

Springfield CONNECTION

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Home LifeStyle

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Tanya and Bruce Tyburski succeed in marriage and real estate in the West Springfield and Burke areas and beyond.

Couple Excels Together in Real Estate

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'Nerdicus' Advances to State Finals

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Springfield Quilters Give Back to Community

NEWS, PAGE 3



SHAME on You John Cook!



Fairfax Board of Supervisor **John Cook** is **underfunding Fairfax schools** again.

Underfunded schools hurt students, hold teachers back and mean less personal attention for your children.

For the fourth year in a row, Cook is rejecting the school board's request to increase school funding.

It's wrong.

Cook even said, "Are those cuts going to have an impact? Yes. Are they going to be devastating? No."

He's wrong.

It's *devastating* when our kids are crammed into classrooms.

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PHOTOS BY JANELLE GERMANOS/THE GAZETTE

SLEEP advocate Beth Steel speaks in favor of later high school start times at a recent school board public hearing.

School Board Votes for a Longer SLEEP

Money saved from annual bus route review will be earmarked for implementation of later start times.

BY JANELLE GERMANOS
THE GAZETTE

According to SLEEP, a local group advocating for later high school start times in Fairfax County, 72 out of 92 counties in Virginia have a high school start time of 8 a.m. or later.

Many students and parents say that the 7:20 a.m. start time of high schools in Fairfax County is having a devastating effect on students' health and well-being.

"There is concrete evidence proving that teens with adequate sleep have improved learning, better memory, and a brighter outlook," said Beth Steel, who advocated for later start times on behalf of SLEEP at a recent school board hearing.

As a follow-up motion to approving the FY 2015 budget, the school board passed a motion recommending that Superintendent Karen Garza identify savings from the 2014 annual bus route review and earmarks those savings to offset the possible cost of implementing later high school start times.

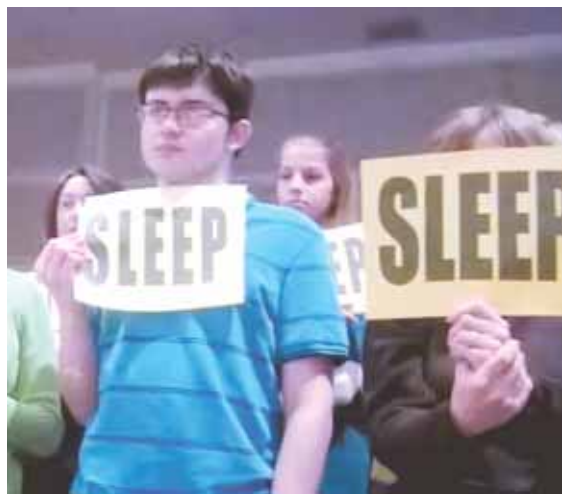
THE MOTION was introduced by Mason District School Board member and SLEEP co-founder Sandy Evans.

"I offer this motion as a very modest approach to earmarking some transportation funds to help implement later high school start times," Evans said. "We find efficiencies in our bus service. If we find these efficiencies, it simply makes sense to recognize that these resources may soon be needed to implement improved bell schedules."

Evans stressed that the motion does not change the transfer request of the FY 2015 proposed budget, and does not take money out of any other budgets.

"As we look at the best approach to make sure that all of our students, K through twelve, have healthy schedules, it's important to show that we're looking ahead and moving in the right direction," Evans said. "The community has been waiting a long time for this. This is a small way for us to say that we do indeed care about and are committed to the physical, emotional and academic health of our teen students."

Springfield District School Board member Elizabeth Schultz and Providence District School Board member Patty Reed referred to an April 2012 resolution adopted by the board, which aimed to start high



Fairfax County Public Schools student Stuart Orloff spoke in support of later high school start times at the public hearing on Jan. 27.

schools after 8 a.m., as a reason to approve this motion. "We have the opportunity right now to demonstrably put our foot down and say, as we identify savings, we are going to make strides to fulfilling the promise that the resolution set more than a year ago. We're not going to do it with no money. This is the time for us to say, we choose to take the next step," Schultz said.

SLEEP, which stands for Start Later for Excellence in Education Proposal, has been advocating for later start times in Fairfax County since 2004.

"It was April 2012 that this board set the goal of later start times for high schoolers. This board has also established the goal of physical health and safety and well-being of our students. For those reasons, I feel that we need to be pursuing this with added haste and zest," Reed said.

SLEEP ADVOCATES voiced their concerns for implementing a later start time as soon as possible at the last public hearing on the budget on Jan. 27.

"In some respects, this is the longest running community engagement project that FCPS has ever had. Now, it is time to act," said SLEEP advocate Phyllis Payne.

Mount Vernon School Board member Dan Storck was among the supporters of Evans' motion.

"All we are asking for is that with any savings that we have, from now on in a sense, at least in this budget year, that we will invest that in the way that this board has already said that we should invest it, which is in our kids, giving them an opportunity to get a little more sleep at night, to be a little more rested and do better in school frankly," Storck said.



PHOTOS BY JANELLE GERMANOS/THE CONNECTION

Springfield resident Anne Hyde and Beverly Pontius present Pontius's quilt, which will be donated to Wounded Warriors at Fort Belvoir.

Quilters Give Back to Community

Springfield Quilters' Unlimited donate to those in need.

BY JANELLE GERMANOS
THE CONNECTION

For members of Springfield Quilters' Unlimited, quilting is more than just a hobby. The group provides opportunities for meeting others, as well as giving back to the community.

"We want to give back to our community," said Springfield resident Anne Hyde. "It's also a great way to socialize."

In addition to learning more about quilting and mixing with individuals interested in the same activity, Springfield Quilters' Unlimited has led numerous campaigns to support members of the surrounding community.

Quilters' Unlimited members are currently working on quilts to donate to the Wounded Warriors program at Fort Belvoir.

Although members continue to donate quilts to the project, Springfield Quilters' Unlimited hosted a Quilting for Others workshop on Jan. 28.

