

Springfield CONNECTION

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Emma Henderson, Emily Latta, Hannah Hirsh, Veronica Talbert and Rylie Smedley will be traveling to Europe this summer with their Girl Scout Troop, which includes girls from Burke, Springfield, Fairfax Station and the Fredericksburg area.

Area Girl Scouts Embark on Trip of a Lifetime

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At Sugarloaf Festival

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JANUARY 23-29, 2014

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Local Artist's Work on Display at Sugarloaf Crafts Festival

**Springfield
potter's works at
juried show.**

BY SENITRA T. MCCOMBS
THE CONNECTION

Local Springfield potter Kerri Henry will be displaying her birdhouses and other functional stoneware at this year's Sugarloaf Crafts Festival at Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly, from Jan. 24-26. Among the pieces Henry will be showcasing at the festival, she will display some of her birdhouses that are molded into a fish shape.

"I was excited by the opportunity to display my work with high caliber artists who show at the Festivals. I'm looking forward to offering the new birdhouses I've designed this year. I'll also have my full line of functional art," Henry said.

She fell in love with the creative nature of pottery after taking a few pottery classes in high school in 2005. In addition, she also took a class at the Audrey Moore Rec Cen-



Potter Kerri Henry

ter in Fairfax and then moved on to become an associate at Creative Clay, a pottery studio in Alexandria. She also took classes at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton as well as workshops with Bill van Gilder.

"I cook and entertain a lot so I try to make pieces that are easy for you to use for entertaining like trays and dishes for crackers and dips," Henry said.

About seven years ago, she opened a pottery studio in her home. Some of Henry's most popular pieces include Berry Bowls and Brie Bakers. Additionally, she also sells bakeware such as the Brie Bakers, coffee mugs and serving pieces.

Henry said that baking her pottery in a high-fired electric kennel at 2232 degrees helps to ensure that it is durable or sturdy for daily use.

Henry hopes to advance her skills and start doing some more complex, larger pieces such as a 20-inch handle platter with a glazed trail decoration.

In her spare time, she enjoys sitting on her front porch or hitting up local thrift stores.

Henry moved from Sacramento to the Springfield area in 2004. Her studio is located in Springfield.

The Sugarloaf Crafts Festival was founded as the Sugarloaf Mountain Works by Deann and George Verdier in 1975.

Its mission was to provide a "low-overhead marketplace where artists and craftspeople could sell their unique creations direct to craftlovers." A year later in the spring of 1976, the first Sugarloaf Crafts Festival was held in Gaithersburg with 200 artisans.

This year's festival will be held over three days: Friday, Jan. 24 and Saturday, Jan. 25 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Sunday, Jan. 26 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

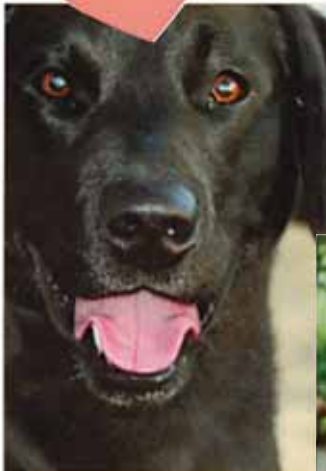
Adult admission is \$8 online and \$10 at the door, and free for children under 12. Admission is good for all three days of the Festival. Free parking is available on site.

During the festival, shoppers can choose from the latest trends in handcrafted arts, including those in jewelry, fashion, leather, home accessories, functional and decorative pottery, sculpture, glass, wood, metal, furniture, photography and fine art of more than 250 acclaimed artisans.

Unlike other craft shows, shoppers can speak directly to the actual artists instead of salespeople. And they can also watch live demonstrations where they can see the creations evolve from ideas to completion.

For more information on show previews, exhibitor lists and admission discounts, go to www.sugarloafcrafter.com or call 800-210-9900.

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Into the Budget Fray

Bulova highlights accomplishments, challenges in annual address.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

Despite the lingering impact of an anemic economy, and the regional ripple effects of federal sequestration, Fairfax County residents will see some concrete signs of progress this year.

That message was delivered by Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova, who cast a mostly positive light on the county's future during a media screening of her televised annual State of the County address on Wednesday, Jan. 15.

In addition to the completion of Phase 1 of the Silver Line in Tysons, motorists can expect to see congestion eased through a number of state-funded transportation projects, including the new I-95 Express Lanes that will tie into the Beltway Express lanes at Edsall Road.

Residents can also look forward to the revitalization and redevelopment of older commercial and industrial areas throughout the county, including the \$250 million transformation of Springfield Mall into the Springfield Town Center in the fall of 2014.

The newly-renovated mall will include the addition of roughly 700,000 square feet of retail, restaurants, a food court and a state-of-the-art movie theater. The 20-foot-tall brown numbers that indicated the mall's six main entrances — a hallmark of the 1970s-era mall — will be replaced with one central grand entranceway.

Bulova also praised the Economic Development Authority and Visit Fairfax for boosting tourism and facilitating the selection of Fairfax County as the host of the 2015 World Police and Fire Games, the world's second largest athletic competition after the summer Olympics. The event is expected to generate more than \$100 million in tourism revenue for the county.

The 30-minute State of the County video, 10 minutes longer than last year's production, highlights many county achievements in the past year — such as the county's low crime rate and a 26 percent reduction since 2007 in the number of



PHOTO BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova hosted a media screening of her annual State of the County address on Wednesday, Jan. 15. Residents can view the address on Channel 16 from 7:30 to 8 p.m., or on YouTube at <http://youtube/YzeaC3K-wiY>

people counted as homeless. It also features three of the county's new leaders: newly-elected Sheriff Stacey Kincaid, the county's

“Our first area of response focus is on preventing the 911 call. ... We've visited over 40,000 homes since June 8 and installed over 6,000 smoke alarms”

— Fire and Rescue Chief Richard Bowers

first female sheriff; Police Chief Edwin Roessler and Karen Garza, the new superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools.

In the video, Garza said one of her top priorities is “to listen and learn what our community expects of its schools.”

“One of our big projects this year is that we enlisted the help of a broad-based community committee to develop the Portrait of a Graduate — which will detail what our community expects an FCPS student to know and be to do upon graduating from our system,” Garza said.

Garza also addressed the ongoing challenge of funding a school system with a current enrollment of 184,600 students, making FCPS larger than the school systems of eight states and the District of Columbia.

“As you know, FCPS is facing some challenges as well,” Garza said in the video. “We have grown by more than 15,000 students in the last five years and our required expenditures for items like employee benefits have continued to increase. At the same time, revenues have not increased enough to cover expenditures.”

In fiscal year 2014, 53 percent of the county's general fund budget was transferred to Fairfax County Public Schools, a sum of roughly \$1.9 billion.

School officials recently unveiled a \$2.5 billion budget, asking for a 5.7 percent increase, or nearly \$98 million more in county funding. Under the proposed budget, class sizes will increase at all grade levels and about 730 staff positions will be cut.

After the screening, Bulova emphasized that while education continues to be the board's “highest priority” and the community's “greatest investment,” there will likely be a significant gap between what school officials are asking for in their budget, and how much the board is prepared to give.

“The schools won't get everything they asked for,” Bulova said. “The school board will have to roll up their sleeves and so will supervisors.”

