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Sweet Saturday

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WELLBEING

PAGE 9

Every
Tweet
Counts

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'It's Not OK to Turn
A Blind Eye to Bullying'

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From left, Cupcakes Actually owner Susan Woodhouse looks on while Supervisor John C. Cook (R-Braddock) serves a gourmet cupcake to Jill Westeyn of Oak Hill.

DECEMBER 5-11, 2013

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

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**Holiday
Entertainment
& Gift Guide 2013**

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PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

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Saturday Morning Coffee with Delegate David Bulova. 9 a.m.-11 a.m. Main Street Bagel, 10268 Main Street, Fairfax. Constituents are invited to talk about issues of interest and to ask questions about legislation affecting our community.

Dog Adoption. 12-3 p.m. PETCO, 13053 Greenbriar Towncenter, Lee

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MONDAY/DEC. 9

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Dog Adoption. 12-3 p.m. PETCO Greenbriar Towncenter, 13053 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, Fairfax. www.hart90.org

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Every Tweet Counts

How Republican Brian Schoeneman earned wrath of his party by making sure every vote counted in county.

By VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

On the morning of Nov. 6, the day after the general election, it appeared that Republican Mark Obenshain had eked out a razor-thin victory over Democrat Mark Herring to become Virginia's next Attorney General.

Like most hotly-contested political battles, the close race generated even closer scrutiny.

National political analyst David Wasserman, with the Cook Political Report, thought there were anomalies in the absentee ballot totals for Fairfax County, which had been expected to vote strongly Democratic.

Wasserman took to Twitter with his evidence, pointing out there must be absentee ballots missing in Fairfax County, because the percentage of requested absentee ballots that had been returned and reported on election night was much lower than the percentage of other counties. Wasserman and others noticed that there were abnormally low totals in the 8th Congressional District, which includes Bailey's Crossroads.

"Are we supposed to buy that just 7 percent of voters in Bailey's Crossroads who requested an absentee ballot actually voted? Preposterous," Wasserman concluded in one tweet.

Meanwhile, Brian Schoeneman, the senior GOP appointee to Fairfax County's three-member Electoral Board, was in the midst of a post-election canvass, his first since being appointed to the board last spring. Essentially, a canvass is checking and double-checking Election Day votes, the purpose of which is to catch inevitable human errors.

Schoeneman, a well-known Fairfax attorney, Republican blogger and former Bush staffer, had been posting tweets and Facebook messages on Election Day to make the process as transparent as possible for voters.

He had also been reading the tweets from Wasserman and others. Finding no evidence of a discrepancy after an initial review, he tweeted a reply.

"To respond to rumors going around, there are zero - o - ZERO



Brian Schoeneman, Secretary of the Fairfax County Election Board, at his "day job" as an attorney in Fairfax County.



Brian W. Schoeneman
@BrianSchoeneman



To respond to rumors going around, there are zero - o - ZERO uncounted absentee ballots in Fairfax County. We completed our count last night

Reply Retweet Favorite More

Brian Schoeneman, Secretary of the Fairfax County Election Board, took to Twitter throughout Election Day and in the days following the election, to communicate with political observers who questioned the discrepancy between requested absentee ballots and actual vote counts in the statewide elections. Schoeneman's now infamous "zero" tweet, posted on Wednesday, Nov. 6, went viral and sparked a fast and furious twitter sphere debate.

uncounted absentee ballots in Fairfax County. We completed our count last night," Schoeneman posted on Wednesday, Nov. 6, at 2:33 p.m.

The "zero" tweet instantly went viral.

Over the next 36 hours, the twitter sphere exploded as hundreds of followers jumped into the fray, providing numbers, offering theories, and, at times, hurling partisan insults.

Wasserman and Ben Tribbett, a Fairfax County Democratic operative who writes the political blog "Not Larry Sabato," kept pepper-

ing Schoeneman with numbers showing abnormally low totals for absentee ballots.

Schoeneman, in an effort to be "hyper-transparent," encouraged the crowd sourcing by engaging followers with real-time status reports.

At 7:40 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 7, Schoeneman tweeted:

"I'm working on figuring this out as we speak ... Nobody's being rude. Dave is keeping me honest, which is fine."

A half hour later, at 8:14 p.m., Schoeneman sent out a "Houston, we have a problem" tweet:



Brian Schoeneman in his Fairfax townhome with his cat, Howie. His favorite portrait of Revolutionary hero George Washington hanging above the fireplace.

Brian Schoeneman — At a Glance

Hometown: Born in Baltimore and raised in Pennsylvania, Schoeneman came to the D.C. metropolitan area to attend The George Washington University, where he earned two degrees. He moved to Fairfax County in 2007.

Education: B.A. in political science, George Washington University, 2001. Master's degree in political management, George Washington University, 2004; Law degree, Catholic University School of Law, 2011

Family: Married to KayAnn, the communications director for the Fairfax Chamber. The couple live in Fairfax with their 3 1/2 year-old son Nick and cat, Howie.

Public Office: Schoeneman served in President George W. Bush's administration as special assistant and senior speechwriter to Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao from 2008 to 2009. In that capacity, he served as the Secretary's lead liaison to organized labor and as a member of her senior staff. In the 2011 election, he ran against state Del. David Bulova, a Democrat, but failed to capture the 37th house district seat.

Profession: Schoeneman earned his law degree at Catholic University.

He is the legislative director for the Seafarers International Union of North America, a maritime labor union. Schoeneman is co-owner and an active blogger for the right-leaning political blog Bearing Drift.

Membership & Affiliations: Member of the historic St. John's Episcopal Church on Lafayette Square; Catholic University Law Review, published The Scarlet "L" - Have Recent Developments in Lobbying Regulation Gone Too Far?; vice president of the Westcott Ridge Homeowners Association; an active freemason, he has served as an officer in John Blair Lodge #187; member of the International Propeller Club of the United States, where he serves on the Board of Governors of the D.C. Chapter; founding member of the GW Graduate School of Political Management Alumni Association, and served as its first president; communications director for the Fairfax County Republican Committee in 2010 and former general counsel for FCRC from 2012 to March 2013. He is a member of the American Bar Association, the Fairfax Bar Association and the Federalist Society.

"I've talked to the GR (general registrar) and we are working on this as we speak — I am convinced now too that there is an issue."

"It was my worst nightmare as an election official, the perfect storm of events," Schoeneman said last week. "During the canvass, we spent most of the day catching little errors, and we didn't realize we had a glaring error."

Votes were temporarily underreported when a voting machine in Bailey's Crossroads malfunctioned early on Election Day. Although the machine was later repaired, an election official grabbed the totals generated when the machine broke down, rather than the final tally — a much larger number for Herring.

Schoeneman's transparency and his willingness to explore what went wrong on election night thrust him into the epicenter of partisan politics.

While his actions earned him the respect of many Democrats, both locally and nationally, Schoeneman also earned the

wrath of some in his own party, who weren't happy that Fairfax County's revised count turned the tide in favor of Democrat Mark Herring.

"Anyone who knows Brian knows that he is honest to a fault, and will do everything in his power to make the (election) process as fair and transparent as possible," said Cameron Quinn, Fairfax County's general registrar.

Chris Sanders, a local Twitter follower, said he was impressed by Schoeneman's candid responses during the election. "He is a stand-up guy, even though we don't have the same politics," Sanders said.

On Nov. 25, the Virginia State Board of Elections certified election results with Herring defeating Obenshain by a mere 165 votes out of more than 2 million cast statewide. Obenshain has requested a recount, which is expected to be held in mid-December.

The "found" absentee ballots and

SEE ELECTION, PAGE 6

Local Non-profit Faces Decrease in Donations

Our Daily Bread is in need of sponsors for their holiday program, which helps local families struggling to make ends meet.

By Janelle Germanos
The Connection

Our Daily Bread, a non-profit that provides assistance to low-income members of the community, has seen a decrease in donations since last year, making it difficult for them to meet the needs of their holiday program.

According to Lisa Whetzel, a Fairfax resident and the executive director of Our Daily Bread, individual donations have decreased from \$120,000 in 2012 to \$87,000 in 2013.

"This is the time of year when we do get the most donations in, just because people are in the season of giving," Whetzel said. "It's unusual though for us to be so behind. We're concerned about that."

