

A Sweet Lesson at Colvin Run Mill

NEWS, PAGE 4

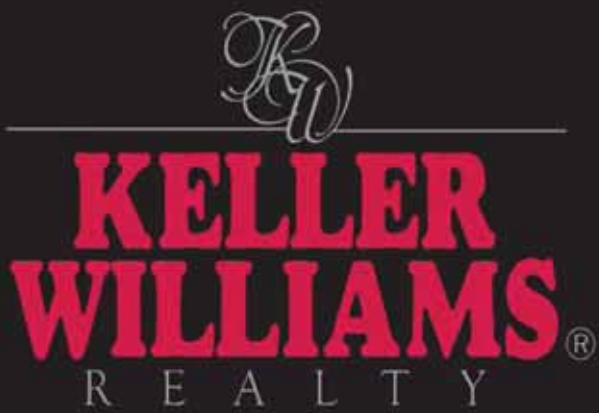
Bulova: 'This Will Be a Challenging Budget'

NEWS, PAGE 3

Students Honored for Promoting Peace

NEWS, PAGE 13

Park miller Mason Maddox demonstrates to groups how to measure if the syrup is sweet enough using a hydrometer.



Bob Nelson



Kelly Putz



Tim Heil



Michelle Cornejo



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FX8235947 - \$400,000 - Alexandria
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FX8203174 - \$399,900 -
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Bulova: 'This Will Be a Challenging Budget'

Fairfax County average homeowner will see tax bill increase \$330 under County Executive's proposed \$7 billion budget.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County Executive Edward Long, Jr. unveiled a \$7 billion budget proposal Tuesday that reflects his "cautious and deliberative approach to budgeting," a result, Long said, of continuing uncertainty over federal spending and sluggish commercial tax revenues.

While Long's budget does not include an increase in the real estate tax rate from FY 2014, steady gains in the county's residential housing market mean the average homeowner will see a \$330 increase in their tax bill, or a 6.5 percent increase over last year's bill.

"The one area that is experiencing an upward tick is the assessed value of residential property in the county," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova (D-At-Large), which will lead to the increase in homeowner's property taxes even if the tax rate remains steady, as proposed by Long.

Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) said "there's a lot of work to be done" before the final budget is approved in April, and the county needs to "eliminate barriers to the growth of our commercial tax base."

"While spending increased by 3 percent, the cost to our taxpayers is increasing over 6.5 percent due primarily to the reduction in our commercial tax base," Herrity said. "I am most concerned that this increase will hurt those in townhomes, condos and apartments the hardest — the citizens that can least afford it."

"This will be a very challenging budget," Bulova said, citing disappointing projected revenues from business taxes.

Among those disappointed with the proposed budget is Fairfax County Public Schools Superintendent Karen Garza, who last month requested supervisors send \$2.5 billion to the schools, an increase of 5.7 percent in annual taxpayer funding and \$98 million more than the schools requested last year.

SUPERVISORS have said they were willing to increase their transfer by only 2 percent, which accounts for 52.1 percent of the proposed county budget expenditures.

Garza's request is about \$64 million more than Long's budget recommendation of \$1.93 billion, a 2.07 percent increase (or \$39 million) over the current fiscal year.

Garza's budget proposal would have increased school funding, but also called for \$96 million in cuts, including classroom testing fees for high school students, large class sizes and staffing cuts.

Long's proposal also includes \$72.6 million in additional support for school services including Head Start, school health, resource officers and crossing guards, after-school programming, field maintenance and recreational programs, among others.

To show support for Fairfax County schools and teachers, the Alliance for Fairfax Public Schools held a "Fund Our Schools" rally at the Fairfax County Government Center before Long's budget announcement. The Alliance is a partnership of parents, stu-



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY

Sharon Bulova, chairman of the Board of Supervisors and Ed Long, county executive, answer questions during a news briefing held after the proposed budget presentation.

dents, and civic organizations including the Fairfax Education Association, Fairfax County Council of PTAs, and Fairfax County Federation of Teachers.

"Our schools are bursting at the seams, talented teachers are leaving, and already large class sizes could get even bigger. The supervisors must make our schools the priority," the FCCPTA said in an online petition addressed to the Board of Supervisors.

"It's absolutely stunning that supervisors put forth a budget that shortchanges students," said Kevin Hickerson, an FCPS teacher and parent-advocate who supported the rally. "Two percent is not enough."

To close that gap and fund other priorities, Bulova said she will consider advertising an increase in property tax rates, which would add about \$150 to the average homeowner's tax bill, on top of the \$330 jump resulting from higher assessed values this year.

Bulova said the board will set the advertised real estate tax rate on March 4; the advertised rate represents the maximum potential tax rate for FY2015.

"Through the budget process, the board may adopt a rate lower than the advertised rate, but cannot adopt a higher rate," Bulova said.

According to the County Executive's proposed budget, one penny of the tax rate is equal to roughly \$21.9 million in the general fund and \$50 for the average Fairfax County residential tax bill.

"As the county continues to face fiscal challenges, we must persist in our cautious and deliberative approach to budgeting, only funding items that are sustainable," Long said Tuesday, adding that almost all of the budget increase in his proposal will be earmarked for capital investment and employee compensation.

"These are two critical elements of our continued success," Long said.

But members of the County's Government Employees Union — SEUI Virginia 512 — called Long's proposed budget disappointing.

"We are disappointed that the county executive's proposed budget fails to meet the needs of our community, and we call on the Board of Supervisors to do more to invest in our future success," SEIU Virginia 512 Secretary-Treasurer Karen Conchar said.

SEE COUNTY, PAGE 5



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

To show support for Fairfax County schools and teachers, the Alliance for Fairfax Public Schools held a "Fund Our Schools" rally at the Fairfax County Government Center before Long's budget announcement.

