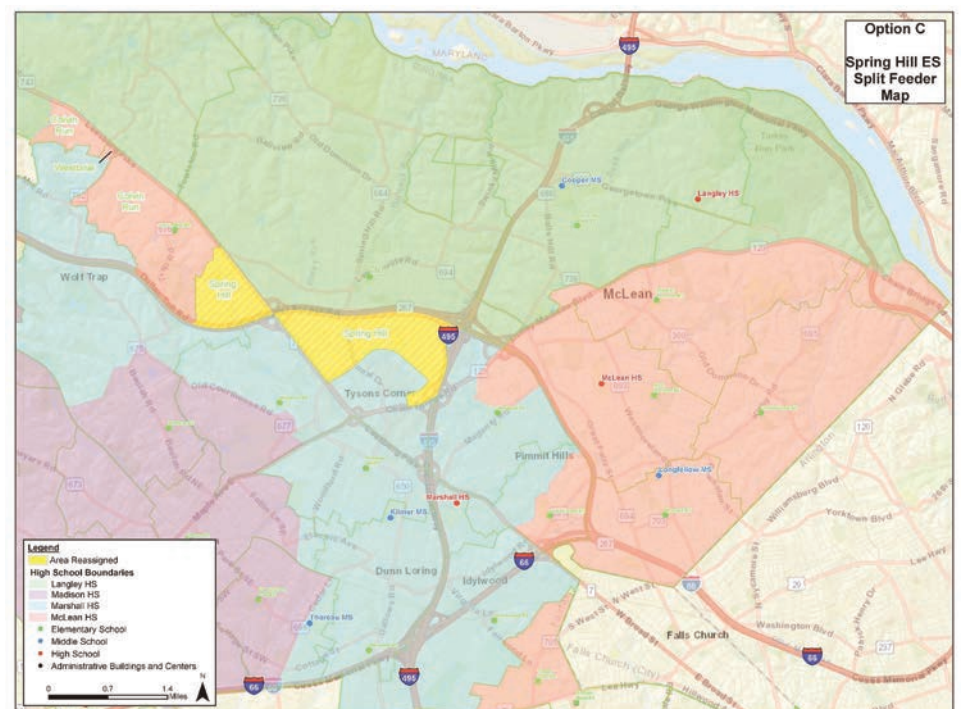
Online Comment: Great Falls Citizens Association: “Members of the GFCA Special Committee on Schools (SCS) submitted feedback during the meeting in favor of Option A, if a boundary adjustment is to proceed at all. Importantly, SCS members shared feedback that any boundary change plan should be accompanied with a commitment by FCPS school board to start the process for a long-overdue physical expansion of (McLean) MHS. Boundary change Option A includes students from the Colvin Run ES



Scenario A Map shows possible adjustment area from McLean HS to Langley HS.



Scenario B Map shows possible adjustment area from McLean HS to Langley HS.



Scenario C Map shows possible adjustment area from McLean HS to Langley HS.

SEE BOUNDARY CHANGES, PAGE 8

A Green New Deal

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



COMMENTARY

In accepting the Democratic nomination for president, Franklin D. Roosevelt promised a "new deal" for the "forgotten man." In the midst of the Great Depression the country responded to Roosevelt's promise by electing him president four times. The ensuing legislation in the first hundred days of his administration and throughout the subsequent years as president produced a new deal that transformed the government from a laissez-faire approach to a broader role of government in the economy.

Dozens of bills over as many years set up new agencies of government including the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA) that put people to work on public projects, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA) that provided cash subsidies to farmers while controlling the production of staple crops, and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) that provided cheap electricity and flood control over seven states. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) acts

moved the federal government actively into monetary policy. There are many more.

Increasing concerns in recent years over climate change and economic inequality have led to a call for a "green new deal." While there have been many statements at the national and state levels as

to what constitutes a green new deal, the most comprehensive definition is a resolution introduced in Congress in 2019 that calls for transitioning the United States to use 100 percent renewable, zero-emission energy sources, including investment into electric cars and high-speed rail systems, and implementing "social cost of carbon" policies as part of addressing climate change. The resolution also addresses universal health care, increased minimum wage, and preventing monopolies as well as the needs of poor and disadvantaged people.

The Green New Deal Virginia is a coalition that includes environmental organizations as well as civil rights and social justice groups and community-based organizations. For the groups that make up the coalition as well as their ob-

jectives, go to <https://www.greennewdealva.com/>. A recent article on the movement written by some of its leaders explains that "Virginians right now are facing a multitude of crises that Green New Deal Virginia directly addresses, including the economic downturn, racial and social inequities and the public health emergency. The Green New Deal is innovative because it is not trying to address each crisis in isolation, but instead it is building community around a collective response to these problems, and prioritizing community voices. . ."

In many ways the challenges facing our country and our state—climate change, income inequality, hunger, COVID19 and health care generally, criminal justice reform and others are somewhat different but at the same time of a similar magnitude as those faced by President Franklin Roosevelt when he promised a new deal to the nation. I support a Green New Deal and like the first New Deal it faces many years of legislative action to be accomplished. A single omnibus bill that promises to meet all its objectives in one action will not be successful. A commitment now to recognize the problems we face and taking the multiple steps to deliver a green new deal can be successful even faster than the dozen years it took President Roosevelt to deliver on his promise.

LETTERS

Covid Alerts Via Mobile?