When asked how close the board is prepared to get to the 5.7 percent request, Bulova said that a 2 percent increase — or \$33 million — is a more realistic number.

In an effort to bridge that gap, supervisors have made state education funding the county's top legislative priority for

Retail Worries

October numbers artificially inflated; holiday numbers could spell trouble.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

The partial government shutdown was more than an October surprise during the race for governor. Newly available statistics from the Virginia Department of Taxation show the month was also an unexpected boost to sales tax revenues across the commonwealth. Fairfax County, for example, recorded a 15.5 percent spike in sales tax revenue in October 2013 compared to October 2012. But state and local officials say that's because several major department stores neglected to increase their sales tax rate to reflect the new regional tax for transportation when the new fiscal year began in July. So the October numbers represent the backlog of uncollected revenues.

Which retailers flubbed their taxes?

“That's proprietary information, so we can't say,” said Marcia Wilds, revenue and economic analysis coordinator with the Fairfax County Department of Management and Budget. “They're big.”

The revenue corrections came at a key time for local governments, a month that many expected to be particularly bleak. Many government workers and contractors were out of work in October, when local governments became concerned that spending habits might reflect a sense of uncertainty about the future. Now budget officials across Northern Virginia are worried about what kind of sales tax revenue they'll collect from the holiday season.

“The sales tax will be back with holiday sales,” said Stephen Fuller, director of the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University. “Over the year there will only a minor weakening.”

BUDGET OFFICIALS are not so sure. As local governments across the region prepare for the first round of budgeting next month, a sense of uncertainty looms over the revenue projections and spending priorities. Part of that is the unemployment rate, which remains at about 6 percent across Virginia. That means consumers may hold back on consumption based spending, which would mean lower revenues for local governments on retail sales and restaurant meals.

“If revenues continue to decline, it may be necessary to make up any additional

SEE BUDGET FRAY, PAGE 12

SEE SALES TAX, PAGE 12

Girl Scouts Embark on Trip of a Lifetime

Girl Scouts from Burke, Springfield and Fairfax Station learn leadership skills while raising money for their trip.

BY JANELLE GERMANOS
THE CONNECTION

Under the leadership of Troop Leader Sandy Latta, Girl Scouts from Burke, Springfield, Fairfax Station and the Fredericksburg area will be traveling to Europe this summer.

Girl Scouts Katie Campbell, Hannah Hirsh, Emily Latta, Rebecca Cox, Rylie Smedley, Emma Henderson, Emmylou Kidder and Veronica Talbert are learning leadership skills and how to interact with the community while fundraising for the trip.

Although the trip will be fun, Latta said it is important that the community recognizes the tremendous effort the girls are undergoing to make the trip possible.

"It may seem glamorous, but the girls are putting in so many hours into making sure the trip can happen," Latta said. "It's going to be a very educational trip and the girls are already learning important leadership skills."

Latta and six other parents will travel to London and Switzerland, visiting two Girl Scout World Centers.



Girl Scouts Emma Henderson and Rylie Smedley, both Fairfax County residents, have spent weekends raising money for their trip to Europe.

"I've always wanted to see Europe," said

Rylie Smedley, a freshman at West Springfield High School who is going on the trip.

Smedley said the troop has been working countless hours in order to ensure the trip's success. The girls are responsible for raising a third of the trip's cost, which she said can be challenging.

"It may seem glamorous, but the girls are putting in so many hours into making sure the trip can happen"

Troop Leader Sandy Latta

"They've given up so much of their weekends," Latta said.

The troop has been leading several money raising events to make the trip a reality, including car washes and badge workshops for younger Girl Scouts.

"They have learned leadership skills, financial management, marketing, and team work

through raising money for this trip," Latta said. "They really have to put themselves out there."

Emma Henderson, a senior at South County High School, said it is trips, in addition to other activities, that make staying in Girl Scouts worthwhile.

"There is this stigma that it's not as cool to do once you are older, but that's not true," Henderson said.

Latta said the trip will be a truly educational experience, as the troop will be exposed to different cultures. The girls on the trip will be able to study culture, language, history, currency, fashion, and cuisine, while learning about Girl Scouts in Europe.

"I'm looking forward to seeing how Girl Scouts operate in different countries," Smedley said.

Anita Cox, a parent from Burke who will be going on the trip, said that Girl Scouts is effective not only because of the dedication of the troop members, but the parents as well.

"Parents are a big thing. If you don't have a great adult volunteer leader, it won't go anywhere," Cox said.

Latta said the trip shows the importance of Girl Scouts in the community.

"Even if you look at the Girl Scout Cookies program, it's all about marketing," Latta said. "Everything is about teaching them about how to give back to the community."

The troop will continue to raise money until their trip this summer. On March 23, the troop is hosting Joni Daniels, a national speaker and author at the Springfield Country Club.

"Through the fundraising efforts for this trip, we are really empowering others to dream big," Latta said.

WEEK IN SPRINGFIELD

Pedestrian Killed in Springfield Crash

An 80-year-old man was driving a 2008 Mazda 323 southbound on Greeley Boulevard and made a left turn, on a green light, onto eastbound Old Keene Mill Road. Meanwhile, 74-year-old Thomas Sullivan was walking south, across the eastbound lanes of Old Keene Mill Road, not in a crosswalk, and was struck by the Mazda. It appears that the Mazda struck Sullivan while in the left lane. He was transported to Inova Fairfax Hospital and was pronounced dead a short time later. Speed and alcohol are not considered factors in this crash.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Crime Solvers by phone at 1-866-411-TIPS/8477, e-mail at www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org or text "TIP187" plus a message to CRIMES/274637 or call Fairfax County Police at 703-691-2131.

Chocolate Challenge

The City of Fairfax Chocolate Lovers Festival Committee is looking for professional and amateur chefs of all ages to participate in the Chocolate Challenge, Feb. 1-2, as part of the Chocolate Lovers Festival.

Works and tastes of art will be submitted for the area's most talented chefs and chocolatiers to judge in several categories. Obtain an application from the Chocolate Lovers Festival website, www.chocolatefestival.net, or call 703-385-7858. Applications are due by Jan. 27.

Volunteers Needed

The Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program needs volunteer advocates for residents in assisted living and nursing facilities throughout the area. Volunteers can work in facilities close to where they live. Training is provided in March 2014. Call 703-324-5861, TTY 711 or email Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov. Find more information on becoming a long-term care ombudsman volunteer at http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/lcombudsman/vol_ombud_program.htm.

Blanket Drive Aids Syrian Refugees

Blankets collected in Northern Virginia's Blanket Drive for Syrian Refugees will soon be arriving in Turkey, where a local relief agency will distribute them to Syrian refugee

families in the Adana refugee camp. More than 18,000 blankets were collected. These blankets were donated by residents of Northern Virginia through grass-roots efforts organized by local elected officials in conjunction with the Fairfax County Interfaith Council. Residents were asked to drop off clean and folded blankets at locations throughout Northern Virginia. In Fairfax County, seven meetinghouses of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) served as donation collection points, as well as two Islamic Centers, and offices of several members of the county Board of Supervisors. Chairman Sharon Bulova joined volunteers at one LDS meetinghouse and publicly thanked the church for its efforts in supporting the effort.

