

Great Falls CONNECTION

Remembering Matthew Shepard

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The full cast of the Langley High production of *The Laramie Project* (first row, from left) director Lauren Stewart, Kathleen Welch, Madeleine Chalk, Rachel Mayman, theatre arts director Phyliss Jaffe, Vanessa Strahan, Alex Ward, Via Tovic, Katie Jones; second row, Tu-An Troung, Nicole Kang, Taylor Goodson, Michael Richardson, Alex Liechtenstein, Jay Mamana, Tess Higgins, Ryan Poyner, Jordan Moeller, Brian Patterson, Cyrus Kingdom; on the tree, Becca Allen, Zack Gray, Caroline Callahan.

Holiday Art On Display

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From left, Fairfax Resolves Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution Citizen of the Year Lawrence McKinley, chapter president John Sweeney and chairman for the Citizen of the Year Award Dennis Hickey.



PHOTOS BY ALEX MCVEIGH/THE CONNECTION

Great Falls resident Lawrence McKinley is awarded the Fairfax Resolves Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution Citizen of the Year. McKinley, who has served as past president of the organization, volunteers at local institutions, such as the Smithsonian, his local church and boy scout troop. He also records audio for the Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic of Metropolitan Washington, D.C.

Man of the Year

Great Falls resident Lawrence McKinley awarded Fairfax Sons of the American Revolution Citizen of the Year.

BY ALEX MCVEIGH
THE CONNECTION

While Great Falls resident Lawrence McKinley was preparing for the Fairfax Resolves Chapters of the Sons of the American Revolution's Christmas social, he was responsible for making the certificate that would be awarded to the group's citizen of the year. The only problem was, he didn't know who the winner was. According to the information given him, a Coty Lemfaux was to be recognized.

"I didn't know who he was, I kept calling people to get some information about him, and they didn't get back to me," he said.

It wasn't until the social began that McKinley realized the truth. "Coty Lemfaux" wasn't a real person, rather it was a name made up of "Citizen Of The Year," followed by McKinley's initials "LEM" and "faux," meaning fake.

Instead the award was given to McKinley himself, as recognition for his years of service to the SAR, as well as the numerous other local institutions he volunteers for.

"I couldn't believe it, I really had no idea," said McKinley, whose genuine surprise was evident as soon as chapter president John

Sweeney announced McKinley as the winner. "I didn't expect anything like this, volunteering is just one of those things I started doing when I retired."

MCKINLEY DESCRIBES himself as blessed and cursed with a "helium hand," meaning he can't keep it from floating up when people ask for volunteer help. He serves as a docent at the National Air and Space Museum, has spent more than 1,200 hours recording readings for blind and dyslexic youth at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum and other distance learning programs. He is also active in volunteering for Boy Scout Troop 1128, the McLean Youth Orchestra, the Andrew Chapel United Methodist Church and Bishop O'Connell High School.

"He is one of the select volunteers with the talent to make youth books come alive for our listeners," said Laurel Marget, evening program manager for the Recording

Teacher of the Year

Langley High School history teacher Brigitte Lavey was awarded the Fairfax Resolves Sons of the American Revolution's Teacher of the Year award for 2010. Lavey has been teaching for 37 years, including AP History, and has consistently seen students test scores go up. She is known around the school as a teacher who will go to any lengths to help students, and is often one of the first at school in the morning and among the last to leave.

"She loves learning, she's constantly reading, constantly on the cutting edge when it comes to new research and technology to incorporate in the classroom," said Don Cooper, a teacher at Langley and the assistant registrar and chairman of the Teacher of the Year Committee for the SAR. "If her students have any need, she is always there for them, no matter what."

Lavey was given the award at the November Langley High School faculty meeting.

for the Blind and Dyslexic of Metropolitan Washington, D.C. "Listening to Larry's voice, the student's experience changes from one of frustration to one of enjoyment for further learning and reading."

Sweeney said that McKinley's countless contributions to the SAR made him a natural candidate, but it was his work with countless other organizations that made him rise to the top.

"Positively influencing the lives of both local and international students has been at the crux of Larry's long-standing volunteer service," Sweeney said. "He has served in an extraordinary number of SAR positions, to include: past chapter president, founder of the Fairfax Resolves Color Guard and immediate past commander of the Vassar Color Guard. He continues to serve as a color guard member, often traveling long distances to various commemorative

events."

McKinley, who has lived in Great Falls since 1983 along with his wife of 36 years, Mary Frances, served in the Army and Army National Guard, including stints as a Medevac Helicopter Pilot. He served in combat in the Vietnam War and Desert Storm.

HE HAS BEEN a member of SAR for the past fifteen years, after getting involved with the Children of the American Revolution with his daughter, Holly Lynn Schmidt.

"He joined CAR when I was younger, and he still serves with them as well," Schmidt said. "He always said 'if it's worth doing, it's worth doing well,' and that's how he has approached everything he's ever done."

McKinley remained humble throughout the evening, which is the trait that caused his fellow SAR members to set up such an elaborate ruse. Even after his accomplishments were laid out for all to see, McKinley still offers a humble, yet humorous explanation for his thousands of hours of volunteer work.

"They're just things I do that keep me out of prison," he said with a laugh.

"I didn't expect anything like this, volunteering is just one of those things I started doing when I retired."

— Lawrence McKinley

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