

Great Falls CONNECTION

Meet Langley High's Teacher of the Year

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Fairfax County School Board Votes for In-Person Learning

Students who opt-in would be due back by March 16.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION



FCPS Superintendent Scott Brabrand

Fairfax County Public School students, whose parents or guardians opt for in-person learning for their children, are headed back to the classroom at least two days a week by March 16.

On Feb. 2, the School Board unanimously consented during its work session to support Superintendent Scott Brabrand to proceed with his proposed timeline presented that day in the Return to School Update. According to Megan McLaughlin, Braddock District School Board member, the School Board has the ultimate authority to open and close schools.

During the final minutes of the work session and before the consensus vote, given the Board's apparent agreement on the proposed timeline, Laura Jane Cohen, Springfield District School Board member, said, "I can only vote to support this plan, Dr. Brabrand, if you are going to keep your foot on the pedal of making sure that our teachers are getting the support that they need ... Mr. Smith [Marty Smith, chief operating officer] has done incredible work of trying to get with Inova and figuring out what teachers haven't gotten [the vaccine] and prioritize. But we have to keep going in both directions, full tilt, of continuing to put pressure on to get those vaccines in people's arms and also to make

sure folks have what they need in the buildings to be successful," said Cohen.

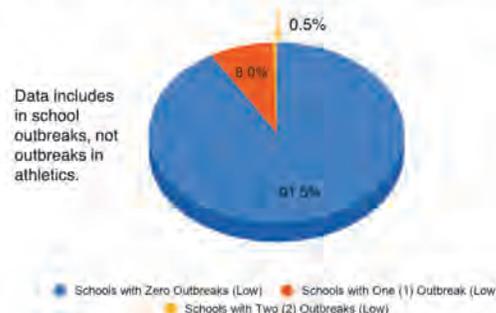
Cohen added that data must be released in real-time. "Our staff and families deserve to know what they are walking into."

Brabrand said, "We've come this far. I'm not about to quit on the Board, the community, or FCPS. We will see this through."

Brabrand acknowledged the vaccines and the plan for getting children back into schools was only "step one" of getting out of the pandemic. There would be challenges, and they needed to turn their time and attention to doing this well. "I will honor that commitment to you and your colleagues," said Brabrand.

The Board first supported, in a vote of 8-to-2, a procedural action to move forward with a pending consensus vote on the timeline, rather than wait and formally take action during the upcoming Feb. 4 regular meeting. School Board members Karen Keys-Gamarra (At-large) and Tamara Derenak Kaufax (Lee) opposed the consideration to vote on the matter on Feb. 2. "I don't believe that's how we inform the community," said Keys-Gamarra.

Level of School Impact: COVID-19 Outbreaks in FCPS Transmission in Schools - Sept. 8th - Jan. 23rd



Level of School Impact

Criteria	Low	Medium	High
Transmission within Schools	Zero or sporadic cases with no evidence of transmission in school	Two outbreaks within a short time period (14 days) or sporadic outbreaks in school. Size of outbreaks remains small.	Several outbreaks in school within short time period (14 days); size of outbreaks is large or scope of outbreaks is significant (e.g. multiple classrooms or grade levels are impacted)

FCPS' COVID Cases/Outbreaks and the Level of School Impact from 09/08-20-01/23/21.



SCREENSHOT VIA FCPS

Getting vaccinations to FCPS employees who want them is critical to in-person learning.

ra. Given the eight votes of support to move forward with the consensus vote, the Board went ahead. Reading out the votes by name,

McLaughlin announced the superintendent's proposed timeline's unanimous support as presented.

"I hope you can see this is a more positive overall outcome," said McLaughlin. "We support this school division moving forward with its best efforts to educate our children. ... This next step to returning to in-person learning for those who have elected it is critical."

Since the start of 2021, when all FCPS students returned to virtual learning after coronavirus infection rates surged regionally and nationally, the school division worked on a plan to get all students back in the classroom.

The current downward trend in Covid cases and percent positivity in the County led Brabrand and his leadership team to present their Return to School Update on Feb. 2.

According to Brabrand, those recent COVID trends, along with the Jan. 14 issue of "Interim Guidance

for Reopening PreK-12" by the Virginia Department of Education and Virginia Department of Health, the partnership with Inova to vaccinate all staff and educators who wanted it, and finally staffing and operational changes gave him and his leadership team confidence to move forward.

Brabrand had said, "It is our desire to return all our students to in-person learning by March 16, for at least two days a week of in-person instruction."

Brabrand acknowledged the challenges, variants of COVID-19 emerging, recommendations for masking, the vaccine process and supply. "However, our return to in-person plan that we are presenting today is not impacted by these issues at this time."

View The Decision-Making Model for Return to In-Person Learning on the Fairfax County Public School website.

2021 Virtual Fairfax County Teen Job and Opportunity Fairs in March

For the past few years Supervisor Pat Herrity's office, Fairfax County Public Schools and Connection Newspapers, along with Supervisors' offices, businesses, and community organizations including our local chambers, have hosted very successful teen job fairs and career-building workshops. These events focused on students and young job seekers looking for a variety of employment opportunities; full time, after-school, seasonal positions, internship opportunities, and volunteer positions. The fairs

have provided thousands of teenagers the opportunity to get in front of employers and for our employers to find talented Fairfax County students to fill their positions.