"From mountains of blankets in board offices to faith groups who packaged thousands upon thousands of blankets, the Fairfax County and Northern Virginia communities truly rallied to support this great cause," Bulova said.

Paxton Van lines collected the blankets and delivered the blankets to the port of Virginia/Norfolk in early December, where they were loaded onto four 40-foot containers to be shipped to Turkey. Maersk line, a shipping company, donated the shipping and containers for the blankets without charge.

— JEFF CARR

NEWS

Continuing the Struggle for Equality

Lynne Garvey-Hodge delivers message of women's equality at Workhouse Arts Center.

BY JANELLE GERMANOS
THE CONNECTION

The Lorton Workhouse Arts Center hosted the first of its five-part lectures series "American Women: The Long and Winding Road," on Jan. 8. The series aims to describe the story of women's fight for equality from the Civil War to present.

Lynne Garvey-Hodge, a Clifton resident and a member of the Fairfax County Historical Commission, portrayed suffragist Mrs. Robert Walker at the event. The arts center is nearby the historic site of the Occoquan Workhouse, where Walker was imprisoned for 60 days in 1917 after picketing for the right to vote at the White House.

"The re-enactment is really about women's role in trying to seek equality in the United States," Garvey-Hodge said. "And there is still so much work to be done. Women are still only making 77 cents for every dollar a man makes, and are at just about 21 percent representation in the Senate and The House. That is rather disconcerting."

GARVEY-HODGE chose to portray Walker, also known as Amelia "Mimi" Himes, because it allows her to tell the story of women fighting for the right to vote.

"That is why I am so drawn to doing these re-enactments. It is a way to do a story. Most adults are much more drawn to a story than a history lesson," Garvey-Hodge said.

Walker, a Quaker woman from Baltimore, was a suffragist who was arrested for picketing in front of the White House on July 14, 1917, and along with 122 other women, sent to prison at the Occoquan

Workhouse. Conditions at the prison were dismal, and many women, including prominent suffragist Lucy Burns, were beaten and force-fed.

"This is a story that needs to be told," Garvey-Hodge said.

Garvey-Hodge has met four of Walker's six living grandchildren, and the three of them who have seen Garvey-Hodge portray Walker loved the performance.

Walker also testified in front of Congress in 1921 in support of the Equal Rights Amendment, which does not yet exist in the United States.

Garvey-Hodge said that there are many reasons, including divorce and the division of property, that prove an Equal Rights Amendment is still needed.

"There is nothing equal about a man walking away with 50 percent of everything when the woman still has to take care of the children," Garvey-Hodge said.



Lynne Garvey-Hodge, who portrays Mrs. Robert Walker, stands with Walker's granddaughter Susie Walker Salm.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LYNNE GARVEY-HODGE

THERE NEEDS TO BE a stronger representation of women in the United States, Garvey-Hodge said.

"When women come together, we can do amazing things. We are very good at handling emergencies, and very good at coming together to get things done," she said.

In the audience at Garvey-Hodge's re-enactment on Jan. 8 was Carolyn Cook, CEO and founder of United 4 Equality, a group working to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment by 2015.

"Lynne was phenomenal. I was so touched by the end of her performance," Cook said. "For me, I got into this because I have such a sense that as a woman, we have no idea how courageous and brave these women were who worked for all these rights we have today, as well as setting the

course of rights that we still don't have, like the Equal Rights Amendment. I was really touched by her performance because she really spoke to some of the struggles the women at Occoquan had."

The event also featured a speech by Robyn Muncy, an associate professor of history at the University of Maryland.

The next part of the "American Women: The Long and Winding Road" lecture series will take place on Feb. 5 and will feature discussions about women's role during the Great Depression and World War II.

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Extend Health Coverage in Virginia

General Assembly should not block coverage for as many as 400,000 uninsured.

Standing on what is essentially scorched earth, Republicans in the Virginia General Assembly have condemned hundreds of thousands of poor Virginians to living without health coverage even though it would be fully funded by Federal money for the next three years, and with Virginia paying 10 percent after five years.

Gov. Terry McAuliffe has pledged to do everything he can to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, and we encourage him to use every creative option available to make that happen. In Ohio, the governor found a legal way to accept the Medicaid funds despite objections from the General Assembly, for example.

Earlier this week, McAuliffe included an amendment to the FY2014 caboose budget bill authorizing the Governor to act in the event that the Medicaid Reform Innovation and Reform Commission (MIRC) fails to decide

whether or not to accept federal funding to cover up to 400,000 uninsured Virginians through Medicaid by the end of the current legislative session.

EDITORIAL

Business groups and chambers of commerce around Virginia, including the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce, support accepting the expansion of Medicaid in Virginia under the Affordable Care Act. One persuasive factor for the business community: The expansion would create an estimated 30,000 jobs. Hospitals support expanding Medicaid which would offset many of the costs of caring for uninsured populations.

It isn't as if there is no health care cost for the uninsured now. Right now, they access health care when they are very sick by going to an emergency room or other clinics, where providers spread the cost of care around. This is inefficient, expensive and unhealthy, including for those of us who do have health insur-

ance. It means unvaccinated and/or sick people are going to work and going about their daily lives putting themselves and others at risk.

As of January 2014, in Virginia, Medicaid eligibility for adults without disability is limited to parents with incomes below 51 percent of poverty, or about \$11,900 a year for a family of four, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. Adults without dependent children remain ineligible regardless of their income.

The General Assembly should not be able to block coverage for as many as 400,000 Virginians basically out of spite. The established excuse, that the Feds can't afford it and can't be counted on to pay the money, doesn't hold water in Virginia, which receives more Federal dollars per capita than any other state but Alaska. If legislators are so concerned about Federal ability to pay, you might expect to see them refusing transportation money, for example, or to turn the possible FBI headquarters away, or thousands of other ways that Federal dollars make their way into Virginia.

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

NEWS BRIEF

Animal Shelter Shines in 2013

Fairfax County Animal Shelter adoption initiatives resulted in the shelter having its most successful year yet, saving a record number of animals' lives.

Thanks to implementation of new programs and policies, the shelter had an overall animal placement rate of 92 percent, making Fairfax County the largest municipality in the entire nation to have a placement rate above 90 percent. The placement rate measures the number of animals adopted, transferred to a rescue group and reclaimed by their owners.

More than 4,200 animals came through the shelter's doors in 2013. There are many reasons animals end up at the shelter. Some are picked up as stray pets by Animal Control. Others are surrendered by their owners, who, for a variety of reasons, including moving, allergies, or economic hardship, must give up their pets. Finally, the shelter receives animals involved in cruelty, neglect and hoarding cases.

To find loving homes for thousands of homeless pets, the shelter worked with more than 61 rescue partners and countless volunteers and foster families. In addition,

the shelter ran creative adoption promotions throughout the year which increased all adoptions and doubled dog adoptions. Other successful shelter initiatives included animal enrichment, daily play groups for dogs, weekend fostering, and off-site dog walking.

Partnerships with other organizations added community strength, as well. The "Twelve Days of Adoptables," a partnership between the Washington Humane Society and the Fairfax County Animal Shelter resulted in adoption of nearly 300 animals between Nov. 15 and Dec. 31. Joining forces with other groups and

agencies helped to spread the word about some long-term shelter residents.

