

# Great Falls CONNECTION Celebrating The Farm

NEWS, PAGE 4

Andrew Fox, 14, of Herndon, rides over one of the jumps in the new 250-foot by 200-foot equestrian ring at Turner Farm Park on Ben, an Norwegian fjord. The ring was completed in June 2009 and is open for the public to use. The park also includes a 30-acre cross-country course, a training ring, a playground, and an observatory at the park.



## A Glimpse of 'Time's Square 2090'

NEWS, PAGE 3

## Artist Depicts Old Great Falls

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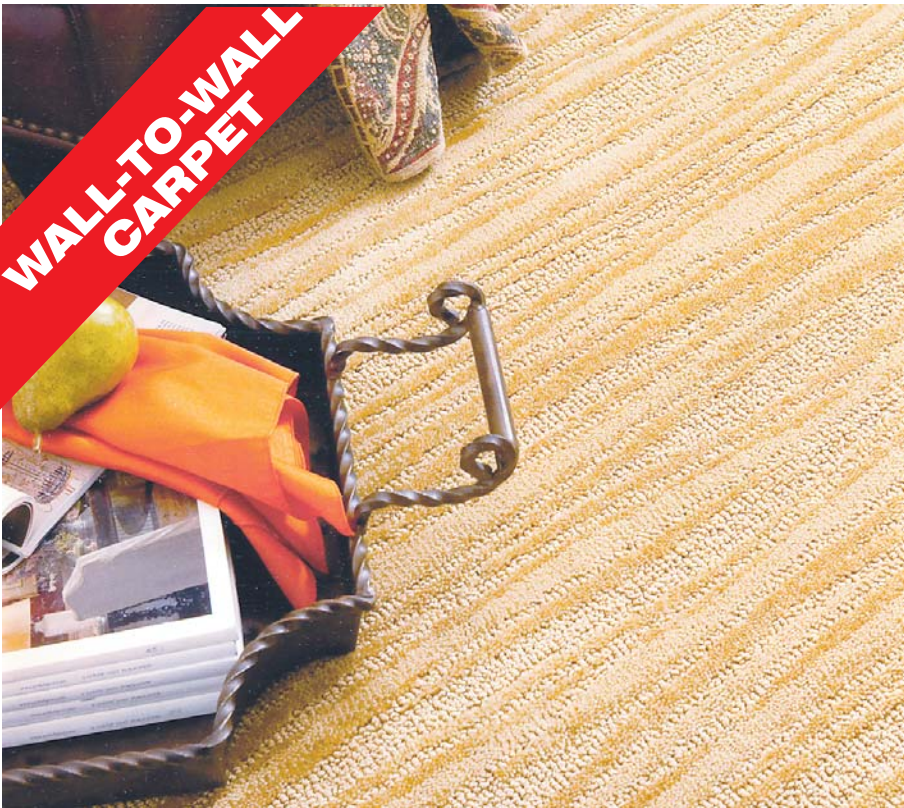
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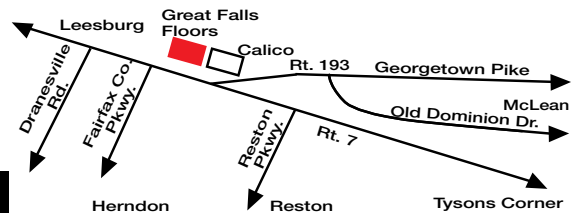
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**McLean Rotary President Paul Frank, left, Saxon Stage Director Phylliss Jaffe, center, Langley High Principal Matt Ragone, right, and the cast of 'Time's Square 2090.'**



PHOTOS BY  
CHRISTY STEELE/  
THE CONNECTION

## A Glimpse of 'Time's Square 2090'

**McLean Rotarians preview Langley High School's upcoming musical.**

BY CHRISTY STEELE  
THE CONNECTION

**C**ast members of the upcoming Langley High School musical "Time's Square 2090" spoke and performed for the Rotary Club of McLean on Tuesday, Oct. 27. Phylliss Jaffe, Saxon stage director, and Matt Ragone, Langley principal, accompanied the students to the lunch event. The meeting opened with "America the Beautiful" led by Langley students Chelsea Raitor and Justin McKay. After announcements and lunch, the cast members performed three different scenes from the musical.

"**TIME'S SQUARE 2090**" is the first ever student written musical to be performed at Langley High School. Wes Brandt, Langley High School senior, wrote the script, music and lyrics and is also the director of the performance. He has acted in previous productions at Langley, but this is his first time directing.

"I give Mrs. Jaffe a lot of credit now," said Brandt. "I realize in the directing position that it's a really big hassle if you don't know your lines. It's just little things like that that I have been learning as a director."

In the futuristic dystopia portrayed by the musical, Time's Square is the new capital of the country and the U.S. government has complete control over its citizens. The music includes many



**Rael, played by Justin McKay, and Lily, played by Chelsea Raitor, get to know each other better in this scene. Wes Brandt, the writer and director, plays the keyboard, left.**

styles ranging from a big band number, a blues song, techno, rock and even some rapping.

**"I am just floored by these kids.**

**—Langley High Principal Matt Ragone**

"What's interesting about this is that it's a really different type of music in terms of the kind of music that [Brandt] has added in," said Paul Goldberg, who plays President Julius in the musical. "It gets me out of my comfort zone with the rap. There is just a totally different feel and everything is so fluid and interesting."

McKay, who plays Rael in the production, said that his favorite

part of being in the production is that "because it is student written, we are doing all of the music for the first time. It's not something where we can take a CD home and listen to it to know how it was done on Broadway, or watch a movie and see how they did it on stage. We can do it the way that we want and that Wes wants and it's open to interpretation."

**AFTER WATCHING** the students, Ragone said, "I am just floored by these kids. That was the first time I have gotten a glimpse of what they are going to do. I think it's going to be a great show and I am really proud of them."

"Time's Square 2090" will run Nov. 12-14 at 7:30 p.m. and tickets can be purchased at [langleydrama.com](http://langleydrama.com).



PHOTO BY MIKE DICICCO/THE CONNECTION

**The wait to vote is not long around 10 a.m. at Forestville Elementary.**

## Great Falls Up for Grabs?

**Hotly contested race for the 34th District.**

*The Great Falls Connection went to print before the polls close on Election Day Nov. 3. For up to date information on the local elections, visit [www.connectionnewspapers.com](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com).*

**B**y about 10 a.m. on Nov. 3, around 200 of the approximately 3,500 residents registered to vote at Forestville Elementary in Great Falls had cast ballots.

"It's a little more constant than what we've experienced in an off-year election," said Dudley Tadem, the polling place's precinct chief, adding that it was probably too early to read much into the numbers.

During the previous gubernatorial election cycle in 2005, Great Falls' four precincts reported voter turnout of approximately 45 percent, similar to the average turnout across Fairfax County and Virginia as a whole.

But unlike 2005, when now retired Del. Vince Callahan (R-34) ran unopposed, Great Falls has a hotly contested local election. Del. Margi Vanderhye (D), who succeeded Callahan to the House of Delegates 34th District seat in 2007, faced Republican opponent Barbara Comstock.

The Vanderhye-Comstock showdown was one of the most

expensive delegate contests in the history of Virginia, with each candidate spending over \$570,000 by Oct. 21, according to the Virginia Public Access Project, a nonpartisan organization that manages campaign finance in the Commonwealth.

