

Nike Park Opens Artificial Turf Field

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Putting a Face on Homelessness

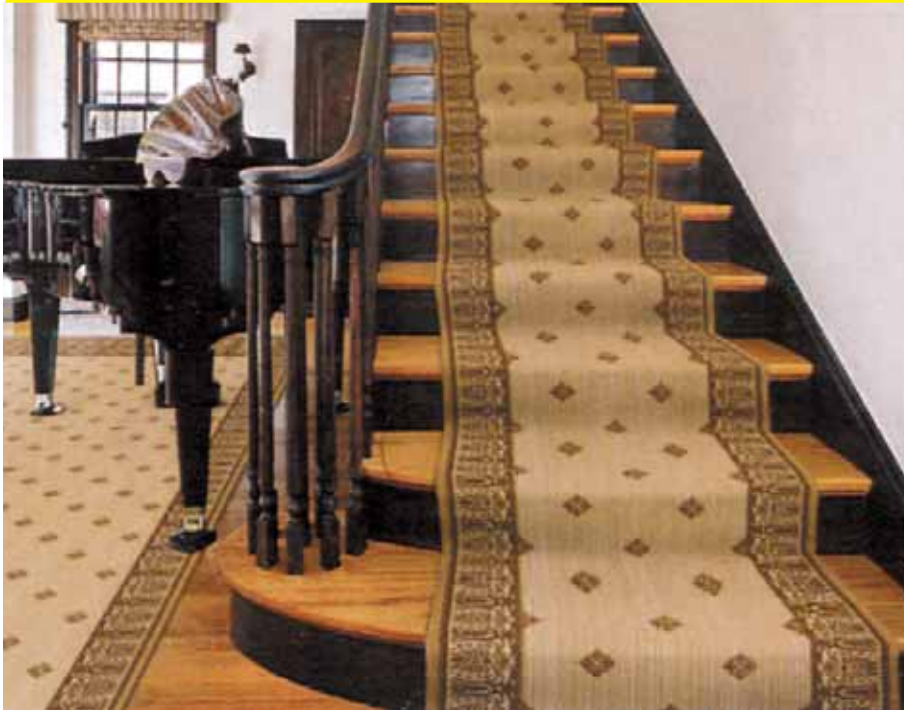
NEWS, PAGE 4

Girls lacrosse players get time in on the new artificial turf field at Great Falls Nike Park Saturday, March 2.

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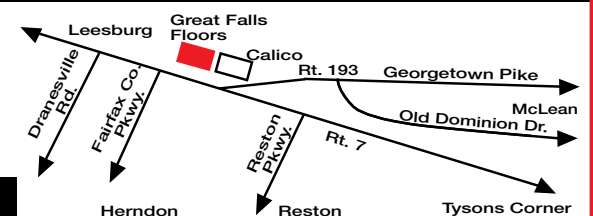
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NEWS

Local officials and lacrosse players celebrate the ribbon cutting of the new artificial turf field at Great Falls Nike Park Saturday, March 2.



PHOTOS BY
ALEX McVEIGH/
THE CONNECTION

Nike Park Opens Artificial Turf Field

Field is joint effort between county and community.

BY ALEX McVEIGH
THE CONNECTION

The artificial turf field at Great Falls Nike Park was officially opened Saturday, March 2, giving local athletes a new playing surface. The \$1.4 million field with lighting is the result of a joint venture between the Fairfax County Park Authority, Board of Supervisors, Department of Neighborhood and Community Services and Athletics Council.

"The conversion of this turf field is a major event, and this will change the level of competition, the amount of practice time and time spent playing," said Kevin Fay, the Dranesville representative on the park authority board. "When I became the park board member for Dranesville 10 years ago, we had one turf field in the district. Today we have at least 11 with three to five more on the way."

Deb Garris, manager of the county's Synthetic Turf Fields branch, estimated that the artificial turf would increase playing capacity by 62 percent by not losing time to muddy, dangerous conditions and the lighting would also increase playing time, which reduces the need to build additional fields when land to do so is scarce.

"This is the 32nd artificial turf field in the county, and probably the greatest satisfaction I've had, just knowing all the people who put a lot of work behind this on a very compressed schedule," she said.

IN 2004, the county performed a needs assessment for athletic fields, and found that the county was 94 fields short of community demand. Rectangular fields are in especially high demand.

"There was tremendous involvement by the Great Falls community and the park's neighbors, who obviously had opinions about this, and were very cooperative throughout the process," said Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville). "With that many players, we could have had chaos, but we came together to seek realistic solutions to benefit the young players who enjoy this field and the neighbors seeking safety when it comes to flooding in inclement weather."

The county's Department of Public Works and Environmental Services also funded more than \$365,000 for stormwater remediation. DPWES Di-



Glenn Tofil, commissioner of Great Falls Lacrosse, speaks at the ribbon cutting ceremony of the new artificial turf field at Great Falls Nike Park Saturday, March 2.

rector James Patteson said the field represented a "creative environmental solution" to stormwater issues in the area.

"This field helps the drainage, not only for the local community by reducing flooding, it reduces the storm water velocity which helps the Potomac River and helps reduce nitrogen and phosphorus pollution which creates dead zones in the Chesapeake Bay," he said.

Work around the field includes a new asphalt path from the parking lot to the field, new fencing and goalposts around the field, and a new scoreboard.

"We've had the opportunity to play on this field for a few months, and the biggest thing I've heard back from players and parents when they see it for the first time is 'wow, that's a beautiful field,'" said Glenn Tofil, commissioner of Great Falls Lacrosse. "When you see this field at night it's absolutely spectacular."

Even in the cold, wintry conditions Saturday, March 2, dozens of young male and female lacrosse players were on the field.

"It's hard to even call what was here before a field, more like an open grassy area with a few goals placed at the ends," said James Stone, whose son plays lacrosse in Great Falls. "Now it looks like a state-of-the-art athletic structure, and according to everyone I've talked to it's a world of difference, they really love playing on it."

THE ARTIFICIAL TURF FIELD was originally slated for Leo Santaballa Field, located behind the Great Falls Library. After community members raised concerns, it was moved to Great Falls Nike Park.



PHOTO BY BILL CANIS

From right, VDOT Chief Engineer Garrett Moore and arborist Guy Meilleur perform tests on the tree near the intersection of Georgetown Pike and Walker Road. Moore decided Friday, March 1, to take the tree down.

VDOT Decides Fate of Trees

Tree closest to Walker Road to be removed, remaining tree to be pruned.

BY ALEX McVEIGH
THE CONNECTION

After more than six months of back-and-forth, including second, third and fourth opinions, VDOT Chief Engineer Garrett Moore has decided that one of the two trees at the intersection of Georgetown Pike and Walker

Road will be removed, and the other will be pruned and monitored for further deterioration.

"In the end, it was the overwhelming opinion of various expert arborists that one tree, the one closest to the corner, was too ill and in danger of fall

SEE WALKER ROAD,
PAGE 15



PHOTO BY ALEX McVEIGH/THE CONNECTION

The Virginia Department of transportation has decided to cut down the tree on the right, at the intersection of Georgetown Pike and Walker Road, out of concern for potential safety hazards.



PHOTOS BY ROBBIE HAMMER/THE CONNECTION

Lesha Debose and Tchonda Bishop call out to those living in a homeless encampment in the Lorton area while volunteering their time to help identify and register the chronically homeless during Registry Week.