Whetzel said that corporate donations have also decreased, something the organization is concerned with.

"In 2012 we received about \$48,000 in donations. This year, it's about \$24,000," Whetzel said.

Whetzel said that the sequestration and the government shut-down may be the reason for the decrease in donations.

"We are very concerned that



Steve Harris, President of American Legal Investigations & Support Services (ALIASS) presents a donation of \$1,000 to Our Daily Bread's Dawn Sykes, the seasonal programs manager, and Lisa Whetzel, the executive director. The donation will provide grocery and gift cards to families on the organization's holiday assistance list.

PHOTOS BY
JANELLE GERMANOS/
THE CONNECTION

Heather Webb, communications manager at Our Daily Bread, stocks food supplies at the organization's office. Our Daily Bread has seen a decrease in monetary donations this year.



Dawn Sykes, the seasonal programs manager, and Sheila Dixon, the outreach and advocacy manager, decorate a holiday tree with gift cards that will be given to families in need at Our Daily Bread.



people don't have the spending ability they had in years past. They're not sure about what is going to happen in the future. There is still the threat of a shut-down in January, and so people might be holding on to their income, that they might normally give, just in case," Whetzel said.

ON DEC. 3, Our Daily Bread took part in a global movement called

Giving Tuesday that encourages donations to non-profit organizations.

"There was Black Friday, and then there was small-business Saturday, and then Cyber Monday, and then there is Giving Tuesday, which I think is the most important one. It is the reason for the season," Whetzel said.

Our Daily Bread is in need of assistance for their holiday pro-

gram, which allows for a donor to sponsor a family by donating in the form of food, gifts, or a gift card that the family can use themselves.

"If we compare last year's number to this year's to date, we are about 100 short of what we had at this time last year," Whetzel said. "That means we are going to have to use more of the cash donations and dip into our general

operating funds to be able to provide for the families that are on our list."

Whetzel said the list of families has been capped at 3,500.

"Last year we serviced 3100 families. We increased it by 400 in hopes that the community would support the holiday program. We're just very concerned that we aren't going to meet that

SEE DONATIONS, PAGE 5

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Donations Needed

FROM PAGE 4

need," Whetzel said.

Heather Webb, a Fairfax County resident and the communications manager at Our Daily Bread, said that donors need to sign up to sponsor a family by Dec. 13.

"We have this tiny little window of opportunity because we need everybody to sign up by the 13th so we can figure out who is left and how we are going to give assistance to them. People need time to shop and contact their families," Webb said.

According to Webb, sponsoring a family can be a great group activity and can be done in a variety of ways.

"If you like to put a food basket together and buy the gifts and do that for a family, you can. If you would rather give them gift cards, you can do that. We have a virtual donor program where you can just give us money online and we'll give that to a family in the form of gift cards so they can go out and get their own gifts. There are just a lot of wonderful options," Webb said.

WHETZEL SAID that the clients that Our Daily Bread serves typically make about \$22,000 a year.

"For a family of four, that is considered poverty," Whetzel said. "The pockets of poverty are sort of invisible."

But they are out there and it's very real. Our clients are living on minimum wage incomes, or maybe just above, and more than half their income is going to rent, and it just doesn't leave a whole like that to buy food, pay bills, much less buy a holiday gift for their child."

Our Daily Bread's holiday program helps families accomplish this task.

"When you think of all the abundance we have around here, it must be so stressful for them to see their kids are at school and seeing what their friends are giving or hearing about their crazy wish list," Webb said. "The parents just don't know if they're even going to have a nice meal, if there is going to be food on the table, and to think of what they can get their kids when there is just no money."

Donors can also give to Our Daily Bread throughout the year. According to Dawn Sykes of Alexandria, the seasonal programs manager, the organization provided school supplies for 1,400 children this year.

"We do a wish list on Amazon.com where donors and sponsors can go on and purchase backpacks and calculators," Sykes said.

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Election Aftermath: 'Getting it Right in Fairfax'

FROM PAGE 3

the approved provisional ballots resulted in a 975-vote new swing in favor of Democratic nominee Mark Herring. In fact, the additional votes from Fairfax County were the single biggest factor in Herring edging out Obenshain in the final certified tally.

The headline-making story spawned conspiracy theories by political activists on both sides of the aisle. While Schoeneman said he was just doing his job by making certain that every vote counted, others in his party saw it differently.

Jeanine Martin, on The Bull Elephant blog, asked "Why is Brian Schoeneman, who purports to be a Republican, helping Democrats by extending this deadline?"

Martin was referring to the Election Board's unanimous decision to extend the provisional ballot

aisle — who want to turn everything into a 'good vs. evil' battle where everybody with one letter after their name is good and the other side is evil," Schoeneman said.

Schoeneman also said there were some Republicans who questioned his attempts at transparency and responsiveness through social media such as Twitter and Facebook.

"When I made that 'zero' tweet, I was trying to tamp down the rumors that we had missing ballots or missing votes — and by missing I mean physically not present, like a box of ballots lying around somewhere that hadn't been counted. I had confirmed with the staff that this wasn't the case," Schoeneman said.

"And I was right," Schoeneman added, "we didn't have missing ballots. We did have a major tabulation error that inadvertently left

proved with enhanced communication to election chiefs.

"The one thing I know we need to do differently and would have done differently is to get our chiefs and coordinators the spreadsheet we had that included all of the mail-in absentee and absentee-in-person ballots cast by Congressional District. Had our folks in the 8th District Central Absentee Precinct had that information, they could have figured out right away that their numbers were off," he said.

Ironically, it wasn't supposed to be Schoeneman sitting in that hot seat this highly partisan election.

Last February, Schoeneman was representing the Fairfax County Republican Committee in a lawsuit stemming from the 2012 election when the term of election board member Hans von Spakovsky, a Republican former member of the George W. Bush administration, was up.

Von Spakovsky, a political lightning rod for his controversial research on voter fraud, was the local Republican Party's first choice to remain on the board. Although it's almost unheard of for the panel of circuit court judges to refuse a party's first choice, the panel bypassed von Spakovsky.

Instead, they picked the party's second choice: Brian Schoeneman.

"Did I ever think I'd be sitting here as an election officer? No, absolutely not. But I'm here, and I'm committed to transparency. Call it 'Getting it right in Fairfax.' That's kind of my new slogan," Schoeneman said, smiling.

An avid Orioles fan, Schoeneman compared the events of election night, and the subsequent fallout from the Attorney General's saga to the World Series.

"We had a good night on Tuesday night, and a couple of nights where I thought we were in real trouble, but we patched things together and got it done," Schoeneman said. "Given that we didn't completely wrap up the process until 10 minutes before the deadline on Tuesday the 12th, the whole process felt like coming down to the last pitch of the last inning of Game 7 of the series, and having your guy hit a walk off single to win the game. And it was that stressful the whole time, too."

"I hope I was able to do that for a few people on the left — prove to them that there are Republicans out there who care about the rules, getting it right and being fair..."

**— Brian Schoeneman,
a Republican and Secretary of the Fairfax County Electoral Board**

deadline through Tuesday, Nov. 12, a full week after the Nov. 5 election, while other Virginia counties were adhering to a deadline at 1 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 8.

That decision earned Schoeneman the scorn of Republican party officials throughout the state.

"What happened in Fairfax over the last week, culminating in tonight's announcement of a reversal in fortunes of the Virginia Attorney General candidates, was a travesty," wrote Steve Albertson, vice chairman of the Stafford County Electoral Board, in his blog. "... In doing so they raised a giant middle finger to the rest of us."

Schoeneman said it stung to have members of his own party question his integrity.

"These folks knew better. They've worked with me for years, and they know I'm honest and willing to address any complaints."

"One of the downsides to politics is that there are some folks — and they exist on both sides of the

3,000 or so votes off the results sheet, which we caught and corrected. So both sides were right — there were votes that hadn't been reported, but my tweet was also accurate, because we didn't have any missing ballots that hadn't been counted in the 8th."

Looking back on election night, Schoeneman said he doesn't regret his infamous tweet, or any other tweets that gave the public a chance to "see into the factory where the sausage is being made."

