

Fairfax Station ♦ Clifton ♦ Lorton
CONNECTION

History Decorated

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Dominion Valley Garden Club members brought their own cuttings of holly, cedar, pine cones and boxwood to the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum to add some fresh life to the historic landmark.

DECEMBER 5-11, 2013

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Adding Personal Touch to Fairfax Station Railroad Museum

Wreaths hung outside the museum feature cuttings from members' houses.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

On Nov. 26, members of the Dominion Valley Garden Club didn't just gather at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum for a history lesson; they wanted to spruce it up — quite literally.

For the past eight years, the women's group of nearly 50 active members has helped decorate the exterior of the museum with fresh green wreaths. Their work is usually complemented with interior halls-decking by the Clifton Community Women's Club.

"It's nice to be here — it gives us a sense of association," said current president and Fairfax Station resident Claire Rolince. "We're part of a community, we're attached."

The work by the DVGC is facilitated by Angela Ganey, a museum docent and club member herself. The 38-year-old club holds meetings in the museum that was once a depot for the Orange & Alexandria railroad during the Civil War era.

In addition to the holiday decorating, the DVGC was responsible for planning and installing a special "By-Way" garden in 2007 that beautifies and celebrates the museum's Blue Star Memorial. For that project, members researched period gardens from the 1850s for inspiration and also followed a red, white, and blue theme.

Three years ago, the club members decided their wreath-laying could be more personal. "Let's do a little bit more," said former club president and Fairfax Station resident Cindy Loughran. "Let's get more involved."

The wreaths still come fresh from either Costco or Safeway; but now club members bring cuttings from their own yards to truly



From left: members of the Dominion Valley Garden Club Theresa Meade, Cindy Loughran and Stephanie Bisson add their own personal touches — and cuttings — to wreaths that will decorate the exterior of the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum.

personalize the decorations. With additions of holly, cedar, pine cones, boxwood and handmade bows, each newly festooned wreath is fully customized and unique. That way the garden club leaves a bit of itself behind for other visitors to enjoy.

"When people come through and think 'Who does that?'" said Rolince, "it gives

"When people come through and think 'Who does that?' it gives us some notoriety, and a significance to the area."

— Fairfax Station resident Claire Rolince



DVGC President Claire Rolince hangs the first personalized wreath on a side entrance to the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum.

us some notoriety, and a significance to the area."

After receiving numerous historic preservation and merit awards for projects such as landscaping the Clifton Presbyterian Church and providing "garden therapy" at Commonwealth Care Center, the group's value to the community is far from forgettable. But freshening up the railroad museum is a memorable way to bring new life to a historic location.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The Little River Glen Senior Center in Fairfax needs volunteers to help with front desk coverage and special events. It also needs volunteer instructors for fitness, art, computer, and ESL classes. Call 703-324-5406, TTY 711, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and link to Volunteer Solutions or email VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov

The Kingstowne Senior Center in Alexandria needs volunteers to assist at the front desk on Fridays and instructors for classes in art, Spanish, and Tai Chi or QiGong/Khi Cong. Call 703-324-5406, TTY 711. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and link to Volunteer Solutions or email

VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov

The Lewinsville Adult Day Health Care Center of McLean needs a volunteer musician to perform once or twice a month and a certified Zumba instructor to teach a class on Friday afternoons. Call 703-324-5406, TTY 711, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and link to Volunteer Solutions or email VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov

The Mount Vernon Adult Day Health Care Center in Alexandria needs social companions to help participants. Call 703-324-5406, TTY 711. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and link to Volunteer Solutions or email

VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov

Meals on Wheels needs drivers in Reston, McLean and Falls Church. Call 703-324-5406, TTY 711, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and link to Volunteer Solutions or email VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov

Respite Care volunteers give family caregivers of a frail older adult a well-deserved break so they can go shopping, attend a doctor's appointment or just have coffee with a friend. Volunteers visit and oversee the safety of the older adult for a few hours each month. Support and training are provided. Contact Kristin Martin at 703-324-7577, TTY 711, or

Kristin.Martin@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Fairfax County needs volunteers to drive older adults to medical appointments and wellness programs. Call 703-324-5406, TTY 711, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and link to Volunteer Solutions or email VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov

The Bailey's Senior Center in Falls Church needs a quilting assistant to help with a quilting club on Thursdays, 10:30 a.m.-noon. Call 703-324-5406, TTY 711, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and link to Volunteer Solutions or email VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov

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

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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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Be a Part of CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

During the last week of each year, the Fairfax Station/Clifton/Lorton Connection devotes its entire issue to the creativity of local students. The results are always remarkable, and the editions have won many awards. It is a keepsake edition for many families.