Encampments like this were found scattered around the Lorton area, usually near major shopping areas, but sometimes in isolated fields. Not all encampments had tents for people to sleep; volunteers often found old couches and sleeping bags, or temporary shelters made of cardboard, plastic and scrap pieces of wood.

Putting a Face on Homelessness

462 homeless interviewed during Registry Week, an intense effort to document Fairfax County's chronic homeless.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

Under a bright moon on a chilly Monday morning, a team of volunteers and homeless advocates roamed the woods near Reston Town Center to put a name and a face to those in Fairfax County considered "chronically homeless."

One of the teams, which included Supervisor Cathy Hudgins (D-Hunter Mill), stumbled across wood scraps, broken branches and pieces of plastic that served as the home for Thomas, a 40-year-old unemployed carpenter from Florida who had been living under a cluster of trees since Christmas Eve.

Wearing several layers of clothing, including a dark blue hoodie for warmth and camouflage, Thomas apologized for his living conditions.

"I'm really sorry you all had to come out like this. Be careful of the branches," he told volunteers.

Thomas said a rough divorce and getting laid off from his job contributed to his homelessness. He said the temperature, nearing 40 degrees by 5 a.m. on Monday, Feb. 25, wasn't "too bad for sleeping. I've slept in worse."

"My biggest concern is getting robbed or beaten. That's why I try to protect myself with this little fortress of branches and blankets," he said.

Thomas was just one of 462 chronically homeless individuals found in the woods, in cars, and in tents last week.

Armed with flashlights, food, gift cards and assorted items of warm clothing, more than 200 volunteers and homeless advocates fanned out across Fairfax County for three days—Monday, Feb. 25, through Wednesday, Feb. 27—roaming the woods



PHOTO BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION

Cedric Smith, 40, has been homeless and living in a tent behind a Herndon shopping center for the past five years. On Monday, Feb. 23, Supervisor Cathy Hudgins (D-Hunter Mill) talked with Smith about resources available to help him find a permanent home.

and other homeless "hot spots" to count, photograph and get names and histories for the county's chronically homeless.

THE UNPRECEDENTED EFFORT to create a name and photographic "registry" is a component of the 100,000 Homes Campaign, a nationwide initiative to help nonprofits and local governments prioritize and allocate housing and support resources for the chronically homeless, defined as those living consistently without a home for more than a year.

The county's goal is to get half of them in housing within three years.

"I was struck by the differences in talk-

ing with someone in their 'home'—in their space—versus when we are in shelter and other settings where we must set the rules," said Kerrie Wilson, CEO of Reston Interfaith. "There was a sense of pride from those homeless interviewed when they showed volunteers their campsites."

"After giving my gloves to a man who immediately placed them on his hands for warmth, I realized that this is home and his struggle every day," said Dean Klein, director of the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness (OPEH).

Cedric Smith, 50, who has been homeless for five years, was found living in a tent behind a Herndon shopping center. Super-

Key findings from Registry Week

Volunteers and homeless advocates gathered the following information from the 462 individuals they interviewed last week. The information was released during a community debrief at Jubilee Christian Center on Monday, March 4.

- ❖ Nearly a quarter were between 18-34 years old
- ❖ 10 percent were veterans
- ❖ Nearly half were employed
- ❖ The largest number of chronically homeless (151) were found in the Route 1 corridor
- ❖ More than three-quarters of the chronically homeless were male
- ❖ "Unable to pay rent/utilities" and "job loss" were the most often cited reasons for homelessness
- ❖ 40 percent had a physical disability

visor Cathy Hudgins asked him how he became homeless and his goals for the future.

"Five years from now, I hope to be in my own apartment," he said. He told Hudgins and other volunteers that he also misses his two children, who live in southern Virginia.

"I want to have a place where they can visit. They're in my heart every day. ... They're my primary concern and they keep me going every day," he said.

HUDGINS, who has worked extensively with Fairfax County's nonprofits to help find affordable housing for the homeless, said she hoped the 100K homes campaign opens doors and eyes to the plight of homeless individuals.

"We have to step up to this question. ... Are we going to walk away from this tonight and say, 'That's just the way people live?' Well, it's not the way people should live," Hudgins said.

"The theme for me this week was persistence," said Amanda Andere, executive director of FACETS. "Most importantly the persistence of the men and women we met living in their cars or on the street. In the worst conditions they continued to smile and seemed hopeful this caring community would help find them a home. Some of them were gone to work before we got there or were on their way back to the woods from an overnight shift."

NEWS

Children's Festival and Egg Hunt on March 24

The Great Falls Optimist Club and Adeler Jewelers will present the 29th Annual Children's Festival and Egg Hunt on March 24, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. There will be rides, games in the field behind the Great Falls Post Office, and of course the grand finale, the Egg Hunt on the Village Green.

The fun starts on Thursday evening, March 21, 6-9 p.m. at the Great Falls Grange, with the stuffing of the eggs. The eggs are stuffed with candy and gems by adults and teen volunteers.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

The Egg Hunt will be held on the Village Green.



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Dr. Donna Greco completed her undergraduate studies in fine art, and after a brief professional career as a graphic artist, she returned to dental school and earned her Doctorate of Medicinal Dentistry from the University of Kentucky in 2002.

As a dental student, she was selected as one of only three dental students to ever complete the year-long clinical research training program at NIH in Bethesda, Maryland, studying head and neck development. After graduation, she returned to the D.C. area

and eventually settled in Loudoun County, where she resides with her husband, Craig, and their daughter. Dr. Greco participates in extensive continuing education and training in all aspects of her profession, including her particular areas of interest which are esthetic and cosmetic dentistry, orthodontics and dentofacial orthopedics, dentistry for children and TMJ disorders.

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WEEK IN GREAT FALLS

Mom & Pop Stores in Great Falls Revisited

The Great Falls Historical Society will present the history of Mom & Pop Stores in Great Falls at its monthly program on Wednesday, March 13, at the Great Falls Library Meeting Room at 7 p.m. Photos of small, family-owned, independent stores will be presented, and the store's role in the community will be discussed. An in-depth account of Thelma's Store will be presented by Doris Carpenter, friend of Thelma Feigherty who frequently helped her out in the store. Carol Wright will talk about Buck's Store.

tem, will be the highlight of the night. Families will have the opportunity to study the gaseous giant and its Galilean moons through the park's powerful Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope. Naturalists will point out constellations and share ancient stories associated with them around a warming fire. Children will enjoy making crafts and playing games, and hot chocolate and snacks will be available for purchase.

Reservations are only required for groups of 10 or more. For more information, call the park at 703-759-9018 or visit their website at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend/>.

Stargazing, Stories And Snacks at Riverbend Park

On Saturday, March 9, the moon will be approaching its "new" phase, which means bright moonlight won't be present and the sky will be dark—the perfect conditions for an astronomy festival. As long as it's not raining or snowing that night, people are invited to gather at Riverbend Park in Great Falls, for an evening of stargazing, stories, and snacks from 7-9 p.m. at Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Admission is \$5 per person.

Jupiter, the largest planet in our solar sys-

Town Hall Meeting to Discuss County Budget

Dranesville Supervisor John Foust has scheduled three town hall meetings in March and April to give Dranesville residents an opportunity to learn about and discuss the proposed Fiscal Year 2013 (FY2014) Budget for Fairfax County. County management and budget staff will be present to make a summary presentation of the budget and answer questions. The Great Falls session is scheduled for

Tuesday, April 2, at 7 p.m. at Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike.

