

Alcorta Places Third At Foot Locker Nationals

Sports. Page 12

State, Local Officials Rally Behind FBI in Springfield

News, Page 3

A 'Homeless' Church Presents Living Nativity

(formerly on Pickett Road in Fairfax) lost their church property more than two years ago in a dispute with the Episcopal diocese. While temporarily "homeless" the church (known for decades of theatrical and dance performances) has decided to bring the show on the road. Their unique take on a living nativity will be held in a non-religious atmosphere at the Sherwood Community Center in Fairfax. Admission is free.

Friday, Dec. 20, 7 – 8 p.m. at

(next to Van Dyke Park), 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax.

Rev. Joe Acanfora has said that even though the economy is recovering, there are still many people out there distressed or just coming out of a tailspin or still feeling "homeless" and that the circumstances this church went through have actually worked to bring the church into the general community rather than stay within physical walls.

Church of the Apostles has an equally different take on the Liv-

Church of the Apostles Anglican Sherwood Community Center ing Nativity, as the seemingly impromptu dialog shows the harsh realities people faced during the time of the census thousands of vears ago.

> A church in Oakton (Whole Word Fellowship) hosts the COAA congregation twice on Sundays in the interim. Church members hail from all parts of Fairfax County including Reston, Herndon, Springfield, Annandale, Clifton, and Centreville/Chantilly. For information more visit www.christmasinbethlehem.org



Photo contributed

Rev. Joe Acanfora plays a rabbi.

Area Roundups

Man Robbed in Clifton

Fairfax County police are seeking the people who robbed a man, Friday night, in the 6100 block of Clifton Road. According to police, the victim had just parked his vehicle, at 9:50 p.m., when two men approached and demanded money. One of the men displayed a handgun and shot out a window on the victim's vehicle.

Both men then stole cash and property from the victim and fled in a blue sedan. There were no injuries. The suspects were described as black, ages 17-20, and wearing black clothing and masks.

Don't Drink and Drive

As the holidays approach, Fairfax County police reminds everyone not to drink and drive. SoberRide is offering a free cab ride home every night from now until Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2014. So anyone heading out to enjoy a holiday gathering is urged to designate a driver or call SoberRide at 1-800-200-TAXI between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. to get home safely. (AT&T customers dial #9727). For more information, go to http:// www.wrap.org/soberride/.

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.

SATURDAY/DEC. 21

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

MONDAY/DEC. 23

Pohick Prose Society. 7-8:30 p.m. Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke, Teens talk about books. Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi. Registration required. Book discussion for age 13-18. 703-644-7333

THURSDAY/DEC. 26

Polar Bear Reading Club. 10 a.m. Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Join the club. Read five books and choose a prize from the treasure chest. Do it again and again in January and February. Age birth-12. 703-644-

FRIDAY/DEC. 27

Polar Bear Reading Club. 10 a.m. Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Join the club. Read five books and choose a prize from the treasure chest. Do it again and again in January and February. Age birth-12. 703-644-

Fun Flicks. 10:30-11:15 a.m. Watch movies based on children's books. Call for the titles. Cosponsored by the Friends of the Pohick Regional Library. Registration required. All ages. 703-644-7333.

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What More Could FBI Want?

Virginia leaders tout merits of Springfield site for FBI HQ relocation.

By Victoria Ross
The Connection

high-ranking delegation of Virginia politicians gathered in Springfield Tuesday morning in a renewed effort to convince the Federal Bureau of Investigation to relocate its headquarters to a warehouse site in Springfield.

The move in the high-stakes, highly competitive regional competition comes after site selection guidelines eliminated almost all other Northern Virginia locations.

U.S. Sens. Mark Warner (D) and Tim Kaine (D), U.S. Reps. Jim Moran (D-8), Frank Wolf (R-10) and Gerry Connolly (D-11), Governor-elect Terry McAuliffe (D), State Del. Vivian Watts (D-39), Fairfax County Supervisor Jeff McKay (D-Lee) and others held a news conference on Tuesday, Dec. 17 at Northern Virginia Community College's Medical Campus Tuesday to send a message that the Springfield site is the ideal choice.

IN LATE 2011, the General Services Administration (GSA), which manages federal properties, announced plans to move the FBI's main office out of the run-down, dilapidated J. Edgar Hoover Building on Pennsylvania Avenue.

Since then, several jurisdictions across the Washington region have made it clear they have the ideal location for the bureau's move.

But the Virginia delegation made the argument that the federally-owned warehouse in Springfield makes the best location for the FBI to consolidate as many as 11,000 employees for a number of reasons, including the fact that the GSA already owns the warehouse, which guarantees that federal government ownership of the campus is both clean and easy.

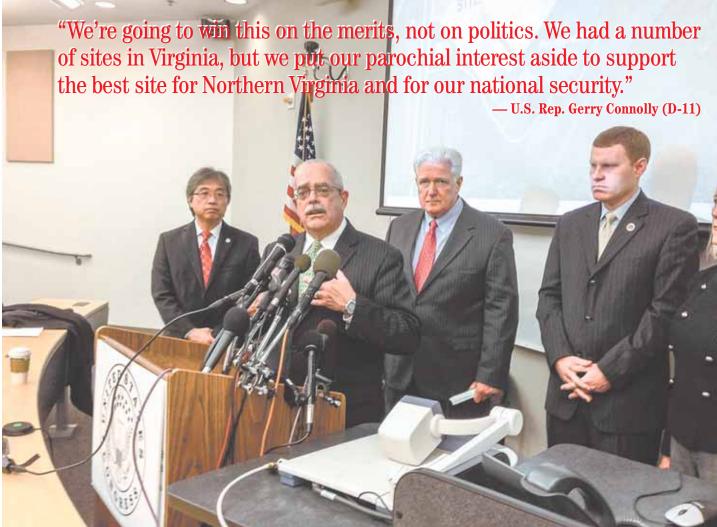
"Virginia checks every box," Warner said, "transit accessible, fiber-wired, synergy with FBI Quantico... Many FBI employees live in Virginia, and it is easy for DC and Maryland residents to commute."