To the Editor:

Given the evolving COVID-19 restrictions and guidance in response to another wave of infections, I believe I have an idea for information proliferation. We should leverage mobile device push notifications like we do for severe storms and Amber Alerts. This could reach citizens who don't have TVs, don't watch or listen to local news, and don't follow any state political accounts on social media. We are fighting a ton of misinformation during this pandemic, which necessitates clearer and widespread communication. I urge Gov. Northam, Del. Simon and Sen. Saslaw to consider leveraging this technology that we already use. We need mobile device push notifications, to communicate changes in COVID-19 restrictions and potentially guidance in a way that could reach more people.

Katharine Weintraub
Vienna

December is Puppy Mill Awareness Month

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Third article in a series.

A puppy store's assurance that it buys only from licensed breeders is no better than suggesting anyone who has a driver's license is a good driver. Puppy mill breeders are required to be licensed under the national Animal Welfare Act (AWA). However, federal animal regulations for breeders are well known to be woefully lacking, requiring only the most basic care. Inspections are few and random, and violations are not dealt with severely, allowing a cited breeder to continue operations for all but critical problems.

Buyers should be wary of puppy stores' claims that all is well with their sourcing. Under Virginia's regulations, stores can not buy from breeders who are not licensed, or who have had a number of critical violations in recent years. Unfortunately the limited staffing of US Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspectors and the estimated more than 10,000 facilities that must be inspected, mean that inspections are few and chances of problems going undetected are high. The USDA's "risk-based" inspection model translates to inspections as seldom as once every two to three year for many breeding operations.

Neither does the AWA ensure that dogs are happy or live a quality life, only that facilities meet minimum humane standards. Those standards include, for example, cage size must be six inches larger than the size of the dog, no more than 12 dogs in a cage, must be provided food and shelter. Only recently has USDA



PHOTO COURTESY MONICA GOOD

Animal activists picket one of Virginia's only 18 puppy stores

proposed that dogs have a continuous water supply, instead of twice daily water offerings. Further there is no uncaged time requirement, no limit of the number of dogs kept, and no limit on the age or number of times bred. And significantly, no requirement for socialization to humans. What level of care, quality, and socialization to humans do you think is even possible when breeding operations have hundreds of dogs and profit is the operating goal?

For more insights into the dog breeding industry, readers may wish to read, "The Doggie in the Window," by journalist and national Emmy Award-winning television producer, Rory Kress.

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VIENNA POLICE HIGHLIGHTS

The following summary contains various incidents of general interest as well as vehicular crashes handled by the Town of Vienna Police Department from Dec. 5 – Dec.10, 2020.

INCIDENTS

Grand Larceny -- Lawyers Road and Church Street, NW, Nov. 21, 12 p.m.

A citizen reported that a check he mailed from the mailbox at Church Street and Lawyers Road was stolen, forged, and cashed.

Grand Larceny -- Whole Foods, 143 Maple Avenue, East, Nov. 21 between 2 and 2:30 p.m. On Dec. 9, a citizen reported that on Nov. 21, her elderly mother's wallet was stolen while she was shopping at Whole Foods. Her credit card was then used to make unauthorized purchases.

Petit Larceny - 200 Block Lawyers Road, NW, Nov. 22, 4 p.m. A resident reported that a gift card she mailed to a relative from the mailbox at Lawyers Road and Church Street was stolen during recent thefts at that mailbox.

Animal Case -- 400 Block Knoll Street, NW, Nov. 25, 12 p.m. ACO Barker was notified by the Louisa County Sheriff's Department of a dog bite case that they investigated. The two dogs who were involved were returning to their home in Vienna where they would complete their quarantine. On Dec. 5, ACO Barker spoke to the dogs' owner and found the dogs completed their quarantine with no issues.

Fraud -- Lawyers Road and Church Street, NW, Nov. 27, 12 p.m. A citizen reported that a check he mailed from the mailbox at Church Street and Lawyers Road was stolen, forged, and cashed.

Fraud -- 300 Block Johnson Street, SW, Between Nov. 30 at 1 p.m. and Dec. 4 at 1 p.m. An elderly resident received a telephone call from a man claiming to be his grandson, stating he had been arrested in another state and needed his grandfather to send money for him to be released from jail. After the resident sent the initial money, he began receiving several other requests for money regarding the same incident with his grandson, resulting in the resident's loss of several thousand dollars.

Vandalism -- 800 Block Ninovan Road, SE, Between Dec. 3 at 12 a.m. and Dec. 5 at 12 a.m. A resident reported that someone egged his vehicle.

Destruction of Property -- Yeonas Park, 1319 Ross Drive, SW, Between Dec. 4 at 2 p.m. and Dec. 9 at 1:30 p.m. Someone damaged the metal door to a shed that belongs to the Vienna Little League.

Arrest -- Driving While Intoxicated -- Maple Avenue and Beulah Road, NE

Dec. 4, 6:57 p.m. Two vehicles were traveling westbound in the right lane of Maple Avenue. Vehicle-1 struck the rear of Vehicle-2 twice before coming to a complete stop. While the two drivers were attempting to move their vehicles out of traffic and into a parking lot, Vehicle-1 struck Vehicle-2 a third time. Rescue responded and treated Driver-2 at the scene for non-life-threatening injuries. Upon the officer's interaction with Driver-1, he detected signs of impairment. Driver-1 refused to perform a series of sobriety tests and was placed under arrest. Ofc. McElhattan transported the 65-year-old man from SW 97th Street in Miami, Fla. to the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center, where a technician drew blood for analysis. The man was charged with Driving While Intoxicated and Failure to Maintain Proper Control.