This year Herrity is once again teaming up with Connection Newspapers, Fairfax County Public Schools, community chambers and organizations and fellow Board members to bring our community two Fairfax County Teen Job Fairs and Career-Building Workshops. Normally, there are 5-6 fairs at local high schools. With the limitations of the ongoing pandemic, this year's fairs

will be hosted virtually through Brazen, a professional virtual job fair platform. The virtual fairs are scheduled for Saturday, March 13, 2-5 p.m. and Saturday, March 20, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The fairs will be open to all teens in Fairfax County looking for employment, volunteer opportunities, or tips on building their resume. Free online booth space will be provided to businesses and organizations to advertise their available positions. We will also host resume and career building sessions with our Chamber

of Commerce partners.

Beginning Feb. 1, students as well as employers can register to attend at this link, www.fairfaxcounty.gov/springfield/teenjobfairs.

First jobs are important, and these events help connect teens with employers and prepare our youth for the workforce. This year especially, students and employers are desperate for opportunities provided by the fair with the hope that some normalcy will begin this summer.

Black History and Regional Parks

BY PAUL GILBERT
THE CONNECTION



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Karen Campblin at Tinner Hill

In many ways, the history of Northern Virginia is the history of America. It is complicated and has many facets. February is Black History Month and a good time to consider the many stories that our historic places have to share. Here are a few of the Black history stories told through your regional parks.

In 1751, John Carlyle, a wealthy merchant from Scotland, and his wife Sarah Fairfax Carlyle started construction on the largest house in Alexandria. The big house and lavish lifestyle they had was made possible by enslaved people. Many people have called the slave economy “America’s original sin.”

Twenty years ago, NOVA Parks developed an interpretive video to help tell the slave story that underpins the Carlyle House. And in the last few years, the Carlyle House has hosted genealogy programs that help people discover if their ancestors were enslaved people at this colonial site. Lt. Governor Justin Fairfax discovered his ancestry to the Fairfax family slaves from Maddy McCoy, who leads the ‘Breaking Down the Walls of Slavery at the Carlyle House’ programs.

In 1854, a young man named Daniel Dangerfield, who had worked at Aldie Mill in Loudoun County, escaped to freedom in Philadelphia. Someone from Virginia spotted him on the streets of Philadelphia, and there was a trial to see if he should be returned to slavery. He won that case, but it was close. He later moved to Canada to be free from the Fugitive Slave Act. The Civil War’s primary reason was increasingly northern states were not enforcing the Fugitive Slave Act, as can be seen in the Dangerfield trial. A new interpretive sign telling this story has been installed at Aldie Mill.

In 1889, a fourteen-year-old named Orion Anderson was jailed in Leesburg for chasing a neighbor girl. The Ku Klux Klan took him from the jail and lynched him a few blocks away at a railroad station on land that is today on the W&OD Trail. In the summer of 2019, a moving dedication of the sign that tells this tragic story took place.

In 1915, a group of civic leaders gathered at a house in Falls Church to organize in opposition to a proposed law that would have required Black residents to sell their property and move. The proposed law was what they called a “sunset law” where no one of color could legally be in the town after sunset. The house where they organized was in a Black community called Tinner Hill. Those brave individuals were successful in opposing the proposed sunset law, and that group became the first chapter of the NAACP outside of a major city. In 2015 NOVA Parks partnered with the City of Falls Church, Fairfax County, and the Tinner Hill Heritage Foundation and opened a small park on that site. On Martin Luther King Day this year, NOVA Parks hosted an event at Tinner Hill to unveil new interpretive signs that tell this story.

In 1959, the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NOVA Parks) was established. One of the reasons the local governments in our area chose to create the first regional park au-

America has a troubled history with justice and racism. The regional parks of Northern Virginia help to tell these stories, from Colonial time to the modern-day.

thority in Virginia was the State Park System at the time was segregated. Essentially, NOVA Parks was an integrated state park system for the region.

In 1969, NOVA Parks opened the largest pool in Virginia to all people, at Bull Run Regional Park. The same year the public pool in Leesburg was being closed instead of integrating. None of the facilities built by NOVA Parks in the often segregated decades of the 1950s and 1960s were ever segregated.

In 2020, after the killing of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, Black Lives Matter marches sprung up all over the country. At Algonkian Regional Park, over 2,000 people organized by high school student Ocean Akinotcho came to express their frustration and lack of justice in a peaceful and somber march.

America has a troubled history with justice and racism. The regional parks of Northern Virginia help to tell these stories, from Colonial time to the modern-day. Part of growing as a society is acknowledging our past and learning from it. Black History Month is a time to focus on these important stories.

Electrification of Virginia Transportation

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



COMMENTARY

In 1998 I chaired a task force of business and community leaders to collectively document what Northern Virginia needed to do to be an “EV Ready Community.” Our work was part of a national effort involving ten communities under the sponsorship of the U.S. Department of Energy and the Electric Vehicle Association of the Americas to prepare for the introduction of electric vehicles. Our inch-thick report was very comprehensive in detailing the infrastructure needed in charging stations, building and roadways, and other changes that electric vehicles would require.

We were ahead of our time. Within about a year of our report the first commercial electric car, EV1, was no longer available and other manufacturers were not offering electric vehicles. Move ahead less than two decades and electric vehicles are becoming commonplace in many areas. I even own one, and on trips in my community I always see more than one.

