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PHOTO BY RENÉE RUGGLES/THE CONNECTION



Jean Voss, dressed as a Christmas tree, stops in the field, with her horse Cowboy. Parade watchers were able to meet some of the horses at the end of the Town of Clifton's horse parade on Saturday, Dec. 1.

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NEWS



PHOTO COURTESY OF JONATHAN BURKIER, BSA Troop 1104 HISTORIAN

Boy Scouts from Clifton Troop 1104 take a break and pose for a picture during their annual food drive event.

Troup 1104 and Cub Scout Pack 1861 Collect 3,200 Pounds of Food

Boy Scouts of America Troup 1104 did volunteer work at their annual food drive event on Saturday, Nov. 10. Troop 1104, along with Cub Scout Pack 1861, collected over 3,200 pounds of food for families in need at the event.

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'Jean' Therapy Helps Homeless

Fairfax County kicks off second annual Jeans Day on Dec. 14.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

Everyone knows that gene therapy can help scientists treat a number of debilitating diseases, but what about human "jean" therapy?

The homonyms might have more in common than you think, which is why the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors proclaimed Friday, Dec. 14 "Jeans Day," an innovative approach to alleviating chronic homelessness in Fairfax County.

On Jeans Day 2012, Fairfax County is asking businesses, schools and community residents to pull on a pair of their favorite jeans to demonstrate their support for ending homelessness.

The day of community give-back is hosted by The Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness, The Connection Newspapers and Apple Federal Credit Union.

A popular fundraiser for homelessness and other causes nationwide, Jeans Day is a relatively simple idea. Companies go casual for a cause, inviting employees to wear their jeans to work in exchange for a \$5 contribution to fight homelessness. Last year, more than 100 employers representing 3,000 employees participated in the initiative.

"We're proud to partner with the county, through the Office to Prevent & End Homelessness, The Connection Newspapers and Apple Credit Union to provide an opportunity for businesses and their employees to participate in the robust work to end homelessness going on in our community," said Fairfax Chamber President & CEO Jim Corcoran.

"Now, more than ever, we need you to get involved as we move forward with the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnership to Prevent and End



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY
The Board of Supervisors designated Dec. 14, 2012, as Jeans Day in Fairfax County at their Dec. 4 meeting. (Center) Jim Corcoran, president of The Fairfax Chamber of Commerce, holds the proclamation with Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova.

Homelessness. Everyone is in need of some type of help at one point in time or another," said Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova. "Now, we need your help and Jeans Day is a great way for you and your business to get involved to prevent and end homelessness in our community as we know it."

Nearly 3,000 children, women and men face homelessness and the threat of severe temperatures and hunger today in the Fairfax County-Falls Church community, according to Dean Klein, executive director of Fairfax County's Office to Prevent and End Homelessness (OPEH).

The majority of people without homes in our community are children and working families.

"In Fairfax County, it's easy to forget that there are homeless families here, homeless children in the schools, and that many people who are homeless here are actually working, but don't make nearly enough money to afford housing," said The Connection Publisher Mary Kimm. "The Connection is committed to raising awareness of homelessness and the need to provide permanent shelter, and to recognizing the good works of individuals and businesses in Northern Virginia."

"I'm excited because Jeans Day is an easy avenue to get employees and their companies, and people of all ages, involved in learning about the challenges and solutions in preventing and ending homelessness," Klein said.

Board Selects Appointees to Commission

Bi-partisan group will review election process.

On Tuesday, Dec. 4, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors appointed representatives to the Bi-partisan Election Process Improvement Commission, which was created by the board after long lines were reported across various voting precincts during the most recent election.

The list of appointees consists of two co-chairs; one appointee designated by each supervisor; two appointees designated by the chairman; chairs of both the Republican and Democratic Party of Fairfax County; and representatives from various Fairfax County organizations, including the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce, the League of Women Voters, the Fairfax Bar Association, Fairfax County Public Schools Administration, Federation of Citizen's

Association, and disability and minority community representatives.

The purpose of the commission is to review and make recommendations regarding Fairfax County's election process. The commission will concentrate on ways to improve the county's efficiency on Election Day, with a specific focus on addressing wait times, long lines and various voting issues.

"I am pleased to see that the commission is moving forward," Chairman Sharon Bulova said. "It is important that the county identify ways to reduce lines, decrease wait times, and streamline our election process. I am eager to find ways we can improve for future elections."

Bulova recommended the commission begin work in January 2013 after appointments have been made and that recommendations be presented to the Board of Supervisors in May of 2013.

—VICTORIA ROSS



PHOTO BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION
State Sen. Dave Marsden (D-37) received a standing ovation for his efforts against the practice of fox-penning in Virginia. After receiving the Legislator of the Year award from the Humane Society of the United States, Marsden talked about fox-penning and answered questions from a group of animal welfare advocates at the Burke Centre Library on Tuesday, Dec. 4.

Animal Advocates Honor Marsden

State Sen. Marsden awarded "Legislator of the Year" for efforts against fox penning.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

State Sen. Dave Marsden (D-37) received the Legislator of the Year Award from the Humane Society of the United States Tuesday, Dec. 4, for his ongoing efforts against the practice of fox penning in Virginia. The practice, also called fox-hound training, involves trapping wild foxes, placing them in wooded preserves, and allowing hundreds of dogs to pursue them until they are caught and torn apart, or they escape into trees.

Like Marsden, most opponents want fox penning banned or phased out over time.

"Sometimes, when I research an issue, it turns out not to be as bad as I thought," Marsden said before a group of about 100 animal advocates at the Burke Centre Library Tuesday evening. "But in the case of fox penning, it's actually more grim than I thought."

Marsden, who patroned a bill that would make fox penning a Class 1 misdemeanor that is punishable with up to 12 months in jail and up to a

\$2,500 fine, said foxes are purchased and placed into fenced enclosures ranging from 100 to 900 acres. Competitions are held between dog owners as the dogs track the foxes.

"This is not hunting, this is not sporting, and this is not the Virginia way. It's state-sanctioned cruelty to animals," Marsden said. "Some people will tell you that fox pens provide a safe training for dogs, and that the foxes are hardly ever harmed. In reality, more than 3,600 foxes died in these pens over the last three years, and it wasn't from old age."

Most pens are in rural parts of central and Southside Virginia. In the past four years, according to animal welfare advocates, nearly 5,000 foxes were trapped and placed in 41 pens.

The game board oversees the state Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, which regulates hunting, fishing, boating and other activities.

"The deal I've offered is to limit [the] number of dogs per acre, limit the number of foxes, and if and when the owner of the fox pen, who holds the permit, goes out of business, that ends the permit," Marsden said.

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



Every year between Christmas and New Year's, The Fairfax Station/Clifton/Lorton 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: ChildrensSouth@connection newspapers.com, or mail (.jpg and text files on disc only) 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.

THE CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS

NEWS



The beginning of the Clifton Horse Parade. Shawna Voisine, riding Bronson, waves to the crowd.



Santa leads Elle, who is riding on Haj, to the start of the parade.

On Parade

The holidays began in the Town of Clifton Saturday, Dec. 1, with a parade of horses and riders decorated in Christmas finery. Sponsored by the Clifton Horse Society, the parade traveled up Main Street, went through town and along Chapel Street to a field where participants and spectators gathered for cookies and the awarding of prizes.

PHOTOS BY RENÉE RUGGLES/THE CONNECTION



Willow and her horse Dusty (chestnut) along with Elle and Haj (white). They took some time to visit and get their horses ready for the ride back through town.



Bella Curtis, complete with fairy wings, rides Espresso in the parade.



A full view of the Black Horse Cavalry, as they ride onto the field, as a unit.

Did you know?
60% of adults in families that were homeless were employed



Put the ZIP on Homelessness by wearing jeans December 14 in exchange for a \$5 contribution to the Fairfax-Falls Church Partnership to Prevent & End Homelessness.

Learn More & Sign Up
<http://jeansday2012.eventbrite.com>

In 2011, more than 100 employers representing 3,000 employees participated in this community-wide give-back initiative. Help us boost those numbers in 2012!

Preventing and Ending Homelessness
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www.fairfaxva.gov/jeansday

Fairfax COUNTY Chamber OF COMMERCE
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www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

FAITH NOTES

Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416. Deadline is Friday. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

Franconia United Methodist Church invites you to worship for Advent on Sunday, Dec. 9, 16 and 23 to prepare and wait for the birth of Lord Jesus Christ. The church is handicapped accessible and assisted listening devices are available. 703 971-5151 or admin@franconiaumc.org. <http://www.franconiaumc.org>.

Advent Holy Communion worship service, 7:30 p.m. on Wednesdays Dec. 12 and 19 at Living Savior Lutheran Church, 5500 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. All are welcome—join to celebrate the season. 703-352-1421. www.livingsaviorlutheran.org.

Christmas Eve Services are held at 7:30 p.m. and 11 p.m., at Franconia United Methodist Church, 6037 Franconia Rd, Alexandria on Monday, Dec. 24. Come join for candlelight and communion services. Located at the corner of Beulah and Franconia, next to the Franconia Elementary School, convenient to the Fairfax Connector routes 231, 232 and 310, the church is handicapped accessible and assisted listening devices are available. 703 971-5151 or admin@franconiaumc.org. <http://www.franconiaumc.org>.