Average Homeowner's Taxes, 2008-2015

❖ FISCAL YEAR 2008

Assessed Value of Residential Property - \$542,409
Real Estate Tax Rate Per \$100 - \$0.89
Tax Per Household - \$4,827.44

❖ FISCAL YEAR 2009

Assessed Value of Residential Property - \$525,132
Real Estate Tax Rate Per \$100 - \$0.92
Tax Per Household - \$4,831.21

❖ FISCAL YEAR 2010

Assessed Value of Residential Property - \$457,898
Real Estate Tax Per \$100 - \$1.04
Tax Per Household - \$4,762.14

❖ FISCAL YEAR 2011

Assessed Value of Residential Property - \$433,409
Real Estate Tax Per \$100 - \$1.09
Tax Per Household - \$4,724.16

❖ FISCAL YEAR 2012

Assessed Value of Residential Property - \$445,533
Real Estate Tax Per \$100 - \$1.07
Tax Per Household - \$4,767.20

❖ FISCAL YEAR 2013

Assessed Value of Residential Property - \$449,964
Real Estate Tax Per \$100 - \$1.075
Tax Per Household - \$4,837.11

❖ FISCAL YEAR 2014

Assessed Value of Residential Property - \$467,394
Real Estate Tax Per \$100 - \$1.085
Tax Per Household - \$5,071.22

❖ FISCAL YEAR 2015

Assessed Value of Residential Property - \$497,962
Real Estate Tax Per \$100 - \$1.085
Tax Per Household - \$5,402.89

* Source - Fairfax County Department of Management and Budget

Budget Event Schedule

FEB. 25

Release of the County Executive's FY 2015 Advertised Budget Plan (including Multi-Year Budget: FY 2015 and FY 2016) - 10:40 a.m.

FEB. 28

Ask Fairfax: Online Chat with County Executive - 2 - 3 p.m.

MARCH 4

Board of Supervisors' Meeting: Advertisement for FY 2015 Tax Rate and FY 2015 Third Quarter - 10:30 a.m.

MARCH 18

Budget Committee Meeting - Govt. Center (CR 9/10) - 1 - 3 p.m.

APRIL 1

Budget Committee Meeting - Govt. Center (CR 9/10)

APRIL 8

Effective Tax Rate Hearing (FY 2015 Budget) - Board Auditorium - Govt. Center - 3 p.m. *

APRIL 8

Public Hearing on FY 2015 Budget - Board Auditorium - Govt. Center - 6 p.m. *

APRIL 9

Public Hearing on FY 2015 Budget - Board Auditorium - Govt. Center - 3 p.m. *

APRIL 10

Public Hearing on FY 2015 Budget - Board Auditorium - Govt. Center - 3 p.m. *

APRIL 18

Budget Committee Meeting - pre-Mark-Up on FY 2015 Budget - Govt. Center (CR 9/10) - 1 p.m.

APRIL 22

FY 2015 Board Budget Mark-up and Approval of FY 2015 Third Quarter - 10 a.m.

APRIL 29

Formal Adoption of the FY 2015 Budget Plan - 10:30 a.m.

JULY 1

Beginning of FY 2015

* Opportunities for public comment

GREAT FALLS CONNECTION ❖ MARCH 5-11, 2014 ❖ 3

Volunteer Tom Milton tends to the boiling syrup over the fire pit.



A Sweet Lesson at Colvin Run Mill

Hundreds turned out to learn how maple syrup is made.

BY ETHAN MCLEOD
THE CONNECTION

How much sap does it take to make maple syrup? For Colvin Run Mill Park's miller Mason Maddox, the average answer is about 60 gallons.

"Typically my last program is always the first week-end of March. That's when they start up North, but it's ending here in Virginia because the weather has been too warm," said Maddox, who has served as a miller at Colvin Run for over 15 years.

Visitors flocked to the park in Great Falls during February and March to learn about the history of maple syrup and how it is made. The final session was held on Sunday, March 2.

Maddox explained the process of maple sugaring to the crowds, from tapping trees by boring short holes into the outer layers of bark to letting the sap funnel into hanging buckets underneath. Most importantly, he and his team demonstrated the process of boiling the sap down to syrup over a fire. Since maple sap is about 97 percent water, it can take hours to boil away the moisture to obtain the final product.

According to Maddox, American Indians discovered maple syrup first. While there are many theories as to how, he believes they saw the trees oozing during the winter and discovered the sweet substance from observing its attraction to insects and other creatures.

Other volunteers nearby showed guests the boiling process up close. Standing over a churning vat of boiling sap above a cement block fire pit, volunteer Tom Milton theorized that it was the fire that brought many of the families out during the park's three Sunday afternoon sessions.

"I like the activity associated with the fire and the boil and being outdoors, it's nice," said Milton while removing impurities from the boiling pot. Milton lives across the street and has volunteered at all of the park's seasonal events since retiring five years ago.

In the barn next door, staff gave out samples of



PHOTOS BY ETHAN MCLEOD/THE CONNECTION

Volunteers Payton Robertson and Olivia Barrand pass out free samples of cornbread with maple syrup made from trees at Colvin Run Mill.

syrup with cornbread, much to the children's delight.

"It's great this is going on. It's educational for the kids, and if the weather is good it's great for them to get out and learn something right here in our backyard," said Andrea Dahl, visiting with her family from Vienna. "The only time I've ever seen this before was in New Hampshire. To have it in our backyard is phenomenal."

After his demonstration, Maddox agreed that, amongst all of the park's visitors, ultimately it is usually the children who enjoy learning about maple syrup most.

"It's just a great program, and as you can see, it's for the kids. I love being able to teach the kids how they get some of their products from the mill."

WEEK IN GREAT FALLS

Six Republicans Will Compete for 10th District Nomination

On March 1, the 10th District Republican Committee released the names of the candidates for their nomination for Congress.