"When folks are that cynical, it's hard to crack through to convince them that their preconceived notions about politics are wrong. I hope I was able to do that for a few people on the left — prove to them that there are Republicans out there who care about the rules, getting it right and being fair ... I want the average voter to know that their vote counts."

Asked if he would do anything differently on election night, Schoeneman replied that he thought the process could be im-



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Saturday Morning Coffee with Del. Bulova

This Saturday, Dec. 7, Del. David Bulova (D-37) will hold the last of his informal office hours before the 2014 General Assembly session. Constituents are invited to talk about issues of interest and to ask questions about legislation affecting the community. The format is casual and no appointment is needed. Office hours will take place from 9 to 11 a.m. at Main Street Bagel, 10268 Main Street, City of Fairfax.

Del. Bulova is also happy to arrange individual appointments on specific issues or concerns.

Del. Bulova represents Virginia's 37th District, which includes the City of Fairfax and parts of surrounding Fairfax County out to Centreville. He has a professional background in environmental and water resources planning. Del. Bulova currently serves on the Committees on Education, General Laws, and Agriculture, Chesapeake, and Natural Resources. He is a member of the State Water Commission, the Joint Commission on Health Care, and the Housing Commission.

Clifton Christmas Parade, Homes Tour

The Town of Clifton welcomes the holidays this Saturday, Dec. 7, with a candlelight homes tour, parade and Christmas-tree lighting. Festivities begin at 2 p.m. with a colorful parade of horses and riders decorated in Christmas finery. Afterward, attendees may shop in Clifton's stores, enjoy the town's restaurants and visit the art show from 4-9 p.m. in the Clifton Town Meeting Hall, 12641 Chapel Road.

The homes tour runs from 4-7 p.m. Five houses and two churches featuring musical entertainment will welcome visitors.

Then at 7:30 p.m. is the annual lighting of the town Christmas tree at the corner of Main Street and Chapel Road.

The fun will include carolers from Chantilly High, hot chocolate and s'mores.

In Clifton, tickets are at A Flower Blooms in Clifton, T&K Treasures, Hydrangea and All that Glitters. They're also at Picket Fence in Burke and Banner's Hallmark in Centreville.

Cost is \$20, adults; \$5, children under 12, through Dec. 6. The next day, they're \$25 and \$10, respectively, at the booth on Main Street.

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OPINION

Who Will Be Hurt?

Innovations, changes and cuts designed to help the budget should be subject to analysis of how they will affect those on the short end of the economic and digital divide.

As Fairfax County faces a tight budget year and Fairfax County Public Schools consider significant cuts, clearly some changes are going to affect services on the ground.

As various proposals emerge, there should be some specific analysis of how changes, innovations and cuts would affect the poorest one-third or so of the county's residents specifically.

The schools, along with certain county agencies, must take special note of their mission, including providing services to families who are on the short side of the economic and digital divide. Elimination of print notices and newsletters, conversion to digital textbooks, use of internet-based surveys are just examples of small innovations that can leave many resi-

dents behind.

In another example, it is disturbing that ongoing concerns about Fairfax County libraries do not include a clear statement of mission to serve families and individuals who lack access to broadband internet at home.

EDITORIAL

In Fairfax County, where nearly 20 percent of the households have annual income of under \$50,000, about 8 percent live below the poverty line and more than 47,000 public school students are poor enough to qualify for subsidized meals, the public libraries are indispensable. Access to library resources goes beyond books, and includes the very digital access that many people cite as a threat to libraries. Public access to information via computers and Internet for those who do not have other access is a

critical service, and should be clearly defined as a critical mission of the libraries.

According to a 2010 report, Opportunity for All: How the American Public Benefits from Internet Access at U.S. Libraries, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation: 44 percent of people in households living below the federal poverty line (\$22,000 a year for a family of four) used public library computers and Internet access; among young adults 14-24 in households below the poverty line, 61 percent used public library computers and Internet for educational purposes; among seniors 65 and older living in poverty, 54 percent used public library computers for health or wellness needs.

The report also notes: "This access has also proven to be critical in times of disaster, where libraries may be the only access point still operating that can provide a delivery point for government and social services to those displaced."

Budgeting and restructuring must take into consideration the disproportionate effect of cutting services on lower income households especially.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Being Grateful

To the Editor:

"I am grateful for..." There could not be a more American expression at this time of year. We will say it out loud at the Thanksgiving table as we prepare to tuck in to a delicious meal. We will murmur it softly to ourselves as we gaze at the loved ones gathered around us. My family is no exception, and every year, we go through our "I am grateful for" lists, my brother proclaiming loudest of all, that he is most grateful that we can finally eat.

As a Muslim American, each Thanksgiving I am reminded of the verse of the Holy Quran that states "If you are grateful, I will surely bestow more favors on you" (14:8). I live in a country that allows me to practice my religion in peace and with dignity. A country that allows me each year, to be thankful that 400 years ago, a group of pilgrims fleeing religious persecution came to America to found a safe haven for all. Indeed The Holy Prophet Muhammad, (peace and blessings be upon him) stated that "One who is not grateful to others is not grateful to God." I am grateful to be American and count myself blessed. Yet for many of us, Thanksgiving is also a time to reflect on those who are less fortunate. We remind our children that while we are eating, there are those elsewhere who will not. I remind myself that while I

am free to go to the mosque on Friday for my prayers, there are others who are not.

In Islam, there are three types of "shukr" or gratefulness. First, understanding and being grateful in one's heart. Second, gratitude that one expresses by verbal praise. Third, gratitude shown by one's actions, that is, spending one's time and wealth on those who are less fortunate. Without that last action, the first two become meaningless. As we sit at the Thanksgiving table this year, let us not forget that there is a last, crucial step. By discharging the dues of mankind, we are discharging the dues of God. By giving from what we have, we are a granted a second reflection on our blessings. Gratefulness in our hearts, gratefulness expressed in our voices, and gratefulness shown towards our fellow men. Let that be our mantra this holiday season.

Salma Haneef
Fairfax

A Case for Real Christmas Trees

To the Editor:

My son when he was younger used to get a little sad when we would put our Christmas trees outside to be picked up like garbage. I don't blame him - it's a bit anticlimactic to see the bare trees lying by the side of the road as

early as the day after Christmas. Few bother to wait until Epiphany when the Magi brings the gifts on Jan. 6 before they get rid of the tree. My poor neighbors, by Boxing Day they probably already have "Christmas hangovers" made worse by the loud, repetitive and often cheesy holiday music that has been blasting in the stores since Halloween. Or worse, maybe their trees have already died and left a trail of thousands of needles on the way to the curb.

Many people avoid such messiness - emotional and otherwise - associated with live trees altogether by displaying an artificial tree. In doing so, they save themselves some hassle and might even think they are doing their own part to save the planet by not cutting down trees. Well, as it turns out, not so much. According to the National Christmas Tree Association (www.realchristmastrees.org), Christmas tree growers in America (whose farms are often located on land not suited for other use) plant one to three new seedlings for every Christmas tree they harvest each year. Compare this biodegradable/renewable cycle that helps the planet breath with the waste and pollution that is likely to be produced in artificial tree manufacturing, packaging and shipping. Adding it all up, it would seem that buying a fresh cut tree locally would be the most environmentally friendly option, if not the cheapest.

Environmental consciousness and cost concerns aside, artificial pine-smelling room sprays can't replace the fresh scent of a live tree in your home. And you won't have to vacuum up as many needles if you by the freshest tree you can find and water it properly. If you can't splurge for a tree cut right at the farm, ask the Christmas tree lot attendant when and where the trees were cut and have the attendant make a fresh cut on the trunk for you. We place our tree in its stand in the garage for a day to let the branches fall into place, shed loose needles, and acclimatize. Once inside, check the water level daily and close any heating vents nearby. Fresh cut trees are more expensive, but the whole process of driving out of town and finding your own tree for cutting makes for a fun holiday outing. We usually get pre-cut trees from a local stand, but once we enjoyed splurging for a fresh one we had cut outside the town of Clifton, where you can also taste local wine or visit little shops and eateries in the little town all within few miles "over the river and through the woods." For a list of Northern Virginia Tree farms and stands, visit <http://www.pickyourownchristmastree.org/VAXmasnorthern.php>, but be sure to call ahead to make sure the listings are still in business and have a crop to sell this year.