On Tuesday, Dec. 25, a **Christmas Eve Candlelight Holy Communion Service** takes place at 6:30 (family) and 8:30. All are welcome—come to celebrate the season! 703-352-1421. <http://www.livingsaviorlutheran.org>.

New Year's Eve Watch Night Service is a time for giving thanks for the blessings of the outgoing year and praying for divine favor during the upcoming year. Join at 11 p.m., at Franconia United Methodist Church, 6037 Franconia Road, Alexandria on Dec. 31. 703 971-5151 or admin@franconiaumc.org. <http://www.franconiaumc.org>.

Fairfax Baptist Temple, at the corner of Fairfax County Parkway and Burke Lake Roads, holds a Bible Study Fellowship at 9 a.m. Sundays followed by a 10 a.m. worship service. Nursery care and Children's Church also provided. 6401 Missionary Lane, Fairfax Station, 703-323-8100, www.fbtministries.org

Lord of Life Lutheran offers services at two locations, in Fairfax at 5114 Twinbrook Road and in Clifton at 13421 Twin Lakes Drive. Services in Fairfax are held on Saturdays at 5:30 p.m. and Sundays at 8:15, 9:45 and 11:15 a.m. Services in Clifton are held on Sundays at 8:15 and 10:30 a.m. 703-323-9500 or www.Lordoflifeva.org.

First Baptist Church of Springfield offers Sunday school at 9:15 a.m., followed by a 10:30 a.m. worship service. 7300 Gary Street, Springfield. 703-451-1500 www.fbcspringfield.org.

Clifton Presbyterian Church, 12748 Richards Lane, Clifton, offers Sunday worship services at 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Nursery care is provided. Christian education for all ages is at 9:45 a.m. 703-830-3175.

St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church, 6720 Union Mill Road, Clifton, conducts Sunday masses at 7:30 a.m., 8:45 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. It also offers a Saturday vigil at 5:30 p.m. and a Thursday Latin mass at 7 p.m. 703-817-1770 or www.st-andrew.org.

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HOW TO GET YOUR ORGANIZATION'S SPECIAL EVENTS IN THE CONNECTION

Calendar Listings

The Connection Newspapers contain a Calendar of Upcoming Events every week. While we cannot guarantee that every event we receive information about will be listed, here is the information we need for your upcoming event to be considered for the Calendar. We welcome photographs of similar events held previously, which sometimes appear with Calendar items.

Name of Event:

Day of the Week, Date and Time:

Name of the Place Event will Be Held:

Address of the Place Event Will Be Held:

Name and Phone Number for More Information:

Three Sentences Describing the Event:

Please submit your calendar information at least two weeks before your event. Clear photographs from similar previous events are always welcome. All events should be open to the public. We give first priority to free events. E-mail listings to:

south@connectionnewspapers.com

or mail to:

Calendar, Connection Newspapers
1606 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314.

For more information, call 703-778-9410.

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NEWS



PHOTOS BY MARY WITKO/THE CONNECTION

During Saturday afternoon's event, teams were required to complete an 800 meter run which included such obstacles as picking up and carrying 95-145 lb. Atlas stones for 200 meters.

'Cold War II' at South Run

CrossFit Liberation of Lorton hosts Mid-Atlantic region competition.

BY MARY WITKO
THE CONNECTION

There's still another hour to go before sunrise, and it's a numbing 30 degrees Fahrenheit inside the Field House at South Run Rec Center. And yet, hundreds of competitors continue to stream inside, dragging coolers, gym bags, bedrolls and cases of water—anticipating two full days of pushing themselves to their physical and mental limits.

And so began "Cold War II," a CrossFit competition for the Mid-Atlantic region, held last Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 1-2. Sponsored by Intelligent Decisions, Inc. and hosted by CrossFit Liberation of Lorton, the competition was the second annual challenge with both team and individual competitor di-

visions. Teams were comprised of four athletes, at least one of whom was required to be female. Designed to be a training tool for CrossFit participants, this year's competition attracted 42 teams from six states—more than doubling the attendance from last year's inaugural event, and included many active-duty personnel and reservists, as well as military veterans and wounded warriors.

CROSSFIT IS A NATIONWIDE PROGRAM which was developed to enhance an individual's physical competency in order to prepare him/her for dealing with life's challenges. Dominique Sineski, a member of CrossFit Liberation and a Cold War II volunteer, remembers making the decision to join CrossFit. "I was feeling old, tired and aching. I felt like I was 70, but I was just in my 40s. The first week of training, I was in pain, but I kept going. All the coaches were very encouraging. And here I am, still working out."

Megan Murray, member of CrossFit Rubicon in Tysons, added: "There are a number of veterans at my gym who are amputees. It's hard for me to com-

SEE COLD WAR II, PAGE 7



From left—Kim Ebbert from Pittsburgh, Pa., with Kourtney Moceckl and Lindsey Kokal from Arlington, participated in "Cold War II," a CrossFit competition for the Mid-Atlantic region, held last Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 1-2 at the South Run Rec Center and hosted by CrossFit Liberation of Lorton.



This year's competition attracted 42 teams from six states—more than doubling the attendance from last year's inaugural event.

OPEN HOUSES SATURDAY/SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8 & 9

When you visit one of these Open Houses, tell the Realtor you saw it in this Connection Newspaper. For more real estate listings and open houses, visit www.ConnectionNewspapers.com and click on the "This Week in Real Estate" link. Call Specific Agents to Confirm Dates & Times

Burke

9750 Rehanek Ct.....\$550,000...Sun 1-4.....Shanna Miller.....Weichert..703-615-3178
5491 Lighthouse Ln.....\$408,888...Sun 1-4.....Dan Mleziva.....RE/MAX..703-380-9915

Centreville

6123 Stonepath Cir.....\$315,000...Sun 2-4.....Donny Samson.....Samson Props..703-864-4894

Clifton

6601 Newman Rd.....\$850,000...Sun 2-4.....Pat Fales.....RE/MAX..703-503-4365
7500 Tutley Terr.....\$849,900...Sun 1-4.....JoAnn Brainard.....Weichert..703-934-0400

Fairfax

4102 Maureen Ln.....\$474,900...Sun 1-4.....John Purvis.....Jennifer Young Homes..703-927-6802

Fairfax Station

11107 Hampton Rd.....\$1,295,000...Sun 1-4.....Dana LaFever.....Weichert..703-609-3479
8030 Woodland Hills Ln..\$1,100,000...Sun 2-4.....Pat Fales.....RE/MAX..703-503-4365
7513 South Reach Dr.....\$849,950...Sun 1-4.....Kathleen Quintarelli.....Weichert..703-862-8808
11215 September Ln.....\$642,500...Sun 2-4.....Pat Fales.....RE/MAX..703-503-4365

Falls Church

3804 Munson Rd.....\$829,000...Sun 1-4..Patrick Kessler/Luci Blodgett.....Keller Williams..703-405-6540

Kingstowne/Alexandria

5924 Embury Spring Ln.....\$812,000...Sun 1-4.....Janet Price.....McEanearney..703-960-5858
4904 Apple Tree Dr.....\$759,000...Sun 1-4.....Casey Margenau.....RE/MAX..703-442-8600
6209 Abbottsbury Row.....\$439,500...Sun 1-3.....Delia Roebuck.....Prudential..703-396-6000

Lorton

5941 Kentia Trl.....\$599,900...Sun 1-4.....Patrick Coen.....Keller Williams..703-564-4000
9237 Lorton Valley Rd.....\$360,000...Sun 1-4.....Monina Diaz.....NextDoor..703-462-5478
8960 Fascination Ct #314..\$359,990...Sat 11-3.....Shawn Evans.....Long & Foster..703-795-3973
8960 Fascination Ct #111..\$269,990...Sat 12-4.....Shawn Evans.....Long & Foster..703-795-3973
8960 Fascination Ct #131..\$226,346...Sun 12-3.....Shawn Evans.....Long & Foster..703-795-3973
8435 Peace Lily Ct #131..\$205,000...Sun 1-4.....Lisa Langlais.....Keller Williams..703-964-1290

Springfield

7117 Braddock Rd.....\$1,599,775...Sun 1-4.....Casey Margenau.....RE/MAX..703-442-8600
5229 Ravensworth Rd.....\$475,000...Sun 1-4.....Tim Belanger.....Long & Foster..703-475-5242
6308 Millwood Cir.....\$419,900...Sun 1-4.....Candace Johnson.....Long & Foster..703-683-0400

To add your Realtor-represented Open House to these weekly listings, please call Steve Hogan at 703-778-9418 or e-mail the info to shogan@connectionnewspapers.com. All listings due by Tuesday at 3 P.M.

'Cold War II' at South Run

FROM PAGE 6

plain about how hard my workout is when I see them working out next to me."

The original idea for a regional competition came from Adam Ziniewicz, a coach and trainer for CrossFit Liberation until his death in September 2012. His wife, Carrie Satterlee, organized this year's event in his memory: "The first Cold War competition was my husband's brainchild. We just took what he built and went forward this year because there was so much interest."