The 34th District, which also includes parts of McLean and Herndon, has leaned Democratic in recent elections but it is still one of the most conservative delegate seats in Fairfax County. Great Falls, in particular, has flipped flopped between Democrats and Republicans in recent elections.

Despite winning the overall race, Vanderhye lost every Great Falls precinct to Republican opponent Dave Hunt in 2007. Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville), who beat an incumbent Republican to win the election, only won one Great Falls precinct.

Republican presidential candidate John McCain also beat Obama in all four Great Falls precincts during the 2008 election.

But in the 2005 attorney general race, where 2009 gubernatorial candidates Bob McDonnell and Creigh Deeds faced off the first time, Deeds, a Democrat, won three of the four Great Falls precincts easily. Gov. Tim Kaine (D) also won all four Great Falls precincts four year ago against a Republican opponent.

— JULIA O'DONOGHUE  
AND MIKE DICICCO





PHOTOS BY ELIZABETH ROUSE

**Cameron Rouse, 14, of Vienna, rides her horse Ladybug, a Norwegian fjord, through the 30-acre cross-country course at Turner Farm Park in Great Falls. The cross-country course recently received brand new equestrian obstacles, including three banks, two ditches and a small stream crossing under the guidance of The Great Falls Horse Society and Fairfax County Park Authority.**



**On her horse Gabe, Chandler Rouse, 12, of Vienna trots around the equestrian ring at Turner Farm Park. The barn in the background was part of the original Turner Farm Dairy before the land was purchased with the help of various community organizations and the Fairfax County Park Authority.**

# Celebrating the Farm

**New riding facilities open at Turner Farm Park.**

BY JENNA PUGRANT  
THE CONNECTION

Anyone driving by Turner Farm Park might look at the seemingly barren land and not think twice about its usage. Just beyond the barren looking hill, however, lies an entire equestrian park few know about: a well manicured trail about fifty yards that leads to a brand new, 250 by 200 feet multi-purpose equestrian arena, filled professional jumps, all-weather footing, and dressage capabilities.

The newly completed equestrian ring opened in June 2009 after years of preparation and planning by various Great Falls organizations, including Great Falls Horse Society, Great Falls Citizen Association and Fairfax County Park Authority.

The use and future of the Turner Farm Park land has been a disputed case since 1994 when The Friends of Turner Farm commission was created to try to save the land from development. Molly Hockman, a member of The Great Falls Horse Society, an organization of about 150 people, was involved in helping to preserve the land. "We wanted to preserve the farm-like atmosphere in Great Falls," she said. "We felt that creating a horse facility would be the best way to maintain the roots of rural Great Falls in the midst of all the development in the area."

**WITH THE HELP** of the Brogue Charities and other community organizations, The Friends of Turner Farm were able to raise \$10,000 dollars in donations, which was



PHOTO BY JENNA PUGRANT/THE CONNECTION

**Riding Instructor Yvonne Lucas of Berryville often gives riding lessons to students like Georgia Lorey of Great Falls and her horse Elvis at Turner Farm Park. The ring is equipped with all-weather terrain and works well for riders in dry and wet conditions.**

met by a grant of equal amount by the Fairfax County Park Authority, to buy the land.

Community members then collaborated to create a horse facility that best suited the needs of the community. Now almost 10 years later, Turner Farm Park is host to a professional riding ring, 30-acre equestrian course, and a round pen for lunging and training, all free for the public to use. With no on-site horse stables, riders must bring their horses and riding equipment in trailers and park in the parking lot.

Cameron Rouse, 14, of Vienna, and Andrew Fox, 14, of Herndon frequently bring their horses to Turner Farm to ride. "The ring is excellent for jumping. All of the jumps are brand new and the ring has great footing, even after it has rained. It provides a great alternative for riding when the grass is wet where I ride elsewhere," said Cameron. Many riding instructors meet their students at the park

to give lessons, adding to the diversity of users of the park.

**ADDITIONALLY**, the 30-acre cross-country course provides another alternative for riders and non-riders alike. "The cross-country course is sheltered from development and noise," said Hockman. "It's for anyone's use, really. You don't have to be a rider to benefit from this park. Many people often walk their dogs around the beautiful land." Less equestrian-inclined citizens can take advantage of a playground and an observatory on the premises as well.

Few other equestrian parks are sponsored by the Fairfax County Park Authority, including Frying Pan Park in Herndon. Turner Farm also includes composting areas to keep up with maintenance of the site. "We try to keep the ring and the equipment as nice as we can," said Andrew. "It's evident there was a lot of thought put into this facility and we want to keep it as great as it is now."

WEEK IN GREAT FALLS

## Veteran's Day Event at Freedom Plaza

Great Falls Veteran's Day Observance will be on Wednesday, Nov. 11, at 11 a.m. at Freedom Plaza on Georgetown Pike next to the library in Great Falls. The Observance will remember and honor all those who have served in the armed forces. The moderator is Lynne Roots with the Great Falls school children, and music will be provided by The Langley High School Madrigals. Parking is behind the library.

Roots graduated from Southern Methodist University in 1965 with a degree in speech and theater and has an All-Level Teaching Certificate from the state of Texas. She is a co-director of admissions at Village Green Day School. Members of her family have served in the Navy, Air Force and Marines. She is married to U.S.M.C. Col. John Roots, retired. They have a daughter, Abiand, and a son, Joshua, a former captain in the U.S.M.C.

## GFCA To Discuss Route 7 Project

The Virginia Department of Transportation is conducting a public information meeting on the Route 7 Widening Project at Georgetown Pike on Wednesday, Nov. 18, 6-8 p.m. at the Aldrin Elementary School Cafeteria, 11375 Center Harbor Road, Reston. Plans for the project will be posted on the VDOT Web site: [http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/route\\_7\\_widening.asp](http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/route_7_widening.asp). The Great Falls Citizens Association (GFCA) will be discussing this project at its General Membership meeting Tuesday, Nov. 10 and its Transportation Committee meeting Tuesday, Nov. 17.

According to the most recent data provided to GFCA, VDOT is projecting a 20 percent increase in the traffic proceeding east on Route 7 through the Georgetown Pike intersection and continuing toward Tysons Corner. However, they are showing a much greater 57 percent increase in the vehicles turning left from eastbound Route 7 onto Georgetown Pike. This increase is to be accommodated by doubling the length of the existing left turn lane and adding a second lane of equal length, i.e., a near quadrupling of the existing turning capacity.

More than 2,000 citizens have signed the "Safe the Pike" petition that objected to this VDOT proposal. The citizens are encouraged to attend and bring their questions and concerns to their state and county elected officials and agency staff.



# NEWS

## Great Falls Resident Wins Studio Tour Drawing

Artist Barbara Gatterdam, left, presents a pitcher from her pottery to Pat Mercincavage of Great Falls on behalf of Great Falls Studios, a network of local artists. The award was a follow-up to last month's Art Studios Tour and was the result of a drawing of e-mails from tour visitors who commented on the event. The prize of a hand-thrown art piece turned out to be appropriate for Mercincavage because she is taking pottery classes at Northern Virginia Community College. The annual tour, in which visitors drive to meet artists in home art studios, has become a major art event in Fairfax County and drew large crowds despite heavy rains.