What happened in the meantime is a greater awareness of our transportation system’s con-

tribution to greenhouse gases and pollution. In the United States alone in 2017, the transportation sector accounted for 29 percent of the nation’s total emissions of 6.4 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, or CO₂e (the CO₂ equivalent of an individual greenhouse gas). Driven largely by the transportation sector’s emissions of fossil fuels, concentrations of CO₂ in the atmosphere have risen steadily since the early 1980s, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Interestingly, when there is a recession there is a corresponding dip in emissions.

In addition to the increased awareness of the adverse effects of our conventional transportation on the environment, there has been an increase in the number of entrepreneurs who are willing to make major investments in developing electric cars and other vehicles and increased competition from abroad. A Super Bowl commercial sponsored by General Motors lamented the fact that in Norway 54 percent of the new cars sold are EVs. The president of General Motors announced recently that the

company would phase out gasoline vehicles and sell only electric passenger cars and trucks by 2035. Press accounts are that Ford Motor Company is making major investments in electric vehicles and VW that is about to move its US headquarters to Reston will be investing \$37 billion in electric vehicles.

In the General Assembly I am a co-patron along with the patron Delegate Lamont Bagby of HB1965 that directs the State Air Pollution Control Board to implement a low-emissions and zero-emissions vehicle program for motor vehicles with a model year of 2025 and later. The legislation will help resolve the problem of consumers in Virginia who want to buy an electric vehicle but must go out of the state to do so. Along with a rebate program the vehicles will become more affordable for persons of limited income. There have been major investments in charging stations throughout the state enabling travel without the fear of running out of juice. You may have noticed the Wawa in Vienna that sells electric charging only but no gas.

I need to review more carefully that report of two decades ago to make sure we are ready for EVs. Ready or not, here they come!

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An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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The Impact of zMOD

Discussing the Zoning Ordinance Modernization: How to protect the character of Great Falls?

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION



FAIRFAX COUNTY

zMOD

Testimony by 46 County citizens about the Zoning Ordinance Modernization (zMOD) project, started in 2017 and nearing the end of its process, elicited more than five hours of testimony at the Fairfax County Planning Commission Meeting held Jan. 28. The County's Board of Supervisors is scheduled to take action on zMOD on March 9, with the delayed effective date targeted for July 1.

According to the 49-page Executive Summary, the project's goals included modernizing the County's current Zoning Ordinance, its permitted uses, and regulations. Compared to the existing 741-page 1978 Ordinance, the proposed new zoning ordinance is streamlined. It makes the regulations easier for all stakeholders to understand and removes inconsistencies, gaps, and ambiguities. There are more tables, graphs, hyperlinks and the ordinance is available on multiple platforms. Substantive changes to land use are part of the new ordinance. New topics include accessory living units, home-based businesses, accessory structures, food trucks, solar panels, and more.

AMONG THE LATEST REVISIONS available on the County's Planning-Development-z-MOD website, are the Public Hearing Draft -January 19, 2021, Public Hearing Draft with Strike-through and Underlined Edits-January 19, 2021, Memorandum to the Planning Commission, and the Flags and Flagpoles Report-February 3, 2021.

William Canis, President of the Great Falls Citizens Association (GFCFA), provided a letter to amplify interests and notify the Commission of the Association's concurrence with McLean and Reston Citizens Associations and the Holmes Run Valley Citizens Association. According to Canis, several areas proposed in the amendment "supersede the mandates and objectives of the zMod Charter first phase."

Canis focused his letter on four areas, beginning with Article 2 - Zoning districts - Residential - Preservation District. According to Canis, GFCFA opposed removing the permanent zoning district because that would eliminate a mechanism to preserve open and undeveloped spaces. This would lead to increases in commuter traffic, possible impact on the water table, important given the use of wells in Great Falls, a more significant effect on school capacities and increased threats to the environment.

The second area of concern was Accessory Living Units (ALUs). "While GFCFA supports efforts to expand affordable housing and resources for older adults and persons with disabilities in Fairfax County, GFCFA objects to this proposal on the basis that elimination

of the special permit process would also remove an opportunity for public notice and comment."

The third area focused on home-based businesses and that it should not be amended now. As currently advertised, it would allow an operator to "circumvent prohibitions on signage in a residential area, engage in commercial activity disruptive to a neighborhood's residential character, increase vehicular traffic and create parking problems." Also, the proposal appears, Canis said, "to be unenforceable by the County."

The fourth area recognized that there were no substantive edits proposed to the 2019 Sign Amendment. Canis said that GFCFA believes the ordinance lacks "specificity in controlling commercial signage in residential areas."

GFCFA urged the Planning Commission to move these items to Phase 2 to allow for further public comment.

In her letter of testimony, Jennifer Falcone, Chair, Great Falls Citizens Association Land Use & Zoning said that she offered her remarks on behalf of the entire Executive Board of the Great Falls Citizens Association. She noted that the zMOD had been described and even lauded by County officials to provide much-needed reforming, up-to-date rules, flexibility, the elimination for some public hearings, and the ability to accommodate emerging trends.

"The focus on removing ambiguous or confusing language and content has been jeopardized by the inclusion of substantive changes found within the 600 plus pages... That supersedes the scope of the original plan," Falcone said.

Like Canis, she too focused on zoning districts, Accessory Living Units, home-based businesses and signs. "If these changes to the ordinance are adopted...gradually, streets and blocks of residential neighborhoods could transform into commercial zones, with special events and food trucks, especially as we see businesses driven out of their leaseholds across the country as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and a growing number of cottage industries emerging."