Ann Soraghan
Fairfax Station

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Holiday Blues: Cope and Prevent

Mental health experts say being realistic and seeking support can help you avoid holiday stress and depression.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

While the holiday season is filled with parties, shopping, decorating and other festive activities, mental health experts say it often brings unwelcome guests as well: stress and depression.

While they can be difficult to manage when one is in the midst of a bout, with a few strategies one may be able to prevent both before they ruin the holiday season.



PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Bethesda-based psychotherapist Karen Soltes enjoys a conversation with her friend Linda Feldman. Mental health experts say spending quality time with friends can help relieve holiday-induced stress and depression.

Frederic Bemak, Ed.D., a professor in counseling and development at George Mason University in Fairfax, said causes of stress and depression during the holidays can include difficult family dynamics or issues such as illness, death of family members or changes due to marriage or divorce.

"People need to have open and clear dialogues about those issues," said Bemak. "Anticipatory conversations about those issues in advance is better than arriving and then saying 'Now what do I do?'"

Bemak advises managing one's own issues first. Sometimes that means seeking professional help. "Gain an understanding of your issues and behaviors," he said. "If you have had a difficult relationship with a family member, you have to work on that for yourself and ask yourself 'How do I handle those things when these issues come up?' so you don't get pulled back into behavior patterns that are unhealthy."

Bethesda-based psychotherapist Karen Soltes, a licensed clinical social worker who treats military veterans, said while spending time with family can be challenging, a lack of familial connection can also pose obstacles.

"During the holidays, it is hard for people who don't have family," said Soltes. "A lot of veterans I work with are disconnected from their families and are lonely be-

cause they don't have family to be with."

Linda Gulyn, Ph.D., a professor of psychology at Marymount University in Arlington, said high expectations can lead to anxiety and sadness as well. "Some people feel this need to spend a lot of money, which can contribute to stress, especially with parents and children," she said. "They have unrealistic expectations which can lead to profound disappointment."

In addition to dealing with possible causes, recognizing the warning signs of stress and depression can help prevent serious bouts. "One big sign that your mood is being affected is trouble with sleeping," said Gulyn. "Senses of hopelessness, guilt, regret or other kinds of negative feelings are signs, as well as overeating and alcohol or substance abuse. You're also more likely to be more agitated with other people."

Shorter days and less sunlight are other contributors. "The holidays happen to fall in winter where we're more likely to have our moods affected by lack of

SEE WELLBEING, PAGE 15

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Fairfax Water is busy planning to welcome you as a new customer on Fri., Jan. 3, 2014. We want to ensure you are aware of a public hearing on the proposed Schedule of Water Rates, Fees, and Charges. The public hearing will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Thurs., Dec. 19, 2013, at Fairfax Water's offices at 8570 Executive Park Avenue in Fairfax.

The proposed rate schedule incorporates the existing commodity rates and service charges of the City of Falls Church and the City of Fairfax water systems. These rates, effective Jan. 3, 2014, include the following:

1. City of Falls Church water system service area:
 - a. A Quarterly Billing Service Charge of \$8.07*
 - b. A base Commodity Charge of \$3.27 per 1,000 gallons of water
 - c. A Peak Use Charge of \$4.99 per 1,000 gallons of water
2. City of Fairfax water system service area:
 - a. A Minimum Charge for residential customers of \$23.92
 - b. A Minimum Charge for commercial customers of \$28.12
 - c. A base Commodity Charge of \$4.57 per 1,000 gallons of water beyond the 5,000 gallon minimum
3. All other rates, fees, and charges will be equalized with Fairfax Water's existing rate schedule.

You can see all of the proposed changes on our Web site at www.fairfaxwater.org/rates/index.htm. If you would like to speak at the hearing or would like a copy of the proposed changes, please call 703-289-6017, TTY 711. You may also submit written comments to PublicHearingComments@fairfaxwater.org or mail written comments to:

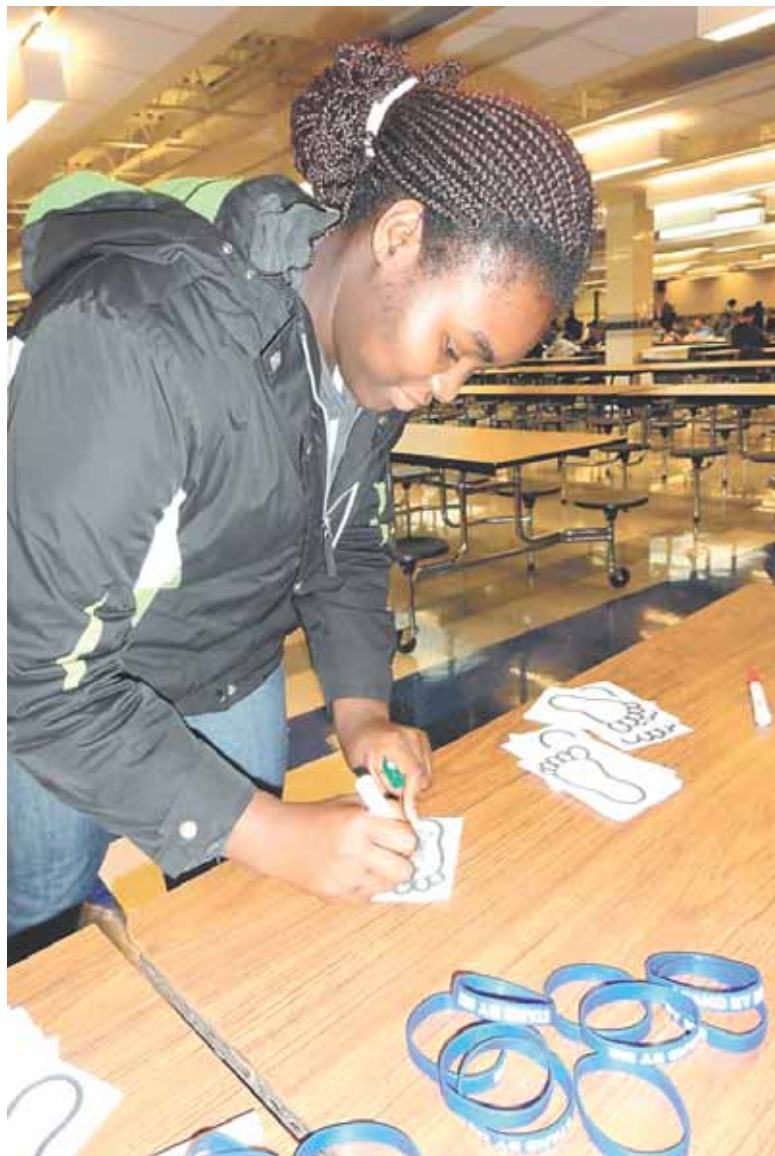
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All written comments must be received by the close of business on Wed., Dec. 18, 2013, to be included in the record of the public hearing.

*Charges reflect fees associated with a standard 5/8-inch residential meter. Changes in charges for larger residential and commercial meters are reflected in the Proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees and Charges.

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Sophomore Dorcas Osei-Adjei signs her footprint.



From left: seniors Sabrina Bastos and Selina Cardin show off their “Stand by Me” wristbands.



Passing out wristbands and paper footprints are (seated, from left) Renee Rozell, Amanda McGuire and Kristina Nguyen, plus Howard Kim (standing).

‘It’s Not OK to Turn a Blind Eye to Bullying’

Fairfax High students pledge to stand by each other.

By BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Children of all ages get bullied and bully others, themselves. It’s not true of all children, but it’s true of enough of them that Fairfax County and City of Fairfax schools want to do something about it.

Last year, schools in the Chantilly High Pyramid held a Bullying Awareness Week to address and eventually eradicate this problem. The theme was “Stand by Me,” emphasizing support for the person being bullied, and it was the theme of this year’s week, Nov. 18-22, as well.

But this time, the initiative was expanded to all Cluster VII schools,

including those in the Fairfax High pyramid. Besides the high school, Daniels Run, Eagle View, Fairfax Villa, Providence and Willow Springs elementary schools, plus Lanier Middle School all participated.

“It’s important for students to stand up for others,” said Fairfax High counselor Donna Leone. “One of the reasons students may not come to school is that they may not feel safe. So by promoting anti-bullying, it makes for a more-supportive school environment and may change the way students act toward one another.”