PHOTO BY ROBIN S. KENT

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<b>OCT. 29 - 7pm</b> Thursday	<b>Corey Wallach, MD</b> Inova Mt. Vernon Hospital 2501 Parker's Lane, Alexandria, VA	<b>703-750-8800</b> inova.org /ask the expert
<b>NOV. 19 - 7pm</b> Thursday	<b>Dhruv Pateder, MD</b> Reston Hospital Center 1850 Town Center Parkway, Reston, VA	<b>877-689-DOCS</b> (877-689-3627)

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## COMMUNITY



Kurt Cylke collects money from Susie Komdracki of Great Falls for the used books she and her daughter Alice have selected from the Friends of Great Falls Library Book Sale.



Nathaniel Speiser, a 13-year-old volunteer, organizes and stacks the books at the book sale.

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# Friends of Great Falls Library Hosts Biannual Used Book Sale

BY CHRISTY STEELE  
THE CONNECTION

**F**riends of the Great Falls Library, a membership organization that meets once a month to generate ideas for ways to support the library, conducted its biannual

book sale Oct. 23-24 to benefit the library. All of the books were donated from community members and all of the profits will go toward improvements to the Great Falls Library and fund events for the public.

Friends of the Great Falls Library provides items and services to the

library that the county government does not. Throughout the year, the organization sponsors book discussion groups, ice cream socials, puppet shows, arts and crafts bazaars, a rotating art exhibit featuring local artists, a

SEE FRIENDS, PAGE 7

THE MADEIRA FINE ARTS  
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# COMMUNITY



Roger Heady, left, and Donna Lee scour the racks of the book sale, as Nathaniel Speiser, a volunteer, organizes and stacks the books.



Shaila Muralidhar, a soon-to-be Great Falls resident, sifts through the children's books with her sons Sidharth, left, and Sachin.

## Friends Help Library

FROM PAGE 6

children's summer reading program and other events for the Great Falls community. Among other contributions, Friends provided comfortable sofas and chairs to the children's reading section of the library and paid for the framing of a large collage created by Ronnie Jolles, a local artist.

Kurt Cylke, a member of the Board of Directors of the organization, devoted his Saturday to working at the used book sale. "The main point is to have people enjoy the book sale and to help the children," he said. Cylke works full time as the director of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped at the Library of Congress and has been

working in libraries since 1946 when he started his first job at Yale Library. He stops by the library every evening after work to organize and refresh the used-book shelf.

To learn more about the organization or become a member at any level, visit the Friends' Web site at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/LIBRARY/friends/gf/gffriends.htm>.

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# OPINION

## Time To Get Serious

### Opportunity to use science to clean up the Chesapeake Bay, Potomac River.

The Potomac River provides a beautiful backdrop to so much of Northern Virginia, from the rugged areas of the Potomac Gorge from above Great Falls down into Arlington to the broad tidal Potomac from Alexandria, then meandering down to the Chesapeake Bay.

The river and the bay are an important part of our local identity, part of our local heritage and a remarkable environmental and recreational resource.

While over the past decade, federal and local governments plus environmental groups and activists have devoted much energy and attention to the health of the Chesapeake Bay, we have been losing ground. This is despite a clear understanding of the pollution problems and the exact limits that would be required to make the bay healthy. There are three major sources of pollution in the bay, sewage treatment plants, agriculture and stormwater runoff from roads, driveways and parking lots. The resulting growing influx of

“nutrients” from these sources causes an unnatural growth of aquatic plants in the bay, absorbing oxygen and then dying off, creating massive, floating dead zones where no life can survive.

Now, new legislation, the Chesapeake Clean Water and Ecosystem Restoration Act of 2009, proposed in both the House and the Senate, has a chance to make all the difference for the bay — and also much of the Potomac River from Arlington and Alexandria on down.

#### EDITORIAL

While the bills would ensure that the six states in the bay watershed and the District of Columbia develop and implement detailed plans to reduce pollution sufficiently to achieve the Bay-wide reduction targets for nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment by 2025, it also has national implications as a blueprint for improving the health of other wetlands and waterways around the county.

U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly, an original cosponsor of legislation to reauthorize the Chesapeake

Bay program, successfully urged the inclusion of language that will limit runoff into the bay from impervious surfaces, the one source of pollution that has continued to grow dramatically along with population growth around the bay watershed. Connolly’s capacity to relate complex problems to solutions that would work in local government land use and stormwater regulation is invaluable in this. U.S. Rep. Jim Moran and U.S. Rep. Chris Van Hollen are also cosponsors of the bill in the House. U.S. Sen. Ben Cardin (D-Md) is author of the bill in the Senate; Virginia’s U.S. Senators Mark Warner (D) and Jim Webb (D) should get on board as well.

The legislation proposed would connect the scientific understanding of the pollution levels with incentives, penalties (withholding of federal money if standards aren’t met) and flexibility (interstate nutrient trading provisions) to achieve the necessary levels.

While this legislation is aimed at the Chesapeake Bay, local streams and rivers will also benefit in the process.

— MARY KIMM.  
MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

## Both Sides of ‘Reading Fast’

BY DEVON MALONEY  
MARSHALL HIGH SCHOOL

Remember reading those tedious books for your English class? Those endless classics like “Lord of the Flies” and “Pride & Prejudice?” English teachers to this day assign the very same novels for their classes, but their demographic has changed.

On Sparknotes’ Wiki page, it says that many parents and teachers claim that their children and students are using the sites “as a replacement for reading assignment or to cheat during tests ... using cell phones with Internet access.”

Easy, legal and fast new Internet sites like Sparknotes, Wikipedia, Book Rag and other book summary sites have now popped up online with everything over-committed teens need. These sites have every option, from plots summaries and essay writing help to character relationships and individual chapter quick reads. Image all of Geoffrey Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales finished in 10 minutes.

Talley Murphy, a Great Falls 14-year-old Marshall freshman, remembers what happened in a friend’s eighth grade English class and how the students used the Internet to do it the easy way. “To Kill a Mockingbird” had



#### TEEN PERSPECTIVE

been assigned to the class with an easy homework of jotting down notes while they read. Leaving their novels in their lockers, “a good half the class” looked up the summery on Spark Notes and just used the site’s notes as their own.

Talley described as her teacher began checking their assignment, then stopping and announcing to the students that he in fact had written the Sparknotes page on “To Kill a Mockingbird.” While it’s hard to know whether the teacher really wrote the notes, or simply knew how to make the guilty students confess, it shows how many teachers feel about the use of those sites.

The idea of summing up a book fast is hardly new. Cliff Notes, those yellow pamphlets that say things like: “Read less,” “Only the important stuff,” or “Make a long story short,” have been around since 1958. While many people use the summaries “to help ... understand complex works” or even as a study guide, there are many critics who dislike the concept of an easy way out saying “they let students avoid even reading them,” Cliff Note’s Wiki page says.

The writer is a 14-year-old Vienna ninth grader at Marshall High School

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Rise in Child Deaths

To the Editor:

Last week, a new report by the advocacy group Every Child Matters focused on the disturbing rise of child deaths in the United States due to maltreatment. Local reports earlier in the year also pointed to an increase in family violence across Northern Virginia as well.

What readers need to know is that the majority of children who die from maltreatment had no prior contact with child protective services. We need to understand that each one of us is responsible for the children in our community — not just child protective services — and that we each have the power to prevent these tragedies.