Falcone urged the commissioners to defer action on the ordinance and direct staff to limit Phase 1 amendments solely to changes addressing readability and formatting. She ended by saying, "GFCFA firmly believes that an undertaking of this magnitude is a relatively long-term task and requires much more public examination."

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School Board Approves McLean High Boundary Adjustment

Monitoring continues as population explodes in Tysons.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION



The Fairfax County School Board prepares to vote on the McLean High School Boundary Adjustment.

The Fairfax County School Board heard the final words on the McLean/Langley High School Boundary Study during a hybrid regular meeting of the Board held on Feb. 4, 2021. Dr. Ricardy Anderson, Chair (Mason District Representative), called on Dr. Scott S. Brabrand, Division Superintendent, to introduce the topic and make a recommendation. “After extensive community feedback, including feedback from the Jan. 28, 2021, public hearing...staff is recommending Option B as it was presented at the community meeting on Dec. 7, 2020...It will better balance capacity between schools and it will allow staff and FCPS to do continued monitoring of population growth and plan development in Tysons,” said Brabrand.

The adjustment, which identified an estimated 190 students at the high school level and 78 students at the middle school level, realigns the boundaries of McLean High School, Langley High School, Longfellow Middle School, and Cooper Middle School. The change adjusts the Colvin Run Elementary School split feeder area, a portion of the Spring Hill Elementary split feeder area, and a portion of Westbriar Elementary from Longfellow Middle-McLean High to Cooper Middle-Langley High.

THE APPROVED PLAN goes into effect at the start of the 2021-22 school year with phasing and grandfathering adopted. The high school option that parents/guardians choose for the 2021-22 school year will determine the students’ school through the 2024-25 school year and cannot be changed. Fairfax County Public Schools announced detailed information and what to expect in a Feb. 5 News Release, available on its website.

Option B was not the one that Jeffrey K. Platenberg, assistant superintendent, Facilities and Transportation Services, and member of Superintendent Brabrand’s leadership team, presented as staff recommendation at the Board’s Jan. 21 regular meeting.

School Board Representative Elaine Tholen (Dranesville District) introduced the motion to adopt Option B of the McLean High School Boundary Study. Karl V. Frisch (Providence District) seconded the motion. Following a Board-approved appeal by Tamara D. Kafax (Lee District), whose audio was not operational during the vote, the final recorded vote stands at 11-1.

Abrar Omeish, an At-Large member of the School Board, presented the sole dissenting opinion during the discussion before the vote. She said that staff had recommended different things and “the previous time recommended C.” According to Omeish, her thought process and decision not to support the motion had nothing to do with the diversity piece but everything



PHOTO BY FCPS

Elaine Tholen, Dranesville District Representative on the Fairfax County School Board.



Abrar Omeish, At-Large member on the Fairfax County School Board, presents the sole dissenting opinion.

to do with thinking long term.

“None of these are good options. We’re kind of stuck choosing amongst difficult ones that have pros and cons in every direction...It pains me to be saying any of this and not to feel in good conscious to vote in support...I can’t reconcile not finding ourselves here five years later, in the same place, because we didn’t make the best adjustment we could have with what we are faced with. We know that the Tysons area is one of the fastest-growing development area(s). We know Marshall High School is so overcrowded that they can’t even accommodate kids for IB anymore, transfers for any reason. That whole region is exploding in population.”

Following her first approved motion, Tholen introduced a second motion, “a nod to the hardships our Longfellow eighth-graders are undergoing.” She mentioned the students’ combined stresses of COVID, mid-year admission’s policy change for Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, and boundary change all at the same time. Tholen presented a motion that rising ninth graders residing in the area changed would have the option to attend Langley HS in SY 2021-22 or be grandfathered at McLean HS with transportation provided through 12th grade in the 2024-25 school year.

THE BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT is another step to alleviate capacity pressures at McLean HS. Modularity will be open later this month and ready to accept high schoolers as they return to school in March.

Fadi Shadid, Co-Chair of the Special Committee on Schools at the Great Falls Citizens Association, wrote in an email, “Of the three options considered, I think Ms. Tholen’s and the Board’s decision on option B is

SEE BOARD, PAGE 11



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Tricia M. Poythress, Career and Technical Education (CET) Department Chair at Langley High School is its Teacher of the Year 20-21.

Meet Langley High’s Teacher of the Year

Recipient learns Publishers Clearing House style.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Langley High School announced its Teacher of the Year 20-21 during a virtual staff meeting. This year’s awardee is Tricia M. Poythress, Career and Technical Education (CET) Department Chair. She brings real-world learning and skills to her Marketing students and builds supportive relationships with them.

According to Poythress, she was at home and attending a virtual staff meeting when she learned the recognition. “My doorbell rang. It was Mr. Robertson, assistant principal, with two dozen roses and green and gold Congratulations, Star balloons —Publishers Clearing House style. It was a shock,” said Poythress. “Mr. Robertson had his phone, and he was videoing, so he was live during the faculty meeting,” she said.

Poythress has been teaching for 35 years and said she believes what makes her a good teacher is the connections she can make with her students. Unlike required graduation coursework, career and technical education courses are electives. Poythress said that the ability to teach students for extended years, many all four years, allows her to watch them develop and to build relationships that, for some, last even beyond their senior year.

“I work very hard to create a place where my students feel comfortable sharing their opinions with me and with each

other. We build mutual respect for each other and our differing viewpoints,” Poythress said.