Springfield Quilters' Unlimited has donated to several

groups throughout the community. They recently donated 531 pillowcases for ECHO's Holiday Shop, in which parents fill the pillowcases with toys when shopping for their children.

According to Hyde, the organization also made 100 baby quilts for local hospitals, baby hats for area nurseries, dolls for children undergoing surgery at local hospitals, and quilts for other fundraisers.

"We really love to give back to the community," Hyde said. "We want to give comfort to recipients of our quilts."

Penny Boyanton said a variety of ages and skill levels come out to the quilting workshops.

"I've been quilting since 1976," Boyanton said.

Hyde said that in addition to donating to the community, the group learns a lot about quilting in general.

"Springfield is where the fun is," Hyde said.

Quilters Unlimited will be hosting the 41st annual Quilt Show at the Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly from May 20-June 1.



Penny Boyanton and Anne Hyde show off a quilt that will be donated to the Wounded Warriors program at Fort Belvoir. Hyde said the group loves to give back to the community.

NEWS

West Springfield High School students Elizabeth Barto, Bonnie McClellan, Austin Morrison and Josh Elliot portray the Miller family in West Springfield's one-act play, "Nerdicus (My Brother with Autism)."

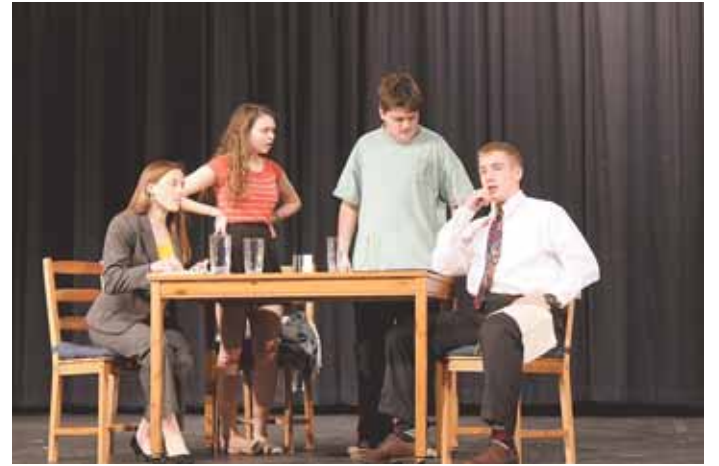


PHOTO BY JANELLE GERMANOS/THE CONNECTION

'Nerdicus' Advances to State Finals

West Springfield High School attends finals second year in a row.

BY JANELLE GERMANOS
THE CONNECTION

After West Springfield High School won the Virginia High School League district, regional and state one-act contests last year with the play "The Other Room" under the leadership of Bernie DeLeo, it became clear to the drama director that he wanted to write a play that demonstrated a less tragic side to autism.

"Sure, I loved that people gasped and cried at the end of the play - that's what you want as a director, for the play to evoke a visceral, emotional response from the audience. But it left people with the feeling ultimately that to live with autism is a sad and tragic thing - whereas in my experience, it has been anything but that. It's not without challenges, but more often than not, life with my son Charlie is quite funny," DeLeo said.

In summer 2013, DeLeo wrote "Nerdicus (My Brother with Autism)," and on Feb. 6, the play won the VHSL 6A North Regional One-Act Championship.

ACCORDING TO DELEO, the play is 90 percent autobiographical.

"It's really about my daughter Sophie, who is two years younger and had to attend high school with Charlie. The play examines how having a sibling with a disability affects the other sibling who does not. Autism is a social disorder, in which most autistics have little clue about socially appropriate behaviors; and my son had some pretty eccentric behaviors that drove his sister, a typical, easily-embarrassed high school girl, crazy," DeLeo said.

DeLeo cast senior Austin Morrison in the role of Eddie, based off of his son Charlie. DeLeo said he wrote the lead with Austin in mind.

"Austin is on the autism spectrum and he's been taking drama classes since middle school. I'd cast him in all of the plays last year because drama had been an appropri-

ate social outlet for my son - and I was determined to include Austin to give him that opportunity as well. It's Austin's senior year now, and he'd never had a lead - so I wanted him to go out with a bang. He's very similar to my own son in many regards, and he's doing a terrifically funny job. There's a movement these days to cast people with disabilities in roles that require characters to have disabilities; as a parent of a child with a documented disability, I decided I need to put my money where my mouth was - and I'm so proud of Austin," DeLeo said.

Morrison said he enjoys playing the role of Eddie, and thinks he shares some similarities with the character.

"I felt like I could relate to him," Morrison said. "Except I would not wear Nerdicus armor and a fake sword to school, especially not on pajama day."

Morrison is referring to a part in the play where Eddie arrives dressed in ancient Roman armor on pajama day, one of the several scenes in the play taken directly from DeLeo's personal experiences.

"The opening scene - where Charlie went to the bus stop in a warrior outfit and having imaginary battles with invisible armies - real life (and it drove Sophie crazy). They were both overlapping in high school - as in the play - and my daughter did indeed avoid him in the hallways," DeLeo said. "Many of the arguments and scenes with the family came right from my home."

Morrison received the Outstanding Actor award at the regional festival on Feb. 8, and received a standing ovation from the crowd.

"That was truly rewarding - and just proved the point of the play itself: students with autism can perform just as well as their peers, given the opportunity. Thanks to my experience with my own son, I was able to see past Austin's disability to recognize his capabilities, and that might not have happened at another school," DeLeo said.

Junior Bonnie McClellan, who plays Eddie's sister Rachel in the play, said she was a little nervous portraying a character based off DeLeo's daughter Sophie.

"I didn't want to say anything not the way his daughter would say," McClellan said. "I wasn't sure if I was going to be offending his daughter by being too headstrong. She

SEE AUTISM, PAGE 14

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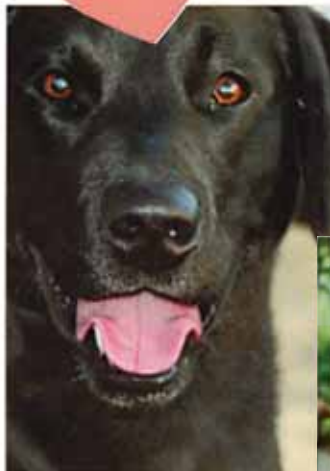


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OPINION

Addressing Mental Health

Why are localities providing so much less for people who need mental health services?

