

Route 7 Widening: Effects on Neighborhoods

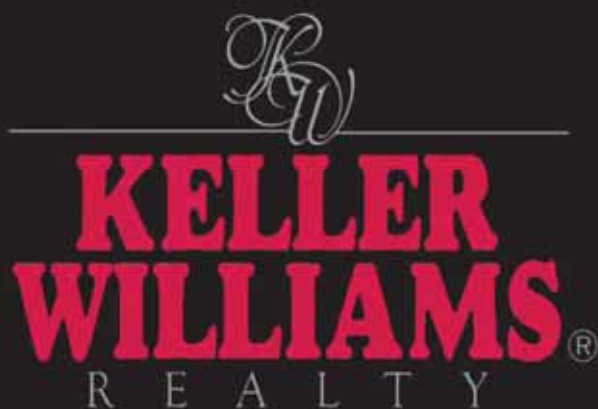
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Bob Nelson



Kelly Putz



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The Great Falls Citizens Association hosted a Town Hall at the Grange to hear residents' concerns about Route 7 construction.



PHOTO BY ETHAN MCLEOD/THE CONNECTION

Residents Discuss Route 7 Widening, Effects on Neighborhoods

Great Falls and Reston residents discuss how Route 7 construction would impact their neighborhoods.

BY ETHAN MCLEOD
THE CONNECTION

Great Falls and Reston residents met at The Grange in Great Falls on Tuesday, Feb. 11 to voice their concerns about the 6.9-mile project along Route 7 that will widen the road from four to six lanes. A presentation led by Great Falls Citizens Association board members went into great detail about the impending changes to each intersection along the stretch, extending from Seneca Road at the edge of Reston to Jarrett Valley Drive just before Tysons Corner.

"This construction is changing the overall character of our neighborhoods," said one Great Falls resident who asked that he not be named. "We're trying to build Route 7 into what is essentially Route 28, which is mostly commercial and not residential living."

THE WIDENING PROJECT

includes changes to 11 intersection traffic lights and 13 existing median breaks. GFCA board member Pam Grosvenor explained to the audience that drivers will need to make U-turns to get into certain neighborhoods in the middle of the highway where median breaks were removed. In other neighborhoods, such as Wolf Trap Run Road, residents will need to take a service road further down to get to Route 7 once after certain turns onto the road are eliminated during construction.

Though the project aims to alleviate traffic congestion moving away from Tysons Corner, those at the meeting said planners did not factor in the potentially harmful effects on the neighborhoods along the road. GFCA Board members pointed to the need for HOV and viable transit options to relieve congestion so close to residential areas.

Others noted that the increased noise levels in certain neighborhoods brought by two additional lanes of traffic would be unbearable. GFCA Vice President Bill Canis pointed to limited access to certain businesses along the road, such as Meadows Farms at Springvale.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) held a meeting Nov. 6, 2013, highlighting the \$300 million project's major changes along the road. Traf-

fic along Route 7 will increase from between 46,000 and 54,000 vehicles a day, as of 2011, to between 73,000 and 86,000 vehicles a day by 2040.

On Jan. 8, 2013, the Board of Supervisors approved the Tysons Transportation Funding Plan, which provided funding for all of the Tysons Corner-wide roadway projects, with the exception of about \$200 million for the next 40 years, or \$5 million per year.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S APPROVAL of Virginia's comprehensive state transportation funding plan, however, allotted about \$125 million annually to Fairfax County for regional transportation funding, which will provide full funding for the construction project.

"We're jumping on this at this point in time to limit the effects of this project on our neighborhoods."

— Eric Knudsen, president, Great Falls Citizens Association



President and Transportation Committee Co-Chair Eric Knudsen encouraged neighborhood residents to promote their concerns through their neighborhood homeowners associations. Knudsen pointed to a Dec. 2013 incident in which residents in the Rockland Road neighborhood successfully requested that the county move construction vehicles blocking access to the neighborhood, following an emergency response team's inability to enter the neighborhood one evening.

"We're jumping on this at this point in time to limit the effects of this project on our neighborhoods," said Knudsen. "Every other neighborhood is going to be in the same place as you, and every neighborhood between Reston Avenue and the Dulles Toll Road is going to be having problems like this."

GFCA is conducting an ongoing "Direct How We Connect" transportation survey through the end of February. The survey provides a way for neighborhood residents and homeowners associations to voice their concerns to the association, according to GFCA board member Pam Grosvenor. The link can be found on their website at <http://gfca.org/transportation.html>.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Rendering of Station Street, as part of the Scotts Run Station South master plan.

Transforming Tysons

Scotts Run Station South wins the award for 'Best Master Plan.'

SmithGroupJJR was awarded a 2013 Award of Excellence by the Northern Virginia chapter of National Association of Industrial and Office Parks (NAIOP), a commercial real estate development association, for its planning and design of the Scotts Run Station South master plan.

The NAIOP awards program, which celebrates significant contributions to Northern Virginia by the commercial, industrial and mixed-use real estate community, was held on Nov. 30, 2013 at the Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner. Scotts Run Station South won the award for "Best Master Plan."

With the planned arrival of four new Metrorail stations, the community of Tysons Corner has an exceptional redevelopment opportunity. SmithGroupJJR's master plan for Cityline Partners' properties at the new Tysons/McLean station will transform the area into a transit-oriented, mixed-use community with the Scotts Run Stream Valley Park at its heart.

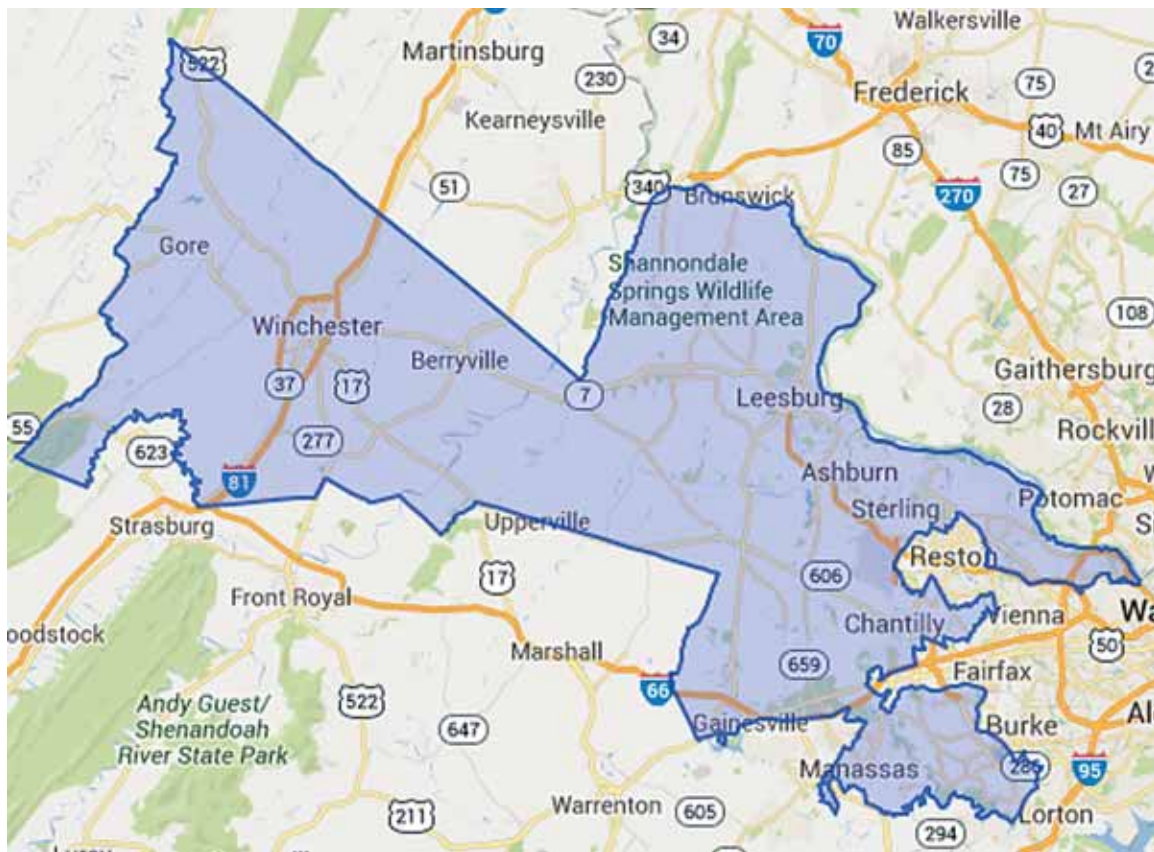
The development plan introduces a new pedestrian-scaled grid of streets with an engaging mix of uses along Station Street, the development's main avenue. A total of 17 new buildings are planned, including residential, office and retail uses along with a full-service hotel.