Help make the Animal Shelter a better place for homeless animals in the community. Consider becoming a foster family by temporarily housing animals that may need the safe, quiet home to recover from medical treatments, illness, or simply need extra love and socialization that a private home provides.

Schedule a shelter tour for scout, school, church or community groups by emailing FCPDPetResources@fairfaxcounty.gov or by calling 703-324-0208.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

SUNDAY/JAN. 19, 26 - FEB. 9, 16, 23

"Religions & Cultures of the Middle East." Six-class series taught by Johnnie Hicks of George Mason University, formerly of the Tehran American School in Iran. 3-4:30 p.m. Grace Presbyterian Church, 7434 Bath St., Springfield. 703-451-2900.

THURSDAY/JAN. 23

English Conversation Group. 7 p.m. Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Practice English with others and improve your skills. Adults.

SATURDAY/JAN. 25

Dog Adoption Event. 12-3 p.m. PETCO, Greenbriar Towncenter, 13053 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, Fairfax. 703-817-9444.

SUNDAY/JAN. 26

Annual Meeting of the Burke Historical Society. 4:30 p.m. Fellowship Hall at Abiding Presence Lutheran Church, 6304 Lee Chapel Road, Burke. BHS members Mary Lipsey and Christine Zinser will tell the fascinating story of Burke's initial selection as the site of Washington's new airport in the 1950s, and the events that followed.

MONDAY/JAN. 27

Pohick Prose Society. 7 p.m. Pohick Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Help with using eReaders, tablets, computers and mobile devices to access library eBooks.

Adults.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 29

Pohick English Conversation Group. 7 p.m. Pohick Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Practice English with others and improve your skills. Adults.

SATURDAY/FEB. 1

Dog Adoption Event. 12-3 p.m. PETCO, Greenbriar Towncenter, 13053 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, Fairfax. 703-817-9444.

MONDAY/FEB. 3

Area Wide Prayer Meeting. 7:30 p.m. 10000 Coffey Woods, Burke. All local Burke churches are welcome and invited to join us as we pray for our community, schools and leaders. Hosted by Knollwood Community Church. For more information go to www.knoll.org or call 703 425 2068.

ONGOING

Singers Wanted for the Celebration Singers. The women's show choir is interested in new talent to perform at various Northern Virginia community sites. Practices are Wednesdays 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. in Burke. Contact Gayle Parsons, 703-644-4485 or email gparsons3@cox.net.

Senior Fall Prevention Classes. 1:30-2:30 p.m., at the Woodlands Retirement Community, 4320 Forest Hill Drive, Fairfax. Tuesday and/or Thursday classes in a heated pool designed to work on balance and core muscles for injury prevention. \$10. 703-667-9800.

American Red Cross CPR, First Aid and AED. Various times, at 2720 State Route 699, Suite 200, Fairfax. One-year certification, digital or print materials and continued education on Mondays-Thursday and Saturday. \$70-110. www.redcrossna.org.

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Road Improvements

Just south of Springfield at the Fort Belvoir North Area, crews lift beams last week for a ramp that will link the future 95 Express Lanes to Heller Road at the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency building. Initially, the ramp will cater to motorists heading to the southbound HOV/95 Express Lanes in the afternoon, or to the general purpose lanes of I-95 North. In the future, the ramp will be modified to handle northbound 95 Express Lanes traffic to the Fort Belvoir North Area in the mornings as well.



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/VIRGINIA MEGAPROJECTS

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ENTERTAINMENT

A Chocolate Lover’s Dream

Fairfax’s annual festival is Feb. 1-2.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Chocolate — candy, cake, sauce, pancakes, fudge, ice cream and even a chocolate fountain or three — they’re all part of the City of Fairfax Chocolate Lovers Festival. And this year’s event, the 22nd annual, is Saturday, Feb. 1 through Sunday, Feb. 2.

A dream-come-true for chocolate aficionados, as well as for those seeking tasty treats to give as Valentine’s Day presents, the festival offers a full slate of activities for all ages.

The fun-filled weekend contains everything from a competition to see who can make the most beautiful and creative cakes, cupcakes and sculptures in chocolate to an irresistible sampling of chocolate goodies that attracts thousands of people from throughout the Washington Metropolitan area.

“Chocolate and Valentine’s Day belong together,” said Mayor Scott Silverthorne. “The City of Fairfax’s annual Chocolate Lovers Festival has become a delicious destination for people throughout the region and beyond. Join us!”

The festivities begin Friday, Jan. 31, at 2 p.m., when Kaydee Puppets offers “Chocolate Dipped Tales” for children at the City of Fairfax Regional Library, 10360 North St. Then on Saturday, Feb. 1, the day starts with the annual, Kiwanis Club Pancake Breakfast, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Fire Station 3, at 4081 University Drive. Dine on regular or chocolate-chip pancakes, plus sausage, coffee, juice and milk. Cost is \$6, adults; \$4, children ages 4-10. Children 3 and under eat free with a paying adult. There are also music performances, fairytales, a fire-safety puppet show, a Chocolate Caper mock trial, a magician and open houses in historic buildings.

New this year is the “Chocolate and a Movie” night, Feb. 1, featuring the original “Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory” starring Gene Wilder. Admission is \$3/person and comes with a golden ticket that could prove lucky, and there will be children’s stories and activities before the movie.

There’s even a Chocolate Express provid-



From left: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova, event Chairman Beverly Meyer and City Councilman Steve Stombres judge cupcakes during last year’s festival.

ing free, shuttle service between event locations. It will run Feb. 1, from 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. and Feb. 2 from 11:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

“We are excited to again be hosting the Chocolate Lovers Festival in the City of Fairfax,” said Festival Chairman Beverly Meyer. “It brings folks from all up and down the East Coast, young and old alike, and weather is never a deterrent for the festival.”

The event initially began as a joint effort of the City of Fairfax, Central Fairfax Cham-

ber of Commerce, Downtown Fairfax Coalition, Downtown Fairfax Merchants Association and George Mason University. The goal was to attract visitors to Old Town Fairfax, encourage participation in the community and foster cooperation among the city government, businesses and local residents.

The first festival was in February 1993 and, since then, it’s become one of the city’s most popular events. And two of the main highlights are the Chocolate Challenge and the Taste of Chocolate.

Running Saturday, Feb. 1, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, Feb. 2, from noon-4 p.m., on both floors of the Old Town Hall, university Drive (during the Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast)
♦ 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.: Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, 10209 Main St.
♦ 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.: Nutrition Kitchen, 3950 University Drive
♦ 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.: City of Fairfax Regional Library, 10360 North St.
Food donations will also be collected Sunday, Feb. 2, at:
♦ 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.: Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, 10209 Main St.
♦ Noon to 4 p.m.: Nutrition Kitchen, 3950 University Drive
♦ Noon to 4 p.m.: City of Fairfax Regional Library, 10360 North St.



This pirate ship from Cake Walk won an award in 2013’s Chocolate Challenge.

3999 University Drive, the Taste of Chocolate is not to be missed. Strollers may be left on the building’s front porch. A fully accessible entrance is at the door on Main Street.

Admission is free; visitors buy pogs for \$1 each and then browse around the vendors’ tables to check out the wide array of chocolate treats being offered. When something catches their fancy, they pay for it in pogs.