For details about the FY2014 budget visit the county website at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb>. For more in

SEE WEEK, PAGE 7

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WEEK IN GREAT FALLS

FROM PAGE 6

formation on these public meetings contact Jane Edmondson in Supervisor Foust's Dranesville District office at 703-356-0551, TTY 711 or email Dranesville@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Celebrating Pike on Great Falls Day

Great Falls Day will celebrate the listing of Georgetown Pike on the National Register of Historic Places, which occurred in August 2012, and is the only road in the nation that has been included on the list. The event will take place at the Historic Great Falls Grange Park on Sunday, May 5, from noon to 6 p.m. The Great Falls Historical Society invites local volunteers to participate in the preparation of the complete history of the families, houses, churches, shops, and events that have occurred along the road over the last 200 years. In fact, construction of the Georgetown Pike began in 1813 — exactly 200 years ago — and was completed in 1827. GFHS invites local families and businesses to become sponsors of this event. This is the first major event to be held at the Great Falls Grange Park, Grange Hall, and Old Schoolhouse in many years. Community participation and support is vital to delivering an exciting celebration of community history.

BULLETIN BOARD

To have community events listed in the Connection, send to greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Friday.

FRIDAY/MARCH 8

GovCon Debrief—How to Survive in an Environment of De-escalation. Noon-1:30 p.m., at the Tysons Chamber Office, 7925 Jones Branch Road, Suite LL200, McLean. An open forum for contractors to discuss critical issues in today's business environment including pricing strategies, finding cost savings, employee compensation and benefits, hiring and retaining talent, cost allocations and re-negotiations. \$25 for members; \$25 for non-chamber member government contractors; \$50 for non chamber member non-contractors. info@tysonschamber.org.

Stroke and Osteoporosis

Screenings. By appointment at Great Falls United Methodist Church, 10100 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Take up to five 60-90 minute screenings to reduce risk of having a stroke or bone fracture. \$159. Register. 1-877-237-1287 or www.lifelinescreening.com.

TUESDAY/MARCH 12

Future of Energy. 7:30-9 a.m., at Tysons Chamber Office, 7925 Jones Branch Road, Suite LL200, McLean. A discussion on the topic of the future of renewable energy led by Dominion Virginia Power Director of Customer Solutions Phillip Sandino. \$15 for members; \$25 for non-members. info@tysonschamber.org.

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OPINION

Helping to Build a School in Ghana

Reston resident appeals for support in building a school.

BY GAYLE ROBINSON

My name is Gayle Robinson and I am a Reston resident currently working in Ghana as a health, water and sanitation educator with the Peace Corps. In addition to my primary health projects, I am working with my community to build a new school. I am writing to request support from the Reston Connection in order to spread the word about my project.

My town is a rural community of about 600 cocoa farmers in the Western Region of Ghana. Three years ago, the community approached the District Assembly about starting a junior high school in town. Previously, students would walk over an hour to an overcrowded and poorly performing junior high school in a neighboring town. The district agreed to fund teachers, but told the com-



Gayle Robinson playing with some of the students at the school.

GUEST EDITORIAL

munity they had limited funds and could not build the new classrooms. The community had begun construction on a new school but construction ceased due to limited funding. Since then, the community has made two makeshift classrooms but they are not sustainable. The new school building will include three classrooms, an office for teachers and a storage area. The building will also cater to town meetings and night classes, which are currently held by flashlight.

Often, international aid organizations build schools and hospitals without working with the local government to ensure future funding for staff. Not only has the funding for teachers already been written into the district's budget, the district has also agreed to contribute approximately \$5,000 in materials for the construction. Additionally, the community has volunteered to do all of the labor and the district will be providing free technical workshops throughout the construction process in order to train members of the community in masonry, carpentry and electrical work. This will therefore ensure proper construction, as well as increase capacity within the community for future projects.

I am writing because despite these contributions by the community and District Assembly, approximately \$8,500 is still needed. Donations are accepted online through the Peace Corps website—<http://donate.peacecorps.gov>—and my project can be found by searching under my last name, Robinson. If you are interested in supporting my project, I'd be happy to provide you with any additional information.

Gayle Robinson is a health, water and sanitation educator, Peace Corps Ghana.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Out of Mainstream

To the Editor:

According to a Feb. 25 article in "Politico," two prominent Republican CEOs lambasted GOP gubernatorial candidate Ken Cuccinelli at the Feb. 22 meeting of the Republican Governors Association, saying his hard core socially conservative policies will make Virginia less attractive for business, and he is out of the Virginia mainstream.

It is good to finally see leading members of the Republican Party speaking up for the betterment of our state.

To date, Mr. Cuccinelli has not exhibited the same kind of moderation as his would-be predecessor Gov. McDonnell. As case in point, he has been quite vocal in his disdain for the transportation bill recently passed under the stewardship of McDonnell, who of course is a Republican as well. The bill is primarily based on new taxes and cuts, and was passed on a bipartisan basis. As alluded to in the article, this seems to be the breaking point amongst even establishment Republicans, such as these CEOs.

Instead of focusing on tangible issues such as roads, education and transportation, he has focused his attention on socially partisan issues such as limiting women's contraceptive rights. Perhaps now

that leading figures of Cuccinelli's own party have reprimanded him for deterring new business from coming to Virginia due to his socially extremist witch hunts, the voters of this commonwealth will move on to the business of determining a serious leader with real solutions.

RJ Narang
Vienna

'Green' Tax

To the Editor:

You have to laugh. You know how our liberal friends love to raise "revenue" for a variety of self-defined beneficent causes: Rail to Dulles, "transportation," school facilitators, "green" projects, and such. Plunging in to save the world, some folks purchased, at a price, hybrid vehicles. Now no sooner have these environmentally worthy folks been slapped with a small tax directly (with Democrat votes), they are rushing to the microphones at warp speed.

Our delegate, who has two such "environmentally responsible" vehicles, dislikes the hybrid tax ("All's Well That Ends Well," Reston Connection, Feb. 27-March 5, 2013). A matter of minutes after having commended Richmond's dubious transportation tax hike, Delegate Plum ("I was both amazed and delighted") says he is "writing to the governor to ask him to rethink that whole

proposition" (of a \$100 a year hybrid-vehicle tax). We feel the pain of owners of such hybrids (a whopping 1.3 percent of Virginia's vehicle fleet), but cannot forgo a wry grin. Oxen being gored, and all that.

Anyone seen a Volt anywhere?

Harry Locock
Reston

Protecting Open Spaces

To the Editor:

I am writing to express my concern regarding the current proposal to build a new indoor recreation center at Baron Cameron Park. Our open spaces and parkland are limited. Once our open spaces and parkland are replaced with buildings and parking areas, cement and asphalt, they are gone for good.

Baron Cameron Park currently provides a variety of recreational amenities, including football fields, soccer fields, community garden plots, a dog park, and open parkland.

Reston and Fairfax County already have plenty of buildings, with many more buildings on the way. We need more open space not less. Reducing the open space at Baron Cameron Park is in opposition to the Fairfax County Park Authority's own recognition of the importance of providing open

space. To quote from the FCPA's policy plan posted on their website: "As residential densities rise and individual yards become smaller or disappear, the need for public open space, woodlands, trails and open play areas increase."