"Scotts Run Station is a model of how the most challenging

suburban developments can be transformed into authentic, mixed-use, connected and sustainable urban places," said Merrill St. Leger Demian, APA, AICP, LEED AP, urban design and planning principal for the Scotts Run Station South master plan. St. Leger Demian, a leader with SmithGroupJJR's Urban Design and Planning studio, is recognized for her expertise in commercial, campus, and mixed-use development throughout the mid-Atlantic region.

Scotts Run Station South will feature highly sustainable architecture, site, landscape, and stormwater design throughout. New buildings will be designed for energy efficiency, with minimum LEED-Silver certification targeted for office and LEED certification for residential buildings. The park will add another dimension of livability and sustainability to the area, featuring a restored stream, new trails and public open spaces. The result is a holistic vision for transforming this part of the suburban edge city into a true urban center.

"At Scott's Run Station, the buildings will be carefully sited for energy efficiency, and sculpted to make daylight and views available for all building types," said Sven Shockey, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, design principal with SmithGroupJJR's Workplace practice.



MAP COURTESY OF VPA.ORG

The 10th district includes all of Clarke, Frederick, Loudoun, and Warren counties and the independent cities of Manassas, Park, Winchester, along with portions of Fairfax, Fauquier, Prince William counties.

How Red Is the 10th District?

Wolf's retirement sparks crowded political stage as both parties vie for coveted Congressional seat.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

U.S. Rep. Frank R. Wolf's announcement in December that he would not seek reelection to an 18th term in Congress came as a surprise to both Republicans and Democrats.

Wolf's retirement notice instantly set off a feeding frenzy among politicians maneuvering to gain the Northern Virginia Congressional seat.

The 74-year-old Republican held the seat for more than three decades. But Democrats now see a prize pickup opportunity for this year's midterm elections, and potential candidates have rapidly dropped in and out of the race as political pundits question how red the district will remain.

Democrat John Foust, a Fairfax County Supervisor from McLean, announced he would challenge the incumbent a week before Wolf's retirement news.

Del. Barbara Comstock (R-34), a McLean attorney and Wolf's former senior aide, emerged as the one to watch when she announced her candidacy in January. Like Foust, Comstock is a formidable fundraiser and she quickly received the endorsement of many party officials, including presidential hopeful Mitt Romney, for whom she worked in the 2012 campaign.

DEMOCRATIC STRATEGISTS considered Foust to be one of Wolf's most challenging opponents in years, and Foust quickly racked up a slew of endorsements from more than 50 former and current elected offi-

cials, including Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam and U.S. Rep. Jim Moran (D-8). Moran later announced he would not seek reelection. Foust's momentum had a rain-making impact on donors. In late January, Foust reported raising more than \$217,000, with nearly that amount — \$210,000 — reported as cash on hand.

"This is another clear sign that our message of bringing problem solving, bipartisan leadership back to Congress is resonating with Northern Virginia residents," Foust said in a statement about his successful fundraising.

"We had fewer than 20 days to do three months of work, but residents sent a clear message that they're tired of the gridlock and finger-pointing in Washington and are ready for our brand of commonsense leadership."

"My money is on John Foust," said Sharon Bulova, chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in an interview Sunday. "His constituent service is second to none and he has really delivered for his Dranesville constituents. Republicans and Democrats alike love him."

In less than a month, three other Democrats currently join Foust in vying for the seat: Fairfax lawyer Richard Bolger, Leesburg architect Sam Kubba and Iraq War veteran David Wroblewski. Several others might still consider a run.

ON THE REPUBLICAN SIDE, speculation about who would enter the race ran the gamut from the obvious to the absurd. Tareq Salahi, a write-in candidate for last year's governor's race, remains in the race. A vintner and television personality, Salahi gained national attention when he and his ex-wife crashed a White House state dinner in 2009.

When announcing her candidacy, Comstock said: "I have a demonstrated record of winning important legislative victories for Northern Virginians as well as winning hard fought, principled elections."

SEE BATTLE, PAGE 7



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Del. Barbara Comstock (R-34) and Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville) are considered frontrunners for the 10th District Congressional seat.

10th District: Still Solid Red or Swing Seat?

In 2011, after the last round of redistricting, the risk of competitive congressional races diminished for Virginia's three Democratic members of Congress and eight Republican members of Congress. On paper, the 10th district was considered safe Republican territory.

But that was 2011.

"The demographics are shifting as we're talking," state Sen. David Marsden (D-37) said in an interview Sunday. "Foust is the one to beat."

Republican Supervisor John Cook (Braddock) said the seat will remain in Republican hands.

"It is a Republican seat and I think we will have a strong candidate, in which case we will win," Cook said in an interview Sunday night.

In December, Rothenberg Political Report and Roll Call rated the 10th district contest a "Lean Republican" race, based on Bloomberg's number-crunching in the most recent state and national elections.

In last year's presidential race, for example, Mitt Romney won the 10th district, 50-49 percent.

In this year's gubernatorial race, Republican Ken Cuccinelli carried the district over Democrat Terry McAuliffe 48-47 percent. Republican Mark Obenshain and Democrat Mark Herring fought to a standoff in the race for attorney general, with Obenshain winning the 10th district by 72 votes before the recount. The 10th gave Democrat Ralph Northam a more solid victory, with a 52-48 percent win over Republican E.W. Jackson.

The district includes all of Clarke, Frederick, Loudoun, and Warren counties and the independent cities of Manassas, Manassas Park, Winchester, along with portions of Fairfax, Fauquier, Prince William counties. Wolf won the 2012 race with 58 percent of the vote against Democrat Kristin Cabral (39 percent) and Independent J. Kevin Chisholm (3 percent).

Who is Running?