For example, a slice of cake could cost three pogs, or a customer could buy three small pieces of candy for two pogs. The vendors set their own prices and roaming volunteers in red aprons will have plenty of pogs on hand for people wanting to purchase more.

And the variety of goodies is mind-boggling. There are chocolate cakes, all kinds of chocolate candies and bars, chocolate-covered strawberries, fudge, ice cream and even chocolate fountains into which customers may dip fruit, cake or marshmallows.

This year’s Taste of Chocolate vendors include: Ba’Ter Chocolates, C & D Sweets, Cakes by Shelby, Cameron’s Coffee & Chocolate, Capitol Chocolate Fountains; Chocotenago, Cocoa Vienna, Confection Connection, Dave’s Candy Kitchen, El Ceibo/Bolivia, Extreme Ice Cream, Fair Trade Winds, Fluffy Thoughts Cakes, Mike’s Fudge, Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory, Sugar Mama’s, Virginia Chocolate Co. and Watergate Pastry.

The Chocolate Challenge, a display of imaginative creations in chocolate — art, cakes and cupcakes — takes place at the Nutrition Kitchen, 3950 University Drive. It runs Feb. 1, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., and Feb. 2, noon-4 p.m. Both professionals and amateurs participate, and judges and visitors judge them in various categories. Visitors may also vote for the People’s Choice Award winner.

This year’s judges include Sabrina Campbell, owner and executive pastry chef of Occasionally Cake; Dean Thomas Prohaska of GMU’s College of Health and Human Services; and Fairfax Mayor R. Scott Silverthorne. The event also features a silent auction enabling visitors to bid on the challenge entries, as well as items from local businesses.



Truffles are among the many items offered at the Taste of Chocolate during the City of Fairfax Chocolate Lovers Festival.



Raspberry-white chocolate cupcakes on display.



Chocolate treats for the eyes and tummies are found at the City of Fairfax Chocolate Lovers Festival.

Chocolate Lovers Festival Schedule of Events

FRIDAY/JAN. 31 Kaydee Puppets: Chocolate Dipped Tales. 2 p.m.. City of Fairfax Regional Library, 10360 North Street.
SATURDAY/FEB. 1 Kiwanis Club Chocolate Chip Pancake Breakfast. 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Child Fingerprinting. 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Fairfax Courthouse, 4000 Chain Bridge Road. Taste of Chocolate. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive. Chocolate Challenge and Silent Auction. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Nutrition Kitchen, 3950 University Drive. The Chocolate Caper Mock Trial. 10:15 a.m., 1:15 p.m. Fairfax Courthouse, 4000 Chain Bridge Road. Musical Duo of Cody & BJ. 11 a.m. City of Fairfax Regional Library, 10360 North Street. Harley Eye Candy Photos. 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. City of Fairfax Regional Library. Fire Safety Puppet Show. 12:30 p.m. City of Fairfax Regional Library. So You Think You Are Smarter Than a Lawyer? 11:45 a.m. Fairfax Courthouse, 4000 Chain Bridge Road. Chocolate-Covered Fairy Tales with Gary Lloyd. 2 p.m. City of Fairfax Regional Library. See Jane Sing Quartet. 3:30 p.m. City of Fairfax Regional Library. Open House and Exhibits. Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Legato School, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Ford Building, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Ratcliffe-Allison House, 12 - 4 p.m. Chocolate Movie Night: featuring “Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory” (rated PG). 7- 9 p.m. Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway.
SUNDAY/FEB. 2 Chocolate Challenge and Silent Auction. 12-4 p.m. Nutrition Kitchen, 3950 University Drive. Taste of Chocolate. 12 -4 p.m. Old Town Hall. Fire Safety Puppet Show. 12:30 p.m. City of Fairfax Regional Library. Wildlife Ambassadors. 2-3 p.m. City of Fairfax Regional Library. Journey to the Jungle, see exotic animals and learn how they live in the rain forest among the cocoa-bean trees. Turley the Magician . 3:30-4:15 p.m. City of Fairfax Regional Library. Open House and Exhibits. Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Legato School, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Ratcliffe-Allison House, 12 - 4 p.m. Schedule is subject to change. Visit www.chocolatefestival.net for an event map and information on parking, shuttle schedules, costs and more.

• Save the Date •
A Casino Night to Benefit the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington, Fairfax County Region

Save the Date! Friday, March 7th, 2014 6:30pm– 11:30pm The Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner

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Guests receive funny money and a bidder number. Use your winnings from Black Jack, Texas Hold 'Em, Craps towards raffle tickets for fabulous prizes. The more chips you accumulate at the gaming tables the better your chances to win GREAT RAFFLE prizes at end of evening.

Benefit the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington, Fairfax County Region

CALENDAR

PHOTO BY PEGGY PRIDEMORE

Some members of The Fairfax Academy cast rehearsing the musical "Cats." Performances begin Jan. 24 at Fairfax High School.



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.

THURSDAY/JAN. 23

Mrs. Green's Natural Market. 6:30-8:30 p.m. 12995 Fair Lakes Shopping Center, Fairfax. Brand New, natural & organic, One-stop fresh food market. www.mrsgreens.com

THURSDAY/JAN. 23-SATURDAY/JAN. 25

I Never Saw Another Butterfly. 7 p.m. The Sovereign Grace Home School Co op Main Auditorium, 5200 Ox Rd, Fairfax. The play tells the unforgettable story of a young Jewish survivor of the Holocaust during World War II. \$7 for adults; \$5, students 3-17. www.facebook.com/Sawabutterfly and jubileecampaign.org/funds/tabitha-orphans-fund

THURSDAY/JAN. 23- FRIDAY/JAN. 24

Annie Get Your Gun. 7:30 p.m. Lake Braddock Secondary School, 9200 Burke Lake Road, Burke. This musical tells the fictionalized story of the life of Annie Oakley (1860–1926), a sharpshooter who starred in Buffalo Bill's Wild West, and her romance with sharpshooter Frank Butler. Tickets \$10. <http://lakebraddockchorus.squarespace.com> for information and online ticket sales

FRIDAY/JAN. 24- SATURDAY/JAN. 25

"Cats." 7:30 p.m. Fairfax High School 3501 Rebel Run, Fairfax. Music by Andrew Lloyd Webber and based on TS Eliot's "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats" Ticket sales for \$14.13 & \$6.25 on line at: fxdance.ticketleap.com

FRIDAY/JAN. 24

Messages of Hope. 7:30-9:30 p.m. Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. A Chris Lavelle Film, will be shown. A film event that will touch your soul, this documentary is based on Suzanne's true story of transformation that

has captivated audiences. Participants can ask questions about the afterlife, hear the rest of the story, and get books signed following the discussion. Cost: \$10.

One-Act Festival. 8 p.m. Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Unquiet Theatre Company Presents: A Pair of One-Act Plays. \$5-\$10.

SATURDAY/JAN. 25

Springfield Burke Relay for Life

Scrapbooking/Crafting Event. 8 a.m.- 5 p.m. West Springfield High School cafeteria, 6100 Rolling Road, Springfield. Complete your craft projects in the New Year—photo albums, jewelry, Valentines. Cost includes lunch, door prizes, silent auction and shopping showcase. Suggested donation \$40 for full day, \$25 for half day. All proceeds go to the American Cancer Society. To register contact Leslie Carlin at 703-866-4862 or Anne Wardinski at 703-764-9687.