Stolen Vehicle -- 1200 Block Cottage Street, SW, Between Dec. 4 at 9:15 p.m. and Dec. 5 at 7:00 a.m. A resident reported that both of his vehicles were stolen from his home. The vehicles had been left unlocked with the keys inside. With the assistance of the tracking system on one of the vehicles, both vehicles were located later in the day by the Washington DC Metropolitan Police Department.

Suspicious Event -- Sunoco, 102 Maple Avenue, West, Dec. 6, 11:27 a.m.

An officer responded to a dispute between an employee and a customer. The customer left the area after being advised he was no longer permitted on the property.

Suspicious Event -- 1100 Moorefield Creek Road, SW, Dec. 6, 8:55 p.m.

A resident reported that a relative left the house in a depressed state and that she was concerned for his safety. The resident was provided with information for resources available to the relative.

Arrest - Emotionally Disturbed Person -- Glen Avenue, SW, Dec. 6, 10:32 p.m. An officer responded to the report of a man destroying his parent's house. Officers observed a broken window in the home, damage throughout the kitchen area, and blood where the man injured himself before fleeing the home. Officers located the man a short time later and rescue personnel responded to assist the man. MPO Smith transported the man to an area facility for a mental health evaluation, and the clinician issued a Temporary Detention Order. The man was then transported to an area hospital for further evaluation.

Suspicious Person -- Just Tires, 352 Maple Avenue, East, Dec. 7, 12:33 p.m. An employee reported a disorderly customer. The customer left the area before officers arrived.



CALENDAR

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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

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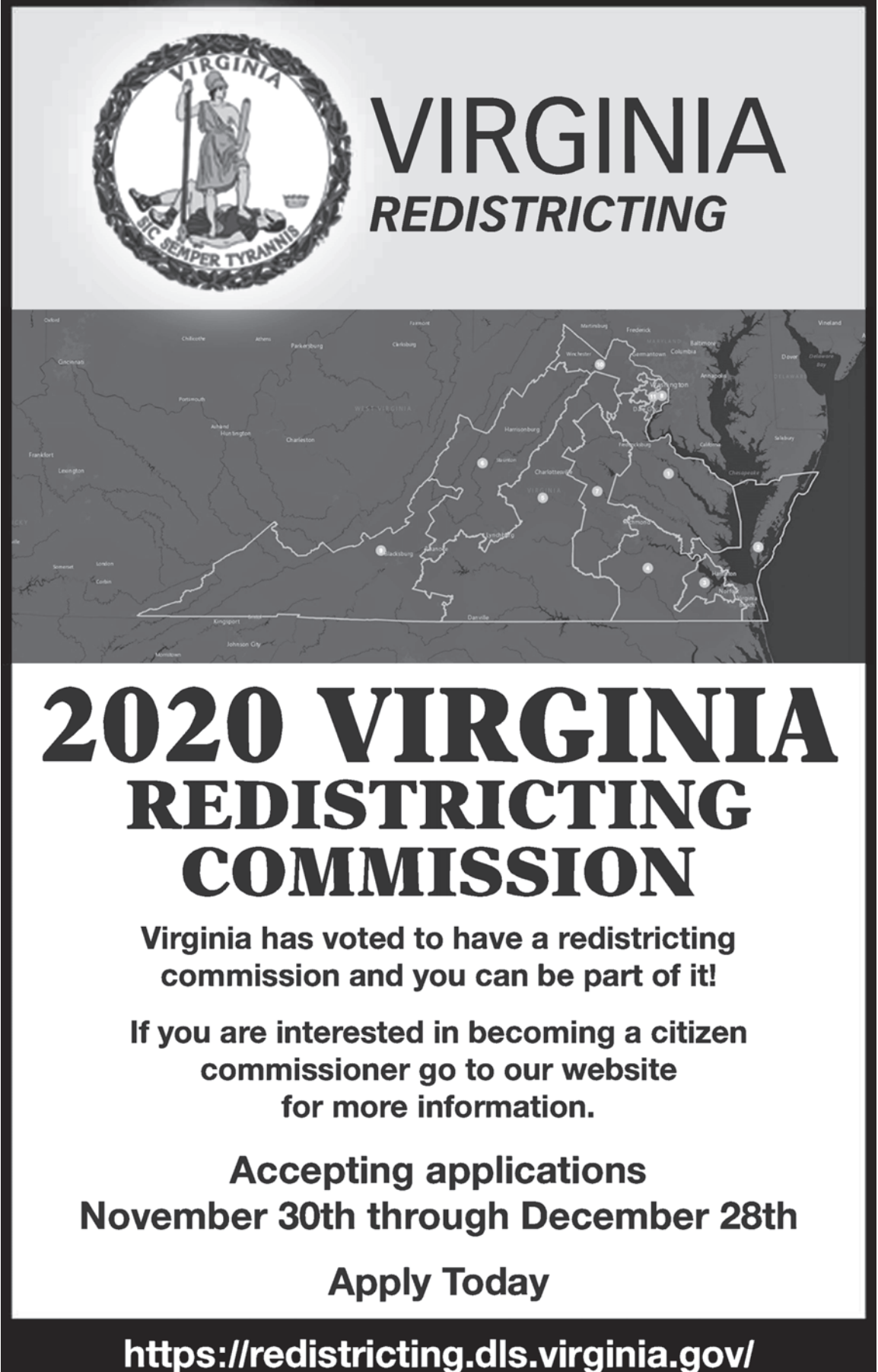
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Students and Faculty on All-School Service Day.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Oakcrest Students Committed to Service

In spite of the many ways that COVID-19 has made life unpredictable, Oakcrest students have continued in their dedication to service. This year students have found many creative ways to serve both those in their immediate community and beyond.