The FCPA and Reston Community Center do not need to reduce already limited open space and parkland to provide new indoor recreation facilities. There are a number of opportunities in Reston to develop private and public indoor recreation facilities that would enhance and revitalize existing centers. As just one example, Tall Oaks shopping center has been struggling for years. An indoor recreation center could stabilize this area, bringing in people and revenue that could attract and keep businesses and restaurants.

The FCPA and RCC need to look for other options to meet indoor recreation needs without reducing outdoor recreation opportunities. To quote again from FCPA policy: "Collaborative efforts between the private and public sectors, especially through the land development process, can result in better appreciation, protection, and stewardship of natural and cultural resources, as well as the provision of adequate recreational facilities and amenities to serve residents."

Angie Loving
Reston

Great Falls CONNECTION

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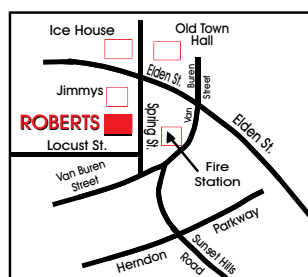
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Paul Li played piano in his own composition, with violinists Kevin Tan and Michelle Chu.

Italian Music at Langley High

Cooper Middle School orchestras join Langley High orchestras in concert.

Students in the five Langley High School orchestras and two Cooper Middle School orchestras presented a concert of Italian music on Tuesday, Feb. 26, at Langley High School. Speaking in her native Italian, Alexa Tavassoli opened the concert with the introduction she gave in the Langley Orchestra's recent concerts in Italy. The Langley orchestras and Cooper orchestras performed some of their musical selections, which will be played in the upcoming District XII Orchestra Assessment.

Composer Paul Li performed on piano with violin soloists Michelle Chu and Kevin Tan. Other soloists included pianists George Prestoy, Theron Masters, Chigiya Sakai, and Christie Goddard, oboe. Musical selections were introduced in Latin and English by Dr.

Tannenbaum's Latin 3 students Madeleine Chalk, Diana Handler, Na He Jeon, Ben Kenna, Sabrina Lamont, Pallavi Prayaga, and Hayley Wenk. Dr. Scott McCormick and Ms. Bo-Min Son could not have put on the concert without Alex Swann and his technical crew, and the work of the Tri-M students, led by Skye Toor and Alexandra Fraley.

William Rau created a slide show of images from the Rome trip, presented with the technical expertise of Alex Swann. Julie Hohl and her team of volunteers organized a pre-concert on piano with violin soloists Michelle Chu and Kevin Tan. McCormick expressed appreciation to Becky Corcoran for the concert program, Diane Hara for the Rome trip blog and website, and to the leaders of the Rome trip, Lien-Rung Kao and Greg Pennington.



Cooper Symphonic students prepare for the Italian concert at Langley High School. From left: Curt Zane, Joe Zane, Ben Wang, Daniel Yoon, Chris Tran, and Amber Lai.

ENTERTAINMENT

Send announcements to greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Thursday for the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged. For additional listings, visit www.connectionnewspapers.com

THURSDAY/ MARCH 7
Wine Tasting Fundraiser. 6-9 p.m., at Oakton Wine Shop, 2952 A, Chain Bridge Road. Enjoy a wine or beer tasting to benefit Operation Walk-Virginia which performs surgeries in Virginia and abroad for those in need of joint replacement surgeries without means to otherwise receive them; donations of crutches, canes, walkers, wheelchairs, etc., accepted. \$10. 703-307-4305, connieroofkohlerot@gmail.com or opwalkvirginia.org.
Helen Reddy. 8 p.m., at The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. The "Queen of '70s Pop" revives her legacy at The Barns at Wolf Trap by singing her favorite uncharted tracks. \$45. 877-WOLFRAP or www.wolftrap.org.

FRIDAY/MARCH 8
Virginia's American Legion Irish Dinner. 5:30-8 p.m., at he Vienna American Legion, 330 Center St., N., Vienna. Corned beef, cabbage and potatoes. 703-938-9535.

SATURDAY/MARCH 9
Annual Spring Craft Bazaar. 10 a.m.-4 p.m., at the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department in the Flame Room, 400 Center St. S., Vienna. A bazaar with crafts from home-based businesses offering holiday decorations, home decor, gifts and other wares; lunch, baked goods and cookbooks available. 703-309-3468 or Dancers1023@aol.com.
Enter the Haggis. 7:30 p.m., at The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road Vienna. Indie-Americana rockers Enter The Haggis bring their popular Celtic sounds to The Barns at Wolf Trap. \$22. 1-877-WOLFRAP or www.wolftrap.org.

SUNDAY/MARCH 10
Tropicals! Opening Reception. 2-4 p.m., at the Vienna Art Center, 115 Pleasant St. N.W., Vienna. An exhibition of original works by local artists featuring flora, fauna and scenes of sun and heat; tropical drinks provided. 703-319-3971 or

www.ViennaArtsSociety.org.
Capitol Steps. 4 p.m., at James Madison High School Auditorium, 2500 James Madison Drive, Vienna. A quick-witted, multi-faceted congressional staffer-acted musical political satire benefits the Class of 2013's drug and alcohol-free All-Night Grad Party. \$25-30. madisoncapitolsteps2013@gmail.com.

TUESDAY/MARCH 12
Vienna Arts Society's Children's Printmaking Workshop. 4-5 p.m., at Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. Children ages 7-12 will print a fish, create reliefs, mono-prints, and other prints with the help of a dozen local artists. 703-938-0405.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 13
Paul Thorn. 8 p.m., at The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Former boxer turned bluesy rocker Paul Thorn returns with his gritty vocals and powerful Southern beats. \$24. 1-877-WOLFRAP or www.wolftrap.org.

THURSDAY/MARCH 14
Paint with Paper! 10 a.m.-noon, at the Vienna Art Center, 115 Pleasant St. N.W., Vienna. Collage artist Megan Coyle demonstrates her mixed media method of creating landscapes and portraits with paper. 703-319-3971 or www.ViennaArtsSociety.org.

FRIDAY/MARCH 15
Johnnie Walker Whisky Night. 6:30 p.m., at Wildfire, Tysons Galleria, third floor, McLean. Join for a special evening at Wildfire, when we explore and enjoy the most widely distributed brand of scotch whisky in the world, Johnnie Walker; featuring Ewan Morgan. \$90. 703-442-9110.
Chatham Baroque: The Discovery Series. 8 p.m., at The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. The Pittsburgh-based chamber music ensemble Chatham Baroque arrives at The Barns at Wolf Trap to perform renditions of 17th and 18th century arrangements. \$35. 1-877-WOLFRAP or www.wolftrap.org.

SATURDAY/MARCH 16
BandHouse Gigs' Tribute to Chrissie Hynde & The Pretenders. 7:30 p.m., at The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road Vienna.

Bethesda-based BandHouse Gigs joins forces with 35 local musicians to recreate the music of '70s rock legends. \$25. 1-877-WOLFRAP or www.wolftrap.org.

MONDAY/MARCH 18
Lunch n' Life. Noon, at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 2589 Chain Bridge Road, Vienna. ABC7/WJLA-TV Chief Meteorologist Doug Hill speaks on forecasting weather and life at the educational series for seniors and those caring for seniors; blood screenings available from 11 a.m. on. Reservations by March 11. \$10. 703-281-0538, www.scov.org or office@scov.org.