REPUBLICAN DECLARED CANDIDATES

- ❖ Barbara Comstock, State Delegate, 34th District
- ❖ Luellen Hoffman, Director of Exhibits at the National Defense Industrial Association
- ❖ Stephen Hollingshead, former U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development adviser
- ❖ Bob Marshall, State Delegate
- ❖ Tareq Salahi, television personality and write-in candidate for Governor in 2013
- ❖ Marc Savitt, President of the National Association of Independent Housing Professionals
- ❖ Richard Shickle, Chairman of the Frederick County Board of Supervisors
- ❖ Rob Wasinger, former Chief of Staff to U.S. Rep. Kerry Bentivolio
- ❖ Richard Bolger, Fairfax attorney
- ❖ John Foust, Fairfax County Supervisor, Dranesville district
- ❖ Sam Kubba, Leesburg architect
- ❖ David Wroblewski, Iraq War veteran

How Will Parties Select Nominees?

❖ The Republican nominee will be selected in a "firehouse primary," also called a party canvas, to be held April 26.

❖ On Feb. 8, the 10th Congressional District Democratic Committee voted unanimously to hold a convention on April 26 to select the 2014 Democratic nominee.

Source: Ballotpedia



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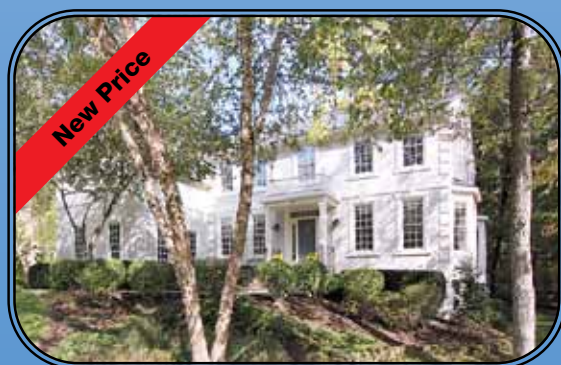
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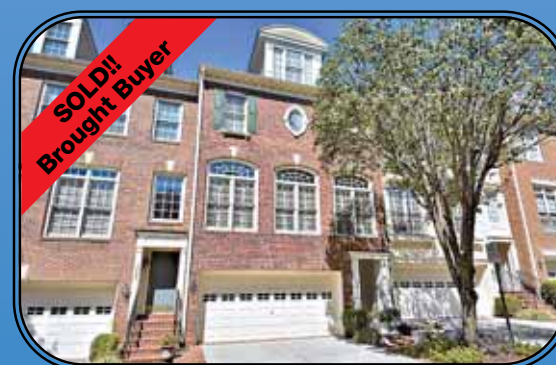
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OPINION

Fundamental Freedom To Choose To Marry

Virginia is historically slow in extending rights.

In 1967, Virginia was one of 16 states that banned interracial marriage and had criminal penalties for violators.

Mildred Jeter, an African-American woman, and Richard Loving a white man, married in 1958, were convicted and banished from living in Virginia for 25 years to avoid serving a one-year prison sentence. On June 12, 1967, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Loving v. Virginia*, overturned the convictions of Mildred and Richard Loving, declaring the ban on interracial marriage unconstitutional.

Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote the opinion: "Marriage is one of the 'basic civil rights of man,' fundamental to our very existence and survival. ... To deny this fundamental freedom on so unsupportable a basis as the racial classifications embodied in these statutes, classifications so directly subversive of the principle of equality at the heart of the Fourteenth Amendment, is surely to deprive all the State's citizens of liberty without due process of law. The Fourteenth Amendment requires that the freedom of choice to marry not be restricted by invidious racial discriminations. Under our Constitution, the freedom to marry, or not marry, a person of another race resides with

the individual, and cannot be infringed by the State."

Less than 50 years ago, it was still illegal in Virginia, punishable by prison time, for a white person to marry someone of another race.

Judge Arenda Wright Allen last week on Valentine's Day, ruled that Virginia's ban on same-sex marriage is unconstitutional. In the opening of her order, Allen quotes Mildred Loving in a statement she made in 2007 on the 40th anniversary of *Loving v. Virginia*:

EDITORIAL

"We made a commitment to each other in our love and lives, and now had the legal commitment, called marriage, to match. Isn't that what marriage is? ... Today's young people realize that if someone loves someone they have a right to marry. Surrounded as I am now by wonderful children and grandchildren, not a day goes by that I don't think of Richard and our love, our right to marry, and how much it meant to me to have that freedom to marry the person precious to me, even if others thought he was the 'wrong kind of person' for me to marry. I believe all Americans, no matter their race, no matter their sex, no matter their sexual orientation, should have that same freedom to marry. Government has no business imposing some people's religious beliefs over others. ... I support the freedom to marry for all. That's what Loving, and loving, are all about."

Judge Allen's written decision is compelling

and well worth reading. You can find a copy of it on the Connection website.

It begins:

"A spirited and controversial debate is underway regarding who may enjoy the right to marry in the United States of America. America has pursued a journey to make and keep our citizens free. This journey has never been easy, and at times has been painful and poignant. The ultimate exercise of our freedom is choice. Our Declaration of Independence recognizes that 'all men' are created equal. Surely this means all of us. While ever-vigilant for the wisdom that can come from the voices of our voting public, our courts have never long tolerated the perpetuation of laws rooted in unlawful prejudice. One of the judiciary's noblest endeavors is to scrutinize laws that emerge from such roots.

"Plaintiffs assert that the restriction on their freedom to choose to marry the person they love infringes on the rights to due process and equal protection guaranteed to them under the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution. These challenges are well-taken....

"The Court is compelled to conclude that Virginia's Marriage Laws unconstitutionally deny Virginia's gay and lesbian citizens the fundamental freedom to choose to marry."

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

'Open' in a Snowy Night

To the Editor:

"Neither Rain, Nor Sleet, Nor Gloom of Night..."

Have you ever heard that motto before? You have if you've been to the New York City General Post Office. It's not actually the official motto of the post office, but it's engraved on the front of their building since 1896. Therefore, for the sake of this story, let's pretend it is.

However, that's not the complete motto. Do you know what comes next?

"Neither rain, nor sleet, nor gloom of night, stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds." Think about this for a moment. Shouldn't this be the motto of most of us in business? After all, what it is really saying is this: When things are tough, we'll be there for you.

In our small town of Great Falls, I was recently reminded of this motto, but I wasn't reminded by our local post office. I was actually reminded of this motto by our local Chinese restaurant. As 15 inches of snow blanketed the area during the night, people stayed off the roads and let the road crews do their work. Dur-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Peking Delight: 'Open' sign shining brightly during the snowstorm last week.

ing the day, the town remained quiet as more snow, sleet, and rain continued to fall.

Finally, around 6 p.m., my wife and I decided to venture out.

When we got to one of the two small shopping centers that serves our tiny Great Falls, every restaurant and store was closed.... except for one. In the darkness, there was one "Open" sign shining brightly for our little Chinese restaurant, the Peking Delight.

Like rushing to a small oasis in a desert, we parked our car and went in to order some food to go. While I was inside waiting, I asked these two questions: How did they get their staff to come in during

this storm?

Why did they decide to open up?