Another grim statistic? Over 75 percent of the children who die from maltreatment are under the age of 4. We must provide new parents in our community with support, including parenting classes and support groups, early childhood home visitation and universal access to affordable health and mental health services.

The report (released on Capitol Hill) calls for more

federal funding — which is certainly critical as governments on every level face tough budget cuts. But this report should also be a wake-up call to the individual community member. When we see a sign of abuse and neglect right here in our own neighborhood, are we pausing for that child long enough to report it to Child Protective Services? When we know a new parent struggling with the stress of young children, are we pausing long enough to offer support or suggest they contact one of the many organizations in Northern Virginia offering parenting resources?

Perhaps while the federal government figures out the funding for this issue affecting millions of children and parents across the country, we each could be having an impact on just one right here in our own community.

**Diane Charles**  
Executive Director, SCAN  
of Northern Virginia

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# Barn Dance Returns

**'Rock N' Roll in the Hay' barn dance and dinner on Saturday, Nov. 7.**

**T**his year, the Great Falls Optimist Club will be joined by the Newcomers of Great Falls in hosting the Fourth Annual "Rock N' Roll in the Hay," a barn dance and dinner on Saturday, Nov. 7, 7-11 p.m. at 964 Walker Road in Great Falls. Classic rock music will be provided by Standing Room Only, a local band. King Creole of Great Falls will cater the dinner. Tickets are \$50 per person, and include dinner, drinks, beer/wine (two each) and a chance to win wonderful door prizes. In addition, a silent auction will offer a special piece of jewelry donated by Adeler Jewelers of Great Falls, among other things.

Club member Linda Thompson has again donated the use of her refurbished barn in Great Falls for the successful event.

Proceeds from this year's dance will benefit Camp Fraser, a local camp that brings boys and girls



**Linda Thompson has again donated the use of her refurbished bank barn in Great Falls for the event.**



**Standing Room Only performs at last year's Barn Dance.**

ages 7 to 15 from the Washington, D.C. area out to "the wild woods of Great Falls" for hiking, canoeing, rock climbing, arts and crafts, counseling and more.

Anyone interested in joining the

Great Falls Optimist Club or volunteering at specific events should contact Calvert Thompson, president, at 571-212-2982, Calvert@CalvertRejuvenations.com; or Membership Chair Mindy Mitchell, mindy@bigplanet.com.

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# CALENDAR

Send announcements to [mclean@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mclean@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is Thursday for the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged. For additional listings, visit [www.connectionnewspapers.com](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com)

## THURSDAY/NOV. 5

**Habatat Gallery Fundraising Event.** 7-10 p.m. at Habatat Gallery, 8020 Towers Crescent Drive, Tysons Corner. Help to raise money for a service dog for Henna, who suffered brain damage after being abused by her biological father at 2 years of age. \$25 at the door. Music by Walk O'Shame, cocktails and wine, raffle for a trip to a Four Season Resort and more. 703-989-7110 or [infoVA@habatatgalleries.com](mailto:infoVA@habatatgalleries.com).

**Willy Porter and Luke Doucet.** 8 p.m. at the Barns, Wolftrap Foundation for the Performing Arts. \$20. 703-938-2404 or [Wolftrap.org](http://Wolftrap.org).

**Chatham County Line.** 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$12. 703-255-1566 or [jamminjava.com](http://jamminjava.com).

## FRIDAY/NOV. 6

**Chad and Jeremy.** 8 p.m. at the Barns, Wolftrap Foundation for the Performing Arts. \$25. 703-938-2404 or [Wolftrap.org](http://Wolftrap.org).

**The King's Singers.** 8 p.m. at the George Mason University Concert Hall, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Tickets are \$22-\$44. Pre-Performance Discussion held 45 minutes prior to the performance. 888-945-2468 or [www.gmu.edu/cfa](http://www.gmu.edu/cfa).

**John McCutcheon,** folk music. 8 p.m. at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. \$28, \$23 district residents. 703-790-0123.

**Ellis Paul and Meg Hutchinson.** 7



**Coleman's Cross will perform on Sunday, Nov. 8, at 5 and 7 p.m. at The Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760-C Walker Road, Great Falls. Reservations required. \$15. 703-759-3309.**

p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$20. 703-255-1566 or [jamminjava.com](http://jamminjava.com).

## SATURDAY/NOV. 7

**The Smart Split: Legal Aspects You Need to Know About Separation and Divorce.** 7 p.m. at the McLean Government Center, 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean. Jeffrey Sprrows, Esquire. \$35 non-members, \$25 members. [www.thewomenscenter.org](http://www.thewomenscenter.org) or 703-281-2657.

**Brooke and Keith Desserich.** 7 p.m. at Borders Books & Music, 11054 Lee Highway, Fairfax. Discussion and signing of Notes Left Behind. 703-359-8420.

**Janis Ian.** 7 p.m. at the Barns, Wolftrap Foundation for the Performing Arts. \$25. 703-938-2404 or [Wolftrap.org](http://Wolftrap.org).

**Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company.** 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. at the George Mason University Concert Hall, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Tickets are \$23-\$46. Youth through grade 12 half price. Pre-Performance Discussion held 45 minutes prior to the performance. 888-945-2468 or [www.gmu.edu/cfa](http://www.gmu.edu/cfa).

**Children's Flea Market.** 2 p.m. at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. 703-790-0123.

**Silly Sounds with Simon.** 8 p.m. at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. \$14. \$10 district residents. 703-790-0123.

**Kent Gardens Elementary School Fun Fête.** 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at Kent Gardens Elementary School in McLean. Games, activities, food, moonbounce/slide combo, spin art, field games and more. Wristbands are \$20 each, \$15 for 3 or more.

**Steve Moakler and Honor By August.** 7 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$12. 703-255-1566 or [jamminjava.com](http://jamminjava.com).

## SUNDAY/NOV. 8

**National Symphony Chamber Ensemble.** 3 p.m. at the Alden Theatre, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. 703-790-0123.

**Monte Carlo Night.** 5:30-10 p.m. Fairview Park Marriott, 3111 Fairview Park Drive, Falls Church. \$50 per

person. Appetizers, casino games, music and dancing, door prizes, silent and live auctions and more. Sponsored by the Rotary Clubs of Northern Virginia. Proceeds go to local educational and civic programs. 703-319-6930.

**Quality of Life Plus Program Veteran's Day BBQ and Picnic.** 4-8 p.m. at The Pavilions at Turkey Run at the Claude Moore Colonial Farm, 6310 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Moon bounces, slides, an inflatable obstacle course, face painting and craft activities for children, volleyball courts, horseshoes and more. A short stroll will lead through the Claude Moore Colonial Farm. Admission to the farm is free for those attending the event. Popcorn, snow cones, lemonade, soft drinks, beer and wine. Burgers, hotdogs, grilled chicken and trimmings begin at 6 p.m., followed by soft serve ice cream. Adults \$50, children under 18 free; Veterans half price. Proceeds support the Quality of Life Plus Program. Advance tickets and contributions can be made at [www.qplplus.org/festival](http://www.qplplus.org/festival), or by check payable to Quality of Life Plus, 6748 Old McLean Village Drive, McLean VA 22101.