THE FIRST DAY of Bullying Awareness Week, each school began the conversation around the definition of bullying. All teachers wore blue, “Stand by Me” T-shirts reflecting Fairfax High’s school colors and bearing the words, “No bullying.”

Cluster VII defines a bully as someone who “repeatedly uses words or actions to intentionally cause physical or emotional harm to another person.” During the

week, students learned how to handle themselves if faced with a bullying situation and how bystanders can help someone being bullied. They also learned peaceful ways to solve problems.

In addition, students took a pledge stating: “I will not bully others; I will stand up to help others being bullied; I will report bullying to an adult; if I see something, I will say something; I know sticking up for someone is the right thing to do. I will stand by you; in return, I hope you will stand by me.”

Afterwards, they each wrote their name inside a paper footprint and received a blue wristband bearing the words, “Stand by Me.” The written pledge was then prominently displayed in each school, surrounded by the footprints.

At Fairfax, members of the Student Leadership class and the Gay Straight Alliance Club were stationed in the cafeteria during lunches, passing out wristbands and paper footprints. Teachers took the pledge, too, vowing to not tol-

erate bullying in their classrooms and to help students stand up for others being bullied. They then hung the words outside their classroom doors.

On scrolling announcements on TVs throughout the school, anti-bullying information was presented. It described what cyber-bullying is, plus what it means to visually harass someone, such as writing a person’s name along with sexual remarks or making obscene gestures. And on the last day of that week, all students wore blue in support of the week’s activities and message.

“When students show kindness and compassion toward each other, it makes for a better school environment,” said Leone. “And that, in turn, leads to better academic achievement.”

After taking the pledge, Nov. 21, several students told The Connection why it’s important to educate teens about bullying and its dangers. “Bullying is really bad, and it’s something people should stand against,” said sophomore Dorcas Osei-Adjei.

Senior Sabrina Bastos said, “So much bullying goes unnoticed. So any little thing that makes people think about it will hopefully stop bullying.”

“It’s good to make people aware that bullying exists and that, if they see it happening, they should report it or stop it,” added classmate Selina Cardin.

ALSO A SENIOR, Andrew Orvedahl said Bullying Awareness Week makes a statement: “We’re telling people it’s not OK, instead of turning a blind eye to bullying. Edmund Burke, a member of British Parliament, said, ‘All it takes for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.’”

“I know how it feels to be bullied and how much pain it causes,” said junior Alex Brunner. “So people should realize how their actions and words can influence the person they’re bullying to do something drastic.”

Senior Kyle Wilkinson said, “I’ve always thought keeping people happy should be a priority in one’s life – and putting a stop to bully-

ing would be a phenomenal start.”

“I don’t think bullying’s a big problem in our school,” said senior Amanda McGuire. “But this brings light to it and makes you think more about the things you do subconsciously that may not seem like bullying to you, but really are. It’s also pretty cool that this is being done in the whole [Fairfax] Pyramid, so it’s like a communitywide effort.”

Classmate Howard Kim said there are some students afraid to come to school and unable to sleep at night because they’ve been bullied. “When you bully someone, it hurts people,” he said. “Sometimes they’ll hide it, so you can’t see the harm it does, but it eats them from the inside out.”

Junior Kristina Nguyen said the week was “really beneficial because people don’t know bullying is going on because it can be discreet. But it still hurts the same way. So this lets people know bullying is a real thing and we should treat people nicely because we don’t know what they’re going through.”

Encore Dancers Present ‘Switching Christmas’

Fairfax High student is in new, holiday show.

By BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

When a precocious, young girl changes places with a playful elf at the North Pole, things are bound to go awry and only Santa can save the day. That’s the premise of Encore Theatrical Arts Project’s new holiday show, “Switching Christmas.”

“It’s a heartwarming story and a love story, too,” said Director and Choreographer Raynor van der Merwe. “It’s also about wanting to be other places, but learning that what we need is right under our noses at home.”

“SWITCHING CHRISTMAS” offers the magic of the season in an original dance musical. The cast of nearly 50 includes students from Centreville and Chantilly schools, plus professional actors Dan and Tina Delafield.

“People looking for something different than the traditional ‘Nutcracker,’ ‘Messiah’ or ‘Christmas Carol’ will really enjoy this show,” said van der Merwe. “The dancers have been rehearsing since July and spend 20-25 hours a week in the studio.”

“We have lots of newcomers, but also a great group of seasoned performers setting a good example for the younger ones,” she continued. “There are so many exciting dance numbers that’ll keep young kids entertained, plus a great story that everyone will enjoy. We’ve got old favorites, plus new numbers, so there’s something for everyone. And, visually, it’ll be spectacular – it truly is a family musical.”

Logan Floyd, a Fairfax High junior, plays one of the lead roles, Madison, the daughter of a New York City hotel manager. “She wants to have fun with her friends, but her dad has a hard time letting her do that alone,” explained Floyd. “Then an elf named Sprinkles comes to the hotel to see who’s been naughty or nice, and she thinks it’s exciting there. Madison wants to travel the world, so the two of them switch places.”

An Encore dancer since seventh grade, Floyd says it’s fun to create the relationship be-



Three of Encore’s dancing elves are (from left) Alia Artieda, Audra Avery and Renee Greise.

tween her character and the elf. Her favorite number is “Dig that Crazy Santa Claus,” performed by elves. “It shows the North Pole and introduces Santa’s workshop for the first time,” she said. “We’re all dancing around and it’s very high-energy.”

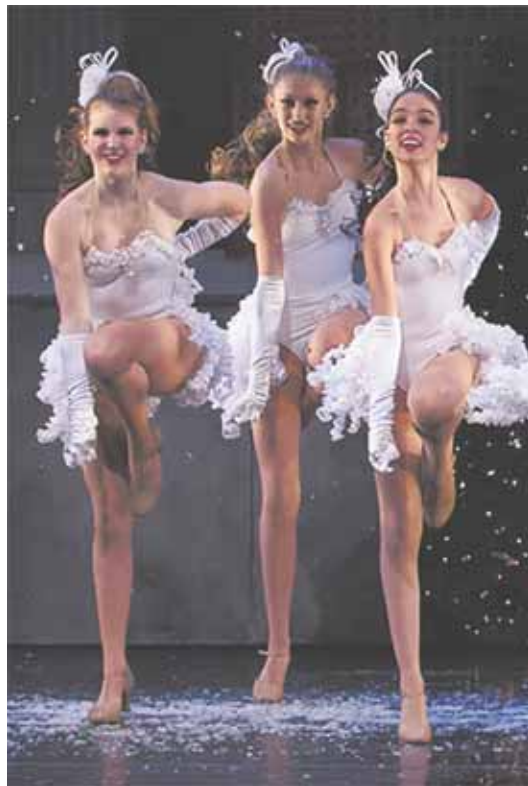
Playing Sprinkles is Little Rocky Run’s Caitlyn Watkinson, who’s homeschooled. “She uses her Christmas magic to mess up Madison’s life in New York,” said Watkinson. “She’s outgoing, happy and carefree, but doesn’t realize the damage she’s doing to others.”

HAVING A GOOD TIME

exploring her character, Watkinson likes playing an elf because “I get to bring all the elf stereotypes to life – Sprinkles is short, skips everywhere and likes to drink hot chocolate.” She likes the “Soldiers” routine because “we get to act like wooden soldiers and move our bodies like [nonhuman] objects.”

It’s her second year with Encore and, said Watkinson, “I really enjoy it; everyone’s super nice and there are no cliques. And I like performing because, when you’re onstage, you’re in a whole, different world and just get to be in the moment.” She said the audience will like the big contrast between Sprinkles’ and Madison’s characters and will leave happy.

Westfield senior Caroline Bond plays Percy the hotel clerk and Sneaky the elf. “Percy aims to please and Sneaky is a mischievous elf who doesn’t really like anything,” she said. “I especially like



Getting into the holiday spirit are (from left) Jessie Dawson, Christina Mastracchio and Mariana Artieda.

being Sneaky because it suits my personality.”

She enjoys performing because “it lets me forget about my issues outside of dance, and it’s fun when everyone really nails their choreography.” Her favorite number is “Multiplying Santas” because she likes the costumes and “how we all look the same. And it’s really fun to be a big, bumbling Santa Claus for a whole five minutes.”