While the General Assembly is making progress in fixing some of the egregious shortcomings of the way Virginia provides emergency services to people in mental health crisis, many fewer people are receiving mental health services in Northern Virginia.

State Sen. Creigh Deeds' son died of suicide late last year after the limitations in both the law and local communication resulted in him being released while still in the midst of crisis.

Deeds reports the progress on the bill that has passed the State Senate: "The omnibus bill will require subjects be held up to 24 hours under an emergency custody order, create a database of available psychiatric beds, and ensure people in need of hospitalization cannot be 'streeted' by establishing state hospitals as providers of last resort."

These are important steps.

Services to people with mental illness are provided on the local level by community services boards, and in Fairfax County in particular, those services have been dramatically cut back.

Reporter Michael Pope reports this week that since 2009, the number of people receiving mental health services in Fairfax County has declined by 39 percent. Alcohol and drug service have dropped 43 percent. Services for those with intellectual disability have declined 39 percent.

EDITORIAL

Officials quoted cite the recession and declining property tax revenues in explaining the reductions, along with some changes in the way services are counted.

No matter how services are counted, there is no question that they have been reduced significantly during a recession, a time when research shows the need for mental health services and alcohol and drug services actually increases.

In Arlington, the number of people who receive mental health services has declined by 6 percent. The number of people who receive substance abuse services has decreased by 13 percent.

"Stresses associated with rising unemployment, poverty and social insecurity will lead to upward trends in many national suicide rates, as well as to less readily charted increases in the prevalence of psychiatric illness, alco-

hol-related disorders and illicit drug use," according to a 2011 overview study on economic recession and mental health cited by the National Institutes of Health. "At the same time, mental health services are being cut back as part of government austerity programs. Budget cuts will thus affect psychiatric services adversely just when economic stressors are raising the levels of need and demand in affected populations."

As for blaming the budget, it's hard to see from raw numbers why the most vulnerable should be suffering. In 2009, before the effects of the recession, Fairfax County's budget expenditures were \$5.36 billion. The adopted 2014 budget calls for expenditures of \$6.75 billion.

"Proactive fiscal and social policies could, however, help to mitigate the health consequences of recession," the overview study reports. "Economic mental health care could best be achieved, not by decimating services but by planning and deploying these to meet the needs of defined area populations."

Elected officials and others in county government who have signed off on a set of priorities that punishes the most vulnerable populations have some moral accounting to do.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

School Budget: How to Pay?

To the Editor:

Every year this paper publishes liberals' letters about the Fairfax County school budget, which increases yearly without exception. One year it is teacher pay, the next year class enrollment, this year renovation costs.

The implication is that if the schools don't get what their administrators demand, Fairfax County will collapse. This despite a continuous decline in student performance. Furthermore, there is no quid pro quo; it is my way or the highway by those who claim sanctimonious justification.

However, like the Federal government, no consideration is ever made for how to pay for this; unlike the Federal government, Fairfax County cannot print money. So what will it be? Raise taxes, the favored Fairfax County school administrator way? Borrow money, another favored FC school administrator way? Or what will you cut from your budget to pay for these needed renovations, not the Fairfax County school administration way? Something has to give. Fairfax County is run by Democrat politicians for favored

Democrat constituencies.

One point all should recognize: there is a reason for the increasing student enrollment, one I have discussed with my delegate and for which the state legislature has statistics to confirm. There are on average 6,000 illegal alien children in the Fairfax County Public Schools. Now these children must be educated, will be educated and that is not in dispute by any sane person. However, that is where the growth is and in fact without these children, the school enrollment would decrease such that certain schools in places like Bailey's Crossroads, the Route One corridor in Mount Vernon, Herndon and elsewhere would actually be seriously viewed for closing.

Fairfax County should require that every child being enrolled in the public schools have one parent prove their legal residency, not just in the county but the country. The purpose of such is not to deny schooling to these children. Rather it is for Fairfax County schools to be able to calculate and present a bill to the Federal government demanding reimbursement for each child's education whose parent(s) are not in the county or country legally.

Finally, who believes that education bureaucrats are good stew-

ards of the tax-payers' money other than the usual suspects? Clearly, they did not go into the teaching profession with much respect or understanding for the

capitalist economic system that has brought this nation the greatest prosperity on the globe.

Christopher Thompson
West Springfield

Taking Exception on Medicaid Expansion

To the Editor:

The Connection editorial ["Extend Health Coverage in Virginia," (January 23-29, 2014)] accuses the Republicans in the Virginia General Assembly of failing to accept increased taxes that would be assessed to pay the cost of Medicaid Expansion in Virginia. The editorial states that the cost of the Medicaid Expansion would be paid with federal funding for at least ten years so the expansion would be free to Virginia taxpayers for the immediate future. What the Connection avoids saying is that the federal funding is all derived from the taxes paid by the residents of the states including Virginia. In actuality 100 percent of the cost for expanding Medicaid in Virginia would be funded by the taxpayers of Virginia from day one.

Of the three branches of state government in Richmond, the del-

egates to the General Assembly most closely represent the positions of the residents across the entire state. The delegates are just the messengers of their constituency to the legislature in Richmond. It is a cop out to accuse any General Assembly delegate of being an obstructionist of when the member is faithfully representing the will of the constituency.

Instead of inciting Governor Terry McAuliffe to revolt against established authority in Richmond, the Connection should encourage the Governor to gain the trust and support of Virginians across the state. By winning the recent election, he earned the title of Governor, a rent free furnished office, and prepaid phone card, but he did not earn the consent of the governed, which is the basis of any democracy. McAuliffe re

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Springfield
CONNECTION

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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.