**Claude Moore Colonial Farm Autumn Chores.** 1-4 p.m. at the Claude Moore Colonial Farm, 6310 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Help clear brush from the fields, stack wood for the hearth, repair old fencing, and perform other necessary farm tasks in preparation for the coming winter. Comfortable clothes and work gloves recommended. \$3 adults, \$2 children and senior citizens. 703-903-9330 or [www.1771.org/directions.htm](http://www.1771.org/directions.htm).

**Circo Aereo, "Espresso"** 4 p.m. at the George Mason University Concert Hall, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax.

\$22-\$44. Youth through grade 12 half price. Pre-Performance Discussion held 45 minutes prior to the performance. 888-945-2468 or [www.gmu.edu/cfa](http://www.gmu.edu/cfa).

**Hike the Difficult Run Trail,** from Colvin Run to Georgetown Pike. 2 p.m. Meet at the parking lot at the far south east end of Colvin Run Road across the street from The Mill. [www.greatfallstrailblazers.org](http://www.greatfallstrailblazers.org).

**Harper Simon and Patrick Park.** 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$12 advance/ \$15 day of show. 703-255-1566 or [jamminjava.com](http://jamminjava.com).

## SUNDAY/NOV. 9

**Coleman's Cross.** 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. at The Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760-C Walker Road, Great Falls. Reservations required. \$15. 703-759-3309.

**Benjy Davis Project, Curtis Peoples and Andrew Hoover.** 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$10 advance/ \$13 day of show. 703-255-1566 or [jamminjava.com](http://jamminjava.com).

## TUESDAY/NOV. 10

**Rob Thomas Cradle Song Tour.** 7 p.m. at the George Mason University Patriot Center, 4500 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. 703-993-3000.

**Colvin Run Community Center Weekly Dance.** 7 p.m. at Colvin Run Schoolhouse, 10201 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. \$10. [www.colvinrun.org](http://www.colvinrun.org).

**DMZ to Delta Dance.** 8-12 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Rosslyn, 1900 N. Ft. Myer Drive, Arlington. Military camaraderie and dancing to the music of the Vietnam War era. Cash bar, veteran collectibles and a silent auction. Free

parking. \$30 per person, tickets can be purchased at the dance. Vietnam Veterans of America Inc., Chapter 227 is sponsoring the dance. Proceeds support the chapter's veterans and community programs. 703-255-0353 or [www.vva227.org](http://www.vva227.org).

**National Association Active and Retired Federal Employees Monthly Meeting.** 1:30 p.m. at the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St. SE, Vienna. Speaker: Susan Stone, Outreach Coordinator for the Alzheimer's Family Day Center on Old Lee Highway. 703-205-9041.

**GMU Symphonic Band Concert and GMU Percussion Ensemble.** 8 p.m. at the George Mason University Concert Hall, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. \$15 adult, \$10 students and seniors. 888-945-2468 or [www.gmu.edu/cfa](http://www.gmu.edu/cfa).

**NRA Free Shoot for Military Veterans.** 6-9 p.m. at the National Rifle Association, 11250 Waples Mill Road, Fairfax. Space is limited, e-mail Sylvia Schneider at [nraangeadmin@nrahq.org](mailto:nraangeadmin@nrahq.org) to reserve. Casual dinner, firearms and ammo provided. The program features an exclusive display from the NRA National Firearms Museum. Senior curators Phil Schreier and Doug Wicklund will be available to answer questions. Military personnel and veterans will be asked to take a short range test if they have not shot at the NRA's range prior to the event. Free. 703-267-1402 or [nraangeadmin@nrahq.org](mailto:nraangeadmin@nrahq.org).

**Generation Awareness: Creating Synergy through Understanding.** 8:30 p.m. at Morgan Stanley Smith Barney, LLC, 1650 Tyson's Blvd., 10th Floor, McLean. With author Misi Burmeister. 703-281-2657 or [www.thewomenscenter.org](http://www.thewomenscenter.org).

**Tiny Tot Tales.** 10:30 a.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave., McLean. Stories and activities. Age 13-23 months with adult. 703-356-0770.

**Civil War Songs and Stories.** 1 p.m. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. Folksinger Judy Cook plays and sings Civil War songs, weaving together stories and excerpts from letters of the era. Adults. 703-938-0405.

**Bobby Long.** 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$15. 703-255-1566 or [jamminjava.com](http://jamminjava.com).

## WEDNESDAY/NOV. 11

**Great Falls Veteran's Day Observance** will be held at 11 a.m. at Freedom Plaza on Georgetown Pike next to the library in Great Falls. The Observance will remember and honor all those who have served in the armed forces. Moderator: Lynne Roots with the Great Falls school children, with music by the Langley High School Madrigals.

**Bob Dylan.** 8 p.m. at the George Mason University Patriot Center, 4500 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. Tickets are \$57.50, available at all Ticketmaster locations. 703-993-3000 or [www.patriotcenter.com](http://www.patriotcenter.com).

**Line Dancing Classes for Active Seniors.** 11 a.m. at the Vinson Dominion Hall, 6251 Old Dominion Drive, McLean. Join a new community program designed for age 55 and over. Free. Wear low heels and comfortable shoes. Registration required. 703-442-9075, TTY 711.

**Works Progress Administration with Spring Standards.** Bluegrass. 8 p.m. at the Barns at Wolf Trap Center for the Performing Arts. \$20. [Wolftrap.org](http://Wolftrap.org).

**An Evening with Ian McLagan.** 8

p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$15 advance/ \$18 day of show. 703-255-1566 or [jamminjava.com](http://jamminjava.com).

## THURSDAY/NOV. 12

**The Pink Panther Strikes Again.** 7 p.m. at Paul VI Catholic High School, 10675 Fairfax Blvd., Fairfax. Tickets at the door are \$5 for students and seniors, \$10 for adults. [PVIProducers@yahoo.com](mailto:PVIProducers@yahoo.com).

**Mason Dance Company Fall Concert.** 8 p.m. at the George Mason University Harris Theater, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. \$15 adult, \$10 students and seniors. 888-945-2468 or [www.gmu.edu/cfa](http://www.gmu.edu/cfa).

**Mountain Heart, Tim Finch & The Eastman String Band.** Bluegrass. 8 p.m. at the Barns at Wolf Trap. \$22. [Wolftrap.org](http://Wolftrap.org).

**Sarah Borges and the Broken Singles with Eilen Jewell.** 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$12 advance/ \$15 day of show. 703-255-1566 or [jamminjava.com](http://jamminjava.com).

## FRIDAY/NOV. 13

**Taste of the Vine Fundraiser.** 6-9 p.m. at the Historic Blenheim Civil War Interpretive Center, 3610 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Wine tasting, hors d'oeuvres and raffle prizes. \$50 in advance, \$55 at the door. Proceeds benefit Historic Fairfax City Inc. 703-591-5305 or [hilcam31@aol.com](mailto:hilcam31@aol.com).

**Haochen Zhang,** pianist. 8 p.m. at Wolf Trap Center for the Arts. Ludwig von Beethoven, Piano Sonata No. 31 in A-flat major, Op 110; Mason Bates, White Lies for Lomax; Maurice Ravel, Gaspard de la Nuit; Johannes Brahms, Variations and Fugue on a Theme and more. [Wolftrap.org](http://Wolftrap.org).



## Here's What's Happening at MCC

**John McCutcheon in Concert**  
Friday, Nov. 6, 8 p.m.

\$28/\$23 district residents

Take a musical journey with folk music's John McCutcheon, the master of no fewer than 10 different instruments.