In the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving break, students participated in a schoolwide Thanksgiving food drive benefiting St. Stephen's Food Pantry at St. Jude parish in Rockville, Md. Oakcrest math teacher Jennifer Kilmer and her family, who are St. Jude's parishioners, volunteer at St. Stephen's Pantry. They first got involved over the summer when it was set up to bring relief to those suffering from the economic impact of the COVID-19 closures. Oakies brought in box loads of canned cranberry sauce, stuffing mix, instant potatoes and biscuit mix and donated enough food to feed more than 400 families Thanksgiving dinner.

The school's Service Initiative Programs (SIPs) serve various needs. In November, Helping Hands, which serves the homeless and needy, created care packages for senior citizens. "In these times of COVID, many elderly people suffer from loneliness and isolation; we felt that senior citizens were an important sector of the population to focus on serving," Helping Hands founder Catalina Scheider-Galiñanes explains. Oakies created and assembled dozens of care packages. Each included a booklet about the Catholic faith, a Divine Mercy Jesus card, and a handwritten note of encouragement. Helping Hands members filled their care packages with non-slip fuzzy socks, travel size toiletries and lotions, snacks, classic novels, brain teasers and crosswords, tea bags, and blankets. They donated all of the bags—more than 95 pounds—to the Catholic Charities of Arlington at the St. Lucy's Food Project. Helping Hands also organized a schoolwide Christmas Toy Drive.

Students have been active in many other SIPs this semester as well. Buttons and Bows, which makes handmade gifts for those in the community, led a project where Oakies created cards and sock dolls for kids in the hospital. Students in Random Acts of Kindness collected wellness supply kits for the homeless and sent out cards to friends and family. Operation Sacrifice—an SIP that works to serve and thank military members—is making paracord survival bracelets for those in the military.

Although Oakcrest's 2020 summer mission trip with Mustard Seed Communities in Jamaica was canceled due to the pandemic, the team leapt into



In the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving break, students participated in a schoolwide food drive donating enough food to serve Thanksgiving dinner to more than 400 families.

action to provide much-needed financial support for the organization. Mustard Seed is dedicated to caring for the most vulnerable populations, and the pandemic was a huge challenge for the organization. The Oakcrest mission trip team held a Mission Trip Walk-a-Thon at home to raise money for Mustard Seed. The goal was to walk 2600 miles as a team in 100 days. Students ultimately succeeded in raising \$10,000. Mustard Seed Communities was very appreciative of the team's initiative, saying, "Thank you for your hard work and ingenuity! We appreciate all that you do for the residents of Mustard Seed!" Oakcrest plans to resume the Jamaica service trip in June of 2021.

In addition to SIPs and the summer mission trip to Jamaica, all Oakcrest students perform service hours each semester. Oakcrest also holds an annual All-School Service Day in the fall, when the entire school participates in projects that serve the surrounding community.

About Oakcrest: Oakcrest School is an independent school for girls in grades 6-12 guided by the teachings of the Catholic Church. For over 40 years, the school has provided an exceptional liberal arts education to girls of all faiths while fulfilling its mission to grow, challenge and inspire its students to thrive in college and throughout their lives. Learn more at Oakcrest.org.



PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Ichthyology field trip learning fish identification led by Fairfax County Stormwater Planning team shown using electro-fisher unit.

Master Naturalist Program Graduates Spring Class

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

The 2020 Spring class of Virginia Master Naturalists (VMN) graduated, finally, in a Zoom ceremony on Dec. 14. The 10 graduates from across northern Virginia are now prepared to conduct and participate in area environmental service projects and programs sponsored by the State-wide organization. An additional nine members of the class will complete their elements in coming months. Noting the "great resilience exhibited by the graduates," Ron Grimes, Fairfax Chapter Vice President, commented on the numerous disruptions caused by the pandemic which extended the Spring class, intended to end in May, well into the Fall.

Graduates completed 12 three-hour classes in earth sciences, four day long field trips to local parks, offered group presentations, and successfully completed a 100-question final examination to complete the course. Final certification as a Master Naturalist requires 40 service hours and 8 continuing education hours, normally completed within six months of course completion. Two graduates already have completed this requirement. The service hour and education requirements are repeated each year to continue certification.

Begun in mid-February, the class met a few times at the Fairfax County Gov-

ernment Center, until Covid 19 restrictions ended meetings in the building. After delivering some on-line meetings during April and May, classes were suspended until instructional plans could be revamped and re-started in September, with restructured field trips held in October.

"Virginia Master Naturalists" is an all volunteer organization which provides education, outreach, and service for the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas in the Commonwealth. The organization, its training program and projects are jointly sponsored by the following state agencies and departments: Virginia Cooperative Extension; Game and Inland Fisheries; Forestry; Conservation and Recreation; Museum of Natural History; Environmental Quality.

The program is accepting applications now through Dec. 23, for the next Spring class, expected to run from Feb. 18 through May 13. For more information on the program and the Spring 2021 class, visit <http://www.fairfaxmasternaturalists.org/>.



Master Naturalist Program students learn about geologic processes from scientist Cynde Sears during Riverbend Park field trip.