Six candidates filed by the deadline, said 10th District GOP Chairman John Whitbeck in a release. "We ... feel like we are in an excellent position to hold the 10th District Congressional seat in November regardless of who the Democrats nominate."

The committee listed the candidates in alphabetical order: Del. Barbara Comstock, Stephen Hollingshead, Howie Lind, Del. Bob Marshall, Marc Savitt, Rob Wasinger.

The Republican nominee will be decided in a party canvass on Saturday, April 26 with voting at 10 different locations, including Langley High School and Centreville High School.

Supporting CIA Officers Memorial Foundation

This month's Military Appreciation Monday event on March 10 will be in support of the CIA Officers Memorial Foundation. Be sure to make your reservation early for either the 5:30 or 7:30 seating at the Old Brogue by calling 703-759-3309. Visit: CIA Officers Memorial Foundation to learn more about this organization and the help it provides to Agency families.

For those unfamiliar with the MAM events, you simply come enjoy a great dinner at the Old Brogue in Great Falls. The Brogue, Bob Nelson of Keller Williams Realty and co-sponsors will each make a contribution to the foundation based on 10 percent of whatever you spend, typically amounting to about a 150-200 percent match of your dinner tab. Door prize entries are also sold as a means of raising additional funds. Upcoming dinners:

April 14 - Our Military Kids

May 12 - Operation Renewed Hope

Faith and Public Policy Breakfast in McLean

Everyone is invited Saturday, March 15 to hear a panel of Fairfax County leaders discuss issues around the theme "Caring for the Vulnerable in an Affluent County - Policy and Program Challenges." The session will be moderated by Jane Edmondson, Chief of Staff for Dranesville Supervisor John Faust, and will include Kerrie Wilson, CEO of Cornerstones, which supports Northern Virginia people in need; Nannette Bowler, Director of the Fairfax County Department of Family Services; and Dr. Gerald Poje, Vice-Chair of the Fairfax County Human Services Council. The free continental breakfast begins at 8:30 with the discussion addressing how faith communities can have an impact ending at 10:30. It will be held at Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road in McLean. Contact Ray Martin for details, email martinrs@aol.com, phone 703-556-0123.

Volunteers Needed to Help Older Adults

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

The Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program needs volunteer advocates for residents in assisted living and nursing facilities. Training is provided in March. Call 703-324-5861, TTY 711 or email Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Fairfax County needs volun-

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

The Little River Glen Senior Center in Fairfax needs help with special events and an arts and crafts instructor. Call 703-324-5406, TTY 711, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and link to Volunteer Solutions or email VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov.

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FAITH NOTES

Faith Notes are for announcements and events in the faith community. Send to greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Friday.

Faith and Public Policy Break-fast. Everyone is invited Saturday, March 15 to hear a panel of Fairfax County leaders discuss issues around the theme "Caring for the Vulnerable in an Affluent County - Policy and Program Challenges." The session will be moderated by Jane Edmondson, Chief of Staff for Dranesville Supervisor John Faust, and will include Kerrie Wilson, CEO of Cornerstones which supports Northern Virginia people in need; Nannette Bowler, Director of the Fairfax County Department of Family Services; and Dr. Gerald Poje, Vice-Chair of the Fairfax County Human Services Council. The free continental breakfast begins at 8:30 with the discussion addressing how faith communities can have an impact ending at 10:30. It will be held at Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road in McLean. Contact Ray Martin for details, email martins@aol.com, phone 703-556-0123.

Great Falls United Methodist Church is offering "24 Hours That Changed the World," about the last 24 hours of Jesus' life - before the resurrection. The study, written by Adam Hamilton, will be offered during the Sunday school hour (9 to 9:45 a.m.) beginning on Sunday, March 9 through Sunday, April 27 at Great Falls United Methodist Church, 10100 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Youth and adults are welcome to participate. The study will also be offered on Wednesday mornings from 10 to 11 a.m. beginning Ash Wednesday, March 5 through Wednesday, April 16. On Sunday morning, the nursery will be staffed for childcare

needs.

If you have questions, contact Bertina at youth@greatfallsumc.org or Pastor Denise at atpastordenise@greatfallsumc.org.

The Jewish Social Services Agency (JSSA) offers a wide variety of support groups for those with emotional, social, and physical challenges. www.jssa.org/growth-learning.

HAVEN of Northern Virginia offers a variety of free bereavement support groups, meeting on a weekly basis. 703-941-7000 or www.havenofnova.org.

McLean Bible Church Fitness Class at Body & Soul Fitness. Gain balance, energy and strength at 9:45 a.m. Mondays and Fridays. Free childcare for registered students. bodyandsoul@mcleanbible.org.

St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church, 1830 Kirby Road in McLean, holds a third Sunday service every month at 10:15 a.m. which allows children to play active roles in the music and as greeters and ushers. Traditional services are every Sunday at 8:15 and 10:15 a.m.

Vienna Christian Healing Rooms are open, every Saturday, 1-5 p.m., at 8200 Bell Lane. A team of Christians is available to anyone requesting prayer. Free and open to the public. 703-698-9779 or www.viennachristianhealingrooms.com.

Chesterbrook United Methodist Church is at 1711 Kirby Road, McLean. Worship service is at 11 a.m. Sunday school is at 9:30 a.m. for adults and children. 703-356-7100 or www.ChesterbrookUMC.org.

County Faces a Budget Challenge

FROM PAGE 3

"The county executive's proposed budget falls short in protecting the county's jobs and services," said Joe Wilhelm, president of SEIU Virginia 512.

Wilhelm said Fairfax County employees have fallen behind peers in neighboring jurisdictions when it comes to pay, and Long's budget proposal fails to help employees catch up.