"We all piled into one car, and got here at our normal time," the woman said with a smile. Knowing that almost no one would be able to come by and order food, and faced with the danger of driving in terrible conditions, I needed to ask my second question one more time: Why did they decide to open up? As the woman responded, she no longer smiled.

She answered me with a somewhat serious expression and a hint of pride: "We felt you need us."

They didn't open because they felt it would be profitable. With a partial staff on hand, they had only

made a handful of meals all day...and they knew this would probably be the case. They opened because they felt the community needed them. Was it the safest thing to do? Of course not, and I don't hold it against any business that wasn't able to open on this snowy night. But it was a gesture I will not soon forget.

We often see companies open up businesses in a community, but how often do we see businesses that understand what it is to be a member of a community? Well, there's a little Chinese restaurant in Great Falls, Virginia, that let its actions speak louder than its words. If the post office doesn't want to officially claim that motto, I think we should hand it to the Peking Delight.

Rob Jolles
Great Falls

Who Wins in Great Falls

To the Editor:

(Regarding "Petition Halts Senior Housing Development at Cornwell Farm," Great Falls Connection, February 12-18, 2014).

Winds in the east, mist coming

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 15

Great Falls CONNECTION

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Battle for the 10th District

FROM PAGE 4

Comstock's mainstream GOP platform includes "repealing and replacing Obamacare," as well as promoting policies for a healthier economy and "fighting to protect our national security and dedicated military."

"I will be a tireless advocate for one of the most vibrant and diverse communities in the Commonwealth and I will demand and work hard for common sense results," she said in a news release. "I am running for Congress because I believe my strong record as a common sense conservative leader is what is needed in Congress. I know how to effectively fight for Northern Virginia's hard working taxpayers having first learned from Congressman Wolf, working in his congressional office."

Comstock is currently facing seven declared candidates for her party's nomination, including a challenge from Virginia Del. Bob Marshall, who entered the crowded Republican pri-

mary field last week.

In a news release announcing his candidacy, Marshall, who has represented parts of Prince William and Loudoun counties in the General Assembly for more than 20 years, vowed to vote no to any tax increases, and said he would "be on the front lines to defund and dismantle Obamacare."

Marshall also said in his announcement that he would oppose "the creation or maintenance of a police surveillance state to spy on us," and oppose the "executive assault" on congressional powers. He told reporters he believes his candidacy will appeal to the conservative party activists.

Earlier this month another Republican, Rob Wasinger of Fairfax Station, announced his candidacy, citing 20 years of experience of working for prominent conservative law-makers on Capitol Hill.

Potential candidates have until March 27 to file the necessary paperwork for a run.

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Alexandria	\$6,910,580	\$48.17	148.76 percent
Loudoun	\$11,854,503	\$36.55	129.32 percent
Fauquier	\$2,051,735	\$31.19	110.36 percent
Manassas Park	\$511,095	\$35.15	108.56 percent
Manassas	\$1,356,148	\$34.72	107.23 percent
Prince William	\$11,798,000	\$28.46	100.7 percent
Fairfax City	\$690,751	\$30.21	93.29 percent
Fairfax County	\$28,626,359	\$26.12	92.41 percent

Money on the Shelves

Northern Virginia jurisdictions take a variety of approaches to funding libraries.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

What is the future of the neighborhood library? That's an open question as jurisdictions across America are rethinking their library system, a reevaluation brought on by tight budgets and technological change. Here in Northern Virginia, jurisdictions have taken a variety of approaches to funding libraries. Some, such as Arlington, have restored almost all the funding cut during the recession. Others, such as Fairfax County, lag behind the statewide average. "We are very concerned about this because our funding is far down behind the rest of the state of Virginia and in the entire metropolitan area as well," said Charles Fegan, vice chairman of the Fairfax County Public Library Board of Trustees. "How are we going to get books on the shelves? How are we going to get hours?"

Supporters of public libraries are concerned that elected officials who control funding don't seem as committed to the idea of public libraries as they once were. Some of that change is technological. In an era when book-stores are vanishing and books are available for download, some are questioning the logic behind having public libraries at all. That's why libraries across Northern Virginia took massive hits when budgets became tighter because of the recession.

"The libraries are a convenient target because a lot of people look at the libraries relative to many other things and decide they are not as important," said Alexandria City Councilman Justin Wilson. "I don't necessarily always come to that conclusion, but I do think libraries are changing. They're definitely changing."

BACK IN FISCAL YEAR 2009, before the recession hit, the Fairfax County Public Library system had a budget of \$33.1 million. Since that time, members of the Board of Supervisors have slashed about 20 percent out of budget for the library system, which has reduced the numbers of hours libraries are open and the collections available on the shelves. As a result, library officials have had

to get creative to stretch their limited budget as far as they can. "As an example, there are some days that we don't answer the telephone," said Mary Mulrenan, marketing director with the Fairfax County Public Libraries. "We just don't have the staffing." When the recession hit, all Northern Virginia jurisdictions cut back on library funding. Some have made efforts to restore funding, while others have lagged behind. Arlington had led the way in restoring almost all the hours that were cut in their neighborhood libraries, although the Central Library still opens an hour later than it used to and closes an hour earlier than it used to. But overall, Arlington's library system remains one of the best in the region. Earlier this month, the Library Journal named the Arlington Public Library one of six "star" libraries in Virginia.

"The library is the only place you can get face-to-face personalized research assistance that you would never get online," said Peter Golkin, public information officer for Arlington Public Library. "Librarians are a professionally trained group of experts. They're kind of like concierges for all sorts of life issues."

LIBRARIES REMAIN a budget target, even as jurisdictions emerge from the recession. Last year, for example, Alexandria City Manager Rashad

Young's proposed budget included a proposal to reduce hours at three libraries as well as the materials budget at the central library and services to the visually impaired. The proposal would have eliminated three employee positions and

slashed about \$240,000 out of the operating budget, but members of the Alexandria City Council restored funding when they voted on a final budget. "The citizens really turned out and said no. The City Council responded, and the cuts were restored," said Oscar Fitzgerald, vice chairman of the Alexandria Library Board. "We're facing the same thing again this year because the city is facing a substantial downturn in their income, and they are looking for cuts across the board."

Nowhere will the battle be more pitched than Fairfax County, where libraries are still working with reduced staffing and reduced collections. Members of the library's board of trustees say they are ready to make a pitch to the Board of Supervisors that it's time to restore the hours that were reduced and add back the funding for the collections. "A library is the heart of a community," said Fegan. "I've spoken to a number of people who have come into this country, and the first thing they did was get a library card."

CALENDAR

Send announcements to McLean@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Friday for the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 19-FRIDAY/FEB. 28

"Here and There: Paintings of the Brogue and Beyond." Paintings on exhibit by artist Jill Banks. Katie's Coffee at the Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760C Walker Road, Great Falls. www.JillBanks.com.

Fine Arts Photography Exhibition. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Great Falls artist Richard Suib depicts many scenes from Venice, Florence, Slovenia, and Russia.

THURSDAY/FEB. 20

Dance and Dessert. 7:30 p.m. Old Firehouse Teen Center, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Regional choreographers will showcase and discuss their latest works-in-progress with lots of opportunities for audience members to ask questions.