We publish artwork, poetry, essays, creative writing, opinion pieces, short stories, photography, photos of sculpture or gardens or other creative efforts.

We ask that all submissions be digital so they can be sent through e-mail or delivered on CD or flash drive. Writing should be submitted in rich text format (.rtf). Artwork should be provided in .jpg format. Identify each piece of writing or art, including the student's full name, age, grade and town of residence, plus the name of the school, name of teacher and town of school location. Please provide the submissions by Friday, Dec. 6 for publication the week of Dec. 26.

E-mail submissions to: ChildrensSouth@connectionnewspapers.com

To send CDs or flash drives containing artwork and typed, electronic submissions, mark them clearly by school and hometown and mail the CD to Children's Connection, 1606 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.

THE CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

AREA ROUNDUPS

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.

Toy Donations Are Needed

Each year, the Fairfax County Police Department Motor Squad and the county Sheriff's Office give Santa a hand with his gift deliveries. But they count on the community to help provide the presents.

They're asking local residents, businesses and other organizations to donate new, unwrapped toys, games and books to be distributed to children at Inova Fairfax Hospital and to children in the community who might not otherwise have a cheerful holiday season.

Bring these items to any Fairfax County police station, to Waples Mill Elementary or to the lobby of the Pennino Building, 12011 Government Center Parkway; Herrity Building, 12055 Government Center Parkway; or DIT (Department of Information Technology), suite 143, at the county Government Center, by Monday, Dec. 9, at 9 a.m.

Police and sheriff's motor squads will then go on Santa's Ride, escorting Santa Claus and friends to help collect the gifts for distribution.



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY

Members of the Greenspring Resident Council and staff were recognized at the Board of Supervisors meeting on Nov. 19 in honor of the community's 15th anniversary.

Board of Supervisors Recognizes Greenspring for 15th Anniversary

On Tuesday, Nov. 19, Greenspring was recognized by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors for 15 successful years in Fairfax County. Greenspring celebrated the community's 15th anniversary on Nov. 17 and is now home to nearly 2000 residents and the workplace of nearly 1000 staff members.

Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay brought forth the matter to the Board on Tuesday to recognize the community. "I'm proud that Greenspring chose to locate in Lee District—we benefit tremendously from its presence," said McKay. "Greenspring residents take civic responsibility very seriously. They actively vol-

unteer and can always be counted on to support our local civic events. "We truly appreciate this special recognition and are thankful for the continued support from Fairfax County," said Robin Gliboff, Greenspring's Executive Director. "We've had a wonderful 15 years and look forward to continuing to provide an exceptional lifestyle for all who call Greenspring home." More than a dozen Greenspring staff members and members of the Resident Council were on hand for the recognition ceremony at the Fairfax County Government Center.

Additional information about Greenspring can be found at www.ericsonliving.com.

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Winter Blues?

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While we know that the holiday season is a time of joy for many, we also realize that others are struggling. Our clinicians are dedicated to helping people through the difficulties of the winter season. We provide help with mental health, career, life and a variety of other issues. If you or someone you know needs help, call us today.

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Deborah Johnson, left, signs a copy of her book “How Did They Do That?” at a launch party in Alexandria, Nov. 18. Attending the reception are Janet Barnett, Burke and Herbert Vice President Walter Clarke and Mimi Rolph.

Tales of Triumph

Dominion Power’s Johnson launches new book.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
THE CONNECTION

Sherman Parker was only 14-years-old when he was selected as one of two African American students to desegregate King George County schools in rural Virginia in the 1960s. Shunning a police escort, he still remembers the angry crowds that greeted him on his first day of school. “A crowd of angry students and their parents stood on the steps leading to the school doors,” Parker recalled. “My father grabbed my hand and walked us straight toward the crowd. The walk up those stairs was an unforgettable experience. My father was holding my hand and I know God was holding his.”

Parker’s experience with prejudice and discrimination and his subsequent rise to become a Fortune 100 executive is one of 12 profiles of courage and success in the book “How Did They Do That? Career Highlights, Challenges and Triumphs” by Deborah Tompkins Johnson.