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A Holiday Season Reimagined

The pandemic leads to altered and new traditions.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

When schools adjourn for winter break the anticipation of a COVID-19 pandemic holiday season will become a reality. As festive gatherings are altered or cancelled to help prevent the spread of the disease, many families are faced with the loss of traditions and the challenge of getting into the holiday spirit.

“This year many families will be coping with not being able to spend the holidays with extended family or to travel in the way they usually would,” said Stacie B. Isenberg, Psy.D. “Although some may appreciate a break from obligation many may be grieving the loss of time spent with loved ones, as well as missing their usual routines and traditions.”

Creating new holiday rituals or adjusting old ones can help minimize feelings of longing and melancholy. “Families can work toward recapturing some of these traditions at home,” said Isenberg. “Perhaps other traditions can continue in a modified way such as baking with Grandma in two separate kitchens connected by a video call during the activity. Maybe kids can do Mad Libs or other games with their cousins over a call.”

For those accustomed to traveling during the holidays, a substitute might be driving, walking or biking around the neighborhood to look at Christmas lights. A hike through Rock Creek or Great Falls Park might appeal to families with children from toddlers to teens.

“To make hikes or walks engaging, adults or older children can think ahead about what they may see on the hike or walk,” said Sonia Pruneda-Hernandez, College-Wide Chair, Early Childhood Education Program at Montgomery College. “Ask children to look for birds. ‘How many birds can we find or hear during our hike or walk?’ The next day, focus on animals. ‘Can any animals be spotted during the hike?’ The following day, collect leaves, have the children take a bag with them and find different leaves then return home and help the child identify the leaves and the type of trees each fell from.”

In fact, time spent outdoors can improve overall mood if holiday weeks off from school turn sometimes glum or dull. “Physical exercise gives energy ... and helps regulate sleep,” said Jerome Short.

When the weather or circumstances make venturing outside difficult, indoor activities like scavenger hunts can preserve holiday cheer without health and safety risks.

“Hide items throughout the house and give the children clues to find items,” said Pruneda-Hernandez. “Items can be simple objects that are in the home like toothpaste, with clues like ‘What do you use to brush your teeth?’ You can do a different scavenger hunt every day.”

“Some fun ideas are reading stories together and then acting them out, creating a scene from the book in a shoebox or playing charades with topics related to the story,” said Patty Howick, education instructor at



PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Activities like biking or hiking can replace traditional holiday traditions.



PHOTO BY CHAD CONEWAY

Alexandria-based artist Kathryn Coneway is using the creative process to redefine how holidays are celebrated.

“This year many families will be coping with not being able to spend the holidays with extended family or to travel in the way they usually would.”

— Stacie B. Isenberg, Psy.D.

Marymount University. “Writing a letter to a friend, asking an older relative to share a memorable moment in history or taking a walk to observe the changes in nature are some ways to stay connected. Be creative and have fun together.”

Trade the hustle and bustle that often accompany the holidays for projects that offer opportunities for reflection and contemplation. “Many of us are used to school concerts or holiday parties and will be missing them this year,” said Kathryn Coneway, an Alexandria, Virginia based artist, author, and educator. <https://www.kathrynconeway.com> “This year, perhaps you can take a walk or spend time in nature, take photographs and share them with family or friends.”

One idea that Coneway is trying with friends this holiday season is using daily drawing prompts inspired by artist Anna Brones <https://annabrones.com/>. The group uses one short phrase offered by Brones each day to awaken creativity which they use to create a sketch over the course of a day.

“The prompts offer a starting point for a drawing a day,” Coneway said. “Families could do them at home together or share with family and friends at a distance and then share through texting or posting photos.”

Creativity can help children and adults stay connected to family and customs, suggests Isenberg. “This unusual time is also an opportunity to create new traditions or just to have new experiences,” she said.

Vienna Church to Host Christmas Eve ‘Journey to Christmas’

A special “Journey to Christmas” will be held Christmas Eve at The Church of the Good Shepherd (United Methodist) in Vienna, marking the first time the church has held an in-person worship service indoors since March. The event will be from 5 to 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 24, with participants walking through various Advent stations in the church building at 2351 Hunter Mill Road.



PHOTO BY LESLIE JANE FAHRNEY
OF THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Vienna’s Church of the Good Shepherd (United Methodist) will hold its first indoors in-person worship service since March on Christmas Eve. The special “Journey to Christmas” event will be from 5 to 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 24.

“This will be open-house style so that people can come anytime during this time frame and be safe as they move throughout the church rooms spaced further apart,” said Pastor Eric Song. “Communion also will be offered outdoors. We are very excited to celebrate Christmas in a new and creative way this year.”

The church has been meeting online for the last nine months as directed by the Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church. The district office of the state conference had to approve the church’s Christmas Eve plan, Song said. The Worship Committee decided to try to develop a Christmas Eve plan after the church successfully held an approved church rummage sale in September, he added.

“Participants must wear a mask to attend,” Song said. “We also will require those attending to sign health acknowledgment forms so that we can keep track of who we are in contact with. We are all working together to make sure we can celebrate Christmas in a safe and healthy way.”

Participants are asked to enter through the doors closest to the church’s Fellowship Hall,

and they will exit by the sanctuary doors.

Additionally, Song said, “We will be collecting diapers as part of our gift to the manger, so we encourage participants to donate in this way for those in need. And we’ll have a special treat for children, who will be looking for ‘Woolly the Sheep’ along the way as they journey to Christmas.”