SATURDAY/FEB. 15

Dog Adoption. 12-3 p.m. PETCO, Greenbriar Towncenter, 13053 Lee Jackson Mem. Hwy., Fairfax. 703-817-9444

FEB. 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.

MONDAY/FEB. 17

Beating Hunger. 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Kingstowne Giant, 5870 Kingstowne Blvd., Alexandria. Join Fairfax County Government, Giant, Shoppers Food and Pharmacy, Wal-Mart and MV Transportation, Inc. as we collect food donations to assist the most vulnerable in our community. Purchase food and other needed items at the cash register or at the special display in the store and drop your contribution by our bus. All donations for this event go directly to Koinonia Foundation, a local nonprofit organization that helps to feed needy families and individuals in Fairfax County.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 19

Understanding Dementia, Improving Lives. 1:30 p.m. Insight Memory Care Center, formerly Alzheimer's Family Day Center, 2812 Old Lee Highway, Suite 210, Fairfax. Learn some simple steps to help tap into remaining abilities for loved ones with dementia that will improve their quality of life. Call 703-204-4664 to RSVP.

FAITH NOTES

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

Annual Valentine's Day Banquet. The Family Ministry of the Greater Little Zion Baptist Church is sponsoring their annual Valentine's Day Banquet on Saturday, Feb. 15, from 6:30 to 11 p.m. All couples and singles are invited to fellowship to enjoy an evening of dining, music, dancing and featured entertainment. The theme for this night of extravaganza and celebration of Valentine's Day is "The Joy Of Love" (Song of Songs 4:10). Location: Waterford Receptions at Fair Oaks, 12025 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, Fairfax. Cost: \$55 per person. Contact Deacon Anthony Bazemore or Deaconess-Elect Terri Bazemore at 703-764-9111. Reservations and payments are due by Feb. 10.

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

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

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By SAL RUIBAL
THE CONNECTION

If you drive anywhere in Burke and Springfield, you'll see their faces on familiar red, white and blue Re/Max realty signs on lawns, at intersections, parking lots and pretty much everywhere. When you shop at any of the major grocery stores along Old Keene Mill Road, your grocery cart probably will have that same color scheme along with a color photo of two smiling people. In the course of a year, you may see those faces a thousand times, maybe more. You don't have to read the words because you know who that happy couple is: "Bruce & Tanya."

Next to Washington political power couples such as the Obamas and the Clintons, Bruce and Tanya Tyburski are among the most familiar married couples in this area.

What you may not know is that there is a wonderful romance story behind those signs.

THEIR LAWN SIGNS don't give you the full perspective: Bruce is 6-foot-6 and Tanya is 5-2, give or take the size of her high heels. Bruce is calm and a bit serious, while Tanya is like sparkling champagne, bubbly and effervescent, tossing out ideas and memories of their life together.

She grew up in Vallejo, Calif., a few miles from the famous Napa Valley vineyards and wineries. During the summer months, Tanya worked in the fruit orchards where she learned the virtues of hard work.

Meanwhile, laconic Bruce was working his way through the ranks of the Marriott Corporation, eventually becoming the youngest general manager at the company's flagship restaurant in Berkeley, Calif.

While in college, Tanya applied to work at Bruce's restaurant. There was an immediate attraction between the couple, but because Marriott had rules forbidding managers from dating workers, Bruce would have lost his job had their romance been discovered.

So in 1983, he fired Tanya. In 1984, he married her.

That may have been Bruce's best decision ever.

After deciding to move back to Bruce's native Northern Virginia, Tanya worked as a waitress at night and in the daytime she was a window designer at the Woodward and Lothrop department store.

Tanya decided to go to real estate school, where she says, "I was addicted from the very first class. I didn't realize you didn't have to have \$112,000 cash to buy a \$112,000 house."

They had their second child, Max, in 1989 and Bruce decided he had enough of the restaurant business, as his 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. schedule made it hard for him to see their children. He took a six-month hiatus to figure out what he wanted to do. Because Tanya was doing so well in real estate, Bruce could think about his future while being a stay-at-home father.

After three months, Tanya had enough of Bruce hanging around while her business was booming, so in 1991 she convinced him to help her out. She couldn't train him, so he went to another firm for training.

"His first year, he surpassed me in sales," Tanya says. "That was it. We had to team up."

THEY STARTED ADVERTISING in the Connection newspapers and the business began to boom. Then came the idea of putting their names and faces on their signs.

"Tanya's a very visual person," Bruce says. "The signs were successful because people could see our faces. In real life we are a 'ying-yang' couple because she's 5-2 and I'm 6-6. People remember that."

They started out finding houses for friends and acquaintances in the West Springfield and Burke areas. They have expanded, but still focus on those areas.

Tanya's visual sense is what makes Bruce &

Tanya seem like a much bigger company.

"We concentrate along Old Keene Mill and other roads in our area," she says, but those signs are simple directional signs that guide potential buyers directly to the homes we list.

"That's the same for the grocery carts. It seems like we have a million of them but we just target the three biggest grocery stores in our immediate area."

"She's a marketing genius," Bruce says.

As their fourth and youngest child, Angela, is set to graduate high school this year, the couple is contemplating what to do with their own lives. But they are determined to remain a strong couple.

"We're like Sonny and Cher," Bruce says. "I got you babe!"



PHOTO BY SAL RUIBAL

Tanya and Bruce Tyburski succeed in marriage and real estate in the West Springfield and Burke areas and beyond.

Home LifeStyle

Home Design: What the Pros Know

A look inside the homes of some of the area's top builders.

By MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Remodeling industry professionals spend their days helping clients create dream homes, adding quartzite counter tops and outdoor, stacked stone fireplaces, turning ideas and photos into functional, chic living spaces.

But what about their homes? What materials do they choose for themselves? How do they make the most of their living spaces? Three local professionals from BOWA Builders, Inc. opened their doors and shared the secrets of their renovations.