"As a result, the best librarians, social workers, engineers and more will continue to leave Fairfax County to serve in other jurisdictions, hurting the services residents depend on," Wilhelm said.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS of Long's budget proposal include:

- ❖ A 1.29 percent compensation increase for county employees based on a Market Rate Adjustment, effective July 1, 2014, as well as an increase in funding of health insurance and other benefits.

- ❖ Increase in capital construction funding, including capital renewal (planned replacement of aging roofs, electrical systems, HVAC systems, plumbing systems, etc. in county facilities), compliance with the Americans With Dis-

abilities Act (ADA) and athletic field maintenance.

- ❖ Increase in public safety funding, including 9-1-1 support and requirements, and full year funding of operations at the Wolftrap Fire Station.

- ❖ Increase in human services funding including behavioral health services for youth, school readiness for preschoolers and domestic violence services.

Public hearings on the proposed FY 2015 Budget are held in the Government Center Board Auditorium:

- ❖ April 8, 6 p.m.
- ❖ April 9, 3 p.m.
- ❖ April 10, 3 p.m.

Those wishing to speak at a public hearing can sign up online to place their name on the speakers list or contact the Office of the Clerk to the Board at 703-324-3151, TTY 703-324-3903. The public hearings will be held in the Board Auditorium, Fairfax County Government Center and will be shown live on Fairfax County Government Channel 16.

Residents can also provide feedback and comments on the proposed budget through mid-April at dmbinfo@fairfaxcounty.gov.

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OPINION

Take the Money

No downside to gaining health care for 200,000 or more; 30,000 jobs and millions of dollars for hospitals from expansion of Medicaid.

Gov. Terry McAuliffe is right to make expansion of health coverage part of the budget process.

Any measure that would create 30,000 jobs, that could save \$1 billion in the state budget over 12 years, that could provide health insurance for 35,000 people who don't have it in Fairfax County alone, that is supported overwhelmingly by the business community and hospitals, actually deserves to be a part of the budget. As many as 400,000 people in Virginia currently without health insurance could be covered.

Under the Affordable Care Act, if states opt in to the expansion of Medicaid, Federal dol-

lars would pay the costs for five years to cover people with incomes up to 138 percent of poverty, \$15,856 for an individual or \$26,951 for a family of three in 2013. After five years, federal dollars would still cover 90 percent.

Under the Affordable Care Act, people with incomes 100 - 400 percent of poverty qualify for subsidies on their health insurance premiums when they purchase coverage through a Marketplace. The amount of the subsidy, provided via tax credit, is based on income and the cost of insurance, and are only available to people who are not eligible for other coverage, such as Medicaid/CHIP, Medicare, or employer coverage, and who are citizens or law-

fully-present immigrants. Because the Affordable Care Act envisioned low-income people receiving coverage through Medicaid, people below poverty are not eligible for Marketplace subsidies. At least 190,000, and as many as 400,000 adults in Virginia fall into the coverage gap because they don't qualify for Medicaid under Virginia's rules, among the most stringent in the nation, but earn less than the poverty rate, so not enough to qualify for subsidies. [Source: Kaiser Family Foundation]

Elections have consequences. McAuliffe made expansion of Medicaid a key element of his campaign, and Virginia voters chose McAuliffe. The Virginia Senate approved a plan to expand health coverage using Medicaid dollars to purchase private health insurance.

There must be a way forward that doesn't involve stifling economic growth and the health of poor Virginians.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Opposing Special Permit

To the Editor:

Last week's Great Falls' Connection carried a story on a topic of interest to many: horseback riding in Great Falls and the role of Blacks Hill Stable, LLC, in providing a commercial riding venue ["Molster Family Stable Awaits Special Permit Decision"]. I am one of the over fifty immediate neighbors who oppose the grant of a special permit that would permit the Stable to move its operation from Turner Farm to deep within our residential neighborhood. As none of the many opponents of the special permit was interviewed for the original article, I wanted to make sure that you were aware of our side of the story, as well as point out a few corrections.

Most importantly, this is not about horses in Great Falls. I believe that each and every opponent of the proposed special permit strongly supports the Molsters' ability to maintain their horses under existing zoning rules. This includes, of course, riding and maintaining horses for their own enjoyment, as well continuing the existing activity of offering riding lessons at Turner Farm.

Commercial operations, including riding stables, generally are not legal in areas zoned RE or R-1. This means that families who purchase homes in such areas can rely on a continuing residential neighborhood character and feel. A special permit allowing a commercial operation can be granted only if the proposed use (1) is har-

monious with and will not adversely affect the use or development of neighboring properties;

(2) will not impair the value of neighboring properties; and (3) will not pose hazard to or conflict with existing and anticipated neighborhood traffic. Those of us who would be in proximity to the relocated Stable operation generally do not believe that any of these standards are satisfied. I encourage your readers to ask themselves if they would believe the standards would be satisfied in the context of a proposal to open a commercial stable in the heart of their own neighborhoods.

As part of the Molsters' special permit proposal they are suggesting a cut-through to connect the Stable to Falls Bridge Lane. The cut-through also would affect Sherlin Lane and Branton Lane, which connect to Falls Bridge, as well as traffic on Georgetown Pike nearing the congested intersection with Seneca and Route Seven. Much of the Stable's traffic would be turning off of and onto the Pike and driving up and down Falls

Bridge in the busy after-school/rush hour period. Falls Bridge has no sidewalks, has complicated sight lines and has school bus stops at both ends. It is a street that is heavily utilized by runners, bikers and walkers, including the many young children who ride the buses.

There are a few points in last week's story that I would like to specifically address. First, the article and associated captioning refer to pastures and riding rings that are "currently unavailable."

The pastures were cleared, the property was re-graded, the riding rings were built, and commercial

operations were begun without undertaking the county review mandated by the special permit process. After years of neighbors' complaints, the zoning violation was reported in 2012. Last week's article reported that the Molsters "voluntarily stopped providing lessons at their home in November 2012." In fact, the Sheriff's Letter that they received required them to clear their violation.