Bond said the audience will love the show’s “creative storyline and colorfulfulness of the dances. It’ll put them in the Christmas spirit.”

Emma Konnick, a McLean High senior, plays an elf named Cheeky who “waits for the other elves to get involved in things before she

and all the children in the audience really respond to it. You can see their faces from the stage and they really get into it. Our wreath number at the end is also really cool, and the audience won’t know what we’re creating until we’re done. The show is really upbeat and will keep everyone engaged.”

Showtimes are Friday, Dec. 13 and 20, at 8 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 14 and 21, at noon, 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.; and Sunday, Dec. 15 and 22, at noon and 4 p.m., at NOVA’s Richard J. Ernst Community Cultural Center, 8333 Little River Turnpike in Annandale. Ticket information is at www.encore-tap.org.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LINDA HELMS

Jackie Hoffman's A Chanukah Charol Comes to Fairfax Dec. 7 & 8

The Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia continues its 2013-2014 Performing Arts Series with a visit from Broadway, television star and kvetching comedienne Jackie Hoffman. She has created and performs in Jackie Hoffman's A Chanukah Charol, where she is forced to examine her life when she is visited by the Ghosts of Chanukah Past, Present and Future, and even Molly Picon. What she finds on her quest for fame is that she is a dark, desperate diva who would give Scrooge a run for his money.

Jackie Hoffman's A Chanukah Charol is Hoffman's holiday-themed, pseudo-autobiographical, one-woman show inspired by Patrick Stewart's A Christmas Carol, co-written and directed by Michael Schiralli. Performed during the holidays in NYC in 2011 and 2012, the JCCNV performances will be her first performances "on the road." Jackie Hoffman recently starred as Grandma in The Addams Family. Her other Broadway credits include Xanadu and Hairspray (for



Jackie Hoffman's A Chanukah Charol will perform on Saturday, Dec. 7 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 8 at 2 p.m.

which she received the Theatre World Award). Jackie Hoffman's A Chanukah Charol will perform on Saturday, Dec. 7 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 8 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$29, \$24 for JCCNV members and for seniors (65+), and \$19 for students and for groups of 10 or more. Performances will be held at the JCCNV, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. Performances are most enjoyed by ages 13+. For more information about the JCCNV Performing Arts Series, visit www.jccnvarts.org or call the JCCNV box office at 703-537-3000.

CALENDAR

To have community events listed, send to south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416 with questions. The deadline for submissions is the Friday prior to publication; we recommend submitting your event two weeks ahead of time. To see more entertainment events, go to: <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2013/sep/26/fairfax-county-calendar/>.

FRIDAY-MONDAY/DEC. 6-DEC. 16

"Page Turners." Daily, at the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. The exhibit highlights visual artists who are also illustrators, to run concurrently with the 8th annual Northern Virginia Jewish Book Festival. Features Valerie Brown, freelance photographer with images from her "Capital Splendor: Gardens & Parks of Washington, DC," Ian Frank, architect and artist, Katherine Janus Kahn, illustrator of the Sammy Spider series and Ziz, a gigantic bird of Jewish mythology and The Ladysmiths: 16 of the group of local female metalsmiths' jewelry creations. 703-323-0880 or www.jccnvarts.org.

TUESDAY/DEC. 10

Laura Black Murphy Book Signing Event. 4-8 p.m. Barnes & Noble, 12193 Fair Lakes, Promenade Drive, Fairfax. Murphy, a resident of Fairfax Station, Va., will be available to sign copies of her book, "My Little Messenger."

FRIDAY/DEC. 13

One Night Stands. 8 p.m. Workhouse Arts, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. In concert, one night only, featuring solo cabaret performers from the DC area. Two performers each night, each performing a solo 45 minute set. Tickets: \$15-25.

SATURDAY/DEC. 14

2nd Saturday Art Walk. 6-9 p.m. Workhouse Arts, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. The 2nd Saturday Art Walk at the Workhouse showcases the diverse work of more than 100 visual artists in a unique historic venue, creating an atmosphere that encourages visitors to immerse themselves in the richness of this creative community.

Cecil Ray Comedy Club. 7p.m. Workhouse Arts, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Host Cecil Ray leads the proceedings in a night of laughter with guest comedians from the mid-Atlantic region. Tickets: \$20-30.

SATURDAY/DEC. 21

An Irish Christmas – An Nollaig. 8 p.m. GMU Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Irish-American fiddler Eileen Ivers brings the joy of the holiday season to Fairfax with her celebration for the whole family, a heartwarming concert filled with tales of Irish Christmas traditions and favorite Celtic holiday tunes. Tickets: \$25-\$50.

ONGOING

First Fridays at the Clifton Art Guild. 6-9 p.m. at Clifton Wine Shop, 7145 C Main St., Clifton. Enjoy a wine tasting and mix and mingle with the Art Guild of Clifton artists. 703-830-1480 or www.artguildofclifton.org/.

Saturday Farmers Market. 8 a.m.-1 p.m., at the parking lot at the intersection of West and Main Streets behind Wells Fargo Bank in Fairfax. Every Saturday there is fresh produce, goods and wares at the market. church@sovgracefairfax.org or www.FairfaxSaturdayMarket.com.

Sunday Farmers Market. 10 a.m.-2

p.m., at the parking lot at the intersection of West and Main Streets behind Wells Fargo Bank in Fairfax. Every Saturday there is fresh produce, goods and wares at the market. church@sovgracefairfax.org or www.FairfaxSundayMarket.com.

Fairfax Mosaic Wednesday Night

Freshbikes Rides. 6:30 p.m., at Fairfax Mosaic Freshbikes, 2910 District Ave., Fairfax. Weekly bike rides leave from the Fairfax Mosaic store, the newest addition to the Freshbikes family of stores in the area. www.freshbikescycling.com.

Northern Virginia Shag Club. 6:30-10 p.m., at the Elks Lodge Fairfax, 8421 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. Dance for two hours every Wednesday with free beginner lessons starting at 7:30 p.m. and dancing preceding and following; no partners needed. \$4. www.nvshag.org.

Join Jewish War Veterans of the USA. The Burke Post E 100 at 5712 Walnut Wood, Burke, invites Jewish veterans and servicemembers to join. 703-209-5925.

NVSC Dance. 6:30-10:30 p.m., at the Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. Beginner lessons at 7:30 p.m. and a buffet dinner preceding from 6:45-8 p.m.; cash bar available. No partners needed. \$4; \$5 additional for buffet dinner. www.nvshag.org.

SATURDAY/FEB. 22

Jeffrey Siegel, "The Power and Passion of Beethoven." 8 p.m., Hylton Performing Arts Center, 10960 George Mason Circle, Manassas. The acclaimed pianist performs Beethoven's "Rage Over a Lost Penny," "Sonata Pathétique," and "Farewell Sonata" as part of his Keyboard Conversation series. \$20-\$38, Mason ID permits 1 free ticket on Feb. 11, 2014. HyltonCenter.org.

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HOLIDAY CALENDAR

THURSDAY/DEC. 5

Annual Holiday Tunes for the Young at Heart. 7 p.m. W.T. Woodson High School Gymnasium, 9525 Main Street, Fairfax. Tickets: \$3 per person. Questions: 703-764-5820

FRIDAY/DEC. 6

Virginia Opera Presents: The Magic Flute. 8 p.m. GMU Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Tickets: \$44-\$86. <http://cfa.gmu.edu/>

Women of Faith Christmas Simulcast. 8-10:30 p.m. Messiah United Methodist Church, 6215 Rolling Road, Springfield. Featured inspiring speakers include Max Lucado, Sheila Walsh, Rick Warren, Lisa Harper and the guest spiritual singer is Francesca Battistelli. Tickets \$5. Contact: Jo-Ann Seichilone at giggles.foryou@verizon.net or 703-569-8230.

SATURDAY/DEC. 7

Plantation Christmas. 2-7 p.m. Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton. Ride in a horse-drawn carriage, sip warm cider by the fire, and sample period food prepared in the hearth kitchen. \$15 adults; \$5 children. 703-550-9220.