The weekend's activities included challenging and sometimes grueling tests of physical strength, endurance and teamwork. During Saturday afternoon's event, entitled "the Green Beret," teams were required to complete an 800 meter run which included such obstacles as picking up and carrying 95-145 lb. Atlas stones for 200 meters, scaling a six-foot wall, and completing as many as 80 swings with a 16-20 lb. sledge hammer. Michael Hmara, a physical therapist from Springfield, came to watch the events. "It's important to do the exercises correctly. Some people might see these big guys here and want to do what they're doing right away. You have to go slowly and do it right, otherwise you'll get hurt." Despite the physical toll, many athletes said they look forward to competition. Craig Griffith, a competitor from Lorton, said, "I'm not sure why I do this, but there's definitely an adrenaline rush."

PROCEEDS from this year's event will be donated to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)



The weekend's activities included challenging and sometimes grueling tests of physical strength, endurance and teamwork.

and to Hidden Wounds, a non-profit organization providing counseling services for combat veterans and their families. Event Organizer Carrie Satterlee said: "Adam [my husband] suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder and bipolar disorder. It's important for people to get the support that they need. We're so proud for this event to raise money for these causes."

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Lorton Community Action Center

LCAC currently provides food for 175 families in the Fort Belvoir/Lorton area on a weekly basis. Help us help those in need by donating the following items:

- Canned fruit, canned non-green veggies, beans, rice, cereal, and mac n' cheese
- Donations accepted Mon, and Wed-Fri 9am-4pm; Tuesday 12pm-7pm
- Donation address: 9518 Richmond Highway, Lorton VA 22079
- Mailing address: PO Box 154, Lorton VA 22199

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LCAC would like to thank The Connection Newspapers for their support.

Lorton Community Action Center

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WELLBEING

Keys to Staying Healthy During the Holiday Season

Finding balance can preserve one's well-being.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Food, festivities and friends are synonymous with the holidays. However, celebrations can take a toll on your health.

"The holidays are times of rush and chaos and of thinking of everyone but yourself," said Michelle Walters-Edwards, department chair and association professor of health and human performance at Marymount University in Arlington.

Health and fitness experts say that even during the hustle and bustle of the season, it is possible to stay healthy and energized. It just takes a little focus.

"I may be stating the obvious, but exercise is the key to staying healthy during the holidays," said Rosa Ganey, a nurse health educator for Fairfax County Health Network and a Burke resident.

Between shopping, parties and decorating, many people feel pressed for time and exercise can fall by the wayside. Here are a few creative ways to sneak in some fitness:



PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL/THE CONNECTION

Exercise is the key to holiday health preservation, say experts.

Incorporate exercise into holiday shopping. "You can walk at the mall and do some window shopping or use your home as an exercise base: The stairs can be used as a perfect location to get your blood pumping," said Walters Edwards.

Make it a family affair. "If you have kids at home, maybe you can play exercise or dance videos or CDs and try the moves to-

gether," said Ganey.

Celebratory gatherings can offer opportunities for exercise as well. "Dance at your holiday party," said Michelle Walters-Edwards. "Thirty minutes of moderate dancing can burn around 200 calories in a person [who weighs] 150 lbs."

If there's no time for the gym, improvise, say experts. "Sometimes it can be challeng-

ing to find time to make it to the gym, but there are quite a few bodyweight exercises you can do at home," said Joel Martin, an assistant professor of kinesiology at George Mason University in Fairfax. "Most people think of pushups and sit-ups when they hear the words 'bodyweight exercise.' However, there are quite a few other exercises like air squats, burpees, planks, mountain climbers."

Accommodate for less workout time during the holidays. "Probably the most important piece of advice I would give, since your workout will most likely be shorter than usual, is try to maintain a high intensity for the duration of the workout and minimize the time you spend resting," said Martin.

Break up a workout routine. "Doing several 10-15 minute workouts throughout the day using only body weight movements at home may be another solution for someone crunched for time," said Martin. "I recommend picking three or four movements or exercises and doing several sets of each with less than a minute of rest between sets."

Above all, say experts, balance is vital to preserving one's health and well-being during the holidays. "Maintain a focus on balancing your stress, eating and exercise year-round. Extremes of each of these factors are not healthy. Remember, moderation is key," said Walters-Edwards.

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The Mosaic District in Fairfax contains a mix of local fashion boutiques and restaurants coupled with national retailers and entertainers.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

The Fairfax Mosaic of Holiday Fun

The Mosaic District offers a tapestry of shopping, dining and entertainment for the holidays.

Since its official opening in September, the Mosaic District in Fairfax has created a buzz among local shoppers.

"It's a really cool place to shop," said Abby O'Donnell, a Vienna resident. "I love the variety of shops, especially the interesting mix of sophisticated fashion and entertainment. And they have a great Target."

Located at 2910 District Avenue in Fairfax, the 31-acre, mixed-use development center creates an urban district in the heart of Fairfax. The mix of the local fashion boutiques and restaurants coupled with national retailers and entertainers makes Mosaic a one-stop holiday shopping destination.

The Mosaic District includes Angelika Film Center, MOM'S Organic Market, Last Call by Neiman Marcus, Target and restaurants such as Black's Bar & Kitchen, Artisan Confections, Bellacara, Cava Mezze and Dolcezza as well as boutique hotels and a park.

The shopping district was developed by Edens, a Bethesda-based company which owns and operates a number of upscale shopping centers on the East Coast.

In November, Mosaic hosted its first "Mosaic Fashion Night" at boutique retailers and trendy eateries such as Lou Lou, South Moon Under, Amethyst, Arti-

san Confections, Langford Market, Freshbikes, Ginger, Timothy Paul, and Last Call Studio by Neiman Marcus, Dawn Price Baby, Bellacara and Sweetgreen. Angelika Film Center & Café screened two fashion films—Diana Vreeland: The Eye Has To Travel and The September Issue. A portion of proceeds benefitted the Starlight Children's Foundation.

In December, there will be several special holiday events. For information about upcoming events, visit MosaicDistrict.com, and Mosaic's Facebook and Twitter pages. Shoppers can visit each week to get exclusive deals, behind-the-scene interviews and stories about each retailer featured.

"Through its intelligent urban design, Mosaic creates a sense of warmth, intimacy and familiarity. The local flavor of the community is clearly reflected in Mosaic's storefronts, landscape, outdoor furniture, materials, lighting, signage and hardscape amenities," said an Edens official.

Phase 1 of Mosaic, which opened in September, included 350,000 square feet of retail, an eight-screen cinema, a 150-room boutique hotel, 73,000 square feet of office space, a one-acre park and LEED certified buildings. The overall project will include 500,000 square feet of retail, 1,000 residential units, 4,000 parking spaces (four above-grade parking garages) and two parks.

Development partners of Mosaic are AvalonBay, a 531-unit apartment building with 40,000 square feet of first floor retail; EYA, builder of approximately 112 luxury townhomes; and Lodgeworks, a hotel which will flag as Hyatt House.

For additional information about Mosaic, go to www.mosaicdistrict.com or www.edens.com.

—VICTORIA ROSS



The new shopping district includes Angelika Film Center, MOM'S Organic Market, Last Call by Neiman Marcus, Target, and restaurants such as Black's Bar & Kitchen, Artisan Confections, Bellacara, Cava Mezze and Dolcezza, as well as boutique hotels and a park.

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THE CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Workhouse People's Choice Award Winners of November

Four artists from the Workhouse Associate Artists (WAA) were chosen during the Workhouse's monthly Second Saturday Art Walk on Nov. 10. The winners are Kathy Strauss (first place), Karen Rexrode (second place), and Bonnie Ferguson Butler and Charla Wilkerson (third place tie).

Strauss is a designer, photographer, creative coach, artist and teacher based in Lake Ridge, Va. She is the other half of the creative studio, ImageWerks.

Strauss is a member of the Workhouse Associate Artists (WAA) at the Workhouse Art Center in Lorton where she exhibits her work and is a course instructor through the Workhouse Institute & ArtStar camps.

Rexrode's art is best described as photography based mixed media. A photograph is just the beginning. Transfers to wood, acrylic and plaster bring out the best in both with visual wood grain, the sheerness of an acrylic sheet or the many imperfections in cracked plaster. Stamping, encaustic (wax) and oil paints are more of the mix in mixed media that Rexrode likes to use to move her photographs into a more tactile world.

Butler is an award-winning painter and photographer, who exhibits in W-16 at the Workhouse Arts Center and at The Loft Gallery. Her primary loves are painting outdoors and travel photography.

Wilkerson's goal as an artist is to glorify God. She has very little formal training and started working with colored pencils because of the vivid colors, and because they are easy to drop quickly when she needs to deal with her children's emergencies, she said. She is transitioning to acrylic paints, oil paints and more mediums.



"Squish" by Kathy Strauss, a treated photograph.

More information about the Workhouse Art Center is available at www.workhousearts.org. The gallery is located at 9601 Ox Road Lorton, Virginia 22079. More about the Workhouse Associate Artists can be found at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Workhouse-Associate-Artists/134373016632491>.

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A Life Lesson in Giving Back

An immigrant's son becomes state delegate and introduces the Virginia DREAM Act.

By ALFONSO H. LOPEZ
STATE DELEGATE (D-49)



My father was born in a small town in the Andes mountains region of Venezuela. He was one of 22 brothers and sisters from the same parents. At the age of 19 he came to this country with \$280 in his pocket and the dream of a better life. He worked as a bus boy and waiter, learned English, and went to school. He graduated from Northern Virginia Community College when I was 5 years old. He then took one class a semester at George Mason University every year, until he graduated from college one month before I graduated from Robinson High School in Fairfax. As a result of his achieving the American Dream, my father was able to change the lives of my entire family in Latin America.