According to Robertson, teachers are nominated by fellow teachers, students, and parents. The final nominations are submitted to the school administration, and the teacher is selected. Robertson said that Poythress was chosen because of the number and the narratives submitted, and the information in those narratives. “Many different characteristics make a great teacher of the year. The list is long but includes caring, sense of humor, creativity, engaging lessons, a good listener, etc. Ms. Poythress has all of these and more,” he said.

Robertson provided a selection of comments which validated why administrators awarded Poythress Teacher of the Year.

“Mrs. Poythress has been my rock and my inspiration for working so hard during virtual learning.” “Mrs. Poythresswould wake up every morning and play music to wake us all up, have a smile on and a happy attitude.” “I know I can always go to her if I need help with anything, even if it’s not school-related.”

While Poythress could retire anytime, she loves teaching too much to do so. “Even if I won the lottery, I’d still go to work. I might have somebody drive me, but I’d still go to work because I genuinely love my job...I love my students, I love Langley and the community.”

PEOPLE



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE WITKIEWICZ FAMILY

Boy Scout Troop 1130 of McLean helped fellow Scout Eli Witkiewicz in his Eagle Scout project by making 88 blankets for Project Linus.

McLean Scouts Make Blankets for Children in Need

For an Eagle Scout project in December, Eli Witkiewicz enlisted Troop 1130 of McLean and their family members to make fleece blankets for Project Linus, a non-profit organization that provides hand made blankets to children in need [https://www.projectlinus.org]. Materials for blankets were distributed to Troop participants' houses with contactless delivery; Eli held a Zoom meeting where he taught how blankets will be made. In the end, 88 blankets were made by Troop members and their households. In addition, Eli's extended family came through with 105 quilts, including one cousin and aunt who made 50.

This was a perfect project for people spending much of their time at home. "It may seem like a small thing, but we do make positive impacts on people's lives," said Eli.

The Project Linus coordinator from South Lakes High School

sent the following message to Eli: "I am a co-founder of the South Lakes High School Parent Teacher Student Association Food pantry. I was leading pantry distribution at SLHS on 12/28 when we distributed blankets from Project Linus . . . and I was the lucky one who handed the unicorn blanket to the little girl whose birthday it was that day. It was such a wonderful moment. We could tell the mom was in a bit of a bad mood that day, and through conversation we found out it was the little girl's birthday, and we showed her the unicorn blanket. She squealed with joy and her eyes beamed. All of us, including her mom, were swept up in her joy. It was so cool. Thanks for making that moment possible."

Boy Scout Troop 1130 (<http://www.troop1130.com>) is sponsored by Trinity United Methodist Church of McLean.

For information contact Scout Master: Greg Griswold ggriswold@gmail.com



Boy Scout Eli Witkiewicz, of Troop 1130 McLean and his mom, Anne Witkiewicz, show off some of the 88 blankets made by his fellow Scouts and an additional 105 by his extended family for his Eagle Scout project to benefit Project Linus.

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PHOTOS BY LUIS ALVAREZ.

Like the kitchen, many of the rooms feature large windows, at Park Grove in McLean.

New Community with Park-Like Environment

McLean's Park Grove neighborhood inspired by former National Parks Director George Hartzog.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

A former public servant's creative vision and dedication to preserving parklands was the inspiration behind a new residential area in Northern Virginia. Park Grove, an eight-home community in McLean, Virginia is built on land that was once owned by former National Parks Director George Hartzog.

"His considerable contributions to our national parks formed the seed of the idea for the theme of Park Grove," said Jamie Gulick, Vice President, Gulick Group, the company that developed the neighborhood. "We've designed a warm, park-like environment in the community by using materials that evoke nature, invite sunlight into the homes with high ceilings and abundant windows, and create a clean-lined, peaceful, spa-like feel inside."

"We incorporated his work in a very literal sense with a small sculpture honoring his work in the community park area," added Gulick

To bring the vision of living as if in nature into (or to) reality, Gulick engaged architect Bill Sutton, President, Sutton Yantis Associates Architects "They gave me a clean canvas to create, and I began my design process with layers and layers of hand sketches," he said. "... A consistent theme in my sketches was using low pitched hipped roof lines and wide eaves echoing the prairie style of Frank Lloyd Wright.

That design aesthetic is consistent throughout each home. "For the interiors, we wanted to complement the linearity of the exteriors inside with clean-lined simplicity," said Gulick. "The black exterior windows are white on the inside to promote an airy feel, and



The modern and minimalist design allows the natural surroundings to be integrated into the décor at Park Grove in McLean.

they have only horizontal mullions, so we selected an interior door style that reiterated that shape."

The modern and minimalist design allows the natural surroundings to be integrated into the décor. "The main level ceiling is more than 10 feet tall, and the windows have transoms above to flood the homes with light," said Gulick. "We kept the decor understated, to accentuate the subtlety of the architecture."

A major architectural feature, says Sutton is the stairway leading to the second level. "The upper floor is likewise spacious, with an open loft area at the top of the stairs...and a large open owner's suite," he said. "The dominant feature is the openness of the floor plan."

Plans for the subdivision include expansive bedrooms, each with a walk-in closet and private bathrooms, features that Park Grove's current homeowners enjoy. "They appreciate the loft space upstairs off of the secondary bedrooms, as well as the size and functional design of [those bedrooms], which gives everyone their own private place to unwind," said Julie Zelaska, Principal, Executive Vice President, Smith | Schneider, LLC, who is the sales rep for the community.