In addition, the article refers to an online petition that opposes the Stable. I am not aware of any such petition. I am, however, aware of an online petition created in support of the Stable which has garnered a large number of signers (many of whom do not live in Fairfax County or, in some instances, the United States). It is phrased in terms of supporting the Stable as part of a general endorsement of equestrian activity and makes no mention of the quality-of-life, traffic and safety issues presented by operating a commercial riding stable in a residential neighborhood.

Last week's article quoted Sharon Molster for the proposition that horseback lessons are "far and few between without having to lease or own a horse." This is an assertion that opponents of the special permit very much wish to correct. A Google search indicates a number of stables within Fairfax County (more, of course, if you include nearby Loudoun), including several in Great Falls. If you make the calls, you

will quickly learn that few have wait-lists; most have lessons readily available. The impression that lessons are difficult to find is simply not accurate.

In conclusion, I will reiterate that the opponents of the special permit do not mind horses or the people who ride them. It's the operation of a commercial stable, with associated traffic running through an established quiet neighborhood, to which we object.

Theresa Gabaldon
Great Falls

Race to Watch

To the Editor:

Thanks for the well-documented article on the political trends in Virginia's 10th Congressional District ("How Red is the 10th District?" February 19-25, 2014). The conventional wisdom among political prognosticators is that the District leans Republican. However, recent voting patterns suggest that a strong Democratic candidate could be well within striking distance for a win. Consider the following: first, in the past two gubernatorial elections, the Republican nominee won the 10th District by only 1 percent. Second, the seat is now open, and retiring Congressman Frank Wolf's name recognition and constituent service record are not in play.

The front running Republican nominee, Barbara Comstock, spent \$1.4 to defend her seat in the Virginia House of Delegates last year, winning with less than 52 percent of the vote. Another candidate for the Republican nomination, longtime Delegate Bob Marshall of Loudoun County, won re-election by about 400 votes. On the other hand, Fairfax

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 11

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First row: Annabeth Holsinger, Megan Baxter, Caitlyn Shumadine, Allie Wakeman. Second row: Mark Baxter, Dani Grieco, Fiona Barber, Devran Johnson, Oma Mere, Lynley Birchard, Isabella Perkins and Phil McConnell.

Great Falls Fifth Grade Girls Finish in First Place

The fifth grade girls Great Falls Select division 1 basketball team, the Goonies, recently completed its regular season 9-2 and finished in first place in the Fairfax County Youth Basketball League (FCYBL). Despite being the shortest team in the league, they were also the highest scoring team, averaging 37 points per game, 8 points more than the next closest team. They enter the postseason tournament as the number one

seed. The team is led by head coach Phil McConnell, voted the Coach of the Year by his peers, and assistant coach Mark Baxter. The Goonies look forward to a successful run in this year's FCYBL postseason tournament. Team members are Megan Baxter, Fiona Barber, Lynley Birchard, Dani Grieco, Annabeth Holsinger, Devran Johnson, Oma Mere, Isabella Perkins, Caitlyn Shumadine, and Allie Wakeman.

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The Langley School Presents ‘Annie’

Performances March 13-15 at 7:30 p.m. in the school’s Sherman Arts Center.

Middle School students at The Langley School will present the Broadway musical, “Annie,” in three evening performances March 13-15 at 7:30 p.m. in the school’s Sherman Arts Center. Tickets may be purchased online at www.langleyschool.org for \$8 each.

This popular musical production, based on the famous comic strip heroine, has charmed audiences throughout the world, earning seven Tony Awards including Best Musical. The rags-

to-riches story opens in 1930s New York City, where Annie is living in an orphanage run by the cruel Miss Hannigan. Determined to find her real parents, Annie and her furry friend, Sandy, escape from the orphanage. After befriending billionaire Oliver Warbucks, she enlists his help to search for her parents, but eventually finds a permanent home – and a very happy ending – with Warbucks.

Accompanied by a live pit orchestra, Langley’s show includes 11 of the musical’s signature songs, including “Tomorrow,” “Maybe,” “Fully Dressed,” and



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Middle School students at The Langley School rehearse the song “Hard Knock Life” for their upcoming production of “Annie.”

“Hard Knock Life.” In addition to learning about life in the Depression era, the 31-member cast is

also practicing New York dialects and learning complex choreography.

Solving the VEXing Challenge Of STEM

Partnerships make it happen for winning team to attend State Robotics Championships.

After months of practice and winning the local competition, the Bailey’s Computer Clubhouse team was elated to learn it qualified to enter the State VEX Robotics tournament in Doswell, Va. in February. That enthusiasm, however, was quickly tempered as the team sponsors realized, although the kids were ready, willing and able to go, they simply didn’t have the entry fee or money for transportation to make it happen.

The good news is that, led by Fairfax County Office of Partnerships (OP3), the community stepped in to make their dream a reality. OP3 facilitated a coalition of interested businesses, nonprofits and Fairfax County agencies, resulting in buses contributed by the Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services; a donation of \$1500 to cover registration fees, meals and logistics courtesy of GAP Solutions, Inc.; and shirts gener-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

The ‘Pearls Team’ from Cornerstones Clubhouse competes at the Regional ‘Toss Up State Qualifier.’

ously printed courtesy of Reston Shirt and Graphics.

With all of this support the teams embarked for the state competition along with their coaches, Northern Virginia Community College Students.

The teams are part of the North-

ern Virginia Community College’s (NVCC) SySTEMic Solutions initiative. Created in response to the region’s critical shortage of scientists, engineers and technicians, the program’s ultimate goal is to meet the demand for a trained workforce in advanced technolo-

gies. Students in SySTEMic Solutions are likely to be the first in their family who have considered college, and come from a moderate or lower income family. With multi-institutional collaboration at the secondary and post-secondary level coupled with collaboration among K-12 school divisions and industry, this key best practice is set to increase college success and completion rates amongst at-risk student populations.