Memory Café. 1 p.m. Andrew Chapel United Methodist Church, 1301 Trap Rd, Vienna. Memory Café celebrate its second anniversary. A memory café is a casual social meeting venue for those with progressive memory or cognitive impairment and their caregivers. 571-236-6933.

Chad & Jeremy. 8 p.m. Wolftrap, 1551 Trap Road, Vienna. Veteran Brit-pop folkies Chad Stuart and Jeremy Clyde first achieved success during the '60s with breezy guitar anthems, witty repartee, and songs like "Yesterday's Gone." Chad & Jeremy's biggest hit in the United States is "A Summer Song."

FRIDAY/FEB. 21

Artist Talk with Eric Celarier. 7 p.m. McLean Project for the Arts, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. McLean Project for the Arts (MPA) will present a talk by exhibiting artist Eric Celarier. This presentation will cover artists who use trash to touch on subjects as far ranging as globalization, environmentalism, consumerism, classicism and colonialism. Free, but reservations are suggested. Please email Info@mpaart.org or call 703-790-1953.

"Souvenir: A Fantasia on the Life of Florence Foster Jenkins" at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, McLean, 8 p.m. Tickets: \$22-\$27; \$15 for students and military. Information call 703-854-1856 or visit: www.1stStageTysons.org

SATURDAY/FEB. 22

Winter Wine Tasting. 7 p.m. River

BULLETIN BOARD

To have community events listed in the Connection, send to greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com. The deadline for submissions is the Friday prior to publication.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 19

Vienna Photographic Society (VPA) Meeting. 7:30 p.m. Oakton Elementary School, 3000 Chain Bridge Road, Oakton. www.vpsva.org.

THURSDAY/FEB. 20

Great Falls Writer's Group. 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Great Falls Writer's Group, Great Falls Public Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike (large conference room), Great Falls. Writers of all experience and skill level are invited to discuss the joys/challenges of writing, and to hear authors read from their work. No registration necessary. No charge.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

"Jardin de Montmartre," oil, by Jill Banks is part of her **"Here and There"** solo exhibit of nine original oil paintings on view at Katie's Coffee at the Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760C Walker Road, Great Falls, through Feb. 28.

Bend Country Club, 375 Walker Rd, Great Falls. Great wines, hors d'oeuvres, cheese and company. \$45 per person, tickets available online until Feb. 18. www.celebrategreatfalls.org/Tickets.html

MPA Workshop for ages 9-14 with artist Eric Celarier: Anatsui and Reuse Art. 1-4 p.m. McLean Project for the Arts, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean.

A special opportunity for young people to work with exhibiting artist, Eric Celarier. During this workshop, 9- 14 year olds will create a woven piece from waste materials, similar to the work of well-known African artist El Anatsui. \$10 per person. Register for the workshop at www.mcleancenter.org

Langley Fashion Show. 7 p.m. Langley High School, 6520 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Over 100 students participate as well as some of the Langley administration and faculty. Tickets are \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door. Email tmpoythress@fcps.edu for more information.

Celtic Invasion. 8 p.m. The Alden, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. Nova Scotia's Celtic rock ambassadors, Grand Dérangement, will perform a rousing mix of new Acadian music. Tickets are \$20, \$15 for McLean tax district residents.

"Souvenir: A Fantasia on the Life of Florence Foster Jenkins" at 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, McLean., 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Tickets: \$22-\$27; \$15 for students and military. Information call 703-854-1856 or visit: www.1stStageTysons.org

SUNDAY/FEB. 23

Chili Cook- Off. 5-8 p.m. Vienna's



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Take a look at Great Falls artist, Richard Suib's photographs from all parts of the world at the Great Falls Library. Exhibit will be on display until Feb. 28

American Legion Post 180, 330 Center St, N, Vienna. \$8.

Amadeus Concert. 4 p.m. Saint Francis Episcopal Church, 9220 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Amadeus Concerts inspires a community of classical music lovers through up-close performances by professional musicians, educational outreach, and mentoring for young musicians. Tickets: \$30. http://www.amadeusconcerts.com. Students 17 and under are admitted free of

new and experienced speakers. Open to the public. **Run With the Doctor.** Every other Saturday at 7 a.m. 8230 Boone Blvd, Tysons Corner. The Center for Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine offers its services in a convenient format to runners at this running event. Free. facebook.com/runwiththedocto.

Senior Fall Prevention Classes. 1:30-2:30 p.m. and 2-3 p.m., The Woodlands Retirement Community, 4320 Forest Hill Drive, Fairfax. Classes are held in a heated indoor pool and are designed to work on balance and core muscles. \$10. 703-667-9800.

Coffee/Tea Poetry Group. Poets and poetry lovers seek to form a group to meet once a month at a local coffee/tea shop to enjoy each other's creations. 703-819-1690.

Virginia Sheriff's Institute Scholarship Program. Those



PHOTO BY TERESA CASTAGNANE/COURTESY OF 1ST STAGE

From left: Brian Keith MacDonald as Cosme McMoon and Lee Mikeska Gardner as Florence Foster Jenkins in 'Souvenir: A Fantasia on the life of Florence Foster Jenkins' at 1st Stage Now playing Friday, Saturday, Sunday through March 2.

McLean, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets: \$22-\$27; \$15 for students and military. Information call 703-854-1856 or visit: www.1stStageTysons.org

MONDAY/FEB. 24

"Good Guys in the Garden." 1 p.m. Emmanuel Lutheran Church-Upstairs, 2589 Chain Bridge Road, Vienna. Dr. Raupp's presentation on the history of bugs and how they contribute to our lives and gardens may change a lot of minds. Presented by the Ayr Hill Garden Club. Non-members wishing to attend should contact Cherie Lejeune at latripp24@gmail.com or 203-400-3668 so the Club can adjust arrangements for seats and refreshments.

SATURDAY/MARCH 1

Ballroom Dance. 8-9 p.m. Merengue lesson, 9-11:30 p.m. dance. Colvin Run Dance Hall, 10201 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Live music from Helmut & Andre playing favorite dance tunes from the 1930s to today. Attire is ballroom casual, no partner or experience is needed. \$20 for the evening. 703-759-2685 or www.colvinrun.org.

Concerts at the Alden. 3 p.m. The McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. A classical music concert cosponsored by the Music Friends of the Fairfax County Public Library and The Alden.

TUESDAY/MARCH 4

Great Falls United Methodist Church Annual Shrove Pancake & Sausage Dinner. 5:30-7:30 p.m. 10100 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Free- no reservations necessary. Donations accepted for Society of St. Andrew's food gleaning programs.°

enrolled in a Virginia college or university who are pursuing a degree in the field of criminal justice are eligible for the Virginia Sheriff's Institute Scholarship Program; recommendation letter needed. 703-246-3251, shf-pio@fairfaxcounty.gov or http://vasheriffsinstitute.org/scholarship/

Everest College Free GED Test Preparation. Tysons Corner, Vienna. Free GED test preparation and credential completion program, GED Advantage, open to the public. 1-888-201-6547.

Weekly TIPS Lunch. 12:15-1:30 p.m., at Shula's, 8028 Leesburg Pike, Vienna. Tyson's Regional Chamber of Commerce does lunch. 703-862-4895.

New Neighbors League Club of Northern Virginia. For women, the club includes Bridge, mah jong, gardening, quilting and many other activities. www.newneighborsvirginia.com.