Four of the eight homes remain. For more information on Park Grove, visit www.parkgroveinmclean.com.

OBITUARY

Ken Johnson, 1930-2021



A former resident of the Seneca Hunt neighborhood in Great Falls, Ken Johnson, age 90, passed away at home at Ashby Ponds in Ashburn on Jan. 27, 2021 with Shonnie, his loving wife of 70 years, their daughter, Jill and her husband, Randy Banks, and caregiver, Joy Thompson at his side. Both Ken and Shonnie grew up in Chicago. They met on a blind date on Sept. 22, 1948 and married on Sept. 3, 1950.

Ken was born on Nov. 17, 1930 in Chicago, Ill., the second son of Bessie and William Johnson; and brother to Richard Johnson (deceased), Marilyn (Mickie) Modjeski and Margaret (Maggie) Olson. He is survived by his wife, their three children: Scott Johnson (Emily), Philip Johnson (Karen), and Jill Banks (Randal), seven grandchildren: Megan, Annie, Drew, Jamie, Sarah, Sam and Rachel; and six great-grandchildren: Maya, Maddox, Olivia, Nicky, Emma and Madelyn.

Ken was an industrious young man performing dozens of jobs on Chicago's South Side, including working for a florist. By the time he was in high school, he was making prom corsages and wedding flowers. His favorite two words were "Help Wanted."

Ken and Shonnie started their own business, Holiday Florist, in 1951. After leaving the flower business in 1958, Ken joined R.H. Donnelley, publisher of the Yellow Pages, as a sales representative. Later he would become President, serving seven years with the renamed Donnelley Directory, a major division of Dun & Bradstreet. While he was highly respected and recognized as one of the most influential figures in this industry, he was most proud of having celebrated successes of many colleagues...and making lifelong friends who have kept in close touch for many years. He retired in 1990.

In addition to his professional career, Ken helped found and was the first President of the Markham Improvement Association, whose mission was to improve the reputation of the then struggling Chicago suburb and the lives of its residents. He and close neighbors' best efforts to bring positive news to Markham included building a true masterpiece of a Christmas Train float, with a number of the builders' children dressed as Santas riding on the steps of the Caboose. And, it actually won first place in Chicago's Annual State Street

Thanksgiving Day Parade! Later, he brought some of that float building expertise to the Seneca Hunt neighborhood entry to the Great Falls 4th of July parades in the 1990s.

One of their granddaughters, Annie, was diagnosed with a rare disease, Tuberous Sclerosis. Ken served for years on the Tuberous Sclerosis Alliance's Operating and Endowment Boards as well as mentored many other Board members.

In 2004, he wrote a book, "The Other One... In Other Times." It covered the first 30 years of his life and was meant to let his kids and grandkids know what it was like living during World War II...and in a neighborhood of immigrants where families were still recovering from the Depression. That book ended up being read and treasured by many others.

With their move to Virginia after Ken retired, he and Shonnie became active members of the United Christian Parish of Reston. And in 2015, they moved to Ashby Ponds in Ashburn as Independent Living residents.

Throughout his life, Ken was both a collector and facilitator of many great friendships whether they be professional colleagues, neighbors, golfing and poker buddies, church members or fellow nonprofit Board members. He was a favorite among his grandchildren... an entertainer when they were little, and an extraordinary role model from then on!

Ken's last several years were physically very challenging, and yet his attitude was always upbeat. Ask him how he was doing and the response was always "I'm great. How about you?" Over the last several weeks of his life, when in Hospice care, his message was always consistent ... how much he loved his wife and family, how much he loved and appreciated his various doctors and caregivers, and how lucky he was to have lived the life he had!

He was a great role model for all. He encouraged others to be the very best they could be. He had a great sense of humor, and was friendly, kind, generous, sensitive and sentimental. It was typical for Ken to

SEE OBITUARY, PAGE 10

BULLETIN

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

FRIDAY/FEB. 12

Toastmasters Public Speaking. 7-8:30 p.m. Via Zoom. Need help with public speaking and zoom presentations? They offer a friendly place (online currently) to learn twice a month. Visit the club to see how they can help. The club meets twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Fridays at 7 p.m. - 8.30 p.m. Visit

the website: <https://tba.toastmastersclubs.org/>

SATURDAY/FEB. 13

Northern Virginia Housing Virtual Expo. 11 a.m. for English speakers; 1 p.m. for Spanish speakers. Topic: "Avoiding Eviction or Foreclosure during COVID-19". The free public event will be hosted at www.NoVaHousingExpo.org.

FEB. 19 TO NOV. 19 (FRIDAYS)

Virtual Great Decisions Discussion Group. 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. A Program of the Shepherd's Center

servicing Oakton-Vienna-Reston-Herndon. Great Decisions is America's largest discussion program on world affairs. Cost: \$32 per person (includes briefing book) which must be ordered from the Foreign Policy Association. Contact SC Coordinator, Mike Mulreany, at mulreany@verizon.net to register and get the information to order the books. Participants who have pre-ordered their books will have the books delivered to them in mid-January. Class meets the third Friday of the month.

Send in Pet Photos for Pet Connection

The Pet Connection, a twice-yearly special edition, will publish the last week of February, and photos and stories of your pets with you and your family should be submitted by Friday, Feb. 19, 2021.