TUESDAY/MARCH 19
Good Food, Good People, Good Fun and Some Business. 6:30 p.m., at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Suriyah Shahrill, wife of the deputy chief of mission for the Embassy of Malaysia, accompanied by diplomatic wives in Malaysian dress, shares Malaysian textiles and designs used in traditional attire; cultural and culinary treats as well as the annual branch meeting potluck dinner precede the business meeting. www.mcleanaauw.org.

THURSDAY/MARCH 21
Computer C.O.R.E. Business to Business Networking. 5-7 p.m., at DaDomenico Ristorante, 1992 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. A networking event with light appetizers and door prizes and a cash bar; two hours of networking and meeting new people. \$10 (cash or check). Gina@ComputerCORE.org.

FRIDAY/MARCH 22
"Never the Sinner." 8 p.m., at 1st Stage in Tysons, 524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner, McLean. Playwright John Logan's riveting first play about the 1924 "crime of the century." General: \$25; students: \$15. or 703-854-1856 or www.1ststagetysons.org.

FRIDAY/APRIL 5
2013 Asian American Chamber Gala. 6-10 p.m., at The Westin Tysons Corner, 7801 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. AACC Chamber Award Gala recognizing businesses and leaders of Asian & Pacific Island

descent who have made outstanding contributions to the D.C.-are business community and economy; cocktails, dinner, auction and cultural performances included. www.asian-americanchamber.org/2013gala.

SUNDAY/APRIL 7
Run & Remember 5K Corporate Challenge. 8:30 a.m. (7 a.m. day-of registration), at Tysons Corner Center, 1961 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Run to benefit TAPS, the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, which honors fallen military heroes by caring for those who they loved and left behind; call for info on sponsorships. 703-281-1333 or www.tysonschamber.org.

FRIDAY/APRIL 12
MoveMENT: Christopher K. Morgan and Artists. 8 p.m., at the Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. As part of the Artist-in-Residence at the Alden program, choreographers and dancers bring athletic, contemporary dance; a collaboration between male choreographer sand composer/cellist Ignacio Alcover perform with special guests. \$25; \$18, MCC residents. www.aldentheatre.org.

SATURDAY/APRIL 13
Tylan. 7 p.m., at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. Tylan, previously of folk-pop group Girlyman, tours with her debut solo record, made in the year after losing her 16-year partner and fellow Girlyman member Doris Muramatsu to leukemia. www.jamminjava.com.

SUNDAY/APRIL 21
McLean Orchestra Gala Midnight in Paris. 6-11 p.m., at The Hilton McLean, 7920 Jones Branch Drive, McLean. McLean Orchestra's annual gala will feature live auction packages and world-class live entertainment. \$250. <http://mclean-orchestra.org/gala/gala-tickets/> or <http://mclean-orchestra.org/gala/>.

ONGOING
Straight Ahead Jazz. 8 p.m., at the Maplewood Grill, 132 Branch Road, Vienna. Every Monday drummer Karl Anthony hosts a night of straight ahead jazz featuring guest musicians and open to sit-in musicians. www.maplewoodgrill.com.



The Langley High School All Virginia singers: (from left), first row: Ivy Kenton (alternate), Ariana Tayebi (alternate), Alicia Melendez, Kathryn Bailey, Madeleine Chalk, Kathleen Welch, Kushali Marwaha. Second row: Brian Niu (alternate), Alfred Lam (alternate), Andrew Jones, Jack Flatley, Jesse Levine, John Higgins (alternate) and Craig McKenzie.

All-Virginia Chorus Selected

The finest high school singers in Virginia will study and perform advanced choral music in Richmond from April 25-27 during the All-Virginia Chorus event. Once again, Langley High School will send the largest contingent of singers among all high schools in Fairfax County with nine selected performers and five alternates. These students will have the opportunity to study and perform under the direction of master teachers and conductors throughout the weekend at this annual event sponsored by the Virginia Choral Director's Association. The Langley singers were selected through state-wide auditions held in February at Oakton High School.



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From left, Brittany Lockwood, Maddie Koch and Tommy Boyce in Langley School production of "Cinderella."

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Mental Health Counseling Professors Honored

Cultural sensitivity at the heart of their work.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Fred Bemak and his wife Rita Chi-Ying Chung, who are both professors at George Mason University in Fairfax, recall being in Haiti shortly after the catastrophic earthquake of 2010. They were there to provide mental health counseling to those traumatized by the natural disaster.

"We were working in one of the tent camps," said Bemak who, with Chung, has been a professor of counseling and development in George Mason's College of Education and Human Development since 2000. "There were tents and each contained about 30 cots. People lived side-by-side with no privacy. There was little food and little water."

They worked with a woman who was so traumatized that she had been unable to get out of bed for three months. "The traditional response is 'let's get her off to the side and speak to her alone,'" said Bemak. "But that is the Western model of therapy. When you're looking at family-oriented communities, there is a tremendous need



George Mason University Professors Fred Bemak and Rita Chi-Ying Chung will be honored by the American Counseling Association for their dedication to human rights, social justice and culturally sensitive mental health treatment.

to connect with others."

As Bemak spoke with his bed-ridden patient, others began to join the session. "We

started to talk to her and crowds started to gather around her cot," he said. "It became a huge healing intervention where for the first time in three months, she got out of her cot. We had a [session] that was conducive to the community in Haiti."

Bemak and Chung's peers will salute their dedication to human rights, social justice and culturally sensitive mental health treatment later this month when they receive two of the American Counseling Association's highest honors.

Chung will receive the Gilbert and Kathleen Wrenn Humanitarian and Caring Person Award, which Bemak was awarded in 2011, and Bemak will receive the Kitty Cole Human Rights Award, which Chung garnered last year. Additionally, Chung will receive the 2013 Outstanding Faculty Award from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and Dominion Resources.

"I am deeply honored that I was even considered for these awards. It is a true honor. I feel so privileged to be in this field," said Chung, who noted that her background fuels her passion for her work.

"I am a person of color and I grew up in another country," said Chung, whose parents moved from China to New Zealand after the World War II. "Being an immigrant to the United States myself, I understood the struggles and challenges of immigrants and refugees. A lot of counseling theories

"A lot of counseling theories are based on Western beliefs. Coming from an Eastern background, I know that culture plays a major part in the way we react and respond to major life experiences."

— Rita Chi-Ying Chung, Ph.D.

are based on Western beliefs. Coming from an Eastern background, I know that culture plays a major part in the way we react and respond to major life experiences."



Bemak worked as a counselor and also served as director of the Upward Bound Program at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. "I worked with white, African American and Latino students who were struggling academically," he said. "When they came together, for many it was the first time that they'd been around people of other races."

Bemak and Chung say cultural sensitivity and insights are often lacking in mental health care. This underscores the importance of their work with Counselors Without Borders, which Bemak founded. It provides culturally responsive humanitarian counseling after disasters. Together, they've led teams of therapists and students in providing mental health therapy along the Mississippi Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina, and on American Indian reservations and in Latino migrant communities after the San Diego wildfires.

"The two of them have traveled to more than 55 countries, together and individually, where they have worked with at-risk youth, immigrants and refugees; counseled child-trafficking and post-disaster victims; and guided students of color and former child soldiers," said Catherine Probst, a spokeswoman for George Mason University.

The couple also co-authored "Social Justice Counseling: The Next Steps Beyond Multiculturalism" last year.

"We both do the work because we want to give back," said Chung. "We're trying to instill in the next generation of counselors to give back. I am not working to be recognized, but I hope this will inspire people to do the work because there is so much need out there."