Through SySTEMic Solutions, NVCC has created a collaborative arrangement among K-12 school divisions, higher education institutions, local government and employers to create a sustainable workforce pipeline that by the year 2015 will have more than 3,000 students preparing for STEM careers.

Now that’s a winning solution to a VEXing problem.

NOTE: Coaches and mentors are always needed and welcome. For more information contact: Wendy Lemieux, Fairfax County Office of Public Private Partnerships, 703-424-1805,

wendy.lemieux@fairfaxcounty.gov

Flint Hill School Ceramics’ Students Raise \$10K to Fight Hunger

On Saturday, Feb. 22, Flint Hill School hosted the 4th annual “Empty Bowls,” an event held to raise money to fight hunger by selling ceramic bowls made by members of the Flint Hill School community—students, parents, alumni, faculty, and staff. Approximately 900 bowls were produced and sold for \$15 each, bringing the total to nearly \$10,000—the highest

so far for this event—all to benefit DC Central Kitchen.

Upper School students with the Clay Club took charge of planning this year’s event, along with ceramics teacher Julia Cardone. “The students’ leadership was instrumental to making this event successful and ultimately making a real difference in the lives of others. In preparation for the event, they spent many weekends and after school hours in

the ceramics studio.”

Senior Madison Oliver, a key coordinator of “Empty Bowls,” summarizes the event’s purpose: “This project is about more than just making bowls: we are giving back to an organization that deserves the community’s help.”

The day of the event was a celebration of community and giving, with DC Central Kitchen providing soup for lunch, a silent auction of

fering additional opportunity to raise funds, a student musician playing the guitar, and guest artist David MacDonald traveling from upstate New York to give on-site pottery demonstrations.

“Empty Bowls” is one of numerous community service projects at Flint Hill School. Read more at: www.flinthill.org/school-wide/community-service/

CALENDAR

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

FRIDAY/MARCH 7

Seed Bead Workshop. 7-8 p.m., Vienna Community Center (VCC), 120 Cherry St SE, Vienna. Melissa Grakowsky-Shippe presents her wonderful seed bead designs. www.nvbs.org

SATURDAY/MARCH 8

Mardi Gras Party. 8 p.m., American Legion Post 180, 330 Center St. N., Vienna. A veteran’s fundraiser and A Tribute to Fats Domino and music by New Orleans’ own, Terry Lee Ryan. \$35. www.Legion180.net.

SUNDAY/MARCH 9

The Stern/Andrist Duo Concert. 3 p.m. Alden Theatre of McLean, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. This free concert will feature violinist James Stern of the University of Maryland and multi-talented pianist Audrey Andrist in a program that includes a sonata by Janacek, Four Pieces by Suk, Theme and Variations by Messiaen, and the Sonata in C minor by Beethoven.

MONDAY/MARCH 10

Lunch ‘N Life. 12 p.m. Emmannual Lutheran Church, 2589 Chain Bridge Road, Vienna. Join the Shepherd’s Center of Oakton-Vienna (SCOV) for their first in 2014 schedule of Lunch ‘N Life events. It includes lunch and dessert followed by Ric Edelman, who appears on stage frequently, talking to thousands of people every year,

FRIDAY/MARCH 7

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington’s (BGGGW) Fairfax County Region Inaugural Casino Night Fundraiser. 6:30-11:30 p.m. The Ritz-Carlton, 1700 Tysons Blvd, McLean.

The Fairfax Regional Board will bring a bit of friendly Vegas-like fun to support the programming for the region’s two Clubs. Unlike the money and chips found in real casinos, Casino Night guests will receive funny money and a bidder number. They will use their winnings from casino-favorites such as Black Jack, Texas Hold ‘Em, and Craps to bid on fabulous raffle prizes. The more chips players accumulate at the gaming tables the better their chances to win great raffle prizes at end of evening

The Fairfax Region of BGGGW provides a safe haven for more than 580 young people between the ages of 5 and 18 years old at

two sites: Culmore Character Club and Murrygate Village Club. The clubs serve poor children, providing support for homework and academic success, life skills training, character building and fun. Ninety-Two percent of the Clubs’ members qualify for free lunch.

Casino Night will not only be a night of fun and excitement, it will be a thrilling opportunity to support youth in the Fairfax community who need us most. The evening includes Ritz-Carlton dinner buffet, open bar, casino games, raffle, dancing, DJ and more, for \$95 a person or \$175 per couple. Special overnight room rate of \$119 available.

Register now. To purchase tickets for Casio Night & and more information about Fairfax Region of Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington visit: www.bggcw.org/fairfax/casino-night/

and is widely acknowledged as an entertaining and informative speaker. Visit <http://scov.org/calendar.htm> or call the office at 703-281-0538. \$10 per person. Reservation and prepayment required by Wednesday, March 5.

www.warhawksports.org or jmhathleticbooster@gmail.com.

SATURDAY/MARCH 15

Ballroom Dance. 8-11:30 p.m., Colvin Run Dance Hall, 10201 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. DJ music from Craig Bukowski playing favorite dance tunes from the 1930s to today. \$15. 703-759-2685 or www.colvinrun.org.

Model Trains. 231 Dominion Road NE, Vienna. 1-5 p.m. See and hear model trolleys and steam and diesel trains plus Thomas and some of his friends in the Historic Vienna Train Station along the W&OD trail just past the



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Creating a Harmonious Family Life

Local experts offer tips for keeping your family happy.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

As Elizabeth Rees drove her daughter and two of her daughter's friends to a library reading group recently, the Alexandria mother of three admits that she felt like a chauffeur at first. But she had a change of heart after hearing sounds of laughter.