When principal and owner George Hodges-Fulton and his wife, Alexandra, decided to remodel the galley kitchen in their Reston home, they decided to expand and change the flow of traffic, keeping the safety of their 6- and 10-year-old daughters in mind.

"We wanted to open the house up more," said George Hodges-Fulton. "We took out a wall between kitchen and the dining room."

Alexandra Hodges-Fulton, a serious cook, added, "The sink and the stove were across from each other. Now the sink and the stove are next to each other, so I don't have to walk across the kitchen carrying hot pasta."

The project took a mere five weeks to complete. "Everything happened perfectly," added George Hodges-Fulton. "Having on-site supervision and knowing the end goal helped."

He says that having undergone his own renovation project, he now has additional insight when advising clients. "It makes a significant difference," he said. "We can say 'In my house I did this.' or 'I did this wrong in my house, so you might consider this.'"

When principal and owner Steve Kirstein first moved into his Potomac, Md., home with his wife and three children, he spotted several missed design opportunities. "We needed some of the spaces to do different things," said Kirstein. "We wanted a family gathering space and a display space upstairs."

The home had a two-story foyer,



PHOTO COURTESY OF BOWA BUILDERS, INC./GETTY IMAGES

View from the interior of BOWA founder Josh Baker's Great Falls home. Casual entertaining spaces include the open first floor and pool.

which Kirstein saw as the perfect location for a second floor family room. He added "flooring, sheetrock walls, built-in bookcases and display cases. Now it's a gathering space for the family upstairs and we still have a dramatic foyer downstairs."

Next, Kirstein turned what he called, "a big wasted space" adjacent to the garage into a mudroom. "We put a cubby and drawer for each child and a bench for taking off shoes. We added a half wall across from the cubbies so you can't see all of the cleats and lacrosse sticks all over the floor. We also added a powder room."

Kirstein also transformed his backyard into an oasis. "We added a pool and entertaining area," he said. "We redid every finish in the house. I liked those small touches because they were simple and easy and changed the way the house looked."

Founder, cochairman and owner Josh Baker grew up in Great Falls and when it came time to raise his family, he remained there. He even built a custom home where he plans to live long-term. "A lot of planning went into the future," said Baker. "The concept behind it was we would create a fun space for our children that their children could eventually enjoy."

He advises his clients to similarly plan ahead and think about how their needs might evolve. "To make it a long-term home is to not think about just what you need now, but what you might need in the future," he said. "We designed a guest suite on the first floor with the idea that my wife and I could live on one floor once we're empty nesters." There is enough space for friends and extended family.

Baker said each time he and his wife updated the house, they did so judiciously. "We made smart

first floor, there are no partition walls in the common area."

The rooms in the house are generous and comfortable and space was used wisely, Baker said. "We focused on the feeling and functionality of the room rather than the size of the room," he said. "None of the rooms are oversized, but they are functional."

Wise use of space is another lesson he shares with clients. "At one time, bedrooms with sitting rooms were very popular," said Baker. "But ... a lot of our clients don't use them so we're repurposing those spaces. In our master bedroom, for example, we focused on walk-in closets. Even our master bathroom is spacious, but it is not vast."

The Bakers designed their outdoor landscape to accommodate their penchant for relaxed entertaining. "We're informal folks," said Baker. "We like to entertain, so we developed our landscaping to include an expansive entertaining area and a swimming pool. We have a lot of outdoor parties. We can accommodate a large group in our yard as well."

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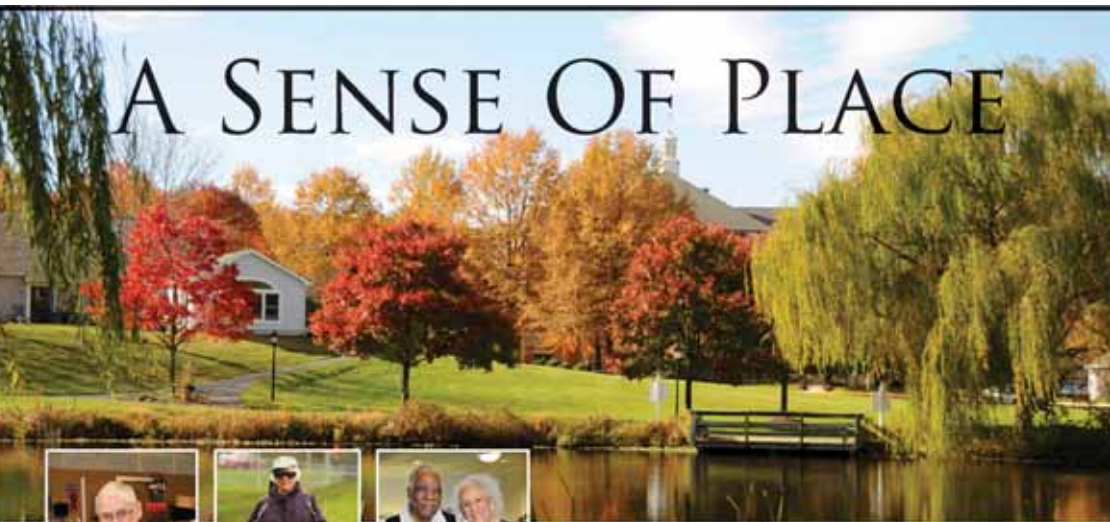
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THE CONNECTION

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7 10608 Kilcorma Way,
Fairfax Station — \$1,000,000