**Children's Flea Market**  
Saturday, Nov. 7, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Free admission

Come get cool stuff at cool prices! A limited number of selling spaces are still available.



**Al Simmons**

Saturday, Nov. 7, 2 p.m.

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## Be a Part of CHILDREN'S (& TEENS') CONNECTION



Every year between Christmas and New Year's, the Great Falls Connection turns its pages over to the contributions of local students. We are seeking artwork, photography, poetry, opinions, short stories and reflections. We welcome contributions from public schools, private schools and students who are home schooled.

E-mail to: [PhotoM@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:PhotoM@connectionnewspapers.com), or mail or deliver contributions by Dec. 4, to 1606 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314. Please be sure to include the student's name, age, grade, school and town of residence along with each submission. For information, call 703-778-9410.

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Susan C. Canis, a member of the board of Great Falls Friends (left), was in charge of the Halloween Spooktacular. Great Falls Friends.



Mike Kearney, owner of the Old Brogue, pictured in his Halloween costume, hosted the event sponsored by the Great Falls Friends.

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 Sun., Dec. 6 1 PM  
 Tues., Jan. 5 9 AM

## Halloween Spooktacular at Village Centre

The Great Falls annual Halloween Spooktacular, sponsored by Great Falls Friends, took place last Saturday at the Village Centre.

This year, for the first time, the event included a Pet Costume Parade. This was led by 'Cruella de Vil' from "101 Dalmatians." The Great Falls Friends also sponsors the annual 4th of July Hometown Celebration and participates in and supports many other community events throughout the year.



Great Falls residents enjoyed yet another community event.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

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THE CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS



# SCHOOLS

Send School Notes to [greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is Friday.

**Ashleigh C. Pepin**, daughter of Andrew and Francine Pepin, graduated from Shenandoah University on Aug. 15, with a doctorate in physical therapy and received her Board Certification in September. She is a 2002 graduate of Langley High School and a 2006 graduate of James Madison University. She is currently employed in an outpatient orthopedic setting in Northern Virginia.



**Ashleigh C. Pepin**

**Jillian Leigh Stojakovich** of Great Falls has earned an associate degree in applied science in nursing from Excelsior College of Albany, N. Y.

**Erin Ellis** of McLean has been named to the spring 2009 dean's list at Choate Rosemary Hall in Wallingford, Ct. Ellis is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Mervyn I. Ellis of McLean.

**Bennett Silverman** of McLean has been named to the spring 2009 dean's list at Choate Rosemary Hall in Wallingford, Ct. Silverman is the son of Dr. and Mrs. Robert Alan Silverman of McLean.

**Christian Schwantes**, a senior at James Madison University and a Langley High School graduate, received second place this summer for presenting his research at an international competition in Switzerland. Schwantes, the only undergraduate student to present, won second place. He is a chemistry and math major.

## BULLETIN BOARD

To have community events listed in the Connection, send to [greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is Friday.

### THURSDAY/NOV. 5

**The Safe Community Coalition** hosts Community Dialogue at 7:30 p.m. at the McLean Community Center, featuring Ashley El Zein, Injury Prevention Coordinator for the INOVA Regional Trauma Center. She will be discussing the dangers of underage drinking and drug use, including the long term effects that early alcohol consumption can have on a developing teen. Free and open to public.

### FRIDAY/NOV. 6

**Conquer Cholesterol.** 1 p.m. at the Inova Fairfax Diabetes Center, 2700 Prosperity Ave., Suite 100, Fairfax. Two two-hour classes, in which registered dietitians will explain how to reduce cholesterol levels through diet, exercise and weight management. \$50. Registration required. 703-750-8800 or [www.inova.org/healthclasses](http://www.inova.org/healthclasses)

### SATURDAY/NOV. 7

**Our Daily Bread Holiday Food Drive.** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. next to Safeway at Courthouse Plaza, 10376 Willard Way, Fairfax City. Proceeds to benefit SHARE. [www.our-daily-bread.org](http://www.our-daily-bread.org).

**The Vision Series: What Happens When Water is Cleaner? Tracking Transitions in Global Health.** 7 p.m. at the George Mason University Concert Hall, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Speaker, Kathryn H. Jacobsen. Free. 888-945-2468 or [www.gmu.edu/cfa](http://www.gmu.edu/cfa).

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NEWS

Artist Depicts Old Great Falls

Regional landmarks long gone and those about to disappear are displayed at library, tavern.

By MIKE DICICCO  
THE CONNECTION

After Pat Mercer Hutchens painted an old Great Falls house that was slated for demolition, a local paper ran a story about the building and it was saved. That was about a decade ago. Now, that house is Dante's Ristorante, and Hutchens has since made dozens of paintings of historic locations around Great Falls and the surrounding region.

Many of those paintings were on display at the Great Falls Library for the last month, and several now comprise a permanent exhibit at the Tavern at Great Falls.

"I've always had an interest in preserving things like that," she said. But at the time that she painted the house that would later



Pat Mercer Hutchens poses with some of her artwork in the Great Falls Library.

and '40s. That came to an end after the 9-11 attacks.

Hutchens was deeply affected by an article she read about the people who chose to jump from the World Trade Center towers as they burned and fell. "I couldn't get it out of my mind. I couldn't sleep for days," she said. She created a work depicting two of those people. After completing the piece, she said, "I pretty much went into hibernation for a while and then started painting local things."

WHAT BEGAN as a series of 20 paintings became 50 paintings, and then 70. "I just got into it and I never stopped," she said.

In a painting of the house that once stood where the Olivers Corner commercial area is now located, at the intersection of Walker Road and Georgetown Pike, she inserted Fantastic, a horse from the Great Falls-based Lift Me Up therapeutic riding program. And an old-time car of the sort she used to paint appears in, among others, a picture of the Triangle Store that once stood at Triangle Corner, now Seneca Square Shopping Center. Another features prominently in a picture of Tysons Corner in the 1950s. "These two little stores were the only thing there," Hutchens said, indicating her rendition of a filling station and a small neighboring shop.

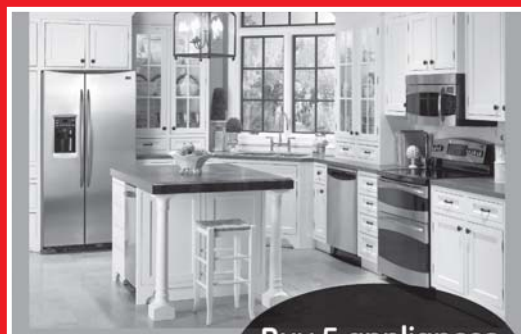
Most of the cars in her paintings are candy-apple red. Most of the roads are dirt, and most of the scenes are surrounded by empty fields or forest. "This was all country out here. You had to come on a dirt road to get here," Hutchens said.

Among the structures she has painted that Great Falls residents would recognize more easily are a house that is now for sale on Colvin Run Road, depicted when the road was part of Leesburg Pike, the late 19th-century barn that was recently moved back from the western stretch of Georgetown Pike and the Great Falls Fire Station. "They're going to tear down the fire station, so that's why I painted that," Hutchens said. Parked in front of the station in her painting are its original fire trucks, which she painted from a picture

SEE PAINTING, PAGE 15

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# Painting Area History

FROM PAGE 14

given to her by local historian and former volunteer firefighter Milburn Sanders. Hutchens said she had been receiving an increasing number of pictures from the area's longtime residents.