“I was inspired by the stories of everyone I interviewed,” said Johnson, a government affairs manager for Dominion Power and active member of Antioch Baptist Church in Fairfax Station. “I wanted others to hear in their own words what led to the success of these 12 individuals from varied backgrounds.”

Other individuals profiled in the book include actor Blair Underwood, former T.C. Williams High School football coach Herman Boone and former Virginia governor L. Douglas Wilder.

“No question education, education, education is the great equalizer,” Johnson said at a Nov. 18 book

PHOTOS BY JEANNE THEISMANN/THE CONNECTION



Sherman Parker, a subject of the book “How Did They Do That?” by Deborah Johnson, attended the book signing with his wife Leslie. Parker was one of two African American students to desegregate Virginia’s King George County schools in the 1960s.

signing at King Street Blues in Alexandria. “Almost everyone profiled in ‘How Did They Do That?’ mentioned the importance of a solid educational foundation for success.”

In addition to her service to Antioch Baptist Church, Johnson volunteers much of her time with civic, education and leadership organizations.

“African American male youth are lacking in role models today,” said Parker, who attended the book signing with his wife Leslie. “But Deborah’s book helps give them inspiration and hope.”

For more information, visit www.howdidtheydothat.org.



This site is soon to become the latest addition to the series of car-title lending operations that have opened along the Route 1 corridor since legislators opened the door to the industry back in 2010.

Usury Explosion

Northern Virginia becomes hotbed for car-title lending industry.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

In the last three years, dozens of new car-title lending businesses have popped up in neighborhoods across Northern Virginia — the result of recent regulations opening the door to a business that charges as much as 264 percent a year on loans. Since 2010, when the Virginia General Assembly gave the green light to the industry, the total number of locations has more than doubled from 184 to 395. And locations are opening every week.

“It’s a trap, and although it’s presented as a loan it’s really loan-sharking,” said Jay Speech, executive director of the Virginia Poverty Law Center. “People who get into this end up much worse off than when they started.”

Lenders have always charged a range of interest rates for loans, but what’s happening now in neighborhoods across Northern Virginia is unprecedented. Back in 2010, after then-Attorney General Bob McDonnell went after the car-title lending industry for violating Virginia law restricting how soon collections could begin on loans, members of the Virginia General Assembly crafted legislation that set rules specific to car-title lenders. The legislation created some restrictions that prevented lenders from going after borrowers for additional money if they had already repossessed an automobile, prevented lenders from charging more than 50 percent of the value of a car and capped the interests rate at 264 percent a year.

“Under this law, Mister Speaker, the industry will not

grow,” said Del. Terry Kilgore (R-1) when the bill was debated on the House floor. “It will shrink.”

THAT PREDICTION ended up being wrong. When the 2010 legislation passed, Virginia had 125 car-title lending locations. By the end of the year, that number had spiked to 184 locations. By the end of 2011, according to a report from the State Corporation Commission, the industry had 378 locations across the commonwealth. And the industry was clamoring for more. In 2011, a year after the new rules were created, the General Assembly considered another piece of legislation that undercut one of the restrictions created by the previous bill — preventing lenders from accepting titles of out-of-state cars.

“If you want to see car-title lenders do more loans in the state of Virginia, then you want to vote yes,” said Glenn Oder (R-94), who brought a plush shark to the House floor to help him make the point. “But if you agree with me that the law we passed last year was sufficient, then you want to vote no.”

A number of Northern Virginia legislators disagreed with Oder and supported the legislation to expand the reach of car-title lenders outside the boundaries of the commonwealth. The Senate passed the legislation on a 32 to 3 vote, with every member of the Northern Virginia supporting legislation that was introduced by Senate Democratic leader Dick Saslaw (D-35). On the House side, the vote was much tighter — 51 in support and 47

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BULLETIN BOARD

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

THURSDAY/DEC. 5-SUNDAY/DEC. 15

Sheehy Toys for Tots Toy Drive Drop Off. Sheehy Volkswagon of Springfield, 6601 Backlick Road, Springfield; Sheehy Ford, Nissan, & Subaru of Springfield, 6727 Loisdale Road, Springfield; Collecting new, unwrapped toys to benefit the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program in which Christmas gifts are given to less fortunate children in the community.