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By KENNETH B. LOURIE

My oncologist is a man. He has e-mail. He works for an HMO that encourages/advertises its connectivity and responsiveness – electronically, to its members. If I want to get medical answers in a reasonable amount of time – save for an emergency, typing, “mousing” and clicking is the recommended methodology. No more phone calls, preferably. Though pressing keys on a keyboard rather than pressing buttons on a phone might have felt counter-intuitive at first as a means of receiving prompt replies, it has proven over these past few years to be a fairly reliable and predictable information loop. Not in minutes necessarily, but more often than not during the same day – and almost always by the very next day. In fact, I’ve received e-mails from my oncologist as late as 9:18 p.m. (time-stamped) after a sometime-during-the-day e-mail had been sent. The content of the sent e-mail has almost always been helpful or constructive, even instructive concerning the issue at hand. I’ve never felt disconnected, though; alone maybe, but that’s more because, other than our three cats, there is rarely anyone else at home with me. Being a salesman can sometimes be a solitary pursuit. And though there are many advantages – freedom and independence being the two most important, occasionally you find yourself alone with your thoughts, literally.

Attempting to speak directly with my oncologist during the day – at my convenience, given the too-numerous-to-list responsibilities of his non-stop, double-booked routine, seems a bit unrealistic. And if there’s anything I’ve learned during this cancer experience, it would be to minimize/manage my expectations in a way – any way, to avoid any totally understandable but fairly unhelpful jumps to discouraging conclusions. Patience can be a virtue, although being one of many, less so. And though I consider myself an important patient (I would imagine most “terminal” patients would characterize themselves as such) and thus deserving/expecting exceedingly prompt and predictable feedback, the reality appears to be somewhat less Kenny-centric. Not that I need constant care (I don’t, thank God!) or reassurance for that matter; however, when your oncologist shortens up your life expectancy by say, 30 years, you kind of think/feel that you’ve risen to the top of his to-do list. Which I certainly don’t know that he has/keeps. If he did/does, perhaps my placement on it would warrant a more immediate reply, electronic or otherwise. Nevertheless, my diagnosis-to-date sense has been that though I am likely on a list, there are probably other equally less fortunate people who have become listed as well. All of whom feel as I do: that they’re the most important name on that list – real or imagined.

Apparently, for the medical system’s exchange of information and for the treatment of patients to sync, e-mail has to suffice. And though it may have taken me a little while to sync up, I am now a regular e-mailer to my doctor and an equally regular receiver of his electronic expertise. It’s not perfect, but four years into it, I feel fortunate to have the access that I do. It’s not exactly any port in a storm, but the weather has been inclement and having lines of communication available to me 24/7 has smoothed out many rough patches.

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

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NEWS

Walker Road Tree to Be Removed

FROM PAGE 3

ing to risk trying to save,” said Bob Vickers, Great Falls tree commissioner. “As for the other, I’m happy that VDOT agreed to careful pruning and close monitoring to see if it could be kept healthy. I hope that in the long run, it remains a legacy for all Great Falls residents.”

The two white oak trees, which are located just feet from the roadway, came under scrutiny after a driver was killed just east of the intersection when a tree fell on his vehicle. Some residents were concerned that the proximity of the trees to the road would present a future hazard, while others wanted the heritage trees to stay, noting that they are in much better health than the tree that fell.

In a letter to the Great Falls Citizens Association Friday, March 1, Moore said after extensive testing by four different arborists that the tree closest to the intersection should be removed.

“Three of the four arborists formally involved advised that the

tree furthest from Walker Road could be retained for an indeterminate amount of time if crown pruning is done,” Moore wrote. “VDOT has no interest in removing the trees along the right-of-way unless there is a safety issue.

“In the end, it was the overwhelming opinion of various expert arborists that one tree, the one closest to the corner, was too ill and in danger of falling to risk trying to save.”

**—Bob Vickers,
Great Falls tree commissioner**

The health of the tree will need to be monitored into the future. We hope that it thrives, but if it becomes less stable or unhealthy, it may also need to be removed in

coming years.”

The decision was made after tests that examined everything from the inspection of the tree crowns to tomography, which is similar to an X-Ray, to detect possible weaknesses.

One report indicated that the tree to be removed has open wounds and obvious decay in the roots on three sides, as well as early stages of decay that extends about six feet up the tree trunk.

After the four arborists submitted their report, they held a conference call with Moore, who made the final decision. Moore, the former Northern Virginia administrator for VDOT, was named chief engineer last December, but continued his interest in the tree issue.

Bill Canis, co-chair of the GFCA’s environmental committee, said that during the process arborists said there is a rule of thumb that removing 15 percent of branches can reduce the pressure on the tree’s roots by approximately 40 percent.

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All listings are due by Monday at 3 P.M.

Great Falls EMT Wins Basic Life Support Provider of the Year Award

Elliott Zaret is this year's recipient of the Fairfax County 2012 Basic Life Support Provider of the Year Award. In addition to his patient care and mentoring, Elliott spent countless hours utilizing his wood-working skills crafting a table that now graces the new firestation.

In nominating Zaret for the EMT of the Year Award, Great Falls Volunteer Fire Department President Joan Bliss said:

"A person can be recommended as EMT of the Year for any number of reasons. Spectacular life-saving efforts, of course, are noteworthy, but it's the volunteer EMT who, day in and day out, serves not only the public, and who also helps other volunteers become better EMTs, who deserves mention and recognition at year's end. Elliott Zaret, an EMT with Great Falls Volunteer Fire Department, Station 12, is an outstanding example of what an EMT should be. Elliott is a skilled, experienced EMT, who rides regularly, and who puts in a large amount of volunteer hours every year. Having witnessed first-hand Elliott's performance in the back of an ambulance, it is obvious that Elliott is a



PHOTO COURTESY OF JESSICA "ZOE" ZARET

The table that Basic Life Support Provider of the Year Elliott Zaret made for the Great Falls Volunteer Fire Department.

capable caregiver to every patient we encounter. Luckily, there are many volunteer EMTs in Fairfax who are technically skilled, and who contribute copious hours of their free time serving the public, and they're to be commended, but Elliott offers something more than that ... He is an excellent guide and facilitator to new members at our station. He is always willing to patiently walk a person through

every step of working on a ambulance shift, from signing in, to checking the medic or ambulance, to learning where all the equipment is stored, to ultimately interacting with the patient and performing assessments and interventions that are needed. Even when he is not actually working on a shift, Elliott will come to the station at any time to help new volunteers become comfortable with

the station and units. He will also take the time to ride along with the newly-minted EMT in the ambulance, letting them-work up to and even past their previous comfort levels.

Elliott helped organized both our 70th Anniversary celebration as well as our Open House. And whenever someone is needed to pitch in, Elliott is always one of the first to volunteer his time and energies..."

Faith Notes are for announcements and events in the faith community. Send to greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Friday.

Epiphany United Methodist Church, 1014 Country Club Drive, Vienna, holds an Easter Egg hunt, rain or shine, on Saturday, March 30, at 10 a.m. open to students in preschool through sixth grade. 703-938-3494.

Great Falls United Methodist Church, 10100 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, holds an Easter sermon series based on Adam Hamilton's The Way: Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus. The series focuses on baptism and temptation, healing ministry, proclaiming the kingdom, calming the storm, sinners, outcasts and the poor, from Lent, Feb. 17 to March 24, at the 10 a.m. service. 703-759-3705 or www.greatfallsumc.org.