Making the Connection. 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Participants will learn how to open themselves to higher levels of guidance, creativity, inspiration and love. Cost \$35 each Saturday presentation – morning or afternoon.

"Heart Gifts" New Evidence of Our Interconnectedness. 1:30-4:30 p.m. Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Suzanne Giesemann, former Aide to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and now acclaimed spiritual author, will tell the gripping story of a very special soul called "Wolf," who in his short time on earth, walked two worlds at once – the physical and non-physical. His story reveals the interconnectedness of the two worlds and the messages he left behind are amazing gifts to us on how to bring peace, balance and greater love into life. Cost: \$35.00 for this afternoon session.

Annie Get Your Gun. 2 and 8 p.m. Lake Braddock Secondary School, 9200 Burke Lake Road, Burke. This entertaining musical tells the fictionalized story of the life of Annie Oakley (1860–1926), a sharpshooter who starred in Buffalo Bill's Wild West, and her romance with sharpshooter Frank Butler. Tickets \$10. <http://lakebraddockchorus.squarespace.com> for information and online ticket sales.

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PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

From left: As Gerta and Kai, Isabel Min and Garrett Christian react to their grandmother's (Aly Waniel) story.



Enjoying a snowball fight are from, left, Elizabeth Wickham, Sam Rudy, Isabel Min and Garrett Christian.

'Family-Friendly, Magical and Heartwarming'

Robinson presents "The Snow Queen."

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Based on the same Hans Christian Anderson tale as the Disney movie, "Frozen," Robinson Secondary presents the children's play, "The Snow Queen."

"Kids will like the colorful characters and that it's the children who save the day," said Director Chip Rome. "And adults and teens will enjoy the wordplay and characterizations. It's a fun ride."

Putting it on is the acting and tech class, Robinson Production Co. The cast and crew of 32 began work in September. Students must audition for the company; so besides being highly motivated, said Rome, "They've approached this show with extraordinary enthusiasm and dedication. They're talented, creative and hardworking and it's paying off."

When the queen insults a goblin by saying he's ugly, his revenge is to freeze her heart and she becomes the Snow Queen. Sister and brother Gerta and Kai hear about her from their grandmother; and when Kai vanishes, Gerta learns the Snow Queen stole him, so she goes on a quest to find him.

Along the way, she meets young Prince Eric of Lapland, who agrees to help her, as do a crow named Cawtrina and a witch called the Conjure Woman. But they must battle the Snow Queen's minions, Blue Norther and Frostbite.

The story unfolds in the grandmother's house, against a snowy landscape and in the Snow Queen's palace, and almost everyone in the cast is also working on tech. For example, costume head is Katherine Ide, with help from freshman Olivia Hays who portrays the Snow Queen.

Wearing a fur shawl, an icicle tiara and a shattered-mirror necklace, Hays described her character: "She's heartbroken because her own son was taken from her and she can't find him. So her mirror turns her evil, bitter and heartless. Playing the Snow Queen is a fun contrast because I'm peppy and friendly in real life, so I love taking on a villainous role. I can be larger than life, order people around and speak harshly."

Calling it "a fun, wintertime-themed show," Hays said its message is that "love persists through everything, and everyone is your family. Children will love it. They'll connect with the lovable talking animals Gerta meets on her journey and will love getting to know each one."

Hays said freshmen are doing the whole show. "It gives us real-world experience of being part of a theater company, not just

acting, but also doing sets, makeup and all the artistic elements," she said. "Everyone gets to show their talents and really shine."

Playing Gerta – in pigtails, tights, hat and a cape over her dress – is Isabel Min. "Gerta's sweet and is nice to everyone she meets," said Min. "She was orphaned, so she wants all the family she can get and is accepting of everyone. She's caring and brave and loves her brother, and she always looks on the bright side."

Having such a big part is challenging, said Min, but it's taught her "more about acting – facial expressions, body movement and reacting to other people. And as Gerta, I meet all these hysterical characters that are fun to be around." She said the audience will like the moral of how "family always comes through. And the costumes, makeup and lights really help the magic of the story come alive."

Sam Rudy portrays Prince Eric. "He's thoughtful and kind, goes out of his way to help others and strives to be the best," said Rudy. "It's fun having some scenes that are all about Eric; it's grand playing a prince because everybody looks up to [him]."

He said children will worry that a main character's in trouble, but they'll like seeing that the story Gerta and Kai heard from their grandmother – about a girl trying to save her brother – comes true.

Garrett Christian plays Kai. "He's a lov-

ing brother and a nice guy," said Christian. "But when he's under the Snow Queen's spell, he becomes cold-hearted, hateful and cruel – all the things children shouldn't be. It's great playing his two, different personalities and showing the contrast between the evil guy and the normal one."

Christian said the audience will like the relationships between all the characters and the connections Gerta makes during her adventure. And, he added, "The effort that went into the tech work also makes this show."

Portraying Cawtrina Crow – complete with huge, black wings and white-and-black feathers – is Maddie Dozier. "Cawtrina is Gerta's guardian, escorting her through the snowy places," said Dozier. "Gerta's safety is her top priority. She's super sassy and doesn't let anyone tell her what to do, and she shows her feelings by how she holds her wings."

Enjoying her role, Dozier said, "Cawtrina has a New York accent and is so much her own person that she doesn't care what others think about her." Overall, she said, "The audience will like this show's magic; it's family-friendly and really heartwarming."

The curtain rises this Friday, Jan. 24, at 7 p.m., and Saturday, Jan. 25, at 2 and 7 p.m. Tickets are \$5 in advance at the main office, \$7 at the door; \$6 reserved tickets are at www.brownpapertickets.com/event/521540.

'I Never Saw Another Butterfly' Comes to Sovereign Grace

A theatrical tribute to the Holocaust through the eyes of children.

BY KATLYN BABYAK

Sovereign Grace Church Co-op Drama Club will present "I Never Saw Another Butterfly," a play based on real-life stories of Jewish children and their families living in the Terezin ghetto in Czechoslovakia during the Holocaust.

The junior and senior high school student cast portrays everyday heroes like Irena Synkova, a schoolteacher played by Ruth Briggs.

"Her goal in life is to care for these ... children, she wants ... to make them happy ... She made such a big imprint, even though she's a fictional character, she's based off of real people," Briggs said.

The play inspires people to find good in painful situations. Jared Okada, who plays a rabbi, said, "The rabbis tried to keep everyone together and keep everyone's hopes up, even though most likely most of them would be going to their deaths."

Terezin operated from 1942 to 1945 as a transit and labor camp for prisoners en route to the Auschwitz death camp, and was also used in Nazi propaganda. Fifteen thousand people passed through, with only 100 survivors remaining by the end of the war.

Director John A. Newman said, "I knew 'I Never Saw Another Butterfly' was a good

play ... a powerful play, and very serious ... It certainly skews to an older audience"

The drama is recommended for adults and children 8-10 years old and up. "It's more about the people, not exactly the atrocities of the Holocaust, but just what people emotionally had to go through in the ghettos," said Briggs. "It's about family and love and relationships ... a beautiful tale of how love lasts even with adversities and danger everywhere."