My mother was a teacher and guidance counselor in Arlington Public Schools for over 20 years. For most of her career she worked with ESL and immigrant children at Washington & Lee High School. As a direct result of her efforts, over 1,000 children, who might have otherwise fallen through the cracks, were able to continue their education after high school and graduate from college.

Throughout my life, my parents reminded me of the value of public service and taught me that if you have the opportunity, you should always give back to your community. My father also never hesitated to remind me that in the U.S. it is possible for the son of an immigrant to have the opportunities I have had—to work for the governor of Virginia, as a presidential political appointee, and to be elected to the General Assembly.

My mother and father touched the lives of countless people in our community. Every day I hope to honor them and live by their example.

With that in mind, I have fought efforts to pass anti-immigrant legislation in Virginia. Today, everyone agrees that we

need comprehensive immigration reform that is tough, fair and practical. However, that reform must come at the federal level. We do not want or need a patchwork of immigration laws from state to state—nor do we want an unworkable patchwork of rules from locality to locality. These attempts in Virginia to pass constitutionally questionable Arizona or Alabama-style legislation only serve to unnecessarily make us appear less tolerant and put us on a slippery slope towards hurting business and lowering state revenues.

I am proud to have introduced the Virginia DREAM Act. This legislation would allow undocumented children—who in many cases know no other home than Virginia—to receive in-state tuition if they meet certain strict criteria. Similar language was included in executive orders by Governors Warner and Kaine and similar legislation recently passed the State Senate. I will continue to fight for the DREAM Act until it becomes the law in Virginia.

Working with House Republicans I am also happy to have helped pass legislation allowing legal immigrants who have lived in Virginia for less than five years to receive prenatal health care coverage under the state Medicaid and FAMIS (Family Access to Medical Insurance Security Plan) programs. Prenatal care improves the health outcome of the child and reduces the neonatal and long-term health costs for the commonwealth.

Over 100 languages are spoken in the 49th District. There are 58 languages spoken at my local high school. This amazing, vibrant tapestry of cultures enriches our community and the commonwealth immeasurably. We should do everything we can to embrace these new immigrants who bring so much to Virginia.

Alfonso Lopez is the first Latino Democrat ever elected to the Virginia House of Delegates.

FOCUS ON IMMIGRATION Living Life in 'The Dream Land'

Jorge Adeler shares his story of the American Dream coming true.

By JENNIFER BENITZ
THE CONNECTION

Part three of an ongoing series.

The American Dream has been shared for generations—some call it an idea; others call it a reality. Many people come leaving behind former lives in search for better ones, not only for themselves but also for their children.

Jorge Adeler is one of those people. Businessman, optimist, entrepreneur and enthusiast are just a few ways to describe the Argentine immigrant.

"I learned to look for ways to make a living by using my imagination," said Adeler. "That helped me envision opportunities as they crossed in front of me."

At 27 years old, in 1975, Adeler moved to the United States with his wife and two young daughters after visualizing the direction Ar-

gentina was heading in as a nation and not liking what he saw. With only \$450 in his pocket and unable to speak English, he faced a rough transition but took on the challenge with fierce and hopeful drive. Now a successful, internationally recognized jeweler, he has a story unlike any other.

"The price was high, but it was the best decision I've ever made," he said. "I'm delighted here."

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS was a difficult one for the self-taught master designer, but neither the challenge nor the fear of failure stopped him. Growing up in Mar del Plata, Argentina, Adeler helped his parents run their hotel and restaurant business. Consequently, he came to the U.S. with



Jorge Adeler stands between his daughters, Valentina Adeler Armour (left) and Wendy Adeler Hall (right), both of whom work in the family business. Valentina is the appraiser and apprentice designer while Wendy is the vice president of marketing and philanthropy for Adeler Jewelers.

the intentions of continuing in the same business, but soon found it wasn't for him.

Instead, Adeler decided to pursue his own business in the form of trade. He took out a credit line worth \$1,000 with Woolworth to

buy basic necessities, such as pocket knives, fishing hooks and light coats, before traveling to Argentina and setting up camp in a small village in the mountains of Córdoba to trade for stones. Upon return from his trades, he carved

it, he slowly made the transition from stones to jewelry.

It wasn't long before Adeler opened his first jewelry store, selling mostly pendants and other small items in Ocean City, Md. As his business expanded, so did the

number of stores. Within a few years, he had five jewelry stores in Ocean City under his operation.

His success came with his drive to go against the mainstream of popular demands. While most jewelry stores were selling turquoise stones, something Adeler couldn't yet afford, he sold other gems that often caught the attention of those looking for something different. One of those out-of-the-ordinary stones was rhodochrosite, the pink national Argentine gemstone.

"When you have something you're selling that would be much more different because it is something people aren't looking for, I realized it has its virtues," Adeler said. "You'll always have customers searching for something original or different. I began my career doing something different than the rest of the industry."

FROM THEN ON, Adeler focused on what no one else was selling, forcing him to be more creative and look into new ideas. With an overall goal to do what no one else was doing and present it in a way that would attract the minority of customers looking for something dif-

SEE DREAM LAND. PAGE 14

Day Shifts, Night Shifts On the Road to Success

By ANAGHA SRIKANTH
THE CONNECTION

When the chain pharmacy he worked for opened a drive-through pharmacy, it was the final straw for Amit Shah of Fairfax.

"I thought, 'we are becoming Taco Bell,'" Amit said. "So I said 'I'm going to open my own store.' The chain had moved away from taking care of customers. They were more like a machine playing a number game. You went there, they filled your prescription but they counted numbers more than people and it wasn't something I liked."

Having arrived in America from India in 1987 with only \$20 and a green card in his pocket, it wasn't going to be easy. For over a decade he had worked day shifts at pharmacies and the night shift as a technician at George Washington Uni-

versity hospital, all the while studying to earn a bachelors degree in pharmacy from Howard University and a license to practice pharmacy in New York, Maryland and Virginia.

IN THOSE YEARS, before Google or smart phones, information was scarce, and it took him over a year just to figure out how to obtain a pharmacist's license. His wife Kamini Shah gave up her hopes of pursuing further education in psychology to take computer courses at a local university and become a technician.

During all that time, however, they were learning lessons that would prove invaluable in the future. Amit said communication was one of the biggest challenges he faced as an immigrant and it took years of interacting with customers to earn their trust and acceptance. He had to overcome his ac-

cent and learn to talk slower, use less medical jargon and listen.

Kamini, who had earned a masters degree in psychology and sociology from India, found she could use her education to reach out to customers.

"Our customers are all sick people and in their difficult times it helps to have someone to listen to their problems," she said. "I might not be able to do anything but just listening to them makes them feel a little better. Especially when they are all alone by themselves, seniors and single parents taking care of little kids, [they] have a lot to handle. It makes you feel like you can give back to society by helping them."

Providing the best services they could to the community has been one of their main priorities since they opened their first store in 2001. Even when it was just the two of them working seven days a week, they would make deliveries

An Indian immigrant's story: Making it and giving back.



Amit Shah checks an order for a customer during a busy Friday morning at his Woodbridge Pharmacy.

PHOTOS BY ANAGHA SRIKANTH/
THE CONNECTION



Kamini Shah greets customers at the pick-up desk and said she enjoys interacting and developing relationships with them.



From left—Sarah (William & Mary), Sophia (junior, Westfield High School), Kamran (fifth grader, Cub Run), Robin and Bob Zahory.

Building a Better Life

An Afghan immigrant's story: From Soviet war to American Dream.

By HANNAH BUNTING
THE CONNECTION

Personally, I never think anyone is better than me, and I never think I'm better than anyone," Bob Zahory of Centreville said, chuckling as he offers up another pomegranate lemonade.

Mahboob "Bob" Zahory moved to America 31 years ago from Afghanistan, ready to work and begin a new life. At just 21 years old, Zahory and his three brothers left their homeland behind to escape the Soviet War. The brothers soon settled in Northern Virginia, with their first priority being to learn English.

"I knew the better you can communicate, the easier it will be to succeed," Zahory said.

So Zahory enrolled in one year of English at Northern Virginia Community College, where he also studied hotel management for two years. Right from the start, the Zahory family worked full-time for a better future.

According to Zahory, the family also refused to accept anything from the U.S. Government to assist them. They each had a job after a month, and worked in addition to their schooling. As for Bob, he worked for two years at the Marriott, focusing on food and beverage management. Zahory said he valued his time there and learned a lot, but still aspired to someday work for himself and make his own decisions for a business.

Eventually Zahory achieved the dream of owning his own restaurant, and opened what is now Mazadar Restaurant at 11725 Lee Highway in Fairfax, an establishment specializing in Middle Eastern cuisine. Mazadar means delicious.

Through his hard work, Zahory was able to combine his past with his future.

However, this success did not come about easily. Family proved to be a bit of a sacrifice Zahory had to make when building his business. He described the process as constant work, planning and management through long hours and late nights.

Zahory's daughter Sarah, who now studies at The College of William & Mary, shares her father's hardworking personality. "I'm really proud of her and how hard she works. That is your goal as a parent, to give your child a better life than you had," Zahory said.

Another obstacle Zahory had to overcome was xenophobia.