The Church of the Good Shepherd (United Methodist) has been active in the Vienna community since 1967. For more information, visit the church website at www.GoodShepherdVA.com or at www.Facebook.com/GoodShepherd-Vienna.

The Church of the Good Shepherd (United Methodist), 2351 Hunter Mill Road, Vienna, VA 22181, www.GoodShepherd-VA.com

Boundary Changes Debated

FROM PAGE 3

split feeder area. This option offers some relief to MHS, solves a split feeder situation at Colvin Run ES, and leaves room for growth at Cooper MS and Langley HS. Leaving capacity room for growth is important because of concerns about the negative student growth forecasts by FCPS for the Langley pyramid. Those forecasts seem inconsistent with Fairfax County analysis that forecast about 4,000 additional households by year 2025 for zip codes 22102 and 22066 which feed schools in the Langley pyramid.”

Online comments: Dec.4 Feed-

back on Proposed Boundary Adjustment for McLean HS

Those who live directly off Dolly Madison Blvd. (to go to LHS) and off of Kirby Road North and East of Old Dominion.

Moving both Colvin Run and Spring Hill was preferred by Colvin Run parents to help with carpooling and so there is not an isolated pocket far out still going to McLean.

Option 1 is the best option as it fully relieves overcrowding at MHS.

Scenario B makes most sense.

Consider other options that include neighborhoods near/closer to Langley HS.

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McLean Teacher Authors Memoirs-in Essays

Allison B. Kelly: Seeking the perfect day and finding joy in the imperfect.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Allison B. Kelly, ESOL Teacher at Haycock Elementary School is the author of the newly released book, "There's Spaghetti on My Ceiling." Kelly based the 206-page memoir-in-essays on her ten-year chronicle as a full-time teacher, mother of two young teens, and graduate student. "This book speaks to my heart as an educator and as a mom," said Dana Chen of Fairfax, Assistant Principal at Haycock Elementary School.

According to Kelly, she "tried to balance work and life...and some other topics like anxiety, perfectionism and going to the dentist." "My children were in that maniacal age bracket where they signed up for everything but couldn't drive," she said. Before returning to the classroom after the birth of her children, Kelly was an affirmed organizer. She described herself as the mother who "planned matching Halloween costumes and cut sandwiches into cute shapes."

As a full-time teacher, student, and mother, Kelly fully believed all would be good if she kept to the plan. She tried, tried real-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED
Allison B. Kelly, ESOL Teacher at Haycock Elementary School in McLean teaches a class in Dec. of 2020.

ly hard to give 100 percent to her teaching career, 100 percent to raising teenagers, 100 percent to other relationships, and 100 percent to herself." It wasn't working. So instead, she started a blog. "Just a little blog where I would write about things to try to help me process, reflect, remind me to have a sense of humor," she said. Her posts resonated with friends and family.

"This book has such relatable stories that are written with a unique mix of humor and grace. It's so nice to know that I am not alone in my parenting and teaching struggles," said Chrissy Brownson STEAM & Science Resource Teacher at Providence Elementary School in Fairfax. "This collection of anecdotes and reflections is great. As a teacher and parent, I connected with a lot of it," said Ben James, a current co-worker of Kelly at Haycock Elementary School.

When COVID canceled many of the family's plans this summer, Kelly felt reflective. "I sat down, and I read back through these blogs. I surprised myself seeing... themes of work life balance and trying to be the best me I could (while) parenting teens and trying to deal with disappointment and deal with anxiety." Her most recent and last post is about the time COVID-19 hit.

Leanne Pinski is the Assistant Principal at Franconia Elementary School in Alexandria and a friend and co-worker of Kelly. "I'm

not an avid reader, but this book kept me hooked! These short memoirs are relatable with moments of glimmer for all. I found myself smiling, laughing, and tearing up, better yet 100 pages deep in an hour. It truly reminds you to show grin, grit, and grace with every moment in life."

As a new and unknown author, Kelly is learning much about what it takes to market a book. She did not realize how much work came after publishing. "It's definitely pushing me out of my comfort zone. With social distancing, I don't have a book tour planned; however, someone reached out to share that she is organizing a book club called "There's Spaghetti on My Ceiling." I'm excited to meet with teachers at her school for a Zoom group in January. I'm also hoping to connect with some independent bookstores so people can shop locally to pick up a copy."

Leanne King said, "I have known Allison for seven years, first as my daughter's third-grade teacher at Haycock Elementary, and now as a close friend. "There's Spaghetti on My Ceiling" is happiness in a small package... a lighthearted, fun, and honest book that is perfect for any mother, teacher, or perfectionist."

"There's Spaghetti on My Ceiling" by Allison B. Kelly is published by Archangel Ink (November 25, 2020) and available on Amazon as a paperback and Kindle.

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-Werner Heisenberg



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HOLIDAY POP-UP MARKET

The Town of Vienna and Vienna Shopping Center is hosting a Holiday Pop-Up Market Dec. 17-20. The event will take place at 136 Maple Avenue - Vienna Shopping Center in the heart of downtown Vienna (market in the former Tuesday Morning space). The event features a small collection of local artisans ranging from jewelry, home gifts, art, and more. Shoppers can shop safe and explore a variety of handmade gifts from local makers. The times are: Thursday, December 17, 5:00-8:00 p.m.; Friday, December 18, 5:00-8:00 p.m.; Saturday, December 19, 12:00-5:00 p.m.; and Sunday, December 20, 12:00-5:00 p.m. Reservations and walk-in's welcome. To reserve a shopping time and to view artist line up, visit www.viennava.gov/holidaypopup.