Emotions Anonymous, a 12-step recovery program, offers weekly step meetings in Vienna for recovery for couples from a wide range of problems. Join on Mondays from 8-9 p.m. at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 2589 Chain Bridge Road, Vienna. 703-209-0658.

Redeemer Lutheran Church, 1545 Chain Bridge Road, McLean, offers a 9 a.m. traditional service and a 10:30 a.m. contemporary service on Sundays and also offers two services during the summer - both of which will include children's sermons. 703-356-3346.



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SPORTS

South Lakes Girls' Basketball Ends Season at State Playoffs

Seahawks fall to Stonewall Jackson, 55-53, in quarterfinals.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

South Lakes junior Sasha Sprei beat the buzzer with a jumper at the end of the Friday's AAA state quarterfinal contest against Stonewall Jackson, which was decided by two points. But unlike the Northern Region tournament, when the Seahawks won three games by a combined five points, a last-second bucket didn't lead to a South Lakes victory.

The South Lakes girls' basketball team's season ended with a 55-53 loss to Stonewall Jackson on March 1 at Robinson Secondary School. The Seahawks entered the fourth quarter with a one-point lead, fell behind by seven and later pulled within two. South Lakes trailed by no more than six points during the final six minutes of the game, but couldn't find a way to reach the state semifinals in Richmond. Stonewall held a four-point, two-possession lead in the closing seconds, meaning Sprei's jumper affected only the Raiders' margin of victory.

Junior center Abigail Rendle led South Lakes with 16 points. Sophomore forward Princess Aghayere finished with 11 points, senior Mary Severin had 10 and Sprei added eight.

South Lakes defeated Chantilly (42-40) in the opening round of regionals, knocked off Mount Vernon (46-45) on a Caitlin Jensen buzzer-beater in the quarterfinals and edged Oakton (48-46) in the semifinals by a combined five points. After relinquishing a 17-point lead during a 60-52 loss to Edison in the region championship game, South Lakes ended its season with a two-point defeat.

"I think that the kids really dug down," South Lakes head coach Christy Winters-Scott said. "Obviously you want to cut nets and obviously you want to win, but to have the roller-coaster endings in the postseason, we did what we needed to continue. ... We made the plays throughout games necessary to win them down the stretch."

South Lakes' five region and state playoff games were decided by a combined 15 points.

"Being involved in these big games is exciting and nerve-racking at the same time," Rendle wrote in an email. "Your adrenaline is running and the crowd is shouting and you can feel the time ticking away, but

you know you have to stay calm and execute the plays. When you win it's a great feeling, but if you lose in a close game, it hurts. However, you learn from your mistakes and take what you did learn and improve for the next game."

SOUTH LAKES FINISHED the regular season atop the Liberty District standings before suffering a three-point loss to Madison in the district tournament semifinals. The Seahawks bounced back to reach the region final and advance to the state tournament. South Lakes' final record was 23-6.

"The season we had was amazing," Sprei wrote in an email. "Not everyone thought we'd go as far as we did and even though we didn't win regions or states, this season showed us what we can accomplish."

South Lakes will lose two seniors from this year's team: Severin and Gabrielle Schultz.

"Apart from remembering the wins and losses, making it to the region finals and state tourna-

ment, as well as the personal recognition, I will remember the life lessons I learned from varsity basketball the most," Schultz wrote in an email. "Having been a leader and a competitor, I will definitely carry those aspects of the game over into my future."

Severin referenced memories from early and late in her varsity career.

"What I will remember the most about my career is being on the varsity team as a sophomore and working hard to get a starting spot on the team, which is what I wanted," Severin wrote. "I will also remember this season. To have the team go to regionals and states my senior year was awesome. I couldn't have asked for a better season and a better team. I will remember the great coaches I had and my teammates that made the season the best one I have ever had."

THE SEAHAWKS will return most of their roster next season. While athletes gained experience from this year's close games, they also gained motivation from tough losses.

"The losses to Madison, Edison and Stonewall by that small of a margin left a bitter taste in our mouth," Jensen wrote in an email, "so it is motivation to work even harder this offseason to really take our team to the next level next season."



South Lakes guard Sasha Sprei drives against Stonewall Jackson in the AAA state quarterfinals on March 1 at Robinson Secondary School.

PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Langley senior captain Evan Sterling bears down on Woodbridge goalie and fellow NVSHL first-team all-star Dustyn Moyer on the way to one of his four goals against Woodbridge in the NVSHL semifinals

Langley's Undefeated Run Ends in NVSHL Final

The Langley Saxons hockey club fell short in its historic quest to complete an undefeated 13-0 season, losing 7-2 to Briar Woods in the NVSHL 2012-13 championship game at Kettler Ice Rink on March 1.

Attended by hundreds of fans as well as some Caps cheerleaders, the charged atmosphere was worthy of a championship game. Langley outshot Briar Woods, but could not get enough of its 32 shots past Briar Woods goalie Garrett Forest, who had an impressive outing, including some highlight-worthy saves robbing Langley shooters. The Saxons got the scoring going in the first period after a slapshot by senior defenseman Zach Shames rebounded right to junior Jeremy Kim, who netted the easy goal, but then yielded five consecutive goals to dig them into a hole in which they couldn't get out. Langley's other goal was scored by junior Drew Schneider with assists by senior captain Evan Sterling and senior assistant captain Kevin Diner.

Langley entered the championship game after completing a 10-0 regular season and then beating McLean 10-1 and Woodbridge 5-1 earlier in the week. The Woodbridge win involved an entire team effort

against another undefeated team with a lot of experience. Despite only 11 skaters, Langley sprinted out to a 3-0 lead and never looking back, winning 5-1. It was a complete game on both offense and defense, anchored by very strong goaltending by junior Ryan Framinan, who made some impressive stops along the way. Evan Sterling continued his dominant play, scoring four of the five goals, including the two final empty netters to seal the victory, and also assisted on the other goal. Kevin Diner scored a goal and had an assist, and additional assists were registered by Drew Schneider (2) and senior Peter Nam.

This was Langley's first time playing for the NVSHL championship in its history.

During the game, Evan Sterling was named an NVSHL first-team all-star. Drew Schneider and Kevin Diner were also previously named to the all-star team.

Evan Sterling and Drew Schneider were tied for the team lead in scoring with 27 regular season points each, followed by Kevin Diner with 17 and Senior Derick Paxton with 15. Evan added another eight goals and three assists in the three playoff games to lead the team.



Langley senior captain Evan Sterling congratulates junior Langley goalie Ryan Framinan after a strong performance against Woodbridge in the NVSHL semifinals by both players as senior defenseman Zach Shames joins the celebration.

Local Leaders Praise Transportation Funding Bill

State Senator Chap Petersen wants you to curb your enthusiasm.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Politics makes strange bedfellows, and sometimes estranged ones as well. On Saturday, Feb. 23, the last day of the Virginia General Assembly, state legislators struck a bipartisan 11th hour deal to pass a comprehensive transportation funding plan—the first long-term plan in 27 years.

Republican Governor Robert McDonnell, who received credit for hammering out the “compromise” legislation, declared passage of the bill “a historic day in Virginia.”

“There is a ‘Virginia Way’ of cooperation and problem solving, and we saw it work again today in Richmond,” McDonnell said in a statement Saturday.