"There is some discrimination in the beginning, especially when they hear your accent. Those are some of the challenges you have," Zahory said.

Zahory elaborated on the fact that sometimes people will talk with their hands when explaining things to him; patronizing him while assuming he would not understand.

"At least four or five times, I've actually taken their hands and put them down. I asked them, do you honestly talk to everybody like that?" Zahory said.

Zahory said he has never felt like a minority; however there have certainly been issues of discrimination over the years. These have been demonstrated in subtle ways such as being seated in the back of the restaurant near the bussing station, or assuming him to be an unskilled worker.

Zahory said, "Because I've been through it, I never want anyone to be treated less. In my business that's very important to me. I make sure my employees feel equal and I try to help them wherever I can."

FOCUS ON IMMIGRATION

Social Programs Adapt to Fulfill Immigrant Needs

Fellowship House, Interfaith help immigrants on their way to self-sufficiency.

BY AMIEE FREEMAN
THE CONNECTION

A visitor to Hunter's Woods Fellowship House in Hunter's Woods Square in Reston could hear 21 different languages. Residents speak every Middle Eastern language, Russian, German, Polish, Filipino and several Asian languages, said Fellowship Square Housing and Services Executive Director Jana Broughton.

Fellowship Square Housing and Services, a charitable, not-for-profit organization, offers affordable housing for elderly people and for people with disabilities in the D.C. Metropolitan area. Fellowship Square runs four Fellowship Houses: Hunter's Woods and Lake Anne in Reston, Lake Ridge in Woodbridge and Largo Landing in Largo, Md. In recent years, said Broughton, there has been an uptick in the number of immigrants on the waiting list for affordable housing in Fairfax County and specifically for apartments at the Lake Anne and Hunter's Woods Fellowship Houses.

"The resident population in the Lake Anne and Hunter's Woods Fellowship Houses really matches the demographics of Fairfax County," said Broughton.

According to a 2011 American Community Survey for Fairfax County compiled by the Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services and based on statistical data from the 2010 U.S. Census, 29 percent of the people living in Fairfax County were foreign born. Of that percentage, 51.5 percent hailed from Asia, 31.5 percent from Latin America, 8.8 percent from Africa, and the remaining 8.2 percent from Europe, Canada or Oceania.

COMPLICATING ISSUES FOR IMMIGRANTS, Fairfax County is one of the most affluent counties in the country, according to census data. In recent years the cost of housing has increased despite the housing crisis and economic turmoil. In 2009, the last year for which this data was available, the average monthly rent in Fairfax County was \$1,375.

"There is a huge need for affordable housing in Fairfax County," said Broughton.

Fellowship House does not give preference based on immigrant or non-immigrant status, said Broughton. They provide housing based on a first come, first served policy. The waiting list for an apartment at one of the Fellowship Houses is six to eight years.

Most of the immigrant residents at the two fellowship houses in Reston have family who immigrated to the U.S. for better schooling or for better economic opportunities, said Broughton.

"With housing so expensive here, if you are a young immigrant family you cannot afford to house grandma or aunt and uncle. It is important that we offer affordable housing to immigrants. Many of these immigrants bring very important family values with them and we as a society need to respect those values."

Broughton remembered one example of an Iranian family who escaped political retaliation with "only the clothes on their back." This family was well-to-do in their home country, but here they became part of the immigrant poor. Many families, regardless of their reason for immigrating to the U.S. become the immigrant poor as the cost of living is so high, said Broughton.

"By providing affordable housing to immigrants, we are fulfilling part of [the] American dream that we are a home for all," said Broughton.

Reston Interfaith, a Reston-based nonprofit that promotes self-sufficiency through direct support and advocacy, does not specifically direct services to immigrants, but feels that their mission statement requires them to provide services to everyone.

"Our services are open to everyone. We try to provide a diversity of programs that help facilitate access to the community," said Bill Threlkeld, division director of



Every other month at Hunter's Woods Fellowship House in Reston, residents attend an International Tea and share dishes from their country of origin, with one such function pictured here. At Hunter's Woods Fellowship House, 50 percent of the residents are Asian, 21 percent are from Middle Eastern countries and the remainder are Russian, Caucasian and Hispanic.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Residents at the Lake Anne Fellowship House also gather for similar events and celebrate holidays. At Lake Anne, 53 percent of the residents are Caucasian, 35 percent are Asian and the remainder are African American, Indian and Hispanic.

Neighborhood Resources at Reston Interfaith.

RESTON INTERFAITH offers job and housing assistance. They offer programs on foreclosure prevention. Through their community centers they offer legal clinics and try to provide a lawyer who is familiar with immigration issues as there is a high demand for that service. They also offer English as a Second Language classes. This is the only program that is geared specifically for immigrants, said Threlkeld.

Reston Interfaith also offers programs on new life skills. "The person attending this program might be new to the community or new to the country," said Threlkeld.

Threlkeld said that Reston

Interfaith's programs need to be responsive, so they can work toward meeting the needs of anyone who comes into their offices. "These are folks that are part of our community. We want to help them integrate. They want to be able to do what everyone else is doing. We try to help them do that," said Threlkeld.

The goal of many of Reston Interfaith's programs is to promote self-sufficiency. "We don't want people to fall from a position of self-sufficiency to dependency. We want to keep them going on [a] self-sufficient path. If we can keep someone in their home through our intervention, then we do that. The work we do here at Reston Interfaith helps provide stability in our community," said Threlkeld.

Dream Land

FROM PAGE 13

ferent, he stopped carrying designer pieces in his stores and began making all of his own.

"I placed goals for myself, from challenge to challenge," Adeler said. "I make mistakes and I learn from them. I don't have much fear of failure."

By 1980, Adeler decided to combine his family-run businesses under one roof. Great Falls was the place he chose to call home for his business and family. "Great Falls ended up being one of the most fantastic communities I've ever lived in," Adeler said.

Adeler Jewelry has provided services to 3,500 of the 7,000 households in Great Falls since it opened its doors over 30 years ago and continues to grow each year. Recently, Adeler won the 2012-2013 International Pearl Design Competition Designers Award as well as placing in the top competitors at the JCK "Jewelers Choice Awards."

In recent months, the internationally recognized jeweler has received requests from various magazines to showcase his designs to Hollywood stylists and celebrities asking to wear his designs, including Sally Fields in the movie Lincoln this year.

Adeler is so appreciative of the opportunities he has been given to succeed in the country he calls "the dream land," that he makes it a point to give back to the community as much as he can through various donations and volunteer work.

"We believe that if you don't give back to the community, you break the rules in how society should be."

His long list of community partnerships include everything from the Red Cross to various organizations benefiting diabetes, veterans and Inova Hospital, and he continues to reach out.

"I have so much to be grateful for," Adeler said. "Every single day I have everything to be grateful for. Life has been extraordinary to us."

WELLBEING

Quick Relief for Holiday Stress

Simple strategies for bringing down anxiety levels in a hurry.

By MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Whether you need to fulfill the wishes of each person on your gift list or find the time to decorate your home, the festive yuletide season can be stressful. In fact, a survey by the American Psychological Association showed that 61 percent of Americans listed lack of money as the top cause of holiday stress, followed by the pressures of gift giving and a lack of time.

"The holidays can cause a lot of stress and anxiety," Michelle Walters-Edwards, Ph.D., department chair and associate professor of health and human performance at Marymount University in Arlington.

Indulging in excess food or alcohol is a stress-relieving strategy for some, say experts, but instead, Walters-Edwards suggests, "Try to remain on track . . . by designating time to relax and unwind."

Walters-Edwards and other experts offer suggestions for getting rid of stress in a hurry.

Turn on the tunes. "Play your favorite music all day," said Linda Berg-Cross, Ph.D., a Potomac, Md., resident. "Have dancing breaks with whoever is in the room with you—'Gangnam Style' or otherwise."

Pound the pavement. "Going for a run outside may

be a good solution," said Joel Martin, Ph.D. an assistant professor of kinesiology at George Mason University in Fairfax. "It does not require any equipment and allows you to escape the stress at your home for a bit. Plus you get some fresh air."

Walters-Edwards underscores the importance of exercise and finding creative way to incorporate it into one's schedule, especially during the holidays: "Exercise is a proven way to reduce tension and stress in the body as well as prevent the onset of other adverse health issues," she said. "There are many apps available to download for exercise videos that you can take on the go [and] meditation timers to remind you to step out of the chaos and take time to unwind."

And finally, say experts, gratitude can relieve stress. "Go to bed thinking of what you are grateful for during the day, no matter how stressed you are walking into the bedroom," said Berg.

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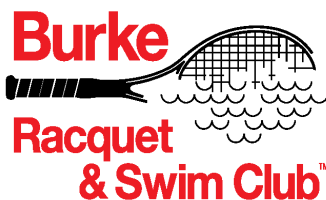


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Holiday Revels With a Safety Net

A serious backup, but seriously, make a plan ahead of time.

There is a little life in the economy this year, and that is quite likely to allow some to be the life of the party.

You know the drill, the five-to-seven or six-to-eight drop-in happy hour, you've been invited to five of them, and you could attend an infinite number of these between now and the second day of 2013. And there are many other varieties of holiday festivities, many involving more than a drink or two.