9 10509 Center Street,
Fairfax — \$965,000



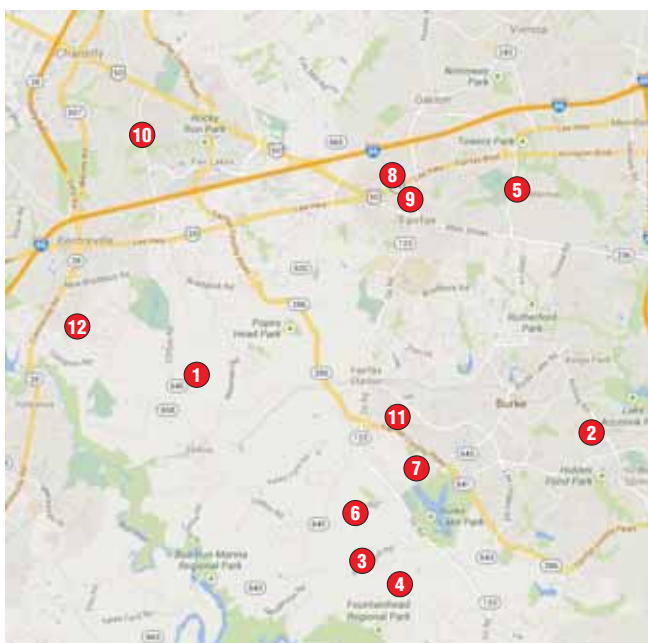
10 13554 Point Pleasant Drive,
Chantilly — \$675,000



11 5915 Clermont Landing Court,
Burke — \$635,011



12 6700 Bay Valley Lane,
Centreville — \$630,000



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2 6512 STALLION RD	5	..	6	..	0	CLIFTON	\$1,850,000	...	Detached	...	5.27	20124	CLOVERLEAF FARM ESTATES	12/03/13
2 6151 REZA CT	6	..	4	..	2	SPRINGFIELD	..	\$1,392,649	...	Detached	...	0.35	.....	22152	.....	CARDINAL ESTATES	.....	11/07/13
3 11100 DEVEREUX STATION LN ..	4	..	4	..	1	FAIRFAX STATION	...	\$1,225,000	...	Detached	...	5.01	.....	22039	.....	DEVEREUX STATION	.....	12/05/13
4 10600 SANDY RUN TRL	5	..	3	..	1	FAIRFAX STATION	...	\$1,225,000	...	Detached	...	6.03	.....	22039	.....	SHADOWWALK	.....	12/16/13
5 3442 PRESERVATION DR	5	..	4	..	1	FAIRFAX	.....	\$1,180,000	...	Detached	...	0.17	.....	22031	.....	PICKETT'S RESERVE	.....	11/27/13
6 11133 SANDY MANOR DR	5	..	4	..	1	FAIRFAX STATION	...	\$1,050,000	...	Detached	...	5.00	.....	22039	.....	SANDY RUN FOREST ESTATES	.....	11/20/13
7 10608 KILCORMAC WAY	5	..	5	..	1	FAIRFAX STATION	...	\$1,000,000	...	Detached	...	5.00	.....	22039	.....	KILLARNEY	.....	11/21/13
8 10707 SCOTT DR	4	..	3	..	1	FAIRFAX	.....	\$974,900	...	Detached	...	0.51	.....	22030	.....	BFA MYERS	.....	12/20/13
9 10509 CENTER ST	5	..	3	..	1	FAIRFAX	.....	\$965,000	...	Detached	...	0.61	.....	22030	.....	CARRIAGE LANDING	.....	11/05/13
10 13554 POINT PLEASANT DR	5	..	3	..	1	CHANTILLY	.....	\$675,000	...	Detached	...	0.26	.....	20151	.....	POPLAR TREE ESTATES	...	11/22/13
11 5915 CLERMONT LANDING CT ..	4	..	2	..	1	BURKE	.....	\$635,011	...	Detached	...	0.19	.....	22015	.....	BURKE CENTRE	.....	11/08/13
12 6700 BAY VALLEY LN	5	..	4	..	0	CENTREVILLE	\$630,000	...	Detached	...	0.26	20121	GREEN TRAILS	11/15/13

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VALENTINE'S WEEKEND



PHOTO BY DONNA BILLINGSLEY

Spend your Saturday listening to romantic tunes by Pianist Peter Nero at George Mason University's Center for the Arts.

Romantic Events Happening in the Fairfax County Area

BY AMNA REHMATULLA
THE CONNECTION

Enjoy your Valentine's Day by heading off to one of these events.

THURSDAY/FEB. 13-SUNDAY/FEB. 16

Wildfire's Special Valentine's Menu. \$85 per couple. Wildfire Restaurant, Tysons Corner, 2001 International Drive, McLean. Guests can indulge in all of their Wildfire favorites, including Crab Stuffed Mushrooms, Spinach & Artichoke Fondue, Wildfire Chopped Salad, Roasted Prime Rib of Beef or Parmesan Crusted New York Strip. Call 703-442-9110 for reservations.

THURSDAY/FEB. 13-SATURDAY/FEB. 15

Valentine's Day at the Animal Shelter. Thursday & Friday 12-7 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Fairfax County Animal Shelter, 4500 W Ox Road, Fairfax. Visit the shelter to enjoy free sweet treats like candy and ice cream, hands-on fun with kittens and puppies (while they last!) and fee-waived adoptions on 10 of the shelter's biggest 'heartbreakers.'

FRIDAY/FEB. 14

Valentine's Night Out. 7-9 p.m.

Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. A family fun movie night presenting Smurfs 2. Bring your own snacks.

Wine, Dine & Be Mine this Valentine's Day. 5-10 p.m. Vinifera Wine Bar & Bistro, 11750 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston. This Valentine's Day, Executive Chef John-Michael Hamlet will offer a five-course dinner, featuring dishes like smoked oyster fricassee, his signature "foiejitas," veal chateaubriand, and deconstructed black forest cake. \$95 per person. 703-234-3550 or visit www.viniferabistro.com

Valentine's Day Chocolate Buffet. 6-10 p.m. The Ritz-Carlton, 1700 Tysons Boulevard, McLean. Entyse, Wine Bar & Lounge will offer an impressive chocolate buffet with seven different dessert options crafted by their pastry kitchen. Satisfy your loved one's sweet tooth with their dessert creations. \$25 per person, seating on first come, first serve basis

Valentine's Day Latin Style. La Sandia Mexican Kitchen, 7852L Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Show some Latin Love this Valentine's Day with a 3-Course dinner and signature beverage or cocktail for \$29 per person. A taste of what's on the menu: Shrimp and Crab Empenadas, Chile Relleno, Pasilla Lava Cake, and more. RSVP 703-893-2222.