The proposal, financed largely by higher sales and car taxes, is projected to raise more than \$3.5 billion for roads and rails over five years and nearly \$900 million annually after 2018. Northern Virginia would get hundreds of millions from the state, including \$300 million committed to complete Metro’s Silver Line extension to Dulles International Airport.

Many local leaders—Republicans and Democrats alike—applauded the package as a “win” for Northern Virginia.

Supervisor John Cook (R-Braddock) said he was “thrilled” at the additional funding for Northern Virginia.

“Money in this bill will also help finish the Dulles Rail project, alleviate congested roads and ensure existing infrastructure is properly maintained,” Cook said. He added that he’s spoken with numerous voters in town halls and neighborhood meetings, and one of the top concerns has been the deteriorating condition of Fairfax County’s roads and increased congestion.

“With this bill, we’re one step closer to significant improvement in these areas,” he said.

SHARON BULOVA, the Democratic chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, said the bill was a “great step toward addressing the transportation challenges we face in Fairfax County and the Northern Virginia region.”

Bulova was instrumental in creating the Urban Crescent Coalition—a group of 54 mayors and county chairs of the state’s 46 most populous regions stretching from Northern Virginia to Richmond and Hampton Roads. For months, the coalition has been lobbying top commonwealth leaders to adequately fund Virginia’s “crumbling” transportation system.

Bulova said she was “especially pleased with the commitment of \$300 million for the Silver Line “which will help to keep tolls in the Dulles Toll Road affordable for Northern Virginia motorists.”

Both Cook and Bulova applauded the bipartisan efforts of Governor McDonnell, Sen. Janet Howell (D-32), Del. David Albo (R-42) and Del. Vivian Watts (D-39) for reaching agreement on a funding strategy



Sen. Chap Petersen confers on the Senate floor with a colleague in Richmond on Monday, Feb. 18. Sen. Dave Marsden (D-37) is sitting to Petersen’s right.

that “moves us in the right direction,” Bulova said.

But State Senator Chap Petersen (D-34) put the brakes on the cross-party celebrating. In a series of scathing comments and posts on his blog OxRoadSouth, Petersen called the bill “the train wreck that was the final compromise on HB 2313,” and said it may be unconstitutional as well.

“If you like discriminatory taxes against Northern Virginia, then you might like this bill. I think it’s a terrible policy,” Petersen said in an email on Tuesday.

The bill provides new revenues for transportation through increased taxes and user fees that, in many cases, are higher for taxpayers in Northern Virginia than other parts of the state. For example, under the new bill, the sales tax rises from 5 to 6 percent only in Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads, and to 5.3 percent everywhere else in the state.

❖ There’s also a new 0.25 percent sales tax on homes in Northern Virginia. That means an additional transfer tax of \$1,250 on the sale of a \$500,000 home, on top of capital gains tax.

❖ Virginia’s car tax rises from 3 percent to 4.3 percent, meaning a new \$30,000 car or truck will come with a \$1,290 tax bill.

❖ The 17.5-cents-per-gallon tax on gasoline, which has remained unchanged since 1986, has been replaced by a wholesale tax on gasoline at 3.5 percent. For consumers of diesel fuel, the tax rises to 6 percent. The tax will not show up at the pump when consumers pay for gasoline, but will likely be incorporated into the price by distributors.

❖ State road funds are linked to Internet tax legislation currently pending (languishing) in Congress. For Northern Virginians,



Del. Tim Hugo (R-40) discusses an upcoming bill on the House floor of the Capitol in Richmond on Monday, Feb. 18.

the wholesale gas tax and diesel tax contain “triggers” that will cause them to rise if Congress does not authorize the state to collect sales tax on Internet purchases, which analysts say is unlikely to happen before the Jan. 1, 2015 “trigger date.” If Congress does not act on the legislation by that date, the tax will jump from 3.5 percent to 5.1 percent, increasing the gas tax to 17.85-cents-per-gallon.

❖ For Northern Virginia taxpayers, that means they are likely to be paying more in gas taxes after Jan. 1, 2015, than they are now.

❖ The local hotel tax increases 3 percent. Revenue from the Northern Virginia-specific taxes will be locally controlled, through the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority.

Petersen said that’s not enough to turn a bad bill into a better deal.

He described the final deal as “a grotesque combination of tax cuts, tax rebates, tax increases, new taxes, old taxes which are phased out (and then reappear elsewhere), regional alliances ... special projects, and exceptions to all of the above.”

He asked his Republican colleagues: “Did you have to rewrite the entire code book, so you could use the fake ‘but we’re cutting taxes too!’ line on gullible voters?”

He conceded the bill will raise millions for transit, including new support for Rail to Dulles, which is “critical” for the region.

And for many commuters in Northern Virginia, that may be enough reason to embrace a long-awaited transportation-funding package.

“This bi-partisan compromise is far from perfect, but it was supported overwhelmingly by the business community and weary

commuters,” said former state delegate Margaret Vanderhye, a Democrat from the 34th district who was narrowly defeated in her 2009 reelection bid by Republican Barbara Comstock. “It contains \$300 million for Dulles Rail and a funding mechanism to allow our region to raise funds that stay here for our transportation priorities—something we tried and failed to accomplish with the 2002 referendum.”

Vanderhye said she was “outraged” that some Northern Virginia legislators would vote “no” solely based on their pledge to Americans for Tax Reform, the organization created by anti-tax crusader Grover Norquist. In the Taxpayer Protection Pledge, candidates and incumbents solemnly bind themselves to oppose any and all tax increases, and the ATR has the role of promoting and monitoring the pledge.

Since its rollout with the endorsement of President Reagan in 1986, the pledge has become de rigeur for Republicans seeking office.

Like most Democrats, Petersen staunchly opposes the ATR and its pledge. “The only pledge I will take is to my wife,” Petersen has said.

But his “no” vote on the transportation package puts him the same camp as Republican Del. Tim Hugo (R-40), who did not vote in favor of the governor’s bill “as I do not believe that it is the right vehicle to address Virginia’s transportation needs. Now is not the time to increase taxes on Virginia’s hard-working families. While I disagree with the bill’s approach, I appreciate my colleagues’ efforts to solve our transportation needs,” Hugo said.

AMERICANS FOR TAX REFORM applauded Hugo and 18 other Virginia lawmakers—including Comstock, Scott Lingamfelter (R-31), Robert G. Marshall (R-13) and David Ramadan (R-87) for “standing firm” against “a \$6.1 billion tax increase. ... These lawmakers serve as an example of what legislative leadership looks like,” the ATR said in a statement released Saturday.

Petersen said he’s unfazed by any false comparisons to those in the ATR camp, and stands by his opposition to the bill based on what he calls the bill’s “lack of vision,” the inequities to Northern Virginians and what he believes is the bill’s ultimate failure to solve the state’s transportation problems. Del. Scott Surovell and Sen. Adam Ebbins were the only other Northern Virginia Democrats to vote against the bill.

“The method for raising these funds is complicated, contradictory and will eventually create ‘two Virginias’—with differing tax rates and, ultimately, differing levels of support from Richmond,” Petersen said.

Petersen contends that any sustainable transportation funding solution should be “simple, uniform and equitable. It should stick to the historic premise that ‘the user pays’ for our highways. It should treat all taxpayers equally.”

“I’ve been told that my opposition to this plan may result in the demise of my political career. If so, I can only state, at least there’s some benefit,” Petersen quipped.

PHOTOS BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION

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