WWW.ALDENTHEATRE.ORG



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Launch Pad for Young Adults?

Paws4people develops pilot for former foster children, others.

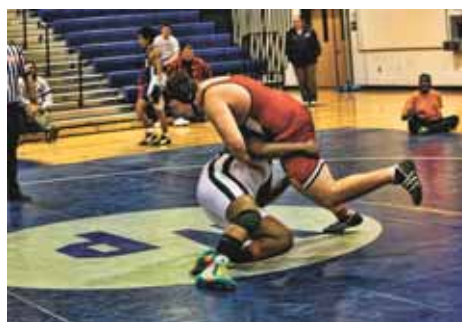


PHOTO BY JOAN BRADY

2008: Hayfield High wrestling



PHOTO BY JOAN BRADY

2008: Tyrell as a young photographer, Lake Accotink Park during the annual 5K to benefit kids in foster care.



PHOTO BY JOAN BRADY

2008: Voices for Change arts competition for Virginia foster kids. Tyrell won 2nd place awarded at the Governor's mansion



2009: Tyrell's high school graduation selfie which he combined with an image of the Fairfax Families4kids group, winning 3rd place in the 2009 Voices for Change competition



PHOTO BY JOAN BRADY

2009: After graduation, Tyrell played for the Northern Riverneck semi-pro football team

Imagine if in your childhood, it was normal for a social worker to show up unexpectedly, hand you a big black garbage bag and tell you to pack your things.

That's what happened to Tyrell in the first quarter of his senior year of high school. Left behind were Tyrell's friends, the football and wrestling teams he had played on and the security he had finally found after nine years in foster care.

Tyrell, a resident of Fairfax County, was once among the 500,000 kids who are in foster care across the United States. He struggled to earn his high school diploma in his new school but succeeded, thanks in part to a mentor from Fairfax Families4Kids.

Earning that high-school diploma put Tyrell ahead of more than 50 percent of kids who have been in foster care, according to a report by the Association of Small Foundations/Annie E. Casey Foundation.

In Fairfax County, foster kids can choose to stay in foster care until they are 21, rather than aging out at 18. The extra years of services come with requirements that are designed to prepare kids for adulthood. They must go to school or work with little oversight. Imagine young adults who, in many cases in foster care, were housed more than they were raised. Kids whose caregivers did not work to instill ambition, confidence, self-esteem, work ethic or core social skills. What are their chances for becoming self-reliant? Many former foster children can't meet the requirements to stay in the system, and even those who made it through until 21 did not gain the skills needed to be successful.

NOW 22, TYRELL IS one of the 26,000 young adults who age out of the foster care system each year in the U.S. without family and the emotional and economic support that often come with family. In Fairfax County in 2012, 49 foster children aged out. Nationwide, four years after aging out of foster care, 25 percent have been homeless and more than 80 percent are unable to support themselves, according to Association of Small Foundations/Annie E. Casey.



PHOTO BY JOAN BRADY

2013: Tyrell was living precariously, without prospects for a better future



PHOTO BY JOAN BRADY

Tyrell with his new boss April Cook (left), Terry Henry, Claire, a psychiatric service dog, and Kyria Henry, founder of paws4people.org.

Despite his winning smile, good nature and potential, Tyrell was living precariously. He has been essentially homeless. Alternating between the couches of friends and not having a place to sleep, there have been times when Tyrell stayed on the bus, where it was warm, until it stopped running at 3 a.m. Then he would head to an all-night McDonald's where he would hope that the manager didn't kick him out.

Mentors and other adults tried to support Tyrell, both emotionally and materially by paying his phone bill and providing him with leads on jobs. He never followed through on the job leads. Like the social workers before them, these well-meaning adults, myself included, became frustrated. For an adult who was raised with caring parents, it was mind-boggling. How could he not make one single phone call to help himself? Why

didn't he see that he had to change his life? This was a kid who we believed in, why couldn't he believe in himself?

But Tyrell represents so many young adults who have grown up in the system. They are focused on survival, food and shelter. They don't trust. They have seen only failure, despite their potential. Their expectations are low. Their dreams don't exist. They are lacking that one person who is pivotal to success: the full-time, caring motivator. The person who is on them, as emerging adults, every waking minute to get out of bed, to follow up on job leads, to never give up.

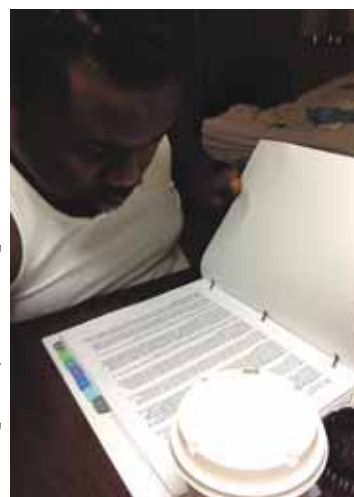
I was working to develop a plan for Tyrell and others that would incorporate this "caring motivator," that could include housing and maybe even employment, when Kyria Henry, co-founder of paws4people.org, contacted me. Understanding the human and actual price tag that comes along with foster care's failures, Kyria wanted discuss developing a program for young adults, paws4potential.

The non-profit that Kyria Henry founded with her parents, paws4people.org, has a mission to enhance the lives of those living with serious illnesses or disabilities.



PHOTO BY JOAN BRADY

Feb 1, 2014 Tyrell arrives at his housing for the pilot program



Feb 2, 2014 - Tyrell's selfie, pouring over his job manual before his first official day of work.

ties by utilizing highly trained assistance dogs for children, veterans and civilians. The bulk of the dog training is done in prisons by inmates. I have seen firsthand the magic that happens when you bring together dogs and people with emotional and physical needs. Many lives have been forever changed by paws4people.

Kyria's proposal had the right ingredients to create success. The program frees participants from the stresses of seeking shelter and job. These emerging adults have stability inside a supportive community of staff, volunteers, students, clients and the dogs themselves. They learn marketable skills, among them dog grooming, care and training as well as facility maintenance skills. The boss becomes the full-time, caring motivator.

Tyrell said he was ready to get his life on track. He agreed that if he was accepted into the program, he would leave friends and family behind here to move to Wilmington, N.C. for the three-month pilot program.

The first hurdle was getting him down to Wilmington for his interview. Tyrell was more than three hours late to meet me for the six-hour drive. Biting back my frustration, I told him that, if he was accepted, being on time was a something they would help him with. I knew he could do this. He had to believe it too.

When Tyrell was offered the one place in the pilot program, he was shyly pleased.

There were two weeks between that day and the day I drove him to North Carolina to start his new life. We were in constant communication, talking through the what-ifs, me constantly reassuring him that he could do it. And he reminding himself that it was only three months.

TWO DAYS BEFORE we were to drive down to Wilmington, I got a text from Tyrell. He couldn't do it, he wrote. He wasn't going to go.



Tyrell working with a young dog at paws4potential

PHOTO BY GENMA SOBERANO



Tyrell, selfie with Joan Brady

My heart fell. The statistics were already against him. He had to really want this in order for him to have a chance of succeeding. In my opinion, this pilot program would give him the best chance of having a successful life. Then he texted, "I new I would get u. Haha. U fell for it. See you at 10:30am on Saturday."