SATURDAY/DEC. 7

Seminar on Scams. 9 a.m.- 1 p.m. West Springfield High School Auditorium, 6100 Rolling Road, Springfield. Learn how to protect against devastating financial scams and fraud.

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

MONDAY/DEC. 9

Stroke & Osteoporosis Screening. 8421 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. Screenings identify potential cardiovascular conditions such as blocked arteries and irregular heart rhythm, abdominal aortic aneurysms, and hardening of the arteries in the legs, which is a strong predictor of heart disease. Pre-registration is required. www.lifelinescreening.com.

SATURDAY/DEC. 14

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

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 18

Caregiving is Stressful! 1:30 pm. Alzheimer's Family Day Center, 2812 Old Lee Highway, Suite 210, Fairfax. Learn some stress management and relaxation techniques for caregivers. Call 703-204-4664 to RSVP and for more information.

THURSDAY/JAN. 16, 2014

Are You 50 or Better? 12-2 p.m. St. Mary of Sorrows Catholic Church, 5222 Sideburn, Fairfax. Sharon Bulova, will discuss current issues affecting the lives of seniors in Fairfax County. For reservations, call Faye Quesenberry (703) 620-0161 by Jan. 10.

ONGOING

John Witt Chapter of the Colonial Dames of the 17th Century. The patriotic, genealogical and heraldic society for women of lineal descendants of an ancestor who lived or served prior to 1701 in one of the original colonies in the geographical area of the present U.S. is accepting new members; the chapter meets four times yearly. j.smithtot@aol.com.

Mount Vernon Rep. Dan Storck Community Office Hours. 10 a.m.-noon, at Lorton Library, 9520 Richmond Highway, Lorton. School Board Member and Mount Vernon District Representative Dan Storck hosts drop-in community office hours the second Saturday of each month. Dan.Storck@fcps.edu or Barbara.Larsen@fcps.edu.

Thank veterans for their service via the post: draw or write a note of thanks and encouragement—no need to seal in envelopes, Adopt a Soldier will do that—and send to Americas Adopt A Soldier, P.O. Box 1049, Springfield, VA 22151. www.americasadoptsoldier.org.

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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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NEWS

Biscuit was adopted in August by Faisal and Mary Ann Rashid of Oakton, and their two school-age children, Julia and Sam.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

The Latest on Biscuit

The little Shih Tzu finds a loving home in Oakton.

Biscuit, the little Shih Tzu who survived on his own for more than two years in the Franconia Community and was rescued by Fairfax County Animal Control Officer Enna Lugo, staff and volunteers of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, has been adopted and is adjusting well to life in his new home.

After being rescued last April, he spent several months in foster care with Officer Lugo and was

adopted in August by Faisal and Rashid of Oakton, and their two school-age children, Julia and Sam.

According to Mary Ann Rashid, Biscuit has become comfortable and even protective of his family over the past several months. "He and I walk the kids to the bus every morning and he waits for them to come home."

She reports that his favorite activity is cuddling with the family during TV time and that he sleeps under the parent's bed, much like he slept underneath a porch during his two years roaming free.

Officer Lugo is thrilled with the match. "I can't believe how much he's bonded with his new family! He's found the loving home we always wanted for him."

Car-title Lending Spreads in the Area

FROM PAGE 6

in opposition. The coalition in support of the bill was bipartisan, including Del. Bob Brink (D-48), Del. Barbara Comstock (R-34), Del. Kaye Kory (D-38), Del. Tim Hugo (R-40) and Del. Mark Sickles (D-43).

"All these laws do is let people get a car-title loan," said Del. Dave Albo (R-42), who also voted in favor of the bill. "People can determine if this is a good choice for them or if it's a bad choice for them."

INDUSTRY LEADERS contributed generously to members of the General Assembly and lobbied heavily to get their way. Since 2009, LoanMax contributed more than \$500,000 and Fast Auto Loans contributed more than \$200,000. Saslaw received the largest individual contributions, receiving \$22,000 from Fast Auto Loans and almost \$20,000 from LoanMax. Many of the other legislators voting in support of the industry also received financial support from car-title lenders.

When asked about his support of the 2011 bill, Del. Bob Brink (D-48) had little to say.

"No comment," said Brink, who received \$1,500 from LoanMax and \$500 from Fast Auto Loans.