City of Fairfax of Lights & Carols. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Old Town Fairfax, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Enjoy live holiday music, hot cider, smores by the Yule log, caroling and lighting of the Christmas tree in the winter wonderland. <http://www.fairfaxva.gov>

Historic Clifton Candlelight Home Tour. 4-7 p.m. Historic District, Clifton. Five homes trimmed for the holidays, two churches and community hall will be open for touring in the historic district. Tickets: \$20. <http://clifton-va.com/>

Art Guild of Clifton Holiday Art Exhibit and Sale. 4-9 p.m. Clifton Town Hall Meeting, 12641 Chapel Road, Clifton. Enjoy original art, jewelry, fiber arts, pottery, and photography made entirely by Clifton artists. www.artguildofclifton.org

Cabaret Series: Home for the Holidays. 8 p.m. Workhouse Arts, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Tickets: \$25, includes planche campagnarde.

Clifton Candlelight Homes Tour. 4-7 p.m. 12641 Chapel Road, Clifton. Five homes will be trimmed and open for touring, and two churches will have choirs singing. cliftonva.org.

Annual Tree Lighting. 7:30 p.m. Ayre Square, main square town in Clifton. Caroling, treats and hot chocolate.

Lunch with Santa. 11 a.m., 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. The Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. \$6 per child. Tickets required. 703-385-7858.

Festival of Lights and Carols. 11 a.m., 12 p.m. or 1 p.m. Sherwood Community Center. 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. \$6 per child for ages 10 and under. 703-385-7858 or visit www.fairfaxva.gov

Jackie Hoffman's A Chanukah Charol. 8 p.m. Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. Hoffman is forced to examine her life when she is visited by the Ghosts of Chanukah Past, Present and Future, and even Molly Picon. Tickets \$19-\$29. www.jccnvarts.org.

Britten and the Brits. 7:30 p.m. St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 5800 Backlick Road, Springfield. Holiday concert that will include Christmas carols as well as audience sing-along. Tickets: \$15 in advance; \$20 at the door. www.northernvirginiachorale.org

Shop the Shepherd Christmas Showcase. 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Church of the Good Shepherd, 9350 Braddock Road, Burke. 30

Standing: Ethan Phillips as Peter, seated, from left: Stephanie Marinova as Li'l, Amanda Ranowsky as Mrs. Cratchit, and Ariana Colligan as Martha in rehearsal for the Providence Players family holiday production of "A Christmas Carol."



PHOTO BY CHIP GERTZOG/PROVIDENCE PLAYERS

Providence Players to Present 'A Christmas Carol'

The Providence Players and The Young Hearts present "A Christmas Carol" at James Lee Community Center Theater, 2855 Annandale Road, Falls Church. Performances: Dec. 6-15, 2013. Tickets: \$17. Call 703-425-6782 or visit www.providenceplayers.org. Note: Half of all net proceeds will benefit The Young Hearts Foundation, dedicated to improving the lives of young people affected by long-term illness.

vendors will be offering a wonderful selection of jewelry, toys, handbags and purses, home decor, kitchen ware, skin care, Christmas decorations and much more.

Loisdale Court, Springfield. Annual banquet of the Lee District Association of Civic Organizations (LDACO). \$55 per person.

SUNDAY/DEC. 8

Family Advent Celebration. 5-6 p.m. Burke United Methodist Church, 6200 Burke Centre Parkway, Burke. Annual family advent celebration. All are welcome. 703-250-6100.

Four Centuries of Virginia Christmas. 2 p.m. Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, 10209 Main Street, Fairfax. Learn about the evolution of Virginia Christmas customs from author Mary Miley Theobald. Free.

Vivaldi's "Gloria." 9 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Burke United Methodist Church, 6200 Burke Centre Parkway, Burke. BUMC Chancel Choir (and friends) presents Vivaldi's "Gloria."

Cabaret Series: Home for the Holidays. 1 p.m. Workhouse Arts, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Tickets: \$25, includes planche campagnarde.

Holiday Open House & Cathedral Brass Christmas Concert. 4 p.m. 5500 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. A musical celebration of the season. 703-352-1421.

Jackie Hoffman's A Chanukah Charol. 2 p.m. Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. Hoffman is forced to examine her life when she is visited by the Ghosts of Chanukah Past, Present and Future, and even Molly Picon. Tickets \$19-\$29. www.jccnvarts.org.

Holiday Sing-Along. 7 p.m. GMU, Center for the Arts. Sing and listen to classical favorites. cfa.gmu.edu.

Journey to Bethlehem. 1-3 p.m. Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 8304 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Come experience the town of Bethlehem and all the events that happened that blessed Christmas 2000 years ago. www.poplc.org

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 11

58th Annual Holiday Banquet. 6:30 p.m. Springfield Hilton, 6550

SATURDAY/DEC. 14

4th Annual Santa's Secret Workshop. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Burke United Methodist Church, 6200 Burke Centre Parkway, Burke. This event is designed to allow survivor's children and local families in need to shop for the perfect gifts for their families, extended families, and even pets at no cost to them.

SUNDAY/DEC. 15

Youth Christmas Pageant Service. 11 a.m. Cranford United Methodist Church, 9912 Old Colchester Road, Lorton.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 18

Travelers' Christmas Eve. 7:30 p.m. Messiah United Methodist Church, 6215 Rolling Road, Springfield. A Christmas Eve service for those persons, especially first responders, doctors and nurses who may have to work on Dec. 24. www.messiahumc.org

SATURDAY/DEC. 21

An Irish Christmas - An Nollaig. 8 p.m. GMU Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Irish-American fiddler Eileen Ivers brings the joy of the holiday season to Fairfax with her celebration for the whole family, a heartwarming concert filled with tales of Irish Christmas traditions and favorite Celtic holiday tunes. Tickets: \$25-\$50.

SUNDAY/DEC. 22

Christmas Cantata. 11 a.m. Cranford United Methodist Church, 9912 Old Colchester Road, Lorton. Join the 25 member strong Cranford Chancel Choir, led by music director Gayle Lennon, as they sing to the glories of the coming Emmanuel with song.

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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

Sweet Saturday

Cupcakes Actually in Fairfax offered free cupcakes as a gift with purchase.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

“There was Black Friday, and that’s great for small businesses,” said Braddock District supervisor John C. Cook. But, he continued, “This makes it a really nice day to celebrate small, independent businesses where you get a different shopping experience, an alternative to going to the malls.”

Cook was on hand to open the store and kick off the Fairfax Corner outdoor shopping center Small Business Saturday event, where merchants encouraged shoppers



PHOTO BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

Supervisor John C. Cook (R- Braddock) stands outside Cupcakes Actually in Fairfax Corner after supporting the “cupcakery” on Small Business Saturday.

to support independently owned stores with discounts and special in-store events. SBS was started in 2010 by American Express as a nationwide promotion to energize

small business.

To sweeten the deal in Fairfax Corner, ten other small businesses partnered with Cupcakes Actually

SEE SUPERVISOR, PAGE 15

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SPORTS

Alcorta Wins South Regionals

Lake Braddock's Christen, Kunc advance to nationals.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

Caroline Alcorta spent most of the VHSL cross country season running on her own, forced to find motivation within as she pulled away from the pack. The West Springfield senior won the 6A girls' state championship on Nov. 15 at Great Meadow with a meet-record time of 17:13, finishing 39 seconds faster than her nearest competitor.

Two weeks later, Alcorta took her act on the road to Charlotte, N.C., for the Foot Locker Cross Country South Regionals. While an increased level of competition closed the gap, Alcorta found herself in a familiar position when she crossed the finish line.

Alcorta won the Foot Locker south regional with a time of 16:55 at McAlpine Creek Park on Nov. 30. Alcorta's top-10 finish earned her a trip to nationals on Dec. 14 in San Diego, Calif.

Alcorta was the only runner to break 17 minutes. Amelia Paladino of Morgantown, W.Va., (University High School) placed second with a time of 17:04. Natalie Rathjen of Dallas (Highland Park High School) finished third with a time of 17:06.

Alcorta improved her time at regionals by 24 seconds. Last year, she qualified for nationals by placing eighth at McAlpine Creek Park with a time of 17:19.

"Last year it was more about ... kind of just hanging on with the lead pack as long as possible until I feel off," Alcorta said. "This year ... I knew I had to do a lot of the work myself instead of hanging on. ... It really helps not worrying about what other people are going to do."