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.

SATURDAY/FEB. 15, 22

Laurel Grove "Colored" School Open House. 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. 6840 Beulah Street, Alexandria. Laurel Grove School is a one room school that served African American students in the Franconia Community of Fairfax County from 1882 to 1932. Visit the school to learn about families coming together to build a school and the importance of educating their children.

SATURDAY/FEB. 15

Movie & Pizza Night. 6 p.m. Hidden Pond Park, 8511 Greeley Boulevard, Springfield. Friends of Hidden Pond are having a movie and pizza night in the Hidden Pond nature center. Pizza and drinks will be for sale followed by a showing of Over the Hedge (PG) on the big screen. RSVP to fohpnc@yahoo.com.

SATURDAY/FEB. 22

Mae Hernon & Celtic Font. 12-4 p.m. Auld Shebeen Restaurant & Pub, 3971 Chain Bridge Rd, Fairfax. Traditional Irish singer will be performing alongside with another band.

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SPORTS

Robinson Wins Conference 5 Gymnastics Championship

Freshman Burda, senior Gross finish top four in all-around.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

A talented freshman and a senior in her final conference meet helped the Robinson gymnastics team capture its second championship in three seasons.

Caroline Burda placed second in the all-around and Sarah Gross tied for third, leading Robinson to the Conference 5 gymnastics title on Feb. 6 at Centreville High School. The Rams won, or tied for first, in each of the four events and produced a total score of 135.4. Oakton finished second with a score of 132.575, followed by Westfield (130.575), Chantilly (129.65), Herndon (122.45) and Centreville (105.375). The top two teams, Robinson and Oakton, qualified for the 6A North region meet.

Robinson won the Concorde District championship in 2012. The six schools became Conference 5 after the VHSL's six-class realignment prior to the 2013-14 school year.

"It's amazing. We've worked so hard this season. It's just great to have it all come together."
— Robinson freshman Caroline Burda

"They definitely performed very well today," first-year Robinson head coach Charlotte Edwards said. "They were more consistent than they normally are. ... They're definitely peaking at the right time. Our first couple meets weren't that successful."

Burda, a freshman, placed second in the all-around with a score of 34.9. She finished first on beam (9.15), third on bars (8.625), fourth on vault (8.75) and tied for eighth on floor (8.375).

"She is only a freshman and she did a great job," Edwards said, "but there's definitely some things we're going to work on before regionals, so when we look at their score sheets we'll see if we can make some more adjustments so she can get a couple more points on some event."

Burda said beam was her best event.



PHOTO BY JON ROETMAN/THE CONNECTION

The Robinson gymnastics team won the Conference 5 championship on Feb. 6 at Centreville High School.

She was one of just three gymnasts to score a 9 or better.

"I thought that I did the best I could and I'm really proud of myself," Burda said. "This has been my best meet so far this season."

Robinson's Sarah Gross, a senior, tied with Herndon's Alexa Bradley for third in the all-around with a score of 34.5. Gross placed third on floor (9) and vault (8.85), tied for fifth on beam (8.8) and finished 11th on bars (8).

"She performed very well," Edwards said. "Even on her [least]-favorite event, balance beam, she had a solid routine, so that was very exciting and I think that made a big difference in her all-around score."

Robinson freshman Emily Gross placed third on vault (8.85) and tied for sixth on floor (8.4). Junior Bailey Young tied for second on beam with a score of 9.

The top eight individuals and any other gymnasts who scored at least a 9 qualified for regionals in each event. In the all-around, the top four finishers and any other gymnasts with a score of 35 or better earned a regional berth. Westfield senior Katie Freix repeated as all-around champion with a score of 36.925. She placed first on floor (9.525), vault (9.5) and bars (9.1), and tied for fifth on beam (8.8).

"I had probably close to my best performances on all my events, except for beam," Freix said. "... I definitely had my best bar routine. I've been having trouble hitting bars recently, so it was really cool to actu-

ally hit the bar routine."

Oakton advanced to regionals with a runner-up team finish despite having the smallest roster in the conference with just eight healthy competitors.

"We feel that's where we differ from a lot of teams, especially being the smallest squad in our conference," Oakton head coach Frankie Orbacz wrote in an email. "Everyone has a ton of talent and everyone contributed equally to our fantastic team score. Most other teams have a few

SPORTS ROUNDUPS

Woodson Gets New Football Coach

W.T. Woodson High School recently named Mike Dougherty its new head football coach.

Dougherty spent the last six seasons as head coach at Stonewall Jackson High School in Prince William County. Last season, as the No. 13 seed, Dougherty led the Raiders to the 6A North region semifinals, where they lost to eventual state champion Centreville.

Prior to Stonewall, Dougherty was the head coach at Dominion High School in Loudoun County for five seasons.

Dougherty takes over for Joe Dishun, who compiled a 7-23 record in three seasons as head coach of the Cavaliers. Prior



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Robinson freshman Caroline Burda placed second in the all-around and first on the beam (9.15) at the Conference 5 gymnastics meet on Feb. 6 at Centreville High School.

standouts that lead the team and sweep the medals, but we really have so much talent in every girl. We are very well-rounded. Standings-wise, four of our eight girls medaled and placed, which means half of our team would have advanced to regions if we hadn't made it as a team. We were so impressed! That's a pretty fantastic showing."

The 6A North region meet was scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 12, after The Connection's deadline. The state meet is scheduled for Feb. 21-22 at Salem High School in Virginia Beach.

"It's amazing," Burda said of winning the Conference 5 championship. "We've worked so hard this season. It's just great to have it all come together."

to Dishun's arrival, Woodson finished 3-7 in 2010 under then-head coach Trey Taylor. The program's last winning season was 2009, when Taylor led the Cavaliers to a 13-2 mark and a trip to the Northern Region championship game.