A map of car-title lending operations in Northern Virginia shows they are clustered in areas with high poverty and low salaries. Manassas has 11 locations. Annandale has four. South Arlington has two. The Route 1 corridor in southeast Fairfax County has seven, and another one is about to open at the intersection with Huntington Avenue. Some say they are concerned Northern Virginia is becoming a place where unscrupulous lenders can take advantage of people in need who come from the District of Columbia or Maryland — a fear that will become more pronounced when a new casino opens in Prince George's County.

"Route 1 has become the car-title lending capital of Northern Virginia," said Del. Scott Surovell (D-44). "And that's the last kind of economic development we need on the corridor."

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WELLBEING

Staying Fit During the Holidays

Staving off extra pounds during the season of sweets.

By MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Patty McAndrews works out with a trainer twice a week at TRUE Health and Wholeness in Arlington. She found that restarting her fitness regimen about two months ago has strengthened her abdominal muscles and toned her body. A threat to her fitness looms, however: the holidays and the food and festivities that come with them. McAndrews plans to continue her workout schedule to combat the traditional holiday weight gain.

"I am excited about the working out during the holidays because it gives me the freedom to indulge," she said.

From eggnog and chocolate truffles to Yule logs and Linzer cookies, the holidays bring an onslaught of sugar-filled delicacies. Those who find it hard to resist

multiple servings of Italian trifle at an office party or chocolate-covered gingerbread men at a cookie exchange might be kicking themselves for overindulging come January, however.

To keep that from happening, local nutrition and fitness experts share their tricks for staying in shape and helping their clients do the same during the sweetest time of the year.

"It is a very hard time of the year, even for me," said Lisa Pawloski, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Nutrition and Food Studies at George Mason University in Fairfax. "Everyone has challenges. There is food everywhere. Office parties are filled with fatty food. There are dishes filled with candy all around the office this time of year."

Pawloski believes bringing calm to the holiday bustle can aid in fitness. "It is important to reduce your stress so that you don't over

consume," she said. "Many people react to stress by overeating."

Planning ahead is one strategy to avoid gluttony during holiday gatherings. "Think about nibbling on small amounts of healthy food throughout the day to fill you up a bit instead waiting on a big meal to fill you up," said Michael Nordvall, Ed.D., professor of health and human performance at Marymount University in Arlington. "Take your time while you're eating, chew slowly, eat slowly. The slower you eat, the less food you end up eating because you will get fuller sooner."

Loading up on nutritious nibbles in advance of a big event might make platters of pound-packing fare appear less appealing. "When it comes to holiday parties or buffets, eat something healthy before you go so you're not feeling overly hungry," said Pawloski. "Think about eating protein and whole grains because high-fiber food will

allow you to feel fuller for a longer period of time."

"My personal philosophy is for people to enjoy themselves at a party," said Nina Elliot of TRUE Health and Wholeness in Arlington. "Have some of everything, but don't go back for seconds. Don't be obsessed with the food, move through the crowd, focus on enjoying the people who are there."

When faced with a large spread of tantalizing eats, be selective. "You have to ask yourself, 'Is it worth the calories?' Since there is such a variety, being picky is important," said Pawloski. "Go after the food you really enjoy. There is research that shows that when you eat food you enjoy, you secrete more of the digestive enzymes and you absorb more nutrients of those particular foods."

Resist the urge to clean your plate. "Most people will pile on as much food as they can and feel the requirement to finish everything," said Nordvall. "Start with smaller portions."

While libations can add merri-



PHOTO COURTESY NINA ELLIOT

Arlington fitness trainer Christian Elliot guides Patty McAndrews through strength training exercises. Experts suggest exercising before a holiday event where rich foods will be abundant.

ment to a holiday party, they can also add pounds. "For the adults, things like alcoholic beverages and

eggnog can slow you down, make you drowsy," said Nordvall. "One of the worst things that can happen after a big meal is to fall asleep because your metabolism slows down."

When it comes to sit-down dinners with family and friends, both Pawloski and Nordvall suggest loading up on low-calorie liquids and moving around. "Have water or some broth before you eat a meal," said Pawloski. "That will actually make you feel a little full."

"Going on a walk with your family after a big meal will increase metabolism and help with digestion," said Nordvall.

Elliot even recommends that those concerned about maintaining fitness consider hiring a trainer for the holidays. "Maybe four sessions during the month of December, once a week, for weight training specifically," she said. "Have a session right before a big party where you know there is going to be rich food."