Citing the bi-partisan display of unity in the effort, Kaine said he was "brought into this process by our three members of Congress - Connolly, Moran, and Wolf...It is characteristic of us in Virginia that we all work together."

Wolf, who chairs the appropriations subcommittee overseeing the FBI, said the site is ideally located, with easy access to the CIA and Quantico.

Connolly agreed: "The FBI's ability to interact with other federal anti-terrorism offices located in NoVA is critical."

Supervisor McKay, whose district is home



U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11) joins other high-ranking Virginia politicians in backing the Springfield site for the new FBI headquarters. The GSA is expected to announce the site selection in 2015. From left - Secretary of Commerce and Trade Jim Cheng, who represented Governor Robert McDonnell; U.S. Rep. Jim Moran (D-8) and Fairfax County Supervisor Jeff McKay (D-Lee).



A map of the warehouse site in Springfield shows the location's prime proximity to major transportation. The site is adjacent to the Franconia/Springfield Metro Station, VRE, AMTRAK, bus service, and every highway except Route 66.

to the warehouse site, said county officials will do "everything in our power to make sure zoning and other factors are in place."

McKay said the benefits to the federal government of relocating to Springfield "would be substantial."

In January 2012, Fairfax County joined Prince George's County and the District in placing its marker on the table in the high-stakes competition soon after the Senate passed a resolution authorizing the GSA and FBI to seek new headquarters in December

2011

"The FBI needs 2 million square feet of office space, located within two miles of a Metro station and within 2.5 miles of the Beltway according to the GAO. Redeveloping existing sites in DC would be extremely expensive, especially given the post-911 security features that are now required...It is adjacent to the Franconia/Springfield Metro Station, VRE, AMTRAK, bus service, and every highway except Route 66," McKay said at the time.

He pointed out that airport access will soon be served by two Metro stations once Rail to Dulles is complete.

Fairfax County would also benefit by highpaying jobs that would come to the area, and redevelopment of the site would spur construction of other office projects nearby and expand commercial tax base.

"You know the site makes perfect sense when the entire Northern Virginia Congressional Delegation, the Governor, the Governor-Elect, and State elected and appointed officials – both Democrats and Republicans- all agree on something," McKay added.

ACCORDING TO OFFICIALS, the decision by the GSA will be made in 2015. While other regional sites have been eliminated for various reasons, Maryland is still in the running with its site in Prince Georges County.

But Connolly predicts the Springfield site will be the chosen one.

"We're going to win this on the merits, not on politics. We had a number of sites in Virginia, but we put our parochial interest aside to support the best site for Northern Virginia and for our national security."

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Recognizing Citizenship

Lee District Association of Civic Organizations' holds 58th annual banquet.

By Janelle Germanos The Connection

ublic servants and civic activists were recognized at the Lee District Association of Civic Organizations' 58th annual Lee District Banquet on Dec. 11 at the Springfield Hilton.

Master Police Officer Jim Reid, Master Police Office Greg Kottemann, and Leah Lamba-Skidmore were presented awards at the banquet.

Reid and Kotteman received the Les Dorson Distinguished Public Service Professional Award. Reid runs the Franconia Station neighborhood watch program and coordinates the area's National Night Out, a crime and drug prevention event. Kottemann has served in the Fairfax County Police Department for 24 years and is now the crime prevention officer for the Mount Vernon Station.

"I just wanted to tell you how much of an honor and privilege it has been for me to work in the community that I grew up in," Kottemann told the audience.

Lamba-Skidmore, who served as chair of the Lee District Land Use Advisory Committee, received the Les Dorson Citizenship award for her service on the committee.

Fairfax County Police Chief Edwin Roessler, Jr. was the guest speaker at the event and spoke about crime in Fairfax County, as well as the department's efforts to keep up with the urbanization of the area.



Master Police Officer Greg Kottemann, Leah Lamba-Skidmore, and Master Police Officer Jim Reid were recognized for public service and citizenship at the 58th Annual Lee District Association of Civic Organizations Banquet on Dec. 11.



Jane Hilder, chair of the Lee District Association of Civic Organizations, presents the Lee District Citizenship award to Leah Lambda-Skidmore, who has been the chair of the Lee District Land Use Advisory Committee since 2006.

"Thank you very much for what you do for your police department, and to help me as your police chief, to do our job efficiently and effectively," Roessler said.

Lee District Supervisor Jeffrey McKay (D) also delivered remarks at the banquet.

"My job is a lot easier because of the civic activism of so many of you, and you do it because you care," McKay told the audience.

According to Jane Hilder, chair of the LDACO, the association received a donation from Springfield Town Center to help cover the cost of the banquet.

"We were thrilled to get that and I just really think this is an exciting time to be living here. We've already seen a lot going on in the Kingstowne area and a lot is starting to happen along Route One. It is interesting to watch," Hilder said

Connie Beatty was recognized for being one of the original homeowners in Rose Hill.