The kids I have watched grow up in the foster care system are in now prison, living on the street and/or are parents. There are very few success stories. I believe that the many young adults who have been let down by both their families and the foster care system can succeed if given the right opportunity. These were once babies who entered the world expecting to be loved, taken care of and supported. They didn't get those things as children. Nothing about this is easy. It will take commitment and caring support.

Tyrell texted me after I left him at the extended stay hotel which would be his home for the next three months, "I am going to do my best to complete the program. [This] is what I'm starving for. I know it'll all work out for me. I just have to leave everything in the past and I will be ok."

Paws4potential isn't going to be the right fit for everyone, but I believe that paws4people.org is on the right track to change outcomes for kids who have aged out of foster care and others similarly at risk. According to a study by the Jim Casey Youth Initiative, every person who gets his or her life on track, saves society an average lifetime cost of \$300,000. Getting ex-foster kids successfully launched makes for a better society and a better world.

If you are interested in finding out more and/or would like to help turn this pilot into a long-term program, please contact me joan@joanbradyphotography.com. Or go to paws4people.org and click on the paws4potential program page.

Joan Brady is a professional photographer; mentor and advocate for current and former foster children; volunteer with Paws4People; and a resident of Great Falls.

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SPORTS

Grapplers Grammes, Adams Gain Spotlight Experience

McLean freshman, Langley senior each finish region runner-up.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

Brendan Grammes said he lost to a “stronger” opponent during the 6A North region wrestling championships on Sunday, but the McLean freshman’s pre-season goals remain attainable.

Jacob Adams came up short in the region finals, but the Langley senior said he will learn from his experience in the spotlight.

Connor Eckhardt suffered a knee injury in defeat, but the Madison senior vowed to return for the state meet.

For wrestlers unable to secure a title during Sunday’s region finals at Centreville High School, the state meet on Feb. 21-22 at Robinson Secondary School will provide another opportunity to prove themselves with a championship up for grabs.

Grammes lost to Battlefield junior Matthew Asper by decision, 10-4, in the 113-pound region final. Grammes entered the match with a 43-3 season record, including an 11-6 victory over Centreville’s Victor Echeverria in the semifinals, but settled for region runner-up.

“He was just stronger than me, for the most part,” Grammes said. “I felt like he was more developed than me. He was a little quicker. In the very beginning, I felt like I came out a little tense because I was a little nervous. I worked that out by the end, but I was down by a little bit at that point.”

EARLY IN THE SEASON, Grammes set goals of winning the Conference 6 championship, finishing runner-up in the region and placing at states. The McLean grappler came through with a conference crown and remains on track to achieve his goals.

“I thought it was a little [far-fetched], like [they were] pretty challenging goals,” Grammes said, “but I thought I could do it if I really tried.”

Adams lost to Robinson senior Dane Robbins by decision, 4-1, in the 138-pound final. He entered the match with a 42-4 season record, having won the Conference 6 championship.

“I want to win,” Adams said about his goal at the state meet. “I’ll be on the opposite side of the bracket as [Robbins], so I should get another shot at him in the finals.”

Adams wrestled at 132 pounds as a junior, when he placed fifth at regionals. He said Sunday’s experience in a championship setting should help him at states.

“It’s probably the biggest crowd I’ve ever wrestled in front of,” he said. “I’m starting to get used to it and I think it will definitely help at states — the spotlight and everything.”



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

McLean freshman Brendan Grammes placed runner-up in the 113-pound bracket during the 6A North region wrestling championships on Sunday at Centreville High School.



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Langley senior Jacob Adams, left, lost to Robinson’s Dane Robbins in the 138-pound final at the 6A North region wrestling championships on Sunday at Centreville High School.

Eckhardt, a Conference 6 champion experiencing his best season as a high school wrestler, injured his left knee during the 145-pound final. He finished the match, but lost to Chantilly senior Walter Carlson by decision, 10-4.

Eckhardt said he had multiple surgeries on the knee in the past. He walked with an ice pack on the knee after the match, but said he will “definitely be able to compete at states.”

“I wrestled terribly,” Eckhardt said about

his performance in the region final. “... I didn’t wrestle my match. I didn’t take my shots. I could have wrestled a better match, and that’s what I’m going to have to do next weekend to get a state title.”

McLean sophomore Conor Grammes placed third in the 132-pound bracket, beating Westfield junior Ryan Yorkdale via injury in the third-place match.

Langley senior Alex Pratte placed sixth in the 145-pound class, losing to Centreville senior Connor Mitchell via pin in the fifth-

place match.

Madison 195-pound senior Chris Hines finished fourth, falling to Osbourn Park sophomore Jacob Maile by decision, 16-9, in the third-place match. Warhawks junior Ryan Barrett captured fifth place at 182 pounds, beating Chantilly senior Logan Barr via decision, 7-4, in the fifth-place match.

Herndon senior Sean Pike took fifth place in the 160-pound bracket, beating Chantilly senior Jeffrey Weinberg via decision, 9-5. Hornets sophomore Sam Milligan finished sixth in the 138-pound bracket, falling to West Springfield’s Junior Ramos by major decision, 15-5, in the fifth-place match.

South Lakes senior Colby Laxton finished fifth in the 195-pound bracket, pinning Robinson senior Maksym Sears in the fifth-place match.

Robinson won the team championship with 257.5 points, giving the Rams three region titles in four seasons. Robinson has also won two of the last three state championships.

“It’s probably the biggest crowd I’ve ever wrestled in front of. I’m starting to get used to it and I think it will definitely help at states — the spotlight and everything.”

— Langley senior Jacob Adams

“This is a pretty special team, a great group of kids,” Robinson head coach Bryan Hazard said. “They’ve been together a long time. They have an expectation that they place on themselves and they really competed well.”

INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONS: Lake Braddock’s Dante Wiles (106); Asper (113); Lake Braddock’s Ryan Haskett (120); Robinson’s Mason Rockman (126); South County’s Hunter Manley (132); Robbins (138); Carlson (145); Robinson’s Jack Bass (152); Robinson’s Zak DePasquale (160); Robinson’s Daniel Mika (170); Robinson’s Cole DePasquale (182); Centreville’s Tyler Love (195); Osbourn’s Robin Garcia (220); and Robinson’s Jake Pinkston (285).



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Starshine Theater's Pat Green Budwig with her students.

STARSHINE THEATER CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARY

Starshine Theater of Great Falls is celebrating its 21st year of Performing Arts Programs for young people, with the following events:

❖ Saturday, Feb. 22: Starshine Theater's rehearsals begin for its spring stage production. Now enrolling the cast of characters, ages 6 thru 18 years, for an original adaptation of the ancient Greek epic, "The Odyssey." All student cast members will receive a dramatic character role as well as singing and dance/action leads if interested. Also enrolling "Teen Actor~Mentors" in high schools and middle schools to assist with rehearsals while enjoying a character role on stage.

Show is mid-May in Great Falls. Contact Pat Green

Budwig, M.A., play director, at 703.790.9050 or StarshineTheater@aol.com .

❖ Starshine Summer Theater Camp 2014 presents: "The Adventures of Tom and Huck." Now enrolling ages 6 thru 18 years. Dramatic actors, Singers and Dance/Movement Artists of all ages and skill levels needed.