Elliot says that weight training is important to maintaining muscle mass and reducing stress. "Most people can go for a run, but what is often lacking is proper utilization of weights," she said. "People with more muscle mass have a higher metabolism because muscles are energy demanding."

Her husband, Christian Elliot, fellow trainer and co-owner of TRUE Health and Wholeness, said, "One of the great benefits about strength training is how it boosts the client's self confidence."

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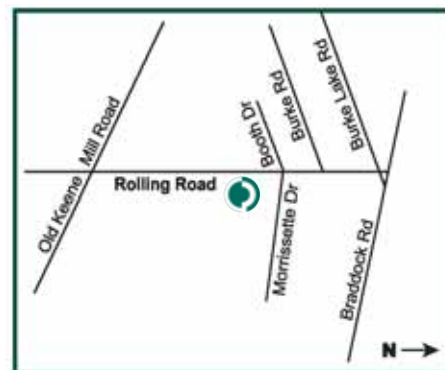
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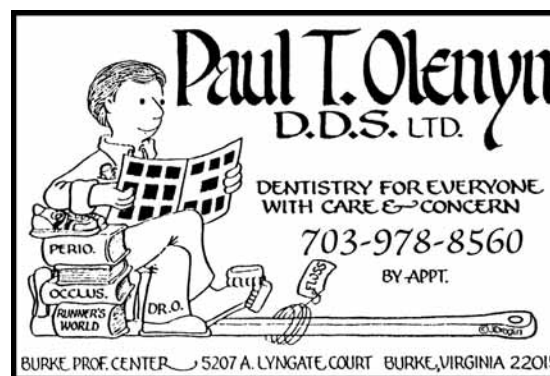
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HOLIDAY CALENDAR

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 Scichilone 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 Carol. 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. Over 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 Carol. 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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CALENDAR

WEDNESDAY-SUNDAY/ DEC. 4-DEC. 8

“Shades and Tones Spiced with Color” 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays, noon to 5 p.m. Sundays, at the Workhouse Arts Center, Building W-5, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Gloria Benedetto and Traci Oberle are the featured artists in the building; see their work featuring rich color in subtle workings. www.workhousearts.org.

FRIDAY/DEC. 6-JAN. 5, 2014

100 under 200. Daily, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Black Friday Sale, at the Workhouse Arts Center, Building W-16 McGuireWoods Gallery, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. One hundred artists exhibiting work priced less than \$200 in an unrestrained gallery exhibit by each one of the artists at the Workhouse. <http://workhousearts.org/events/visual-arts/black-friday-workhouse>.

“From the Fire.” Workhouse Arts, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Five diverse ceramic artists challenge themselves to create personal work for a joint firing in “From the Fire”, an educational exhibit of 30 works and concomitant photographs and text.

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.”

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 11

Chic Holiday Fashions Just For You. Springfield Garden and Country Club, 8301 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Browse through an

Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416. The deadline is the Friday prior to the next paper's publication. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event. For more entertainment events in the county, go to: <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2013/sep/26/fairfax-county-calendar/>.

assortment of clothing perfect for any event.

THURSDAY/DEC. 12

“Survivor.” 7 p.m. Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce Street. Novelist Louis Bayard will read his comic Christmas essay “Survivor.” Hear the author relate a true holiday misadventure that took place at nearby Springfield Mall.

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

Workhouse Farmers Market. 3-6 p.m., at the Workhouse, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Every Thursday on the quad is a producer-only market for discerning shoppers featuring locally grown fruits and vegetables, locally raised meats and poultry and local foods from breads to salsas and sausages. www.smartmarkets.org.

Ballroom Social Dance. Saturdays; mini-lesson, 7:30-8 p.m., \$5; social dance, 8-10:30 p.m., \$10. Each month focuses on a new style of ballroom dance. Complimentary refreshments and a cash bar will be available. Casual dress code, all skill levels welcome.

Sueños Americanos. Sept. 14-Nov. 3. McGuireWoods Gallery, Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. The Workhouse showcases works celebrating Latin America through a variety of mediums and styles. workhousearts.org.

Inner Librare. Through Oct. 6. Vulcan Gallery Community Action Space, Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Ceci Cole McInturff of George Mason University's School of Visual Art curates an exhibit of artists' books, book experiences, and more.