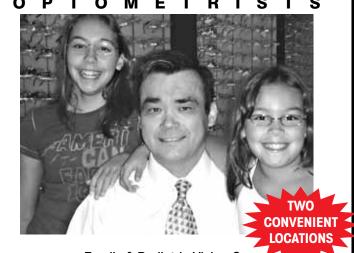
Beatty has lived in Rose Hill

See Viewpoints, Page 7

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OPINION

Preserve 3-2-1 for Housing

Housing for all income levels near transit supports vibrant communities and job growth, reduces traffic.

> BY MICHELLE KROCKER AND JIM EDMONDSON

n the latest edition of The Herrity Report, Springfield Supervisor Pat Herrity proposed "redirecting developers' \$3 per square foot contribution for buying rentcontrolled housing units into a trust fund to pay for public school renova-GUEST tion and construction."

EDITORIAL The report proceeds to make several unsubstantiated claims regarding the number of people living in subsidized housing and the growth in both the number of subsidized units and number of households in Fairfax County. However as in the past, The Herrity Report does not provide the full picture of the housing policy under discussion, and misrepresents the facts.

The Board of Supervisors adopted its housing policy in 2010 as a part of the larger plan

for the redevelopment of Tysons. It is now under consideration, at the request of the board, for application in other designated high density, transit and business centers in the rest of the county. Called the '3-2-1' policy, the proposal by county staff would apply a contribution from commercial development to support the construction of workforce housing in the transit or business area, as it does in the Tysons plan. The contribution would be applied on a sliding scale based on a proposed development's proximity to a transit station. This proposal will go before the Planning Commission and then the Board of Supervisors in the first quarter of 2014.

Why is this policy important?

To accommodate projected job growth and remain competitive within the region, it is im-

> portant to ensure housing opportunities for the workforce of the future at all income levels;

> Developing housing at transit stations and adjacent to employment cen-

ters encourages use of mass transit, walking and biking which can lead to fewer cars, and less congestion; it also enhances Metro revenue and reduces the pressure on local government to provide subsidies for the system;

 Linking commercial development (jobs) and housing via a linkage program is an acknowledged "best practice" in hundreds of communities across the country to ensure an adequate supply of housing to support job

❖ It recognizes the changing preferences of workers/taxpayers/voters, particularly young people, to live near where they work.

The proposed policy anticipates that the contributions will be made to a housing trust fund used by the county to leverage private sector financing to develop the needed housing.

The housing that is constructed will not be owned or purchased by the county. In fact, very little of the affordable housing in the county is owned by the government.

Securing decent housing that is affordable remains a challenge for Fairfax County households earning less than \$60,000.

Meeting the growing needs of our school system is also an important issue. Both education and safe, decent housing are fundamental to the well-being of our community, and residents want leadership that seeks to find workable solutions. Failing to recognize the importance of both and pitting one issue against the other are not the answers, and the citizens of Fairfax County deserve better from elected officials.

Michelle Krocker is executive director, Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance. Jim Edmondson is president of AHOME, which promotes affordable housing opportunities for families at all income levels.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Parents Advocate for Class Size Caps

To the Editor:

On Saturday, Dec. 7, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Superintendent's (Dr. Karen Garza) conducted a "Listening Tour" meeting at Cooper Middle School in McLean.

Many parents who spoke at the meeting were concerned about large class sizes in their children's schools. This is not a problem in most FCPS schools - the average elementary school class in FCPS has only 21-22 students, and plenty of FCPS elementary schools average 20 or fewer students per class.

However, large class sizes have become the norm in Vienna, Oakton, McLean and Great Falls schools. Teachers unlucky enough to be assigned to the 30+ classes are often pushed to the limit in terms of what they can do to control classroom behavior and alleviate student stress. At Wolftrap Elementary, teachers have even created a "coping couch" for stressed kids to help them escape from the crowded, noisy and chaotic atmosphere that is so often inevitable with such excessively large classes.

The school system is looking at county-wide increases in average class sizes. Without some type of class size cap, this would create a situation where most of the county's students had reasonable class sizes (e.g., 16 to 26 students), but even more students in the Vienna, Oakton, McLean and Great Falls would have more than 30 students in their rooms - which are no larger than the rooms being used to hold 17 or 22 students elsewhere in FCPS.



Karen Garza discusses class size at the Dec. 7 listening tour in McLean.

After seeing their children crammed into oversized classes for years, parents formed Class Size Counts last year. The group is working with State Delegate Barbara Comstock to address the class size issue at the state level, Supervisor Foust, several School Board members and Superintendent Garza at the county level. The Class Size Counts online petition, with over 1,000 signatures, asks that the Fairfax County school system not increase average class sizes without simultaneously implementing class size caps:

http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/stopoversize-classes-in-fairfax-countyschool/ ?utm medium=email&utm source=system&utm campaign=Send%2Bto%2BFriend.

At Cooper Middle School, Dr. Garza reassured parents and teachers in the room that she is working to fix this problem, by drafting an FCPS regulation that would impose class

Class Size Counts applauds Dr. Garza for taking a stand on implementing caps so that all children in FCPS can receive a decent and fair education.

Interestingly, the School Board member whose district includes many schools with the largest class sizes - Jane Strauss - also told parents at a Longfellow PTA meeting that she opposed a class size cap, and preferred to continue using the FCPS "staffing reserve." Several years ago, parents submitted a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for emails and other documents regarding the staffing reserve. The documents painted a picture of a slush fund with no apparent criteria or controls.

Kim Farrell

Mother of two FCPS students

Write

Letters to the Editor The Connection 1606 King St. Alexandria VA 22314

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VIEWPOINTS

What have been the biggest developments in the area in 2013, and what to look for in 2014?