Lee Diver Hodges Places Third at Regionals

Lee High School sophomore Gerald Hodges recently placed third at the 5A North region dive competition. It is his first time qualifying for a VHSL state event.

Hodges, a sophomore, placed fifth during the Conference 13 meet.

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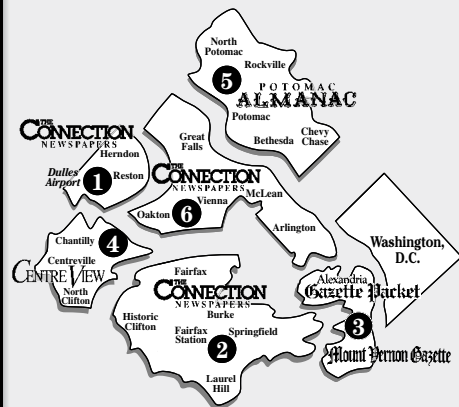
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21 Announcements

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Autism, Up Close and Personal

FROM PAGE 4

is very stubborn and gets embarrassed by
Eddie really easily.”

Senior Elizabeth Barto, who played
Rachel and Eddie’s mother in the play,
shared some of the same feelings.

“Initially it was a little bizarre - the con-
cept of ‘Oh you guys are going to play out
my life, enjoy.’ There’s a little bit more pres-
sure because you have the director and the
author right there,” Barto said. “I was terri-
fied of playing his wife really mean.”

DeLeo said his family was very support-
ive of the play. Some of the cast members
even met a couple members of his family
after one of the performances.

“Had any of them objected, I probably
would have bailed on it. I was most wor-
ried about my daughter’s reaction, that she
might get angry seeing herself portrayed
honestly, warts and all, onstage. I was very
nervous when she read it, and pleasantly
surprised when she laughed and said she
liked it. She even suggested a couple of in-
cidents that I forgot to include. My wife
liked it very much. And Charlie enjoyed it
too. He especially liked that I gave him a
girlfriend in the play,” DeLeo said.

Senior Josh Elliot played Rachel and
Eddie’s father in the play, which he said gave



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

West Springfield Senior Austin Morrison with drama director Bernie DeLeo. Morrison played Eddie in DeLeo’s play, “Nerdicus (My Brother with Autism),” which DeLeo said is 90 percent autobio-

graphical.

him a new perspective on his drama teacher.
“I played the dad, which is weird, because
I basically played Mr. DeLeo,” Elliot said.
“The dad is kind of the goofball. I see him
in a whole new light.”

WEST SPRINGFIELD will continue its
performance of “Nerdicus” at the state fi-
nals at the Piedmont Valley Community
College in Charlottesville on March 8, the
second year in a row the school is attend-
ing and performing another play about au-
tism.

FROM PAGE 6

ceived a majority of the votes in about 20
of the 96 counties in Virginia. The final
vote tally shows that McAuliffe collected
1,069,789 votes, which is less than 20 per-
cent of the approximately 6,000,000 eligible
voters in Virginia.

An analysis of the voting results shows a
clear split between rich counties and poor
counties, between consumers and provid-
ers, and between cities and rural areas.
McAuliffe was supported by a small major-
ity in the richer counties and cities while
his positions were opposed 3 to 1 in sev-
eral of the rural counties. He needs to fo-
cus his energy on gaining consent of the
remaining 80 percent of all Virginians and
preventing further division between the
demographic groups.

The Connection editorial implies that the
Governor need not consider the cost of ex-
panding Medicaid before he stuffs the bill
into a can and tosses it across the fence so
the Federal government can kick the can
down the road for payment by our grand-
children.

The Governor would like to add the cost
of services Virginians use today on top of
the tax bill for the services needed by our
grandchildren when they become taxpay-
ers.

What gives him that right? He needs to
work with our senators and representatives
in Congress to prioritize programs, identify
programs to be cut, and enable the federal
and state to fund Medicaid Expansion in
Virginia without adding to the rapidly grow-
ing national debt. Simply adding the bill
to the national debt for future payment is
no longer acceptable.

Imposing yet another tax increase on Vir-
ginians is counterproductive; you can’t tax
people into prosperity. Does Governor Terry
McAuliffe have the courage to make the
hard decisions that will fund the highest
priority programs while protecting our
grandchildren from being taxed to pay the
bills that come due in 2014? If not him,
then who?

Edward Mills
Fairfax Station

Supporting Safe Hunting

To the Editor:

The bill before the State Senate to allow
hunting on Sundays applies only to private
property and will not impinge on anyone’s
enjoyment of public lands. Most of us only
get the weekends off of work and it is silly
to prevent landowners from hunting on
their own property during half of their free
time.

Hunting brings numerous economic and
environmental benefits to all Virginians and
I encourage the editors and readers to view
the Virginia Department of Game and In-
land Fisheries list at: <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/hunting/benefits/>

The safe practice of hunting should be
supported rather than discouraged.

Christopher Yurasko
Burke

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6:30pm– 11:30pm
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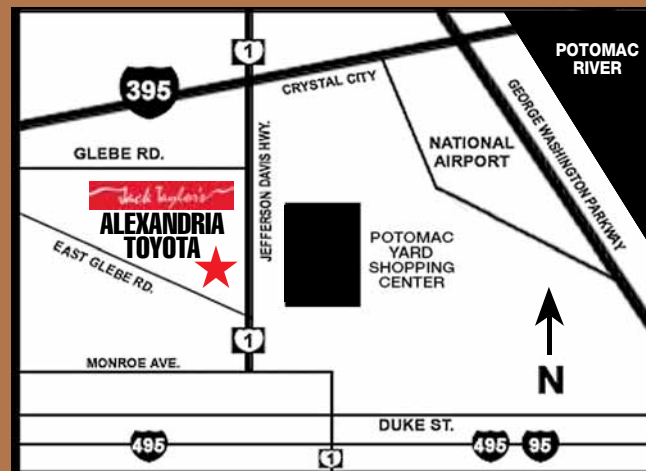
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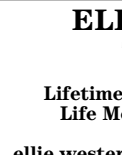


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