Smart Markets Springfield. 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at Springfield Mall, 6417 Loisdale Road, Springfield. Through Nov. 23, the market is open every Saturday with goods, wares, produce and farmers. www.smartmarkets.org.

FAITH NOTES

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

Fairfax Baptist Temple, at the corner of Fairfax County Parkway and Burke Lake Roads, holds a bible study fellowship at 9 a.m. Sundays followed by a 10 a.m. worship service. Nursery care and children's church also provided. 6401 Missionary Lane, Fairfax Station, 703-323-8100 or www.fbtministries.org.

The Guhyasamaja Buddhist Center, 10875 Main St., Fairfax City provides free classes to both newcomers and advanced practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism. The center emphasizes working with the mind and learning how to understand the workings of the mind, overcoming inner causes of suffering, while cultivating causes of happiness. Under the direction of Lama Zopa Rinpoche, the center is a place of study, contemplation and meditation. Visit <http://www.guhyasamaja.org> for more information.

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

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

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

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

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 8304 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield, offers casual worship services on Saturday evenings at 5:30 p.m. featuring contemporary music. More traditional services take place on Sunday mornings at 8:15 and 11 a.m. Sunday School is from 9:45-10:45 a.m. for children and adults. The church also offers discussion groups for adults. 703-451-5855 or www.poplc.org.

Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, 8336 Carrleigh Parkway in Springfield, supports a Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) program on the first and third Wednesday of each month. Meetings are 9:30-11:30 a.m. at the church. All mothers and children are welcome. The program provides mothers an opportunity to get to know other mothers through discussions and craft activities. Register. 703-451-5320.

COMMUNITIES OF WORSHIP



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Register at www.BurkePresChurch.org

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Pohick Church...

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Lutheran

Living Savior Lutheran Church...

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Cranford United

Methodist Church...

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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

Small Business Saturday: Different Shops, Different Turnouts

The Bike Lane in Springfield and The Picket Fence in Burke experienced two versions of the national event.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

Following the controversial additional shopping hours on Thanksgiving, the typical fray on Black Friday, and the online melee of Cyber Monday, Small Business Saturday is positioned in a highly competitive shopping storm.

American Express started the event, posturing it as a nationwide “movement” to get consumers energized about supporting their locally owned and operated restaurants and retail stores. They claim to offer partner businesses promotional materials and guides to run their own PR campaign, and entice AmEx card-holders to dive in with \$10 rebates on purchases (with a prior registration).

Ten dollars may not make the difference in deciding on a large purchase, but presumably American Express figures if it's enough to help bring more foot traffic in



Jen Cortesi, general manager of the Springfield location of The Bike Lane, was surprised at the lack of turnout for Small Business Saturday.

independently owned doors, the shop keepers can do the rest.

In Burke and Springfield, two stores experienced two different versions of Small Business Saturday this year.

“It wasn’t terrible, but it wasn’t better than an average day,” said Jen Cortesi, general manager of the Springfield location of The Bike Lane. Based on other years, Cortesi was expecting more foot

PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION



Billie Thomas, owner of The Picket Fence in Burke, experienced great customer involvement with the Small Business Saturday.

traffic on Small Business Saturday, but this year there was surprisingly little by comparison. And of the customers who did make it out, only one family mentioned the American Express promotion, she said.

HUSBAND AND WIFE TEAM Todd and Anne Mader opened the community- and customer service-focused bike shop in 2001 after pursuing careers as an accountant and social worker, respectively. Eight years later the couple opened a second shop in Reston. The shops are known for their healthy mix of price points for road, mountain and hybrid bikes and accessories, as well as their involvement with local races, safety initiatives and bike service seminars.

The store manager observed there may have been less hype surrounding the day than previously, less information communicated to the public through various media. But, as she said, “It’s always hard to say what changes” from year to year — “it’s a question of expectations.”

“It hasn’t been a stellar year for retail, with Sequestration, the shutdown,” Cortesi continued. “People spend differently when

SEE SHOPPING, PAGE 15

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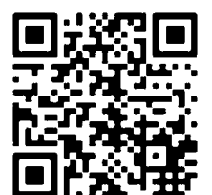


Meet Henry Lopez, 2013 National Boys & Girls Clubs Virginia Youth of the Year, who grew up with the BGCGW Culmore Character Club for 14 years. Henry now attends George Mason University on an Honor Scholarship studying computer engineering.