— Janelle Germanos



Jane Hilder, LDACO Chair, Alexandria

"I think there was an interest in redevelopment and revitalization. In 2014 I am looking forward to shopping at the Springfield Town Center."



Chris Soule, Federation Delegate for the Lee District Association of Civic Organizations, Alexandria

"It's nice to see the development of the Springfield Town Center. I think Route One redevelopment and transportation will be important in 2014. There has also been talk of building a Metro down Route One."



Connie Beatty, Rose Hill Civic Association, Rose Hill

"In 2013, I am proud of the way we have maintained the neighborhood watch in my community. We maintain the safety by looking out for our neighbors. I am looking forward to the same thing in 2014."



Greg Kottemann, Master Police Officer, Mount Vernon District Police Station

"I like the fact that the new Costco opened. I don't know what to expect for 2014. We will continue to combat crime."



Joanne Thompson, Rose Hill Civic Association, Rose Hill

"We have maintained the beauty in Rose Hill and will continue to do so."

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Teaching Children to be Charitable

Experts say modeling, nurturing are keys to raising generous children.

By Marilyn Campbell
The Connection

lena Santiviago walked her 6-year-old son down the aisle of a grocery store near her Arlington home. They picked up five boxes of toothpaste and two bottles of mouthwash, several bars of soap and a few sticks of deodorant. The shopping trip was part of a school project in which students fill holiday stockings with personal hygiene items for the homeless.

"I gave him \$20 to spend," she said. "I figure he can learn how expensive things are and that there are some people who can't afford to buy the things the he takes for granted."

Teaching children about charity, particularly during a season when many are focused on making sure Santa Claus gets copies of their Christmas lists, is an important lesson, according to experts. Redirecting a child's focus from getting to giving this season may not be as difficult as one might think, however. The key, say experts, is for parents to model and foster a sense of generosity.

"Most children are born with a sense of caring for others, which is related to empathy, or being able to put oneself in another person's shoes," said Amy Van Arsdale, Ph.D., assistant professor of psychology at Marymount University in Arlington. "Empathy and caring are found among humans and other social mammals, and a strong sense of empathy can help people to feel loved and included. As children develop, empathy can be diminished if they are not exposed to it often enough or learn that other characteristics, such as aggression, are more rewarding."

Fred Bemak, Ed.D., who is with the Counseling and Development Program in the College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University in Fairfax, said that some children are more likely to be interested in giving than others. "Children have predispositions for charity, but they are not born with it," said Bemak. "You have children who naturally share more than others. There are some toddlers who share their toys with other children and some toddlers who don't."

Bemak believes that a sense of compassion must be nurtured.

"A child could have a predisposition for charity, but have parents who don't foster it," he said. "You can cultivate it by bringing those values into your home environment.

There are a number of ways to cultivate it. "In young children, parents can foster a child's sense of empathy by modeling this response," said Van Arsdale. "For example, if they see a person who has been injured, the parent could comment on how that injury must hurt. ... Ask the child, for example, 'How might that person be feeling right now?' These interactions can help foster the child's empathy for others."

Bemak suggests directly connecting older children with opportunities to help people who are in need. "Take children to serve people who are homeless or refugee populations or people who don't have resources," he said. "Modeling the behavior is extremely important."

He recalled a personal example from his own life.



Experts say exposing children to those in need can help them develop a sense of charity.

"I was in Burma working with children who were vulnerable and poor [who were] at high levels of risk," he said. "Outside the gates [of our facility] were homeless children who were in more desperate situations than those children I was working with."

The children were homeless, hungry and dressed in rags. "They had no parents and were markedly different than the at-risk children I was working with," he said. "Typical response of the children I was working with was 'Go away. Leave us alone and don't sit outside our facility."

Bemak suggested the homeless children be invited inside for dinner. "We talked with them, welcomed them and ate with them," he said. "After they left, we talked about what the experience was like for the at-risk kids and what they learned by talking to the homeless children."

His students learned about charity through processing the experience of having a human encounter. "We talked about what it meant to give," he said. "It was very powerful for all involved. This exercise can be replicated anywhere."

Van Arsdale said that older children learn best about charity when their parents involve them in altruistic activities. "For example, the family could volunteer together by serving meals at a homeless shelter," she said. "This direct, interpersonal experience is more likely to affect the child's sense of empathy than an indirect experience [such as] telling the child they should be charitable."

Cultivating altruistic values is key to raising children who have a sense of charity. "Share food, possessions, support and assistance in ways that people might need it," said Bemak. "Even a young child can share their toys with other children who might not have toys. In psychology we talk about altruism as a healing variable. Altruism leads to compassion and charity."



Len Annetta, Ph.D., of George Mason University traveled to Italy recently with his wife, Jennifer, and his children Samantha and Joey. Annetta kept his children occupied during the long fight with cloud games and by helping them practice Italian.

Home for the Holidays: Surviving a Long Trip

Keeping children entertained on lengthy airplane rides.

By Marilyn Campbell
The Connection

iz Henry is nervous about her upcoming flight to San Francisco. It's not TSA regulations or long lines that are causing her anxiety, however. It is traveling alone with her three children—all of whom are under the age of 6.

"My kids are 5, 3 and 1," said Henry, who lives in Vienna. "I'm taking them to visit my family for Christmas, but they've never flown before. I have a lot of DVDs packed, but I don't know how far those will get me. I don't like pacifying my kids with videos, but I don't think I have a choice."

Going home for the holidays often means boarding an airplane with high-energy children and settling in for a long ride. Parents such as Henry scramble to find ways to fill the time in a way that keeps their child entertained without disturbing other passengers. Local education experts say there are options that don't involve the last resort of videos and electronic games, however.