NOW THRU DEC. 19

XP League Tryouts. 2-4 p.m. At Code Ninjas Falls Church, 479 South Maple Avenue, Suite E, Falls Church. In collaboration with R Controlled E-Sports, Code Ninjas Falls Church will be holding tryouts for its new XP League esports team and invite elementary and middle-school students to participate in try-outs at the Falls Church Code Ninjas with league play starting in early January. Visit the website: <https://www.codeninjas.com/va-falls-church>

FRIDAY/DEC. 18

McLean Art Society Meeting. 10 a.m. Jane McElvany Counce, an award winning local artist and teacher, will be the presenter at the Dec. 18 meeting of the McLean Art Society. The meeting will begin at 10 a.m. and the demonstration will take place from 11 a.m.-noon. Ms. Counce is a former president of both the McLean Art Society and the Potomac Valley Watercolor Society. She is also an instructor with Arlington County Adult Education. The art topic addressed will be "How to Paint a Rainy Day Scene in Oil". Both meeting and presentation will be conducted on ZOOM. Guests are welcome and anyone wishing to participate should contact M.A.S. President at raymgoodrow@aol.com.

SATURDAY/DEC. 19

Drive Thru Live Nativity. 1:30-3:30 p.m. At Holy Comforter, 543 Beulah Road in Vienna. Come celebrate Christ's birth from the safe comfort of your vehicle during Holy Comforter Church's Drive-Thru Live Nativity. It's an opportunity to experience the sights and sounds when Jesus was born. There will be costumed church volunteers and live animals spread throughout the church parking lot.

DEC. 24

Christmas Candlelight Service. 7:30-8:30 p.m. (Online). Sponsored by Unity of Fairfax. Christmas Eve 2020 will be unlike any in recent memory. This year they conclude their exploration of the four Advent themes with a special service about what we've found in our explorations. Visit the website: <https://christmas-eve-candlelight-service-2020-12-24.eventbrite.com/?aff=cnnews>

CALENDAR

TYSONS CORNER CENTER HOLIDAY PLANS

Santa Is Back (Now through Dec. 24). Careful consideration has been given to the Santa set to ensure that they are both healthy and magical to meet the moment. Santa will be seated a distance from his guests to maintain a healthful distance, with a physical barrier to prevent young guests from trying to sit on Santa's lap. Santa and his young visitors will wear masks and maintain a healthful distance, in a contactless visit and photo experience fully re-designed to meet the moment.

Grinch's Grotto (Now thru Dec. 31). Located on Level 2 next to A Christmas to Remember. Guests will meet The Grinch and interact with him right in his cave, as well as pose for a photo. Admission includes a free 6x8" printed photo with a playful Grinch catchphrase. With over 20 sayings to choose from, guests can customize their own Grinch holiday memory. Admission also gets you a collectible Grinch ornament. Each ticket allows admission for up to 5 guests to meet the Grinch as a group. This ticket secures your individual time to meet the Grinch and experience his cave. Social distancing and mask usage will be in accordance with local and mall regulations.

NOW THRU THE HOLIDAYS

Santa at Springfield Town Center. Santa and his reindeer have arrived at Springfield Town Center to kick-off the holiday season. In an effort to create touchless experiences and accommodate varying levels of visitor comfort, Santa will be available at Springfield Town Center via numerous experiences and offerings: Picture with Santa; Virtual Experience; Family Pet Photos on Mondays; Family Photos and Visits with Santa. Reservations are required for all Santa and photo offerings.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 16

The Unruly Theatre Project's Virtual Improv Show. 7 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Join in (the) Unruly Theatre Project's virtual fall improv shows from the comfort of your couch! Register online and a Zoom link and password for the show will be emailed to you. Participants must register two hours in advance of showtime. Visit www.mcleancenter.org

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 16

Jane Austen Tea. 2-3 p.m. Reston Regional Zoom, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Make yourself a cup of tea and celebrate Jane Austen's birthday. They'll discuss her books, her life, and her impact. Zoom invites sent to registrants 1-2 days before the event. Teens-Adults. Visit the website: <https://librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/7303990>

THURSDAY/DEC. 17

Lúnasa, a Celtic Holiday. 8 p.m. At Reston Community Center Hunters Woods, CenterStage, Reston. Cost is \$25 Reston/\$50 Non-Reston. Irish band Lúnasa brings its holiday show to the CenterStage, along with Dublin-born bouzouki player Daóiri Farrell and rising star Malinda. Part of the Professional Touring Artist Series. Visit the website www.restoncommunitycenter.com/ptas.

DEC. 18 TO JAN. 4

Naturescape Narratives: Chinese Brushpainting. 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. At Reston Community Center Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Offering a break from the pandemic, 67 brushpaintings by Tracie Griffith Tso are on exhibit at Reston Community Center Hunters Woods through January 4 offering a 6,000-year-old Chinese artform in a nature-based display.

FRIDAY/DEC. 18

Virtual Family Fun Trivia Night. 7-9 p.m. At the Old Firehouse, McLean. Gather the whole family around the computer or tablet and get ready for some socially distant trivia. Prizes will be awarded to the winning teams! Register online or by calling OFC at 703-448-TEEN (8336).

SATURDAY/DEC. 19

Family Holiday Movie. 2 p.m. Sponsored by The Alden Theater, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Attendees must wear masks and adhere to social-distancing requirements while in the facility. Seating is limited and preregistration is mandatory. Subscribe to The Alden's monthly newsletter (<https://bit.ly/2HSTLhs>) to get the full movie lineup and movie titles. Stay tuned for registration information.