So make a plan. Plan for a designated driver. Plan to celebrate at home. Plan to spend the night. Plan to take public transportation. Plan to call a friend for a ride home. But if the best laid plans go awry, Washington Regional Alcohol program has a safety net for you.

The annual Holiday SoberRide program will operate 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. Friday, Dec. 14, 2012 until Tuesday, Jan. 1, 2013 as a way to keep impaired drivers off the road during this traditionally high-risk holiday period.

Residents celebrating with alcohol may call the toll-free SoberRide phone number 1-800-200-TAXI for a no-cost (up to \$ 30 fare) safe ride home. Last holiday season, more than 2,000 people used the service.

Local taxicab companies will be providing this no-cost service to local residents age 21 and older who otherwise may have attempted to drive home after drinking.

More information at www.soberride.com.

Parents can encourage their young adult children who are over 21 to carry the number with them if they are celebrating. It's probably more important to talk to their underage revelers about moderation and contingency plans to avoid drinking and driving, or risking getting into a car with an underage driver who might have been drinking.

Correction

Last week's editorial included information about upcoming community meetings on the search for a new superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools. Thank you to School Board member Cathy Smith for noticing that we omitted one meeting, Dec. 5 at Chantilly High School. Here are the meeting dates and places repeated, including Chantilly:

Dec. 4—7 p.m., cafeteria, Langley High School, 6520 Georgetown Pike, McLean, VA 22101.

Dec. 5—7 p.m., cafeteria, Robinson Secondary School, 5035 Sideburn Road, Fairfax, VA 22032.

Dec. 5—7 p.m., cafeteria, Chantilly High School, 4201 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly, VA 20151.

Dec. 6—10 a.m. Gatehouse Administration Center, 8115 Gatehouse Road, Falls Church, VA 22042 Room 1600.

Dec. 6—7 p.m., cafeteria, Annandale High School, 4700 Medford Drive, Annandale, VA 22003.

Dec. 6—7 p.m., cafeteria, Groveton Elementary School, 6900 Harrison Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306.

Dec. 7—1 p.m., Gatehouse Administration Center, 8115 Gatehouse Road, Falls Church, VA 22042 Room 1600.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Another Look At Diversity

To the Editor:

In reading "Embracing Our Diversity" by U. S. Rep. Gerry Connolly, in the Nov. 22, 2012 edition of The Connection, I nearly choked when I came to his third paragraph in which he made the following statement: "I tell them that America, a country of immigrants, is a place of opportunity where you can pursue your dreams and raise your families without fearing that somebody's government is going to tell you what to think, how to express yourself, what to believe or how to worship." My question to the representative is this: What rock have you been living under for the past two years?

While the representative, his fellow cronies and the media continue to sweep it under the rug and turn a blind eye, many of us with God-loving and God-fearing consciences continue to fight the Health and Human Services (HHS) Mandate. You see, those very same rights that Mr. Connolly claims we have in this blessed country are being taken away under the HHS Mandate. If you think otherwise, please take the time to educate yourself and read about it. The issue at hand is not about a woman's right to birth control. If you believe that, then you have sadly fallen victim to the dumbed-down version of the issue.

Simply put, this is about the United States Government getting into our heads. The government is telling its citizens that if a business or organization does not serve only

its own, then those owners or organizations have a choice to make: 1. Serve only others who have the same beliefs you do, and then you can carry on; or 2. Go along with what the government tells you to do, and in doing so, violate your conscience; or 3. Stay open, serve and/or employ whomever is in need, and be fined heavily for each infraction; or 4. Shut your doors if you don't want to comply. Don't be fooled by the words "religious employer exemption" and "accommodation," which have been thrown to us, like scraps to a hungry dog. Our forefathers would not allow this assault on our freedom and this is precisely why there are currently 43 lawsuits against the current administration over the HHS Mandate. This is unprecedented in our nation's history!

Take pause: just imagine if every religious-run hospital, school and charity that helps the poor and immigrants had to shut their doors because they refused to violate their faith? Who then will be filling the huge gap in services? Perhaps it will be all of those people who claim that our religious faith is being forced on them? Will they, along with our local, state and federal agencies, fill the need and take care of all of the sick, the hungry, the homeless, the elderly, the orphans, the students, the childless, etc., who were previously served by religious groups? Let's not forget about all of the newly unemployed, whose employers refused to violate their consciences and had to shut down their businesses instead. What will come of it all?

So in the end, Representative Connolly, we can embrace our di-

versity all we want, but if our fundamental freedoms continue to be taken away, our country may become a country of emigrants, rather than immigrants.

Pilar Jones
Fairfax

Tax Cuts for Wealthiest: Not Right and Not Smart

Right now in D.C., our representatives are trying to find a solution to keep us from going over the "fiscal cliff." But too many congressmen are attempting to hold the negotiations hostage, insisting everyone's taxes go up unless President Obama and the Senate agree to extend tax breaks to the wealthiest 2 percent.

I'm among that wealthiest 2 percent of Americans, so I have skin in the game, so to speak. Yet I strongly oppose prolonging the special tax breaks for the wealthiest. We need such breaks the least, as we have been the largest beneficiaries of the tax cuts over the past 10 years. Moreover, our income has grown while the average American's has not, so we need to start paying our fair share. Not since the early 20th century has our country experienced a wage gap between the best-paid Americans and average wage earners as large as the one that exists today.

I am willing to pay my fair share to support the country that has given me so much and provided opportu-

nities for me to succeed. It's only fair to expect that I will chip in to make sure that others have the same opportunities I have had. The Bush tax cuts that only go to the richest 2 percent give an average tax break of nearly \$150,000 to each household that makes more than \$1 million a year. We've been getting this extra break for a decade.

Ending the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy would save nearly \$750 billion over the next 10 years—money desperately needed to put fiscal house in order. Bankrupting the government by providing endless tax cuts for the wealthiest is not right and is not smart. It will lead to the regression in economic growth we are seeing in Europe, and will only fuel conservative cries to cut social safety net programs while the rich enjoy continued expansion of their income and wealth as has been true over the last ten years. Business owners like me know that restoring taxes to Clinton-era rates on the portion of our profits above \$250,000 in household income would have no effect on our decisions about whether to hire additional workers.

Our country faces a choice. It can ask the wealthiest 2 percent to accept tax rates closer to what other Americans pay so we can shrink the deficit while protecting middle-class priorities such as education and Medicare from deep cutbacks. Or we can slash investments vital to our nation's future in order to be even more generous to those of us who need tax breaks the least. That shouldn't be a hard choice.

Joel Kanter
McLean

OPINION

American Conversations From Nepal

BY KRISHNA SHARMA

Although it is a little over six years since I first landed in the USA from Nepal, it is not too early to say that I am living the dream. For me, the American dream is not about amassing money and living in luxury, but about living freely and fully in mutual harmony in a community. It is about happily raising a family in a peaceful and safe environment, giving kids the best education possible, and adapting to the American culture of “giving.”

The American dream does not come easily, as some people think, since it is about relentlessly engaging in fields of endeavor with utmost honesty and diligence. I remember my wife and I being carless, near penniless, and spending half the days transferring buses and trains to get to assignments or training school. Had we been a little languid during those hard times, we would not be who and where we are today. We were equally happy to celebrate our daughter's fourth birthday in our new homeland although we did not have a camera to capture the birthday moments.

There are nations where hard



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Krishna Sharma (right) with Marybeth Markey, president of International Campaign for Tibet in Washington D.C.

work is not always rewarded, due to deeply disturbing socio-political environments. There are cultures with dutifully resilient people whose dreams are forever out of reach. I discovered America as a place where people can actually achieve their dreams by discovering and rediscovering their respective places in the society, utilize America's freedom, liberty and vast support resources, and

constantly improving themselves.

Working at The Washington Post was rewarding in many ways. The best lesson I learned while at the Post was that I needed to unlearn first and then seek a niche acceptable to tomorrow's market.

Hosting the TV talk-show, “American Conversations: Connecting Frontiers”, and interviewing experts and expat community leaders on issues that matter the most to the Nepali Diaspora community is a pleasant experience. And this was made possible because of the resourceful public and private American dynamics. Specifically, Fairfax County, where I live, provided me almost everything—opportunity, basic training, a platform to grow and a pat on the back from friends like Hans Sawyer who is a life-long friend of Nepal and Tibet.

My other profession takes me to almost all the wonderful states on the East Coast and some in the Midwest. I was offered a move to Atlanta for a job with more money. But we loved Fairfax so much that we decided to make it our hometown.

Krishna Sharma is president of the Vision for Nepal Foundation.

FOCUS ON IMMIGRATION

Schools Attract Immigrants to Fairfax

BY KIRK RANDALL

Our community of 200 single family homes in central Fairfax is far more culturally diverse than when Hickory Farms was built while the first wave of refugees from the Vietnam War resettled in the Washington area in the late 1970s. While the Vietnamese led the way, the biggest impact on our community has been the second wave of Indian, Pakistani and Korean immigrants who have sought out new lives in Fairfax County.

What attracts immigrants to our community? While we may boast of our nicely maintained, affordable homes, what really brings them in is our public schools. The immigrant community's emphasis on education can be seen in the proliferation of college prep tutoring businesses in nearby shopping centers. We have even had homeowners purchase houses in our community sight-unseen, before they even arrived in America. Now, that speaks worlds about the desirability of Fairfax County as a place in which to raise a family.