"They were giggling and so sweet in the back," said Rees, the associate rector at Saint Aidan's Episcopal Church in Alexandria. "Suddenly that moment of grace turned it all around and I felt privileged to be there. I think that sort of thing happens all the time if only we are paying attention."

What are the keys to paying attention and creating a happier family life? Experts say it's important to stop trying to do everything 100 percent and make other things a priority. They offer their top tips for creating balance.

"With three young kids, a two-career marriage and way too many activities, I find this balance as hard as everyone else and am absolutely preaching to myself," said Rees.

EXPERTS SAY living in a competitive area like the Washington, D.C., region can make creating balance even more challenging. "I see children who are stressed to always be the best," said Dr. Bruce Pfeffer, a Potomac, Md.-based child psychiatrist.

Parents play a critical role in helping children create a healthy balance of work and play, he added, explaining that "parents must serve as rudders to guide their children [toward the] peace of mind that comes with a supportive home environment, emphasis on gaining joy in life, along with appropriate goals and achieving."

Michael Moynihan, head of the Upper School at The Heights School in Potomac, Md., agrees. "The most significant obstacles to harmonious family life today are over scheduling and over connectedness ... resulting in families that are pulled in many different directions for activities, and when they have those brief moments together, are often plugged into various electronic devices," he said.

Make finding uninterrupted family time a priority. "The solution is to schedule family time such as meals together — without electronic devices — and to protect this time from other activities," said Moynihan.

Rees suggests being present and engaged. "So much of life is spent in work and preparation and accomplishments that it's hard sometimes to live in the moment," she said. "Maybe some days the only time you have together is in the car. ... Try to remember to make the most of even those moments."

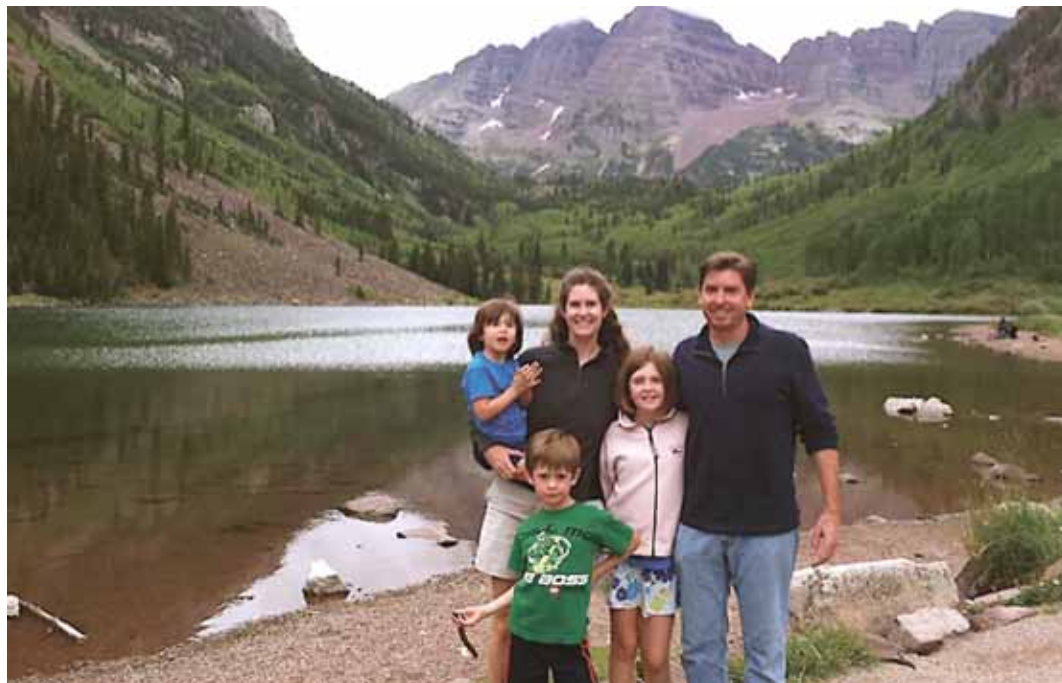


PHOTO COURTESY OF ELIZABETH REES

Elizabeth Rees, the associate rector at Saint Aidan's Episcopal Church in Alexandria, says laughter, forgiveness and gratitude are among the factors that create a harmonious family life. Here she is pictured on a family vacation with her daughter Maya, 3; her husband Holden Hoofnagle; her son Dylan, 7; and daughter Sophia, 10.

Colleen Vesely, Ph.D., an assistant professor of early childhood education and human development and family science at George Mason University, said "It's also important to find joy in the mundane and to give one's self and others a break ... to be patient, empathic and compassionate with yourself and with your coparent. ... But that doesn't mean not holding everyone accountable to the family system, which is also critical."

Rees encourages stressed parents to give themselves time alone as well. "I am part of a prayer and listening group on Tuesday nights. We come together and have a time of silence

and share where we are in our lives. For me, that's my chance for renewal, refreshment, and it makes me return home with a completely different attitude. ... For others, it might be a walk in the woods or coffee with a good friend, or an hour at the gym. It's hard to make space for yourself, but it can make a big difference in how you treat the people around you."

When it comes to building a harmonious family life, which elements matter most? "Love, obviously, is essential," said Rees. "But that's a big and amorphous word and really has to be much more about how we live than what we feel when it comes to daily relationships. When we are stressed

or worried or tired, our closest relationships are the ones that take the biggest hit. It is in those all-too-frequent moments that we have to work the hardest at things like kindness, respect, thinking of how the other person feels."

The willingness to forgive oneself and one's family members is also vital to family harmony. "We all do and say things with-

out thinking all the time with our families," said Rees. "They bear the brunt of all the weight we carry. Try to remember that in the heat of the moment and put aside petty grudges."

Sometimes, says Rees, it's

small, often overlooked actions that can have a major impact. "Little things matter so much in family life," she said. "Replacing the soap in the soap dish, or asking someone about their day and really caring about the answer, or giving a hand when you see someone struggling. When my husband hears my car in the driveway when I return from the grocery store and comes out to help carry the bags ... I notice and I feel cared for."