Also enrolling "Teen Actor~Mentors" in high schools and middle schools to assist with rehearsals while enjoying a character role on stage. Two-week camp of rehearsals & culminating show scheduled for mid-July in Great Falls. Contact Pat Green Budwig, M.A., play director, at 703.790.9050 or StarshineTheater@aol.com.




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Until Further Notice



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Not to state the obvious (which I readily admit I do), but to be given a terminal diagnosis: stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer, along with a rather disappointing prognosis: "13 months to two years" is a challenging set of extremely unexpected (given my immediate family's medical history) circumstances. I don't want to say that I live under a dark cloud – because I don't like the negative implication or reaction it conjures, but I definitely feel as if I have a metaphorical sword of Damocles hanging over my head; which I only refer to as an out-of-context Three Stooges reference wherein a non-Stooge was innocently standing under a pie which Moe had thrown to the ceiling and there it stuck, hanging precariously over the character's head. Now I still don't know the proper historical context of the sword of Damocles, I only know the Three Stooges version, but there was some imminent danger involved (not death, mind you), but rather a falling pie which ultimately landed flush on the character's face as she looked up to make further inquiries.

Nevertheless, pie issues/references notwithstanding, having seen my oncologist today while being infused and receiving a big smile/ "you're going great"/thumbs-up set of gestures/reactions while reclining in my Barcalounger with a chemotherapy I.V. dripping medicine into my right arm, is the kind of super-positive feedback with which I can live. Along with my every-three-week pre-chemotherapy lab work and my every-three-month CT Scan followed by my every-three-month face-to-face appointment with my oncologist, this is how I roll. Worrying about upcoming tests, waiting anxiously for results, trying not to anticipate good, bad or indifferent; living day to day and trying to appreciate my good fortune and the unexpected above-average quality of life with which I've been blessed – for a terminal cancer patient, that is.

Ergo, the title of this column: "Until Further Notice." Whenever I'm asked by those in my know how I'm doing, I typically respond: "I'm doing fine, until further notice." And "further notice" is my way of lightening the emotional load under which I live and thankfully still breathe; any port in a storm, you might say. Moreover, even though there's relative calm right now, given my diagnosis/prognosis, there's likely to be some inevitable unpleasantness down the road – as I'm semi-fond of saying/joking. And as many changes as I've already made to diet and lifestyle since I was diagnosed, I don't suppose I'll know what turns I've taken until my oncologist advises me after my miscellaneous test results have been analyzed. As much as I'm doing internally, I still feel as if the news will come externally. As a result, I feel pressure every day; self-assessing, analyzing, introspecting; it's a constant battle of mind over what may or not matter yet. And of course, I can never forget the pie.

The great Satchel Page joked to not look back because you never know who's chasing you. And though I'm certainly mindful of death and what's chasing me (figuratively speaking), ignoring certain facts as they were presented to me by my oncologist is much easier said than done. When I first learned about my medical situation/diagnosis/prognosis, it certainly sounded like a death sentence; now, five years later, it has evolved into more of a life sentence. And though it's unlikely I'll ever make parole, it is life nonetheless, and though there are some days when it's not very pretty, these are days I didn't anticipate having. And so far, there's been no pie or sword to diminish them – all things considered.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

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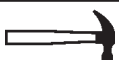
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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 6

in. Like somethin' is brewin' and bout to begin. Can't put my finger on what lies in store, but I fear what's to happen ... all happened before (look all around Northern Virginia.)

Wasn't the developer's application to re-zone historic Cornwell Farm to build high density housing for seniors a joke? The developer knew it would not be successful—this time around. But can we rest on our laurels? The developer is still looking to build somewhere in Great Falls. There is a different proposal to build an art center on Turner Farm. Build baby build. We won the battle, but who will win the war?

Cathleen Rhodes
Great Falls

appearance that services have been reduced, when in reality we are just more narrowly defining who is categorized as receiving a service defined by a particular disability. The number of individuals served who are not counted in the CAFR is large: in FY2013, there were 13,249 individuals who received CSB services that were not categorized in those three disability area categories.

If you actually compare apples to apples, our numbers have remained consistent, and have even increased slightly, despite the economic difficulties of recent years. For this, we can thank our county leaders and our community who recognize, as you do, the importance of supporting these critical CSB services.

Thank you very much for your support.

George Braunstein
Executive Director
Fairfax-Falls Church Community
Services Board

Supporting Mental Health

To the Editor:

The editorial by Mary Kimm ["On Mental Health," Connection, Feb. 12-18, 2014], referencing reporting by Michael Pope, makes an incorrect assertion that our services to people with mental illness in Fairfax County have been "dramatically cut back."

In fact, the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB) served more individuals in FY2013 than in previous fiscal years, thanks to the generous and consistent support of Fairfax County government and the taxpayers of Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church. The bulk of our budget comes from local, rather than state, dollars. This enables our CSB to provide services that many other Virginia jurisdictions are not able to have, including a mobile crisis unit, crisis stabilization, and many other services. To suggest that our local government has dramatically cut back mental health services is simply not true and needs to be corrected for the record.

Here are the numbers (total number of individuals served by the CSB, which includes those with mental illness and/or substance use disorders, intellectual disability, and infants and toddlers with developmental delays):

FY 2013:	20,988
FY 2012:	20,446
FY 2011:	20,058

What appeared to the reporter as a dramatic drop in the number of individuals served was the result of a change in the way we define the categories of individuals served. The county's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) he referenced does not include an entire category (that we are now required by the state to count separately) of individuals who receive "Services Outside of Program Area," including emergency services, assessment and monitoring. Prior to FY2012, those individuals were included in either "mental health services," "alcohol and drug services," or "intellectual disability services." The county's CAFR has retained the old categories but has not added this new one. Therefore, there is an

Ending Fox Penning

To the Editor:

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) applauds Virginia state Senator David Marsden (D-37) for his tireless efforts to pass legislation to crack down on fox penning, a brutal blood sport in which wild-caught foxes are released into fenced enclosures and made targets for packs of dogs in gruesome competitions. When the foxes are cornered and forced to fight for their lives, the dogs are also often injured. A bill to place a moratorium on fox pens – S.B. 42 – passed the Senate earlier this week, thanks to Sen. Marsden's continued efforts to keep the issue of fox penning front and center to ensure that the foxes – and dogs – are protected against this vicious activity.

Over the past six years, more than 7,000 wild-caught foxes have been forcibly transported to Virginia pens often hundreds of miles away, where they are forced into these cruel fox penning competitions. As if this deplorable activity wasn't cruel enough, the transportation of foxes and coyotes across state lines can also lead to the spread of rabies and other zoonotic diseases to domestic animals and humans, posing a threat to everyone involved.

Virginians have spoken on this issue. According to a 2014 Mason-Dixon poll, Virginia residents oppose fox penning by a margin of 9 to 1. It's time to turn public opinion into law and stop this vicious and unnecessary cruelty inflicted upon defenseless foxes and dogs. These animals cannot speak for themselves, so it is our job to give them a voice and fight for their protection.

The ASPCA thanks Sen. Marsden for his concern for animals, and we strongly urge the Virginia House of Delegates to pass S.B. 42 to crack down on this barbaric and intolerable practice.

Ann Church
Vice President of State Affairs for the
ASPCA
McLean

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