Playwright Celeste Raspanti based the drama on her previous work, a collection of children's drawings and poems made during their internment. Houston's Holocaust Museum wrote that "we see the daily misery of these uprooted children, as well as their courage and optimism, their hopes

and fears." Okada said, "I think that that adds a little more emotional depth ... because it's coming from the voice of children who are rather innocent and they don't really know what's going on in the camp."

Proceeds from ticket sales and donations will benefit Tabitha Orphans Fund, a shared initiative of Tabitha Evangel Ministries and Jubilee Campaign that supports orphans whose families suffer religious persecution in northern Nigeria.

Performances will be held at the main auditorium of Sovereign Grace Church, 5200 Ox Road, on Jan. 23-24 at 7 p.m. and Jan. 25 at 1 p.m. Tickets will be on sale each night: \$7 for adults, \$5 for students. Visit www.facebook.com/sawabutterfly; to reserve tickets, contact Dawn Okada at 571-213-1384 or dawn@okada.net.

Bulova Talks Budget in Address

FROM PAGE 3

this year's General Assembly session.

"This is our education year, our number one ask and priority from legislators is to get the full funding of \$33 million," Bulova said.

Although Fairfax County is not facing the "doomsday budgets" of the mid-1990s, a projected budget shortfall of \$25 million this fiscal year, coupled with the accelerating growth and financial needs of Fairfax County Public Schools will present the Board of Supervisors with choices and challenges.

"Once again, it will not be an easy budget year," Bulova said. "Actions or lack of action at the federal level has impacted commercial and sales tax revenue, making it more difficult for the county to recover from the downturn."

Bulova said the county's advertised budget for fiscal year 2015 will be released for public comment

next month. The county will host a number of public hearings, community forums and town meetings to give residents the opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions. In late April, the board officially adopts the budget.

"Every budget tells a story," Bulova said. "We'll look for efficiencies and savings and opportunity for savings, but it won't be easy. The low-hanging fruit has already been picked."

In spite of the challenges, Bulova said she believes the board has consistently been able to strike a bal-

ance that has kept taxes affordable while delivering high quality services to residents.

"We remain committed to work with the community to maintain excellence in the face of our challenges," she said.

"Recently, the department has established the chief's Council on Diversity Recruiting. This council provides the agency engagement with leaders from culturally diverse communities to assist us in developing innovative recruitment opportunities."

— Police Chief Edwin Roessler

Sales Tax Error Inflates Revenue

FROM PAGE 3

shortfalls with expenditure reductions," wrote Alexandria City Manager Rashad Young in a memorandum to City Council members this month.

The concerns are larger than retail sales. One of the potential problems on the horizon is transient occupancy tax revenues. In Alexandria, for example, the hotel occupancy rate fell from 76.1 percent in October 2012 to 72.4 percent in October 2013. In Arlington, hotel occupancy tax revenues fell 15 percent in November compared to the previous year and 18 percent in December compared to the previous year.

"Am I worried? Yes," acknowledged Arlington Budget Director Richard Stevenson. "But that's what budget directors do. We worry."

EXPERTS WHO FOLLOW local government revenues say jurisdictions are worried for two reasons. The first is the lack of continuity on the part of the federal government. When the shutdown was happening, nobody knew how long it would last or when it would end. That led families to cut back their spending habits and cast a wary eye toward the future.

"That, obviously, is scary," said Frank Shafroth, director of the Center for State and Local Government at George Mason University. "It means for a family that you always have to leave something aside instead of using it at a local restaurant, store or other facility."

A second reason for worry is that the uncertainty is far from over. The budget agreement reached be-

tween Congress and the president is good through September, leaving open the possibility of yet another battle about bankruptcy and insolvency. That leaves open a sense of doubt for long-term contracts involving everything from bridges and fighter planes to satellite and veterans hospitals.

"With the Federal Highway Trust Fund expected to be insolvent by next year," said Shafroth, "a key partner in the regional Washington economy is becoming an uncertain one."

"Am I worried? Yes, but that's what budget directors do. We worry."

— Arlington Budget Director Richard Stevenson

THE NEXT FEW months will detail the extent of the economic damage created by sequester and shutdown. Will the numbers track with expectations? Or will they fall well below the budgets local leaders voted for last spring? That has local governments worried and prepared to make reductions if necessary. Then again, they also don't want to make spending reduction that are unnecessary and potentially damaging.

"What you don't want to do is make cuts that if we recover enough we didn't need to make," said Laura Triggs, finance director with the city of Alexandria. "But by law, if it continues to be low then yes I have to cut back on expenditures."

Part of the problem is revenue growth not meeting expectations. Even if local governments see an increase in revenue from sales tax revenue, failure to meet expectations could spell trouble for balancing the books in the current fiscal year. And that means even more headaches for trying to predict the future in fiscal year 2015.

"Normally our sales tax is increasing at a larger extent than it is right now," said Wilds.

Piercing the Marble

Virginia Supreme Court opens audio recordings to public.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

Members of the Virginia Supreme Court have a New Year's Resolution — become more transparent. Starting this year, members of the public will finally have access to audio recordings of oral arguments. The recordings were once public, but installation of new recording equipment in January 2008 changed that. Because the new microphones were so powerful, justices were concerned that sidebar conversations between justices might be audible.

"That was a lame excuse," said Del. Dave Albo (R-42). "I'm glad they decided to change this without the General Assembly passing legislation to make it happen."

As it turns out, legislation was already in the works when the justices changed the policy. Wise County Clerk of Court Jack Kennedy approached Del. Terry Kilgore (R-1) about introducing legislation requiring the court to release audio recording of oral arguments. Draft language for House Bill 1018 said audio records of Supreme Court oral arguments "shall be made publicly available in electronic format without fee within a reasonable time after oral arguments take place."

"I'm a Democrat and he's a Republican," said Kennedy, who lives in Kilgore's district. "But transparency should not be a partisan issue."

THE LACK OF TRANSPARENCY

in Virginia has been a problem for many years, and the commonwealth has recently gained a reputation as a place that is hostile to open government. In 2012, the State Integrity Investigation ranked and graded each of the 50 states on government accountability, transparency and corruption. Virginia got an F, largely because police agencies deny access to basic documents. This week, Richmond-based Open Law Virginia issued its own state-by-state guide comparing public availability of online documents. Virginia got a C minus, largely because many documents and files are difficult for members of the public to access.

"Access to live and recorded oral arguments creates opportunities for civic education and public engagement," the report concludes. "And even many judges have recognized, in part based on experience, that it is time to bring video coverage to appellate courtrooms routinely."

When the court's policy of denying public access became public last year, leaders at the Supreme Court initially decided to defend the policy. In a written statement explaining the lack of transparency, director of legislative and public relations for the Office of Executive Secretary Katya Herndon said new technology was to blame.

"The new digital recording equipment is more sensitive so that the recordings now include any confidential comments any justice makes to another justice during the oral argument," said Herndon last June. "Accordingly, the recordings, which are for the internal use of the justices, are no longer made available to the public."

Since that time, a number of media outlets have reported on the lack of transparency. And legislators began drafting bills to force the court to open up. Now, the court has decided to change course — at least for oral arguments moving forward. Advocates for open government say it's a victory for the public.

"We can't have secret courts," said Ginger Stanley, executive director of the Virginia Press Association. "The public has a right to hear these audio records. That's how democracy works."