"Reading is always a good choice, but for many children, it cannot hold their attention for long plane rides," said Len Annetta, Ph.D., a professor in the College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University. "Games like Scrabble challenge players' literacy skills in a fun way. Crossword puzzles are also fun and engaging."

Annetta, who recently returned from a family trip to Italy, has first-hand experience with surviving lengthy plane rides with children in tow. "I took the whole family, including my 13- and 11-year-old children," he said. "My children are

older, but we played a name the cloud game. Of course, we were above the clouds, so it made it a bit more difficult."

When traveling abroad, a long flight is an ideal time to learn more about the culture or language of your final destination. "My children tried a crash course on Italian," said Annetta. "They learned a few words they used during the week we were there. This was a free app on the iPod that we downloaded before we left."

Bethesda-based psychotherapist Katie Cogan, Ph.D., recommends activities that engage a child's imagination, particularly for younger children. "You always have your imagination with you no matter what," she said. "You can say to a child, 'Tell me a story,' or you can take turns telling stories with your child. When you're on the plane, you can help your child imagine what it will look like when we get there."

For young children, Cogan said, "Using what's inside you to create a world that already exists. It is called active imagination. Use your creativity to do anything. If you're with a young child, you can ask 'How many things can you think of that are red?"

Cogan also advises helping children make up a story, particularly about their final destination. "If it is a small kid, give them the first part of the story or the first word and let them take if from there," she said. "Have paper with you, and you can have your child tell you the story and either write it down or have your child write the story down and color it."

Annetta said, "Journaling your experience is a fun way to practice writing while telling the story of where you are going or where you've been."

The Celebration Singers perform at St. John's United Methodist Church in Springfield on Sunday.







In Harmony With Celebration Singers

Springfield show choir has been going strong 40 years.

By Steve Hibbard
The Connection

he all-volunteer Celebration Singers performed their final holiday concert of the year on Sunday, Dec. 15 at St. John's United Methodist Church in Springfield. The group started at Springfield Methodist Church in the 1960s by the name of the Wesleyan Singers. Some of the ladies have been singing together for 40-plus years. And through the years, membership has reached 66 people, but has since dwindled to 18.

The all-female ensemble sings three, four, and fivepart harmonies with huge audience interaction. They sing and dance at nursing homes, assisted-living facilities, benefits for Make-a-Wish and the Salvation Army, Fischer House at Walter Reed Hospital, and even the White House.

Anne Miller, 77, of Fairfield, Va., near Lexington, started directing the group in 1971 and has remained

ever since. "It's just something I love," said Miller who has been singing since age 6 and hails from Clinton, Okla. "I love to direct, I love to sing and I love to make people happy."

Miller was married to Grant Miller, an Air Force Lawyer, and directed the Tripoli Choral Society while they were stationed in Libya. She received a master's degree in vocal performance from the University of Hawaii in 1969 and moved to Northern Virginia in 1971. That year, she performed in the Leonard Bernstein Mass at the grand opening of The Kennedy Center in front of Jackie Kennedy.

Betty Aldrich, 70, of Falls Church says Miller is amazing in her ability to pull out choral perfection from the group. "She teaches us how to center," said Aldrich who's been a member since the mid-1980s. "She gets a beautiful sound with us."

Jenny Squire, 64, of Springfield, who wrote the script and emceed along with Karen Weinberg, agrees: "She gets from our group a sound that nobody else could get." Squire is also passionate about performing live at nursing homes and hospitals. "It provides them with a window on the world that they can access," she said. "We provide live entertainment,

SEE CELEBRATING, PAGE 11



Anne Miller conducts the audience at St. John's United Methodist Church in Springfield on Sunday.



Nora Steiger, 85, of Springfield plays a washtub bass using a broomstick and one string, sometimes called a "stumpf-fiddle."





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HOLIDAY CALENDAR

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

FRIDAY/DEC. 20 -SATURDAY/DEC. 21

"Oh Holy Night," a Christmas **Concert.** 7:30 p.m. Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Get in the holiday spirit with some melodious tunes. Tickets \$15 http:// www.workhousearts.org/ events/performing-arts/ christmas-concert-o-holy-night

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:

Living Nativity. 5:30-7:30 p.m. Safeway Parking Lot, Burke Town Plaza, at the corner of Old Keene Mill and Lee Chapel/Burke Center Parkway. Calvary Christian Church is hosting its annual 'Living Nativity'. In addition to people, sheep, donkeys and even a camel will be there. Hot cocoa, cider and cookies will be provided.



PHOTO BY LUKE RATRAY

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 on Dec. 21 at GMU's Center for the Arts.

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.

TUESDAY/DEC. 24

Christmas Caroling. 4:30 p.m. Cranford United Methodist Church, 9912 Old Colchester Road, Lorton. Door-to-door caroling.

Candlelight Christmas Eve Service. 7:30 p.m. Cranford United Methodist Church, 9912 Old Colchester Road, Lorton. An evening

reflection of the birth of Jesus. WEDNESDAY/DEC. 25

of music, scripture and quiet

J Fest. 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. wish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River

Turnpike, Fairfax. The day includes entertainment, food and fun for all ages. At 3 p.m., the JCCNV will screen the documentary "Hava Nagila (The Movie)" — a romp through the history, mystery and meaning of the great Jewish standard. Israeli dancing with Markid Mark follows the film. J Fest fee per family (up to 6 people): \$20/ \$15 JCCNV member (includes admission and movie screening) Film only fee: \$9/ \$6 JCCNV member, senior, student, child. Call (703) 323-0880 for details and to register, or visit www.jccnv.org.