DEC. 20-30

A Winter Star. Encore Stage & Studio is making spirits bright this season by offering a unique theatrical experience outdoors in the comfort of your car in the parking lot of Temple Rodef Shalom (2100 Westmoreland St., Falls Church). Performances dates are December 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, and 30. Showtimes begin every 15 minutes between 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.; and 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. All entry tickets must be purchased in advance. Entry tickets are Pay-What-You-Can donations, starting at \$5. Ticket proceeds from A Winter Star will be donated to the Arlington Food Assistance Center and Encore's Theatre for All! Fund which provides scholarships and outreach programs. Tickets are available online at www.encorestage.org. To learn more, visit www.templerodefshalom.org.

'Managing the Moments' Videos Just in Time for the Holidays

Too much togetherness cramping your communication style? Too much teenage anxiety taking over the household? Too much frustration with distance or hybrid learning with your kids? When it gets to be "too much," take a few moments to check out a few new video offerings from the Safe Community Coalition's Managing the Moments series.

These short videos are produced by the psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers of the SCC's mental health committee. Topics selected reflect what they are seeing both in their private practices and on the homefront.

The new videos include:

- * Coping With the Holidays - how to make the most of an unprecedented holiday season
- * Creating Coping Capacity - body

awareness and mindfulness techniques to feel more calm and relaxed

* Connecting Through Play - strategies for minimizing frustrations of younger children

* Anxiety in School - an honest look at teenage anxiety straight from a teen being interviewed by his mother

* Your Daily Prescription to Cope with COVID - focusing on ways to nurture yourself These new videos join the original six videos: Deescalating Conflict, Effective Communication, How to Talk to Your Parents, Brain Breaks During Distance Learning, Self-Care and Calming Techniques, and How Are You? All videos and accompanying tip sheets are free and available on the SCC website, mcleanscc.org. Make sure to bookmark the page and watch any time!

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Three Strikes ...



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

... and now I'm out - of the Handel's Messiah sweepstakes. The sweepstakes being to write in 50 words or less "Why do you love Handel's Messiah?" All I can answer is one word: Hallelujah, and I don't mean the chorus either. 'Three strikes' refers to the number of times I have now been subjected to this "holiday tradition." The first time I was an attendee - with thousands of other Washingtonians. In a jam-packed National Cathedral one Christmas season. The second time, while visiting my father-in-law in Manhattan during Christmas, he suggested going to Carnegie Hall to listen to Christmas music (not specified). I jumped at the chance to go to Carnegie Hall. Little did I know until I was handed the program that the Christmas music that night was Handel's Messiah. And most recently, I was sitting on my couch at home channel-surfing when I came across a "Handel's Messiah" rebroadcast from some famous venue in Salzburg, Austria featuring a lead singer, a mestro, an orchestra and choir, all of whom shall remain nameless to protect their stature. Whatever criticism/less than glowing reaction to hearing "Handel's Messiah" a third time should be a reflection on me, not the performers.

I freely admit my cultural deficiencies. I am not inclined to tolerate - too well, these intrusions into my rather mundane world. I have never been to the ballet, rarely have seen a play/musical, never attended a concert

featuring the Four Italian Seniors (as but one example) and am not so inclined to listen to the classics on WETA 90.9 FM in Washington, DC either, especially since Dennis Owens retired in 2005. In my defense, I am a card-carrying (Three Stooges Fan Club) member of the hoi polloi. And to be perfectly honest, I don't feel as if I'm any the worse for the wear of it - or the why. However, you all might disagree.

I am not a complete dunce though. I can appreciate the talent and discipline it takes to master the skills necessary to sing, dance, play an instrument, memorize pages of dialogue, et cetera. The closest I've ever got to enjoying this kind of entertainment occurred at Wolf Trap during the summer concert season. Twice, if I'm not mistaken, I attended the yearly July 4th concert when the National Symphony orchestra performed Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture with 105mm cannons. It's not exactly equivalent to the old Quaker Oats puffed wheat commercials of my youth but it was entertaining nonetheless. However, having now attended a few times, I'm not so inclined to attend again. And believe it or not, I don't feel at all diminished having said so.

I wouldn't say that the three experiences I've had listening to "Handel's Messiah" has thoroughly convinced me that such cultural forays never be considered again. On the contrary, there is a part of me, a small part, that feels as if I'm missing something. Still, I don't feel incomplete, uneducated or clueless somehow. Instead, I feel like one of the bad guys Clint Eastwood gave an advisory to in one of his "Dirty Harry" movies: "punk. A man has got to know his limitations." And I feel as if I know mine. Perhaps there are cultural areas where I could co-exist but I cannot co-exist with "Handel's Messiah." As I titled an earlier column I wrote for Connection Newspapers while actually attending/hearing "Handel's Messiah" - for the first time, at the National Cathedral one holiday season: "Can't Handel It Anymore."

Two more listens since the original, and I can say with certainty, I still can't "Handel" it. I thought that when I realized what I was listening to at home: "Handel's Messiah," having the freedom to get up, move around et cetera, might possibly enhance the experience. Well, it worked. I didn't feel the least bit trapped so after listening for 10 minutes or so, I got up, turned off the television, left the room, came into my home-office and wrote this column. Apparently, I found a way to "Handel" it after all: stop listening and start writing. I feel better already.

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



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