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FROM PAGE 14

they're missing a month's salary." The extra free time on the sales floor also gave the Bike Lane team time to speculate about the trickle-down effects of the modified shopping calendar this year.

With more stores open on Thanksgiving to get the jump on Black Friday, and extended hours on Black Friday itself, perhaps more shoppers were in need of a financial and physical break come Saturday — at least more so than in previous years.

Members of The Bike Lane team did come out to support their shop. "It was a nice gesture," said Cortesi. But it wasn't the kind of new business American Express seems to want to promote. "The day has potential," Cortesi continued. "It seems like it has more."

OVER IN BURKE, Billie Thomas, owner of the diverse home decor and gift shop The Picket Fence, experienced a much different turnout. "We were pleased," she said. "We were very happy with the response to it and everything."

Thomas's shop has been around for five years, and stocks everything from baby and bath items to decorative home decor, tea and potpourri. With a wide variety of merchandise, Thomas endeavors to sell as much American-made product as possible, like a collection of hammered silver candleholders and plates from Pennsylvania designer Wendell August.

“We try just to find unique things you’re not going to see any place else,” said Thomas.

Despite not being able to process American Express cards, The Picket Fence still drew a crowd on Saturday, according to Thomas. "It is hard to say this time of year because of the holidays," she said, but "the majority of the people that came in did mention they were here because of Small Business Saturday. We have great loyal customers anyway, but it just brings them out even more."

Thomas and The Picket Fence are also running a book drive for INOVA Children's Hospital, and scheduled a drawing for a \$50 store gift certificate to coincide with Small Business Saturday.

Regardless of the single-day turnout — whether above or below expectations — both businesses are hopeful for increased awareness and community involvement going forward to the next Small Business Saturday. “It’s nice to be recognized as a small business,” said Thomas.

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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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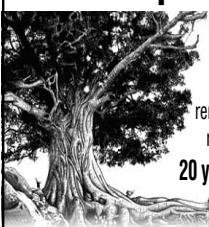
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Iamaya-V, LLC trading as Margarita's Grill, 9526 Burke Rd, Burke, VA 22015. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and beer on premises, mixed beverages restaurant license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Efrén 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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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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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.

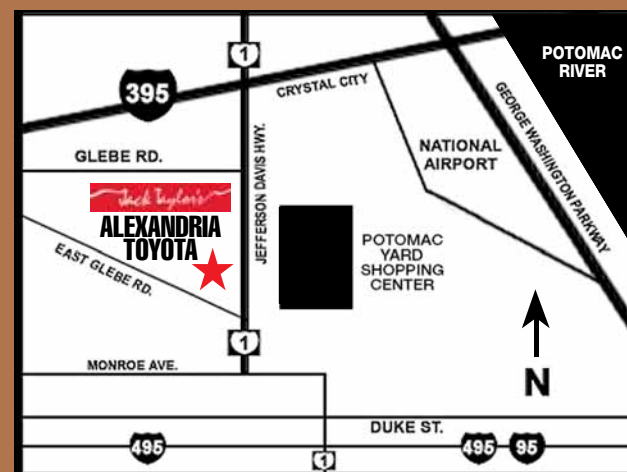
Landreville most recently served as the Associate Executive Director at Fox Run, an Erickson Living community in Novi, Mich. Prior to that position, she was the Associate Executive Director at Riderwood, Erickson Living's largest community in Silver Spring, Md. Landreville is a licensed nursing home 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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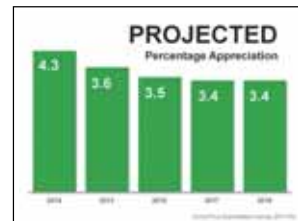


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Centreville **\$357,000**
This brick front town home has 4 BRs, 3.5 BAs, 3 finished levels. Lower level has fireplace and walkout. New carpeting, freshly painted. Amazing!

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Herndon **\$254,900**
Updated 3rd floor condo with almost 1000 sq. feet finished space. Hardwood floors in the living and dining room areas, upgraded kitchen, washer and dryer in unit. Walk to pool, weight room and club room. Minutes to Park and Ride on Monroe Street. New Metro coming in 2018.

Access the Realtors' Multiple Listing Service: www.searchvirginia.listingbook.com