TUESDAY/DEC. 31

The Ultimate 80s New Years Eve. 9 p.m. Empire, 6355 Rolling Road, Springfield. \$20.

The Ultimate New Year's **Eve Experience.** 7 p.m. - 1 a.m. Hyatt Fair Lakes Hotel, 12777 Fair Lakes Circle, Fairfax Live entertainment, music, food, and more. Tickets: \$159 per person.

Cool Cow Comedy Presents: The New Years Eve Special. 7 p.m. & 9 p.m. Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Admission: \$35. With powerful stand up comedy and hilarious sketch comedy, Rahmien Mostafavi (DC Improv, Kennedy Center), Jon Mumma (DC Improv, Sirius XM), and Danny Rouhier (106.7 The Fan, DC Improv) will take you toward midnight with side splitting comedy. For tickets, visit: http:// www.workhousearts.org/events/ performing-arts/cool-cow-comedypresents-nye-special-show.

Calendar

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-countycalendar/.

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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.

SATURDAY/DEC. 21

Ballroom Social Dance, 7:30-10:30 p.m. 601 Ox Road, Lorton. Admission: \$15. http:// www.workhousearts.org/ events/performing-arts/ ballroom-social-dance-10

FRIDAY/JAN. 3 & SATURDAY/JAN. 4

Cabaret Series: Welcome to the Speakeasy. 8 p.m. Workhouse Arts, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. A raucous ramble through the Jazz Age as talented performers tackle the tunes inspired by the gin-joint atmosphere.

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Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnews papers.comor 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 Sta-703-323-8100 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 innner causes of suffering, while cultivating causes of happiness. Under the direction of Lama Zopa Rinpoche, the center is a place of study, contemplation and meditahttp:// tion. Visit 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 www.Lordoflifeva.org.

Celebrating in Harmony

From Page 9

which means it's one-on-on." She loves to see responses like foot tapping or people mouthing words. After a performance, the singers usually go out and shake hands and greet people. "It's all about reaching them," she adds.

For their Christmas Show on Sunday, the group wore brightly colored handmade costumes and danced to the choreographed songs, "O Holy Night," "Hanukkah's Child," "Christmas Waltz," and "African Advent Carol," among others.

For Willa Lutz, 64, of Falls Church, she enjoys the friends she's known for 20 years. "I like to sing and dance," she added.

Nora Steiger, 85, of Springfield has been singing with the group for 40 years. She plays a washtub bass using a broomstick and one string, sometimes called a "stumpf-fiddle." She calls Miller "very patient and gentle."

Lydia Garner, 62, a one-year member from Sterling, says Miller adds humor to the mix. She says she loves "the gratification of knowing I brought a smile to people's faces."

For Karen Weinberg, 58, the Celebration Singers is "like a family." She enjoys the camaraderie and says it's more than just singing. "We get as much out of the performance as (the audience) does."

"It's really like a big caring family of all sisters," added Gayle Parsons, 63, of Springfield, a pianist who's been with the group six years.

After Labor Day, the group goes to the Middlebrook Retreat Center for two days where they begin practicing the songs and choreographing the moves. After polishing the show for about three months at Burke United Methodist Church, they are ready to give their holiday concert.

Alice Groenig, 64, directs a subgroup called "Sounds of Joy," that does smaller shows with eight singers. A member for 28 years, she enjoys "the joy and happiness of seeing people's faces who don't get to see live entertainment."

Celebration Singers is always looking for new members. If interested in joining, email Jenny Squire at Jenny Squire@yahoo.com.



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Sports



West Springfield senior Caroline Alcorta, seen during the VHSL state meet, placed third at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships national meet on Dec. 14 in San Diego.



Lake Braddock senior Katy Kunc, seen during the VHSL state meet, finished 19th at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships national meet on Dec. 14 in San Diego.



Lake Braddock senior Hannah Christen, seen during the VHSL state meet, finished 21st at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships national meet on Dec. 14 in San Diego.

West Springfield's Alcorta Places Third at Foot Locker Nationals

Lake Braddock's Kunc, Christen compete at XC nationals.

By Jon Roetman The Connection

aroline Alcorta finished 16th at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships national meet as a junior in 2012, missing by the slimmest of margins the All-America status that accompanies a top-15 finish.

Alcorta was disappointed but not devastated, knowing she'd have one more shot to crack the top 15.

This year, Alcorta won the south regional in Charlotte on Nov. 30, earning a trip back to nationals. The West Springfield senior had her sights set on becoming an All-American, saying a top-15 finish would be "nifty."

This time, she left no doubt.

ALCORTA PLACED THIRD at

the Foot Locker national meet on Dec. 14, finishing with a time of 17:31 at Morley Park in San Diego. Last year, Alcorta missed a top-15 finish by less than a second. This year, only two runners were faster and she finished 22 seconds ahead of the 15th-place harrier.

Alcorta said her goal was to finish in the top 15, but her "stretch goal" was to place in the top five.

"I'm happy with the effort I put into it and how it turned out,"

Alcorta said. "I couldn't ask for anything better than a top-five finish."

As a senior, Alcorta got used to self-motivating as she would build large leads en route to victory. During the VHSL state meet at Great Meadow, Alcorta won the Group 6A championship with a meet-record time of 17:13, finishing 39 seconds faster than her nearest competitor. Alcorta won the 6A North regional meet with a time of 16:31, the third-fastest time in Burke Lake Park history, and finished 48 seconds ahead of the second-place harrier. West Springfield coach Chris Pellegrini told Alcorta to focus on running her own race without letting any outside factors change her apwould push me to do the best I could. ... I know I'm supposed to run my own race, but at the same time it's nice to know there are people to help you. ... Looking ahead to see the people you're trying to catch is really big."