**EVEN THE OLDEST** residents might not recognize other build-

ings that were displayed in her exhibit at the library, such as the commissary on River Bend Road where farmers once bought supplies, the Elkins Train Station that was the last stop before Georgetown Pike on the line that became Old Dominion Drive and the Springvale Post Office that was operated at the intersection of Georgetown Pike and Springvale

Road from 1844 until 1917. The paintings are all the same 8 by 10-inch size. Hutchens said uniform sizing made for easy exhibition and did away with the problem of how to frame the works, as they all could use the same frame. Also, she said, the series of uniform frames made an effective way to present history, reading like a film.



PHOTO BY MIKE DICICCO/THE CONNECTION

Hutchens painted her grandchildren into a painting of a general store that once operated in Great Falls.

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All listings are due by Monday at 3 p.m.



# SPORTS

## Shifflett's Saxons Ready for Volleyball Postseason

### Langley's Richardson named District Player of the Year.

BY RICH SANDERS  
THE CONNECTION

For Langley High girls' volleyball coach Susan Shifflett, juggling her line-up has been a big challenge late in the season. Because the Saxons, like so many high school athletic teams across Northern Virginia, have had to battle seasonal illnesses to many of their players, finding cohesiveness on the floor has been a challenge.

"It's been a very weird season for us," said Shifflett, whose overall roster consists of just three seniors. "I've never had a season where so many girls were sick. I don't think we've had the same line-up for two consecutive nights in a row."

The coach said about half of her 12-member varsity roster has been hit by some sort of bug.

"It's not swine flu," she said. "We've had bronchitis and real bad colds where they've had to miss school. We're healthy now. Hopefully, no one else will go down."

Going into this week, Langley was 11-5 overall and was carrying a four-match win streak. Team wins last week came over non-region, private school opponent Maret School (Washington, D.C.) on Oct. 27 and Liberty District, cross-town rival McLean. The Saxons won both home matches by scores of three games to none.

Shifflett, whose team concluded the regu-

lar season at 11-5 with the victory over McLean, said the home match against the Highlanders was particularly exciting with a big, enthusiastic crowd on hand.

"It was a high pressure situation," said Shifflett, of the friendly rivalry meeting between the Highlanders and Saxons. "We get more fans [when McLean visits]. McLean is so fired up to play us. It adds an extra element to the game. [Whether McLean or Langley is] good or bad it doesn't matter, there is an element of surprise. You never really know what that energy will bring."

Langley concluded the regular season as second place finishers behind first place Stone Bridge in the district standings. Last year, the Saxons and Bulldogs met in the district tournament finals with Stone Bridge taking the finals meeting. A good chance exists that the two teams will meet again in this year's tournament title match.

Langley was scheduled to begin the postseason with a first round district tournament match, likely against South Lakes, on Monday, Nov. 2. A win there would put the Saxons into the following day's semifinals round. The district championship match is scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 5, at 7 p.m. Both the semifinals and finals were



**Elyse Richardson was recently named this year's Liberty District Player of the Year.**



**The Langley High team finished the regular season with an impressive 11-5 record and earned the No. 2-seeding at this week's Liberty District tournament.**

set to take place at Stone Bridge High in Ashburn.

The 16-team Northern Region playoffs are scheduled to begin Monday, Nov. 9. A year ago, Langley reached the region tournament's second round before losing to Herndon. In 2007, Shifflett's Saxons captured the region crown.

**LAST WEEKEND**, district coaches gathered to nominate this year's All-Liberty District teams. Langley was well represented with five players being selected. Elyse Richardson, a setter/libero player, was chosen as the District Player of the Year. The

senior is the heart and soul of the Saxons, according to Shifflett. Richardson and junior middle hitter Kathryn Caine both were Langley's First Team honorees. Meanwhile, sophomore setter Nikki Hero earned Second Team recognition and both Carlie Owen and Lainey LeBlanc, both senior outside hitters, made Honorable Mention.

Langley went 6-1 against district opponents during the regular season with the victories coming over Fairfax, Jefferson, Madison, South Lakes, Marshall and McLean. The Saxons' only district loss came to Stone Bridge, 3-0, in a road match on Oct. 15.

### SPORTS ROUNDUPS

#### The 13-under Potomac Travel Baseball team,

the Generals, were tournament champions at the Columbus Day Classic that took place on the weekend of Oct. 10 at the Sports at the Beach Complex in Rehoboth, Del. The Generals are comprised of players from the McLean and Great Falls area, and are coached by Charlie Ayoub. The team won the tournament championship game, 3-1, over the Woodbridge Diamondbacks of New Jersey. The Generals entered Sunday's tournament round with a low seeding following lackluster pool play on Saturday. But they turned it around and won all four of their tournament games on Sunday, including a 7-4 victory over the top-seeded Long Island Prospects in a quarterfinal game. That victory avenged the only loss the Generals had suffered over the weekend, a 7-6 setback in their first game on Saturday.

The championship game win over Woodbridge was fueled by the dominant pitching of Billy

Gerhardt, who allowed one run while striking out 16 in a complete game (seven innings) effort. Gerhardt was awarded the Tournament MVP trophy for his outing. The Generals also benefited from fine pitching performances over the weekend from Grant Newsome, Colin Morse, Cam Hester, Matt Spidi and Felix Propp. Big hits came off the bats of Caleb Beatty, Cam Hester, Grady Paine, Grant Newsome and Kennedy Dunn. Fine defense was provided behind the plate by Caleb Beatty and Grady Paine, and in the field from Colin Morse, Felix Propp, Mike Gannon, Grady Paine, Cam Hester, Grant Newsome, Alex Shapiro and Billy Gerhardt.

**Westfield High** will once again be hosting the Eighth Annual Bulldog Bash Holiday Basketball Tournament Dec. 28-30. The event will include both a boys and a girls tournament. Teams competing from the tournament will be

from Northern Virginia, Roanoke and Pennsylvania.

The boys' field of teams will include Langley, Centreville, Flint Hill, Woodbridge, West Potomac, Freedom (Loudoun County), Patrick Henry (Roanoke) and defending tournament champion Westfield.

The girls' bracket will include James Madison, Potomac, Flint Hill, Centreville, Freedom (Loudoun County), St. Hubert's (Philadelphia), and last year's champion McDowell High of from Erie, Pa.

Admission for the Bulldog Bash will be \$6 per day. A three-day tournament pass will be available for \$15. Free admission will be granted to children under 6, adults over 60 and any travel or house youth basketball players wearing their uniform tops who are accompanied by a paying adult.

For more information on the tournament, check out the tournament Web site at [www.bulldogbashtournament.com](http://www.bulldogbashtournament.com).