America has always been a na-



Kirk F. Randall resides in Fairfax.

tion of immigrants, and it continues to attract the best and brightest and most ambitious from these countries. We need them to fuel our growing local economy and keep Virginia and America competitive in the world market.

Is there a downside to so many foreign speaking neighbors? Only in the short term. As a member of my community's board of directors, I get occasional complaints from old timers that the newcomers don't volunteer for the board

of directors or committees, neighborhood watch, don't read the community newsletter which reminds residents of community rules, etc. There may be many reasons for this; English language difficulties, long work hours, or cultural backgrounds that don't value community or school participation by elders. That problem will pass, as we see decades later that the children of the first wave have fully assimilated in our communities. America's history has shown that our immigrants eventually assimilate, and our country is for the better. When my great grandfather and his family immigrated from Italy in the 1890s, it took them a few decades to fit in. It's no different today.

Meanwhile, we get to enjoy the benefits immigrant diversity brings to the community, be it being exposed to new foods or hearing first hand stories of life in other lands.

So, the next time your community plans its Independence Day potluck picnic, please ask your new neighbors to bring along a special dish from their homeland to share.

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HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT & GIFT GUIDE

Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416. Deadline is Friday. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

FRIDAY/DEC. 7

Drumming with Dishes: The Holiday Edition. 10:30 a.m., W-3 Theatre at the Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. An adventurous toddler invites her shy imaginary friend to a kitchen where the two cook up music and see what makes the holiday season the most wonderful time of the year; the play is a 35-minute interactive, non-verbal show with two adult actors and a musician, geared toward children ages 2-6. \$8 (children under 12 months, free). www.artsonthehorizon.org.

Revocation. 5:30 p.m., at Empire, 6355 Rolling Road, Springfield. The metal band from Massachusetts tours with The Faceless, playing songs from their new EP Teratogenesis. \$16. www.facebook.com/Revocation.

Sweeney Todd—The Demon Barber of Fleet Street. 7 p.m., at Thomas Jefferson High School, 6560 Braddock Road, Alexandria. The student choir along with the TJ faculty, parent and alumni choirs perform the Sondheim classic about the vengeful London barber and his landlady's mysterious meat pies. \$10. www.tjchoir.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 8

Drumming with Dishes: The Holiday Edition. 9:45 and 11:15 a.m., W-3 Theatre at the Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. An adventurous toddler invites her shy imaginary friend to a kitchen where the two cook up music and see what makes the holiday season the most wonderful time of the year; the play is a 35-minute interactive, non-verbal show with two adult actors and a musician, geared toward children ages 2-6. \$8 (children under 12 months, free). www.artsonthehorizon.org.

Magical Christmas. 1 p.m., at the W-3 Theatre, the Lorton Workhouse, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Santa hasn't

stopped in the town of Believe for three whole years and doesn't even know the place exists—can Joy's grandfather turn the town Christmas spirit around? \$8, children; \$12, adults. www.lortonarts.org.

2nd Saturday Art Walk. 6-9 p.m. Workhouse Art Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Meet each building's featured artist, a reception in W-16 from 6-7 p.m. and more. www.WorkhouseArts.org.

Sweeney Todd—The Demon Barber of Fleet Street. 7 p.m., at Thomas Jefferson High School, 6560 Braddock Road, Alexandria. The student choir along with the TJ faculty, parent and alumni choirs perform the Sondheim classic about the vengeful London barber and his landlady's mysterious meat pies. \$10. www.tjchoir.org.

A Season of Joy. 7:30 p.m., at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 5800 Backlick Road, Springfield. The Northern Virginia Chorale, accompanied by a chamber orchestra, will perform Vivaldi's Gloria, as well as seasonal favorites by Handel, Rutter and others, along with the Chorale's traditional carol sing-along. Advanced tickets \$15 at northernvirginiachorale.org; at the door \$10 students (12-24); Under 12 free.

Fairfax Symphony Orchestra: Masterworks III. 8 p.m. George Mason University Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Conductor Christopher Zimmerman and pianist James Dick perform Rossini's Overture to La

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The Japanese Americans' Care Fund, a nonprofit, brings together artists with Japanese heritage from the Washington D.C. Metro area to share their wares on Sunday, Dec. 9 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Kena Shriners Annex Building, 9001 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. \$2; children under 12, free. 703-573-4202, www.jacarefund.org or carefund@jacarefund.org.

Gazza Ladra plus Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 and Symphony No. 6, "Pathétique." \$25-\$55. 703-563-1990 or www.fairfaxsymphony.org.

SUNDAY/DEC. 9

Drumming with Dishes: The Holiday Edition. 11 a.m., W-3 Theatre at the Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. An adventurous toddler invites her shy imaginary friend to a kitchen where the two cook up music and see what makes the holiday season the most wonderful time of the year; the play is a 35-minute interactive, non-verbal show with two adult actors and a musician, geared toward children ages 2-6. \$8 (children under 12 months, free). www.artsonthehorizon.org.

Sonata Arctica and Arsis. 6-11:30 p.m., at Empire, 6355 Rolling Road, Springfield. A metal concert open to all ages, also featuring Yesterdays Saints, Fallen Martyr, Trihexyn and Radamanthys. \$18. www.empire-nova.com.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 12

Fabulous Fashions for the Holidays. 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., at Springfield Golf & Country Club, 8301 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. The day includes a luncheon, bake sale and showcased holiday fashions from attire for a holiday luncheon to a black-tie affair; make reservations for luncheon and complementary childcare by Dec. 7. 703-590-6552 or SpringWmConn@yahoo.com.

FRIDAY/DEC. 14

Christmas Cantata, "A World of Christmas." 11 a.m., at Franconia United Methodist Church, 6037 Franconia Road, Alexandria. Joseph Martin gives the world in his new cantata that celebrates the carols and traditions of Christmas. The church is handicapped accessible and assisted listening devices are available. 703

971-5151 or admin@franconiaumc.org. <http://www.franconiaumc.org>.

SATURDAY/DEC. 15

Holiday Art Show. Noon-8 p.m., at Clifton Town Hall, 12641 Chapel Road, Clifton. The Art Guild of Clifton, supported by Clifton Betterment Association, serve up art demonstrations, wine tasting, and the art show and sale to benefit your holiday giftings and spirit. A reception follows the show at 6 p.m. 703-830-1480 or www.artguildofclifton.org.

A Magical Christmas. 1 p.m., at the W-3 Theatre, the Lorton Workhouse, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Santa hasn't stopped in the town of Believe for three whole years and doesn't even know the place exists—can Joy's grandfather turn the town Christmas spirit around? \$8, children; \$12, adults. www.lortonarts.org.

Date Night: Ballroom Social Dance. 7:30 p.m. lesson, 8-10:30 p.m. open dance, at the Lorton Workhouse, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. An instructor-led evening of ballroom dancing in casual dress with complimentary refreshments and a cash bar. \$5, mini-lesson; \$10, dance. www.lortonarts.org.

Date Night: Chef's Table. 8-10 p.m., at the Vulcan Gallery, Lorton Workhouse, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Bring someone special for an evening of cooking and learn easy yet impressive techniques behind a menu of dishes. Reservations. \$80. www.lortonarts.org.

SUNDAY/DEC. 16

"The Journey: A Season of Reflections: Walking the Road to Bethlehem" Bible Study. 9:30 a.m., at Franconia United Methodist Church, 6037 Franconia Road, Alexandria. Sit down with pastor and best-selling author Adam Hamilton as he guides through a four-week devotional based on the most joyous event in history. This Bible Study includes short, reflective devotions combined with Scripture readings and heartfelt prayers. 703 971-5151 or <http://www.franconiaumc.org>.

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The Hub Theater presents "How I Paid for College."

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

"My life is a thousand-piece jigsaw puzzle I have to put together while wearing mittens" is one of the off-beat lines that powers "How I Paid for College," by Helen Hayes Award-winning playwright Marc Acito. The premiere play opens Friday, Dec. 7, at the ever-adventurous Hub Theater in Fairfax.

Acito has taken his 2004 Ken Kesey Award for Fiction-winning farce of a coming-of-age novel, "How I Paid for College," and turned it into a one actor, 20 character, fast-paced, musical comedy production.

The story line is about mundane life in a New Jersey suburb. Or is it? A seem-

ingly carefree teen, named Edward Zanni (Alex Brightman), is struggling with what to do next with his life. His newly remarried father does not share his son's enthusiasm for life in the theater.

With some good buddies, the teen contrives a break-neck plan requiring disguises galore, schemes to test the most fertile imagination and even a little blackmail. Along the way he interacts with any number of colorful characters. Without giving anything away—some quite valuable, unexpected lessons are learned.

"I have long looked for a show about the time in life when our kids go away to school," said Pafumi. "It's an exciting and terrifying time for both parents and their children. And it's a life change that so many in our community go through."

"How I Paid for College" combines "hilarity with moments of weight and relevance. The combination makes for a play that will keep us laughing without losing the importance of this journey into adulthood," said Pafumi.

The Hub used a nation-wide search to find and cast Brightman. "He has natural charm and sweetness, some wicked comic chops, is extremely strong at character work, and has a beautiful voice."

The production includes original music and lyrics by playwright Acito. Matt Neilson is the sound designer. Together they developed something "playful and outrageous," said Pafumi.