Lake Braddock seniors Hannah Christen and Katy Kunc qualified for nationals by finishing fifth and sixth, respectively. Christen finished in 17:15, with



PHOTO BY Ed Lull

West Springfield senior Caroline Alcorta, seen during the VHSL state meet on Nov. 15, finished first at Foot Locker Cross Country South Regionals on Nov. 30, earning a trip to nationals.

Kunc close behind at 17:16. Christen and Kunc placed second and third, respectively, at the state meet.

In the boys' Foot Locker south regional race, Edison senior and 5A boys' state champion Louis Colson placed fourth with a time of 14:50, earning a trip to nationals. Marshall senior Mackenzie Haight also punched his ticket to nationals with a fifth-place finish (14:51).

Aaron Templeton of Knoxville, Tenn., (Hardin Valley Academy) won the event with a time of 14:36.

Nationals will be held Saturday, Dec. 14 at Morley Field at Balboa Park in San Diego, Calif. Last year, Alcorta finished 16th at nationals, one place shy of All-American status. She finished with a time of 17:56.3. Megan Curham of Villa Walsh Academy (Morristown, N.J.) grabbed the final All-American spot with a time of 17:56.

"It would have been worse," Alcorta said, "if I had been a senior and I didn't have another shot at it."

Alcorta has her sights set on a top-15 finish this weekend.

"That," Alcorta said, "would be really nifty."



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFT/THE CONNECTION

Lake Braddock quarterback Caleb Henderson is wrapped up by Westfield defensive lineman Timothy Curry.

Heartbreaking Playoff Loss

Lake Braddock loses 13-point lead in final six minutes.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

Westfield head coach Kyle Simmons stood on the football field at Lake Braddock Secondary School and revealed one of his assistants had spotted on film a flaw in the opponent's kicking game, creating an opportunity for a block.

Later, Lake Braddock head coach Jim Poythress stood outside the Bruins' locker room and said he made the right decision to attempt a field goal, though he had considered another option.

One play didn't win or lose Saturday's 6A North semifinal contest between the Westfield Bulldogs and Lake Braddock Bruins, but it's safe to say the Bulldogs are still alive because of a single tide-turning special-teams touchdown.

Lake Braddock led by 13 points and lined up to attempt a 30-yard field goal with less than six minutes remaining in the fourth quarter. The run-heavy Westfield offense had managed just three points and was without its top threat, running back Tyler Thrasher-Walker, who left the game in the second quarter with a leg injury. The Bulldogs had little reason to believe they could come back and win.

And then junior safety James Gibson returned a blocked field goal 92 yards for a touchdown.

Gibson's return sparked an improbable Westfield comeback. Down by six, the Bulldogs got a defensive stop, scored the tying touchdown, kicked the go-ahead extra point — thanks in part to a Lake Braddock penalty — and sacked Bruins quarterback Caleb Henderson for a safety on the game's final play to pull out a 19-16 victory on Nov. 30.

Westfield will face Centreville for the 6A North title on Saturday, Dec. 7. The winner advances to the state championship game.

"It's like the football gods were against us," Poythress said. "The best team doesn't always win. I think that we were the best team, I felt like — I still feel that way. But they stuck with their game plan



Lake Braddock running back Trevor O'Brien carries the ball against Westfield in the 6A North region semifinals on Nov. 30.

and played hard and never gave up and I think that's a tribute to them."

Thrasher-Walker rushed for 107 yards before leaving the game with a leg injury in the second quarter. Gray finished with 164 yards on the ground and a touchdown.

Lake Braddock quarterback Caleb Henderson completed 12 of 17 passes for 140 yards. He also rushed for 41 yards and a touchdown.

"[H]igh school football is over," Henderson said. "I'm going to miss it terribly."

Lake Braddock running back Trevor O'Brien carried 17 times for 74 yards and a touchdown. Vince Sica caught five passes for 103 yards.

Lake Braddock finished the season 12-1 and won its fifth consecutive district championship.

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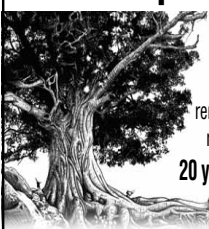
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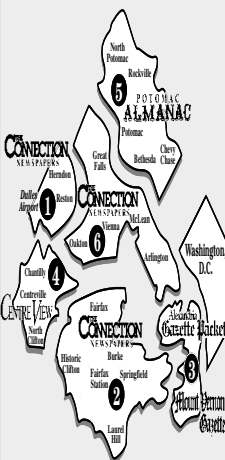
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21 Announcements

ABC LICENSE
Iamaya-V, LLC trading as Margarita's Grill, 9526 Burke Rd, Burke, VA 22015. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL(ABC) for a Wine and beer on premises, mixed beverages restaurant license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Efen Amaya, member NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

21 Announcements

ABC LICENSE
SMA Food, LLC trading as MoMos Nepalese Food, 6304 Springfield Plaza, Springfield, VA 22150. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine & Beer on Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Moti Neupane, Managing member NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

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THE CONNECTION
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21 Announcements

Dept of Rail & Public Transportation Presents Super NoVa Transit/TDM Action Plan at public meetings Dec. 11 at Courtyard Marriott Alexandria Pentagon South & Dec.17 at Holiday Inn Manassas Battlefield from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Public input needed to prioritize policies to enhance transportation choices and improve connectivity in region. Meetings are ADA and transit accessible. DRPT strives to provide reasonable accommodations and services for persons who require special assistance to participate. Contact the Title VI Compliance Officer, 804-786-4440 or TDD 711 for information. Comment deadline December 31, 2013.

www.SuperNoVaTransitVision.com

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21 Announcements

21 Announcements



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The Fairfax High band's Wind Ensemble performed at the Virginia Music Educators Association convention.

Fairfax High's Musicians Perform at VMEA Event

For the first time in Fairfax High's history, the school band's Wind Ensemble was chosen to perform at the Virginia Music Educators Association (VMEA) convention. This year's event was held Friday, Nov. 22, at The Omni Homestead Resort in Hot Springs, Va.

To be considered for selection, the band had to submit a recording in May and was then evaluated against all other entries. The top three or four high schools and middle schools from around Virginia were then chosen to perform.

At the recent convention, Fairfax High's Wind Ensemble gave a 45-minute performance in front of most of the state's music

teachers. "It's a wonderful opportunity for the exposure of our program," said Assistant Principal Maureen Keck. "The rigor of putting that much music together so early in the year – and during marching band season – has truly helped push our musicianship and talents to the next level."

"The music our wind ensemble prepared for the VMEA focused mainly on newer music, with varying difficulties, so they could share a variety of great music with the directors in attendance," she continued. "Our Wind Ensemble students have definitely risen to the challenge and presented a musically rewarding experience for all."

— BONNIE HOBBS

Jean Landreville Named New Executive Director at Greenspring

Jean Landreville has been named the new Executive Director at Greenspring, an Erickson Living retirement community in Springfield. She joined Erickson Living in 2005 and has 18 years of experience in the senior housing and health care industries.

"Jean's proven leadership, expertise in aging services, as well as diverse health care experience will help Erickson Living further serve the senior marketplace in Northern Virginia," said Kerry Jones, Vice President of Regional Operations for Erickson Living. "Her wealth of senior housing experience and unwavering commitment to delivering quality resident services are a few of the many qualities that make Jean a perfect fit for this new leadership role."



Jean Landreville, Greenspring's new executive director.

Landreville most recently served as the Associate Executive Director at Fox Run, an Erickson Living community in Novi, Mich. Prior to that position, she was the Associate Executive Director at Riderwood, Erickson Living's largest community in Silver Spring, Md. Landreville is a licensed nursing home administrator and received a bachelor's degree in general dietetics from Madonna College.

She also received a master's degree in management of aging services from the Erickson School at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. As the Executive Director at Greenspring, Landreville will lead the community of nearly 2000 residents and 1000 staff members.

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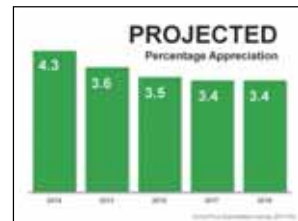


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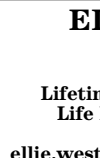
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