**The Great Falls Sharks girls' fastpitch softball team (12-under) took second place at the Oct. 3-4 Heartbreakers' Fall Classic, at Ballenger Creek Park in Frederick, Md. The Sharks competed with teams from Maryland and Virginia. After a tough first day that resulted in two losses and a tie, the Sharks came back on Sunday and pulled off an upset over the top-seeded Ashburn Shooting Stars, 15-4, and then went on to defeat the No. 4-seed LT Lazars before succumbing to the eventual tournament winners, the Germantown Titans. It was the Sharks' first tournament of the fall. This past weekend, they competed at a Halloween tournament in Sterling.**



# A Non-Biting Commentary



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

For as long as I've been biting my nails (my entire life) and for all the unconfirmed underlying reasons, anxiety and nervousness must have, on some level, played a role. However, I was never counseled, never psychoanalyzed (by a professional, that is) and never broken of the habit. Until, extremely oddly enough, recently when I was diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer at 54. You would think, that under these less than ideal circumstances, biting my nails would be all that I would be doing. But it's not, hardly at all. In fact, I even joked to my wife, Dina, that I might need to schedule a manicure appointment. (If I did, it would be a first.)

I wouldn't say I'm at peace over the diagnosis, though. I mean, it was totally unexpected. There's no cancer in my family, both my parents lived well into their 80s (in relatively good health) and I'm a lifelong non-smoker; never having smoked even one cigarette in my pre- and post-adolescent years. Yet, that's the jackpot in which I find myself immersed: tumors, chemotherapy, oncologists, diagnostic scans, lab work, diet and lifestyle restrictions/modifications, work issues, money issues, etc. ("So young, so handsome, well, so young, anyway," Curly Howard of The Three Stooges was looking in the mirror admiring himself, considering death, when he spoke these words, a sentiment I completely embrace, context notwithstanding.)

It's ironic when you think about it, though. If ever there was a time to exhibit a behavior born out of anxiety and nervousness, one would think a stage IV lung cancer diagnosis out of the blue would be it. My nails should be bitten down to the nub by now. Heck, they used to be when I was completely healthy (or clueless, depending on your perspective/assessment), but they're not. They appear almost normal. My nails now need to be trimmed regularly and my cuticles are not all torn up, swollen and bleeding. It's an incredible sight, really, for me and my fingers. I only wish my parents were alive to see it. (Oh, how they were frustrated by my constant gnawing of my fingers/nails/cuticles.) Although, given the fact that they would then also have the knowledge that their "baby" ("Some baby," as my father always joked) had been diagnosed with "incurable" lung cancer, I can't see how this juxtaposition of good and bad would have enhanced their golden years.)

Nevertheless, they would have offered me the kind of love and support and encouragement I no doubt would have benefited from. All things considered, they may not have lived to see me not biting my nails, but had they lived, the underlying reason for the change - my diagnosis, might have hastened their deaths, and doing anything that might have done so would not have been a preferred pursuit.

So, after 50-some-odd years, I am no longer a nail biter. It took a cancer diagnosis to do it, but I suppose it's about time. Certainly I'm not crazy about the contributing factor to its cessation, but I am happy with the results. Whatever was in me, in my head, that caused me to constantly bite my nails, seems to be gone. (Some trade-off, now I have malignant tumors in my lungs instead.)

Not to worry. I can live with the change, Hopefully for a long time. However long I do live, though, I will no longer be biting my nails. And for that, I'm thankful. I'm not exactly clear why I stopped but, since we were all never clear why I started, I consider it a net positive. And considering my current health circumstances, I'm grateful - and happy, for anything that's a positive. No matter what!

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

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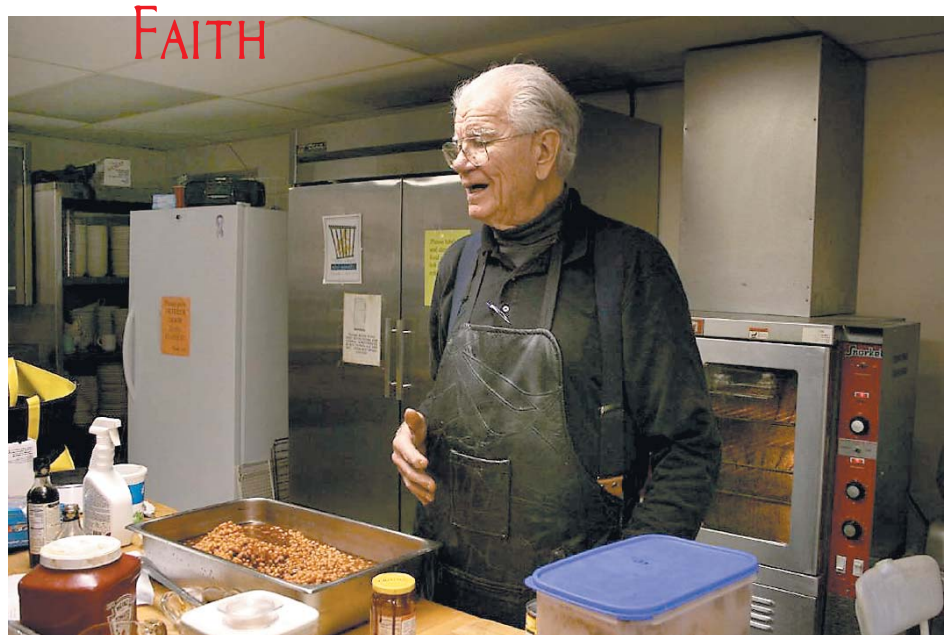
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PHOTOS BY CHRISTY STEELE/ THE CONNECTION

**Earl Kennemer, member of the Great Falls United Methodist Church for more than 40 years, uses his own recipe to prepare the baked beans for Bazaar guests.**

## Great Falls United Methodist Church Hosts Annual Bazaar

Members of Great Falls United Methodist Church gathered on Saturday, Oct. 24, for their annual Fall Bazaar. Church members donated all of the items that were for sale including jewelry, books, homemade crafts and baked goods. Participants also bid on items in a silent auction and enjoyed a barbecue lunch served by the United Methodist Men. The event include a petting zoo and a moon bounce for the young participants but the early afternoon rain quickly forced everyone inside or under cover.

Carol Wright, co-chair of the United Methodist Women, helped organize the contributions to the bazaar. Wright said that "the fellowship of getting everybody involved is what's so great." A group of women within the church met every Tuesday evening throughout the past year to knit items for the bazaar. Mary Ann Allard was in charge of gathering jewelry and donations. Another group of women baked pies, cookies, breads and other desserts.

Shane Yommer, the youth director for the

new combined Andrew Chapel/Great Falls Youth Group, supervised the yard sale portion of the bazaar. Members of the Youth Group organized the yard sale items and collected money. Back in the kitchen, the United Methodist Men served lunch, a change from past bazaars when the women were in charge of preparing an elaborate Thanksgiving dinner. This year, the pulled pork barbecue was provided at a reduced rate from Fresh Catch in Great Falls. Earl Kennemer, a member of the church for nearly 40 years, prepared his own special baked bean recipe. Kennemer was just happy to "see people enjoy themselves" at the event.

Great Falls United Methodist, located in the Great Falls Village, allows the Boy Scouts and other community groups to use the space nearly every evening. The money collected from ticket sales and items sold will go to Church missions and ongoing projects in the community.

— CHRISTY STEELE



**From left, Peg Woods, Bethany Cuddihy, Betty Bruss and Maxine Turner sell homemade baked goods.**



**Mary Ann Allard, left, has been organizing the jewelry sale portion of the Bazaar for 10 years and sells jewelry with Sharon Baum.**



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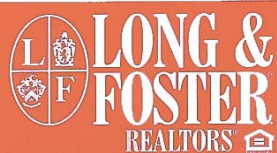
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