Tessa Barrett, a senior from Waverly, Pa., won the event with a time of 17:15.4. Hannah DeBalsi, a sophomore from Westport, Conn., finished second with a time of 17:25.3.

Alcorta started running cross country as a sophomore and continued improving. Shortly before the 2013 state meet in mid-November, Alcorta committed to run for the University of North Carolina

"I started doing cross country because I found a sport that I really love," Alcorta said. "... I just followed what I wanted to do and what I really enjoyed doing and it just turned it really well."

"I'm happy with the effort I put into it and how it turned out. I couldn't ask for anything better than a top-five finish."

On Saturday, however, Alcorta had to chase a couple harriers, something she said helped her run a better race.

"My coach and I talked about even if I couldn't win I would race to try and win," Alcorta said. "That Alcorta was one of five Northern Virginia harriers to compete at nationals. Lake Braddock senior Katy Kunc, who started running cross country during her junior year as a way to condition for soccer, finished 19th with a time of

— West Springfield senior Caroline Alcorta

West Springfield's Berglund Reaches 1,000 Career Points

West Springfield guard Amy Berglund looked up in the stands and saw her mom hold up two fingers.

The Spartans were hosting Madison on Dec. 7 and Berglund was closing in on 1,000 career points. Betsy Berglund signaled to her daughter, letting the Spartan senior know she needed two more points to reach the milestone.

With about a minute remaining in the fourth quarter, Berglund dropped in a reverse layup, giving her 21 points for the game and 1,000 for her career. Along with the personal achievement, Berglund helped the West Springfield girls' basketball team beat Madison, 63-50.

"It was really special scoring my 1,000th point because it was a culmination of so much time and effort that I have put into basketball," Berglund wrote in an email. "It was especially great reaching that mark in a tough game against a strong Madison team."

Berglund is a four-year varsity starter for the Spartans. She's been part of two Patriot District championship teams, one Northern Region championship team and twice experienced the state tournament, including a trip to the state semifinals as a freshman. She was a first-team all-region selection as a junior.

"It became my goal to score a 1,000 points after my freshman year," Berglund wrote, "because I had scored almost 300 that year and I realized it was definitely a reachable goal."

Berglund averaged 18.4 points through West Springfield's first five games



Courtesy photo

West Springfield's Amy Berglund, seen during her junior season, recently scored her 1,000th career point.

this season. The Spartans started 5-0, including a 54-53 victory over T.C. Williams on Dec. 13, during which Berglund scored 11 points. T.C. Williams won the Patriot District title last season, snapping West Springfield's streak of three consecutive district championships.

"The TC game was such an intense game and it was an amazing team win," Berglund wrote. "We were super excited to get the win over the tough opponent that TC is. It is a positive step toward our team goal of winning the district title. I think that our team still has many things to improve on and we know that every opponent is going to put up a tough fight so we focus on one game at a time."

West Springfield will travel to face Lake Braddock at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 20.

— Jon Roetman

18:07.2.

"It was a really great experience," Kunc said. "I never would imagine myself racing at such a high level since I just started last year."

Senior Hannah Christen, Kunc's teammate at Lake Braddock, finished 21st with a time of 18:07.3.

Kunc said having Christen at the meet made things "so much more comfortable."

IN THE BOYS' RACE, Edison senior Louis Colson finished 32nd with a time of 15:58.7, and George C. Marshall senior Mackenzie Haight took 34th with a time of 16:06.1.

Grant Fisher, a junior from Grand Blanc, Mich., won the event with a time of 15:06.5.

"I'm disappointed with how I fin-

ished," Haight said. "My goal was (to finish in the) top 15 for All-American. I don't think I executed my race how I planned it. I wanted to run an aggressive race and I found myself at the back of the pack."

While Haight wasn't pleased with his finish, he said he enjoyed the experience. The five Northern Virginia harriers arrived in San Diego on Thursday, Dec. 12 and returned home on Sunday. Kunc said the runners felt like "professional athletes" and were treated like "royalty."

"It's incredible," said Haight, who will compete for William and Mary next year. "The entire experience was surreal — one of the best weekends I've ever had in my life. I would never trade the experience for anything."

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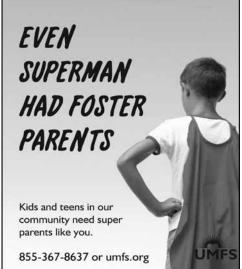
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OPINION

Obama Care and the Individual Market — Not a Failure

BY ELLIOT K. WICKS, PH. D.

ecent news stories have focused on people who bought health insurance in the individual market, rather than through an employer, and whose policies have been canceled. Some then found that coverage available through the new "Obamacare" Marketplaces (or Exchanges) is more expensive. Their anger is understandable, but the issue needs to be put in context.

A great many of those losing coverage and facing higher premiums were the beneficiaries of the insurers' policies that denied coverage to the really sick and charged very high rates to the moderately unhealthy.

Without the reforms of the Affordable Care Act, insurers would continue to deny coverage to many thousand of people with pre-existing conditions and charge unaffordable premiums to older Americans or those with less than stellar health.

The new law prohibits such discrimination in the individual market: no one can be denied coverage or charged more because of a pre-existing condition, and an older person cannot be charged more than three times as much as a younger person. Thus, differences in premiums for people with different risk levels will be greatly reduced starting in January.