"I'm glad they decided to change this without the General Assembly passing legislation to make it happen."

— Del. Dave Albo (R-42)

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PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE TOWN OF CLIFTON FEBRUARY 4, 2014

Notice is hereby given that the Town of Clifton Town Council and Planning Commission will hold a joint Public Hearing on Tuesday, February 4, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. in the Clifton Community Hall, 12641 Chapel Road, Clifton, Virginia. The purpose is to consider amendment and revision of the Signs regulations within the Zoning Ordinance, found in Chapter 9, Article 2 General Regulations, Section 9-14 of the Code of Town of Clifton, Virginia.

The proposed revision is available for review on the Town website at <http://clifton-va.com/TownCode.pdf> under the Town Council/Legislation drop-down menu. A hard copy may be examined at the Clifton Post Office, 12644 Chapel Road, Clifton, Virginia. All interested parties are encouraged to attend the Public Hearing to express their views with respect to the proposed amendment and revision of the Signs section of the Zoning Ordinance.

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SPORTS

Lake Braddock Boys' Basketball to Face Woodson

The Lake Braddock boys' basketball team dropped to 10-3 with a 99-86 loss to Herndon on Jan. 18, but the Bruins will soon get another crack at one of the top teams in the region.

Lake Braddock hosts Woodson at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 23 in a game that was originally scheduled for Tuesday, but postponed due to inclement weather. Woodson is 11-3, has won seven in a row and 10 of its last 11.

"It's definitely a huge game for us," Lake Braddock senior Will Gregorits said. "Woodson has had some great teams in the past and they have one this year ... We'll be surprised if we don't see them [in the conference tournament]."

Gregorits, a 6-foot-7 forward, is averaging 15 points per game for the defending Patriot District champions.

The Bruins had won five of six before falling to Herndon — a team Gregorits said he could see Lake Braddock facing in the postseason.

"They are the best team we've played so far this year," he said. "To be honest, they are one of the best teams I've played my whole high school career."

Herndon is 11-2.

— JON ROETMAN

Lake Braddock Girls' Basketball Wins 5 of 7

After a 2-4 start, during which several players missed time due to injury, the Lake Braddock girls' basketball team has won five of its last seven games and regained a winning record.

The Bruins defeated Herndon 85-39 on Jan 18 and improved to 7-6, putting them above .500 for the first time since the team was 2-1 after beating Lee on Dec. 13.

During the season, Aryn Burrage (12 stitches in lip), Hermela Arcudi (concussion), Caitlyn Mandela (ankle), Marsha (hip) and point guard Betsy Gallier are among the Bruins who suffered injuries.

"I think early in the season we had a lot of girls that were injured," head coach John Giannelli said. "Right after the tryouts, we picked a team and I had to take two or three of the JV girls just so I could run a practice."

Lake Braddock defeated Annandale 41-33 on Jan. 10. After losing to T.C. Williams, the Bruins beat South County 45-42 on Jan. 17.

Giannelli said the loss of 6-foot-4 Natalie Butler, who averaged 26.2 points, 17.8 rebounds and 10.1 blocks per game as a senior last year and now plays for Georgetown, has made for a challenging year. The Bruins have responded with a balanced scoring attack, including several games where each player on the team scored.

Christine McGrath is Lake Braddock's leading scorer at 10 points per game. Marcia Altman is averaging eight points per contest, Caroline Jones is averaging seven and Mandela six.

"Anybody on the team," Giannelli said, "can be the leading scorer on any given night."

Lake Braddock will host Woodson at 5:45 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 24.

— JON ROETMAN



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Lake Braddock senior captain Marcia Altman attempts a perimeter shot against Herndon on Jan. 18.

Robinson Names New Head Football Coach

Robinson Secondary School recently announced Scott Vossler as the Rams' new head football coach.

Vossler spent last season as associate head coach at Robinson under Dan Meier, who agreed to coach the Rams on an interim basis for one season. Vossler is a social studies teacher at the middle school and has been part of the football program for three years.

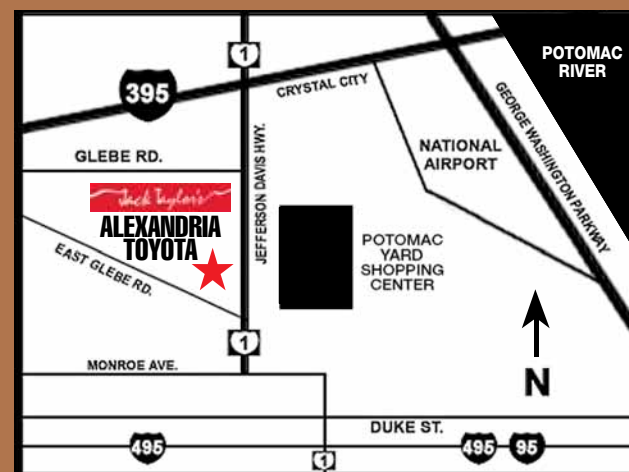
Vossler was a four-year letterman at the University of Dayton, earning all-league honors as a defensive lineman in 2007 and 2008. He was team captain and defensive player of the year in 2008.

Robinson finished 8-4 under Meier last season, including a victory over Patriot in the opening round of the 6A North regional playoffs. In two seasons prior, Robinson finished a combined 9-13 under head coach Trey Taylor.

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Life Member, NVAR Multi-Million Dollar Sales Club
Life Member, NVAR TOP PRODUCERS



SELLING IN 2014? CALL SHEILA!

Sheila's office is right here on Burke Centre Pkwy. I am your Neighbor, I have been marketing the Burke/Fairfax area for over 35+ years. Sheila's skills, marketing techniques and experience are top notch. Want the best, call Sheila. 703-503-1895 or sheila.adams@lnf.com



JOYCE WADLE

Associate Broker/Realtor
Military Relocation Specialist and Fine Homes Professional
joyce.wadle@longandfoster.com
703-403-3058

With a reputation of real estate expertise, negotiating power, integrity and passion for personal service Joyce is the one for all your real estate needs. She helps families everyday relocate all over the country. Call her today and she will help you find the perfect home!!
703-403-3058
joyce.wadle@longandfoster.com



Mickie Shea
Associate Broker, CRS, GRI, e-PRO
Mickie@FairfaxVaHouses.com
703-503-1817
No Blarney...Just Top Notch Real Estate Advice

Coming Soon in Fairfax...
Walk to Vienna Metro and Oakton High School
MOVE-IN READY!!!
Call me today for more about this outstanding property with:
Updated Kitchen & Baths | Main Level Hardwoods
New Carpeting throughout except Sunroom
Three Finished Levels | Family Room Open to Kitchen
Family Room Fireplace with Cherry Surround/Mantel
New Garage Door | Much More!

Catie, Steve & Associates

Direct: 703-278-9313

Cell: 703-362-2591

NVAR Top Producers
Multi-Million Dollar Sales Club



Springfield \$405,000
AMAZING Southrun townhome backing to woods! Features 3 level bump out extension, gleaming hardwood floors, granite countertops. Master bedroom suite w/ sitting room, vaulted ceilings, walk in closet, lux bath with dual sinks and sep tub. Washer and dryer on UPPER level. 2 gas fireplaces. Deck and brick patio backing to private woods. Call Catie & Steve to see it today!

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