For inspiration, Acito noted, "like my alter ego, Edward Zanni, I battled with my father over majoring in theatre. Unlike my character, I didn't turn to a life of crime to pay for

Where and When

"How I Paid for College" produced by the Hub Theater at the John Swayze Theatre, The New School of Northern Virginia, 9431 Silver King Road, Fairfax. Performances Dec. 7-30, 2012. Friday & Saturday evenings 8 p.m., Saturday & Sunday matinees 2 p.m., and Sunday evenings 7 p.m. Tickets: \$15-\$30. Call 800-494-8497 or visit www.thehubtheatre.org. Note: for ages 13 and up.



Alex Brightman in his role as Edward Zanni.

it... the play feels like a guided tour of the pinball machine that is my brain."

"A one-man show is not something that comes along all the time. It is a rare opportunity to showcase everything you have with no safety net... it's all adrenaline and it's all 'go!'" said Brightman.

PHOTO BY MATTHEW MURPHY/COURTESY OF THE HUB THEATER

PEOPLE

US Army's Lt. Col. Burrell and Staff Sergeant Bridges congratulate Stephen Smith, member of the South County High School (SCHS) Marching Stallions, on his being chosen to play in the Army All-American Marching Band.



South County Senior Chosen for U.S. Army All-American Bowl Marching Band

Stephen Smith of South County High School has been chosen as a member of the 2013 U.S. Army All-American Marching Band. Smith will join an elite group of musicians who will perform during half-time of the U.S. Army All-American Bowl at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas.

The U.S. Army All-American Marching Band recognizes the top 125 high school senior marching musicians and color guard members from across the country, showcasing their talents during the largest celebration of high school football in America, the U.S. Army All-American Bowl, televised live on NBC at 1:00 p.m. EST on Saturday, Jan. 5, 2013.

For more than 12 years, the U.S. Army All-American Bowl has been the nation's premier high school football game, serving as the preeminent launching pad for America's future college and NFL stars. Adrian

Peterson, Mark Sanchez, Tim Tebow, Ndamukong Suh, Marcus Lattimore, and Andrew Luck all made their national debuts as U.S. Army All-Americans.

In the 2012 NFL Draft Andrew Luck became the first U.S. Army All-American Bowl alumnus to be selected with the first overall pick. The 2012 U.S. Army All-American Bowl drew a crowd of 39,011 to the Alamodome, and was the most-watched sporting event on television over the weekend, excluding the NFL playoffs.

For more information on the U.S. Army All-American Bowl and its related events visit www.usarmyallamericanbowl.com and www.goarmy.com/events/aab or the official Facebook and Twitter pages located at <http://www.facebook.com/USArmyAllAmericanBowl>, <http://www.facebook.com/USAAAMB> and www.twitter.com/armyallamerican.

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SPORTS

Woodson Bigs Show Perimeter Touch Against Robinson

Cavaliers open season with 17-point win against the Rams.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

Tommy Stepka (6-foot-6), Peter Murray (6-foot-4) and Andy Stynchula (6-foot-4) each possess the size to patrol the paint for the Woodson boys' basketball team. But while each has the ability to make an impact inside, the Cavalier trio also proved potent from the perimeter during the first half of Friday's season opener.

Stepka, Murray and Stynchula combined to hit five first-half three-pointers as Woodson built a double-digit halftime lead against Robinson. The Cavaliers survived a third-quarter surge by the Rams and then cruised to a 68-51 victory on Nov. 30 during the first night of the Red Jenkins Tipoff Classic at Woodson High School.

"We're kind of weird; all our big guys kind of shoot the ball and our little guys drive the ball to the basket [and] score the ball near the basket," Woodson Head Coach Doug Craig said. "Andy, Peter and Tommy can obviously all shoot the ball from the perimeter. It kind of gives us a dimension that we can do some things that are a little unorthodox and we're able to get some shots up that way."

Stepka, Woodson's leading scorer last season, knocked down a pair of three-pointers en route to a game-high 19 points. His second from long distance gave the Cavaliers a 29-16 advantage with 4:53 remaining in the first half.

"I feel like once one person knocks down a three, it gets everyone else going," Stepka said, "and then they have their confidence and they knock down threes. The next thing you know everyone's knocking threes and it's hard to stop."

Murray also made two three-pointers. His first gave the Cavaliers an early 7-0 lead and his second gave Woodson a 23-12 advantage near the end of the opening quarter. Murray, who finished with 16 points and 13 rebounds, credited sophomore point guard Eric Bowles for creating open looks for others.

"The good thing about Eric is Eric's able to create space for everybody else," Murray said. "He draws a ton of attention as a great point guard and then that allows me, Tommy and [senior guard] Damian [Bell] and other people to get these wide-open shots and knock them down."

Stynchula (five points) and Bell (three points) each made one 3-pointer in the first half.

Bowles scored eight points, grabbed eight rebounds and dished out six assists.

Stynchula's three-pointer gave Woodson an 18-point second-quarter lead, its largest of the first half. The Cavaliers entered halftime with a 39-23 advantage, but Robinson made things interesting in the third quarter.

The Rams opened the second half on a 12-4 run, cutting the Woodson lead to single digits when a bucket by senior guard Nate Hackett made the score 43-35 midway through the period. A three-point play by senior guard Keegan Ruddy in the final minute of the third quarter and another Ruddy bucket in early



Woodson junior Andy Stynchula can make an impact in the paint or around the perimeter.

PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION



Robinson junior guard Jared Steen attempts to shoot over the top of a Woodson defender on Nov. 30.

in the fourth pulled Robinson within four at 51-47. But the Rams would get no closer as Woodson outscored Robinson, 17-4, for the remainder of the contest.

The Rams outscored the Cavaliers, 22-12, in the third quarter, but were outscored, 56-29, during the other 24 minutes.

"We played an outstanding third quarter. We played a terrible first half," Robinson Head Coach Brian Nelson said. "To Woodson's credit, they made a ton of shots, but we made things awfully easy on them by giving them a lot of open shots."

"We didn't defend in the first half anywhere close to the way that we need to defend and the way that I know we're capable of defending. We showed in the third quarter how capable we are as a defensive team and how we can turn our defense into offense. We didn't do that at all in the first half."

Hackett led Robinson with 12 points. Ruddy finished with 11 points and junior guard Jared Steen added eight. Junior guard Matt Fall and senior forward Will Grooms each scored six points.

Senior forward Nick Bynum got in foul trouble and finished with two points, but figures to be a major contributor during the season.

Woodson defeated Fairfax, 55-46, on Dec. 1 and lost to Bishop O'Connell, 74-55, on Dec. 4. The Cavaliers traveled to face Wakefield on Dec. 5, which was after The Connection's deadline. Woodson will host Langley at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 7.

Robinson defeated Annandale, 67-53, during its season opener on Nov. 27. The Rams lost to Wakefield, 57-41, on Dec. 1 and defeated South County, 57-50, on Dec. 4. Robinson (2-2) will host Lake Braddock at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 7.



West Springfield outfielder and pitcher Frank Sturek, Jr. signed to play with Charleston Southern University.



West Springfield middle infielder Taylor Boyd signed to play with Saint Joseph's University.

Spartan Baseball Players Sign With Division I Schools

West Springfield senior baseball players Frank Sturek, Jr. and Taylor Boyd recently signed with Division I schools. Sturek, an outfielder, signed with Charleston Southern University and Boyd, a middle infielder, signed with Saint Joseph's University.

Sturek, who also plays football, has played varsity baseball at West Springfield since his freshman year. He is a two-year starting center fielder and pitcher who also plays for the Evoshield Canes Showcase Travel Baseball program during the summer.

In addition to playing outfield for his high school team, Sturek was an all-district honorable mention right-handed pitcher who threw a no-hitter during the regular season and a six-hit, seven-inning shutout in the Virginia AAA Northern Region semifinals. During the 2011 high school district, regional and state playoffs Sturek batted .333 with a .500 slugging percentage. His pitching, performance at the plate and solid defense helped the Spartans finish second in the Patriot District, win the Northern Region championship and return to the Virginia AAA state playoffs. He was a member of West Springfield's AAA Virginia State championship team in 2010 as a freshman.

Sturek's high school athletic awards include honorable mention all-district for baseball (outfielder, pitcher) in 2010 and 2011 and football (inside linebacker, free safety)

in 2010 and 2011. He was selected to the All-Patriot District first team as a defensive back, second as a wide receiver, and honorable mention as a punt returner. He maintains a 3.68 GPA and has already earned college credits in human geography and European history through his performance on College Board Advanced Placement (AP) exams.

Boyd is a 5-foot-9, 160-pound middle infielder who has played varsity baseball at West Springfield since his freshman year. He is a two-year varsity starting shortstop and also played for the Virginia Shamrocks in the summer and the Evoshield Canes Showcase Travel Baseball program during the fall. Boyd also plays basketball.

Evoshield Canes North 18U Coach and West Springfield Associate Head Coach John Bachelor said about Boyd: "Taylor is the kind of player that every coach wants to have a roster full of. He is a tremendous student, a great leader, one of the best defensive shortstops I have ever coached, and his instincts are at the top of his class. Taylor just has a feel for the game that you can't teach and he wreaks havoc on the base paths. St Joe's has locked up a great player, and even better young man. I have no doubt in my mind he will make an impact on the Hawk's Baseball program in a positive manner on and off the field."

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