We invite you to send stories about your pets, photos of you and your family with your cats, dogs, llamas, alpacas, ponies, hamsters, snakes, lizards, frogs, rabbits, or whatever other creatures share your life with you.

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

Do you volunteer at an animal shelter or therapeutic riding center or take your pet to visit people in a nursing home? Does your business have a managing pet? Is your business about pets? Have you

helped to train an assistance dog? Do you or someone in your family depend on an assistance dog?

Or take this opportunity to memorialize a beloved pet you have lost.

Just a cute photo is fine too. Our favorite pictures include both pets and their humans.

Please tell us a little bit about your creature, identify everyone in the photo, give a brief description what is happening in the photo, and include address and phone number (we will not publish your address or phone number, just your town name).

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

For advertising information, email sales@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9431. We are looking for sponsors for pet features year round as well.

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Candidate Petition Packets may be picked up at the Center. Deadline for returning the completed Candidate Petition to MCC: **Friday, March 12 by 5 p.m.**

Visit the Center at: 1234 INGLESIDE AVE., MCLEAN, VA 22101

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February 24, 2021

Ads submitted by:

February 18, 2021

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An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.

-Werner Heisenberg

SPORTS

Westfield Bulldogs Beat Madison Warhawks, 48-40

The Westfield Bulldogs hosted the Madison Warhawks on Jan. 30 in Chantilly. The Bulldogs won, 48-40.

The Bulldogs were led by Jonny Farnelo who finished the game with a team high 18 points. Will Vetter added 13 points. Kashantis Anderson scored 12 points. Madison was led by Logan Spafford who had a game high 25 points.

Westfield will host Langley in the Region Tournament first round on Feb. 8 at 7:30 p.m. Madison will host Herndon in the first round at 7 p.m.

— WILL PALENSCAR



PHOTOS BY WILL PALENSCAR/THE CONNECTION

The Bulldogs were led by Jonny Farnelo who finished the game with a team high 18 points.



Madison's Logan Spafford had a game high 25 points.



Kashantis Anderson scored 12 points.

OBITUARY

FROM PAGE 8

think of others before himself. As one lifelong friend stated: "First, of course, was Shonnie and then family, but then it was like he had a covenant of good-

ness with humankind." He will be greatly missed!

The family is planning a memorial service in September 2021, when travel is safe for all.

If you were to want to give a gift, "in honor of Ken Johnson" a spe-

cial Memorial Fund has been established at www.tsalliance.org/KenJohnsonMemorial.

Please leave your thoughts, messages and memories at: <https://everloved.com/life-of/kenneth-orville-johnson/>

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Let us know about an upcoming event

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CALENDAR

FEB. 1-13

Mardi Gras at the Workhouse. In-Person on Saturday, Feb. 13., 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. The Workhouse Arts Center is thrilled to present its first-ever Mardi Gras celebration. Join them for two weeks of family-friendly events that will engage, inspire, teach and make you laugh. This mini festival will include: Online workshops on festive mask making; Online Mixology sessions; Online demonstrations on how to make floats or yard decorations; In-person glass bead demonstrations; In-person cooking classes; Parade on the Workhouse Campus; and Drive In Comedy Shows.

FEB. 2-26

The Learning Connection. At The Old Firehouse, McLean. The Old Firehouse Learning Connection is a supervised e-learning program supervised by staff, for students in the 5th-10th grades. The program will provide a supervised environment for students to complete their school-led virtual instruction. Staff will provide limited socially distant recreation opportunities for students during their breaks. Program waivers, participant contracts and additional information will be sent to all registered participants prior to the start of the program. Cost is \$300. To register, visit: www.oldfirehouse.org or call 703-448-8336, TTY: 711.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 10

The Unruly Theatre Project's Virtual Improv Show. 7 p.m. Virtual. Join 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. Register online at www.aldentheatre.org.

FEB. 12-14

Fall in Love. In Fairfax City, 10455 Armstrong Street, Fairfax. The "Fall in Love in Fairfax City" Valentine's Day Gift Guide highlights Fairfax City businesses that are offering promotions from Friday, February 12 through Sunday, February 14, 2021, on gifts, dining options, and experiences. Visit the website: fairfaxcityconnected.com/fallinlove

SATURDAY/FEB. 13

Monte Carlo Night. 6-8 p.m. Virtual event. Join in a two-hour Virtual Social on Saturday, Feb. 13, 6-8 p.m. Create your own Paint and Pour vase or heart-shaped cutting board. Cost is \$40. Visit the website: <https://www.jlnv.org/montecarlonight/>

SATURDAY/FEB. 13

Beer Celebration. Noon to 6 p.m. High Side craft beer bar in Fairfax City will host a virtual celebration for its third anniversary. The event includes:

Meet the brewers (beer tasting & brewery tour) – Tabol Brewing, Oozlefinch Beers and Blending, Wheatland Spring Farm + Brewery, and Bluejacket;
Music performance from the City of Fairfax Theatre Co. and Dalia Liliy;
Charity raffle benefiting Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA);
Virtual bar trivia;
Craft beer industry panel discussion;
High Side Beer Banter;
High Side themed ASMR.

A pass is required to access this online event, which will be included with a High Side III Anniversary Beer Box purchase. It's available at <https://highsideva.com/anniversary> for \$65 + tax and includes High Side collaboration beer, glassware, coffee, swag and local discounts.