If we want to ensure that everyone, regardless of their age or health condition, can get affordable coverage-which Obamacare promises to do-we have to accept the possibility that some people will pay more for coverage. The nature of insurance is that healthy people subsidize sicker people. Healthy people agree to this arrangement simply because they never know when they are going to be part of the unhealthy 10 percent of any population group that accounts for about 70 percent of the costs in any year.

Older or sicker people will incur higher medical expenses. And if they are all now to get coverage and not be forced to pay very high premiums, other insured people, the younger and healthier, will have to pay more than they did in the past—unless substantially more younger and healthier people are brought into the insurance pool. That is why the mandate that everyone have coverage is so important. The premiums these newly insured lower-risk people will pay are necessary to offset the costs of covering the less healthy people who are newly

In short, some people may face higher premiums, but that seems a reasonable price to pay for enhancing fairness and preserving the health of the entire population.

Of course, some people will pay more

because the old insurance policies they had provided woefully inadequate protection that would have left them deep in debt if they had a serious medical event. The Affordable Care Act sets minimum standards for coverage, and so some people who bought these skimpy individual plans lost that coverage. Naturally, when they go to the Marketplace to buy comprehensive replacement coverage, the premium is often

But it is essential to understand that many of these people will be eligible for federal subsidies that make the net cost lower than what they were previously paying. Subsidies to make Marketplace coverage affordable are available to individuals and families well up the income scale—to all with incomes up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level (\$94,200 for a family of four in 2013). The size of the subsidy declines as income increases, but many middle-income people will be eligible for some assis-

It is also important to keep the big picture in mind. Most people are covered by employer-based insurance, not the individual market. The individual market is a small part of the total insurance market, and many who buy such coverage keep it for only a short period of time, often less than a year. A study by Mathematica Policy Research found that during an average month, only 5.3 percent of the under-65 population had individual coverage, but fewer than half of that population group (2.1 percent) had that coverage for the entire year.

This "churning" is easily explained: many people who buy individual insurance do so as a stop-gap strategy to protect themselves until they get a job that provides better, less expensive coverage. They are people who leave a job that provided health insurance but have not yet found a new job that offers coverage, students who graduate and lose their school-based coverage, or 27 year olds who have "aged out" of their parents' plan.

The fact is that the individual market has never worked well, which is why the ACA focused especially on reforming it. Large premium increases, loss of coverage, and instability have always been characteristic of this poorly functioning market.

The lesson is that now is not the time to endorse legislation like that recently passed in the House that would perpetuate a broken and inequitable individual market and jeopardize the reforms that would bring good, affordable coverage to many thousands who until now have been denied such

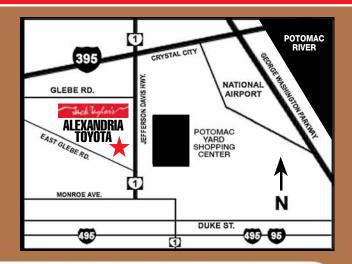
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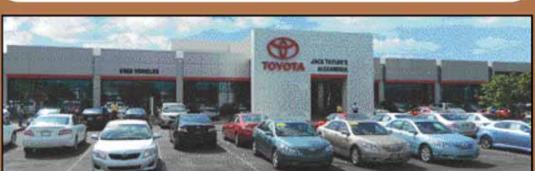




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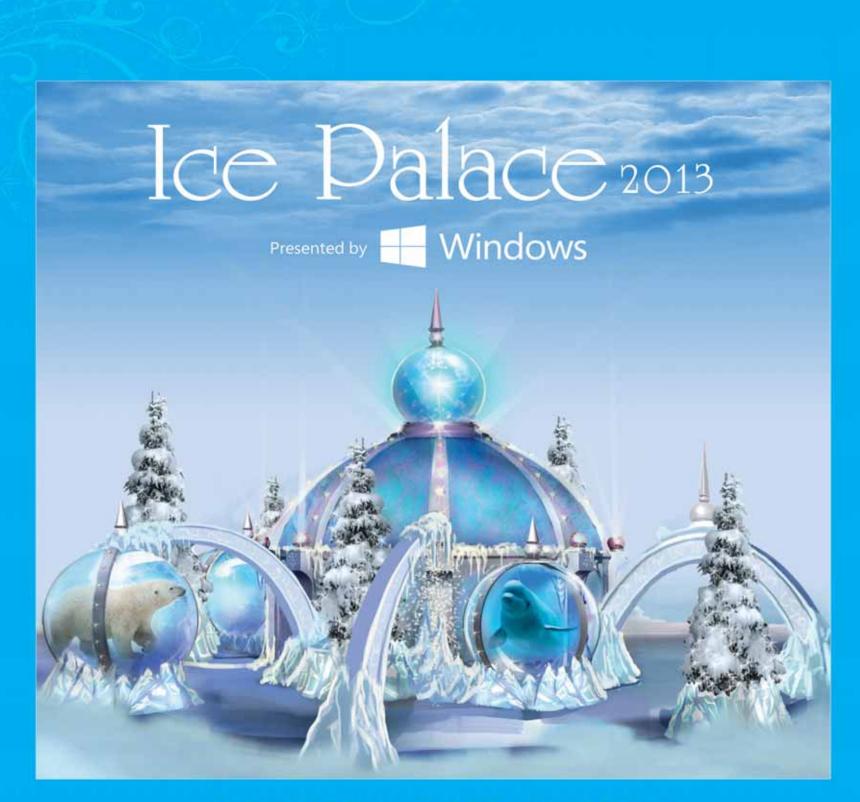
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