FRIDAY/FEB. 19

Virtual Family Bingo Night. 7-9 p.m. Virtual event sponsored by the Old Firehouse, McLean. Cost is \$5 per family (per Zoom invite). Join in a virtual evening of fun and prizes with your family. Winners will take their pick of prizes. Preregistration is recommended. Register online at www.oldfirehouse.org or call OFC at 703-448-TEEN (8336).

FEB. 21 AND FEB. 22

Doktor Kaboom! "Look Out! Science is Coming!" Sunday, Feb 21, and Monday, Feb. 22, 4 p.m. Sponsored by the Alden, McLean. "Look Out! Science is Coming!" Even if it is in your kitchen! Doktor Kaboom! is known around the world for taking his audience on an educational tour of the modern scientific method, using humor and comedy while demonstrating spectacular applications of the physical sciences. "Better than Bill Nye" — DC Theatre Scene. \$15/\$10 MCC tax district residents (this fee is per device). To purchase tickets or for more information, visit www.aldentheatre.org.

TUESDAY/FEB. 23

Search for Winter Waterfowl. 10-11 a.m. At Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Burke Lake Park is teeming with wildlife, even in the coldest months of winter. See what birds are calling the lake home this season with the park's "Waterfowl" program. During the program, you will walk the shores of Burke Lake in search of winter waterfowl. Be on the lookout for birds, such as loons, lesser scaups and ring-necked ducks. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. This program is designed for participants age 12 to adult. Cost is \$8 per person. Call 703-323-6600.

Board Approves Boundary Adjustment

FROM PAGE 6

the better compromise for Great Falls. It satisfies the various goals well while not excessive on Cooper and Langley's capacities. It is a significant number of students but comes from neighborhoods with little to no future development as compared to other options considered."

Shadid said that an expansion of McLean High School in place of a boundary adjustment would have been the best solution. "It would offer long-term relief for MHS while leaving more room for growth at Langley. We believe that more

capacity at MHS is still urgent because of the rapid growth in the two pyramids."

Shadid recommended that the upcoming school bond in the November elections would be a good opportunity to allocate capital to McLean High School. "The McLean and Langley communities should get more involved with county representatives to expand MHS, so we are not in another school overcrowding situation in a few years," he said.

The public can view proceedings of the FCSB's Feb. 4, Action Items 4.02 McLean/Langley Boundary Study via YouTube beginning at 1:22:19.

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"Clinical Correlation Suggested"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Means what exactly? That was the suggestion written by the pathologist after "non small cell lung cancer" was written in the "diagnosis" section of the pathology report completed after my original surgical biopsy was performed at Holy Cross Hospital in early 2009. I had never seen this document until this past week, finally retrieving it after nearly 12 years, represents a kind of symmetry. Though 2009 is when my life as an officially-diagnosed-lung-cancer patient began, I am not at all prepared to say that my current life as a lung cancer patient is over. It's just called something else.

Nor am I prepared to say this document gives me much clarity or satisfaction for that matter. Unfortunately, getting re-diagnosed with papillary thyroid cancer recently doesn't change the past or guarantee the future. It does however, reshape it, potentially - for the better. When it comes to cancers you'd prefer to have and the ones you wouldn't, thyroid cancer, generally speaking is way more preferable than lung cancer. The survivability gap is all you need to know. The side effects and sacrifices required to live with thyroid cancer pale in comparison to those required of lung cancer patients. In fact, if you don't already know it, lung cancer is the leading cause of death among all cancers, by far. Moreover, more people die from lung cancer as do from the next four cancers combined. Lung cancer is a killer. So being reclassified from lung cancer to thyroid cancer is huge. The fact that I've survived so long already, 12 years post diagnosis, means I may have used up some of my unexpected life expectancy however. Still, it beats the alternative.

Originally, I was told my lung cancer was incurable and given a "13 month to two year" prognosis. Presently, as it relates to my current prognosis, it's sort of indefinite. The drug I'm taking is effective for three years. After which, I'm sort of on my own as there are no new drugs in the offing to manage my cancer. In effect, I am once again incurable, as the years of treatment for lung cancer had no effect on the underlying thyroid cancer and did a kind of damage that now means I can be treated but not cured. Quite different than had I been treated for thyroid cancer all along.

Yet, seeing this paperwork from 12 years ago which clearly lists "non small cell lung cancer, primary to the lung" has sort of stopped me in my tracks. So far as I understand/recall, there was no "clinical correlation." I started chemotherapy the following week. Was something neglected? Certainly, I didn't ask for a second opinion, which is on me, but was the oncologist supposed to research further? Was the pathology report sort of damning - me, with a kind of faint praise -- uncertainty, if you can extrapolate?

Otherwise, how does the profession account for my still being alive. When we got a second opinion a few months back from a head and neck (to include thyroid) cancer specialist at The Lombardi Cancer Center at Georgetown, she said, if I had lung cancer, I wouldn't still be alive so it's logical to presume the recent surgical biopsies that indicated thyroid cancer were likely confirming a long-standing cancer, and that quite probably I never had lung cancer but rather thyroid cancer that had metastasized to the lung.. But there was no further investigation in 2009. The diagnosis - without a "clinical correlation" was non small cell lung cancer/carcinoma.

At the initial meeting with my oncologist, it all sounded so serious and the doctor was so clear in his assessment of my situation, that it seemed irresponsible, foolish even, to wait. We scheduled my first chemotherapy infusion for the following week and the rest is history. Now I'm wondering if it was history that need not have been made.

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



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