Bethany Letiecq, Ph.D., an associate professor of human development and family science at George Mason University adds, "With myriad external stressors and pressures on family systems, it is really impor-

tant that families ... work together to model positive coping strategies and moderate conflict and anxiety levels. Parents can model healthy conflict resolution practices and support their children's positive coping and adaptation. This often takes a lot of work, learning skills that we may not have picked up from our own family systems [such as] practice, cooperation and patience."

"Learn and implement effective communication skills," said Rees. "Share what you are feeling with those all-important 'I statements' that we know about but find so hard to use in the heat of the moment. Stop what we are doing when there is something we really need to listen to, and then really listen with empathy and love. ... Not just thinking it, but saying 'I love you,' 'I'm sorry,' 'I forgive you,' 'thank you.'"

Manage expectations. "Reasonable expectations seem like a big piece of this, for ourselves, for our kids, for our partners," said Rees. "Remember to step back and think about what really matters and try to place less importance on the rest."

Parents are a child's best role models for dealing with setbacks. "Parents must help their children be resilient when goals are not met," said Pfeffer. "Sometimes the best growth can be gained by resilience after a disappointment."

LAUGHTER HELPS A LOT, too. "Try not to take things so seriously and to see the humor even in the mistakes and the impossible moments," said Rees.

Practice gratitude. "Lately, I keep reading about the link between practicing gratitude and feeling happiness. I find it true in my own life," said Rees. "When I consciously look for things to be grateful for, I am much more aware of the moments of love and beauty in my life. So practice gratitude for each member of our families, for the good that we see in them, for the moments that we have with them. When, after a long day, I get to sit down and read a book with my arms around my kids, I try to remember to thank God for that moment."

"There really is not one 'right' way to parent a child or engage in family life," said Letiecq. "Every parent-child relationship, every family system is unique in terms of what each person brings to the relationship: temperaments, interests, skill-sets, personality traits, personal histories, past familial experience, health issues, etc. ... There is a range of parenting styles, but what seems most important is to do what works best with your child's temperament and what is going to be most supportive and least stressful for the entire family."

"The solution is to schedule family time such as meals together — without electronic devices to interrupt being present to each other — and to protect this time from other activities."

— Michael Moynihan,
head of Upper School, The Heights School

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.

THURSDAY/MARCH 6

Great Falls Writers Meeting. Noon to 1:30 p.m., Great Falls Public Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Local writers will share from their own work. 703-757-8560.

TUESDAY/MARCH 11

STEM Education. 7 p.m. the Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Avenue East, Vienna. The Vienna branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) will host a discussion about STEM (science,

technology, engineering and mathematics) education. Call 703-321-7499 for more information.

Workforce Ministries presents Purposeful Leadership Speaker Series with Frank Wolf. 12-1 p.m. McLean Presbyterian Church, Fellowship Hall, 1020 Balls Hill Road, McLean. Come hear Frank Wolf share his thoughts on the past 34 years in Congress and his passion to be an advocate for those who cannot speak for themselves as he looks forward to working on human rights and religious freedom—both domestic and international—as well as matters of the culture and the American family. Registration is recommended. Please visit Workforce Ministries at <http://www.workforceministries.com/> to RSVP for this free event.

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 6

Supervisor John Foust, the likely Democratic nominee for the 10th District Congressional seat, carried every precinct in his contested campaign for re-election in 2011, winning more than 60 percent of the vote.

Democrats are gaining ground in northern Virginia because the issues are working in their favor. Polls show strong support for investing in transportation and education as well as for protecting and expanding access to health care for women and low income workers.

The eventual Republican candidate may have a hard time moving away from the Tea Party positions necessary to win the Republican nomination. Extreme positions on economic and social issues will not play well in the suburban areas of Fairfax and Loudoun counties where 70 percent of 10th District voters reside.

In the end, we may find the 10th District to be a toss-up, despite conventional wisdom.

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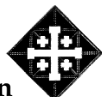
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Madison's Koshuta Scores 39 Against 'Idol' Floyd

Warhawks lose to Stonewall Jackson in region semifinals.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

The Madison girls' basketball team's season had ended and Kelly Koshuta stood teary-eyed inside Robinson Secondary School, saddened that she had played with her senior teammates for the final time.

Koshuta, a 6-foot-2 junior, did all she could to extend the Warhawks' season, but a career-high 39 points and 19 rebounds weren't enough to beat Stonewall Jackson, which defeated Madison 78-72 during the 6A North region semifinals on Feb. 27. The Warhawks finished one win shy of reaching the region championship game and securing a state playoff berth.

While Koshuta fought back tears during a postgame interview, she was more than happy to talk about the talented athlete she battled during Thursday's contest. Stonewall Jackson senior Nicole Floyd, a 6-foot-2 post who signed with Wake Forest, scored 32 points against Madison. Floyd's versatile skillset — her ability to drive to the basket, produce in the paint and knock down 3-pointers — helped her score 18 points in the

first quarter and 10 in the fourth, when the Raiders were holding off a late Warhawks rally.

"She's a great person to play against," Koshuta said, "and she did amazing today."

But Floyd was more than just a quality opponent and an on-court challenge for the Madison standout. Koshuta admires Floyd as a talented athlete who battled the same kind of adversity she faced.

IN THE SUMMER OF 2010, prior to her freshman year, Floyd tore the ACL in her right knee. She returned near the end of the season, helping Stonewall defeat West Springfield in the state semifinals before the Raiders lost to Princess Anne in the championship game.

Two years after Floyd suffered a torn ACL, Koshuta tore the ACL in her left knee during an AAU game prior to her sophomore season. Koshuta sat out the entire 2012-13 campaign and the Warhawks were eliminated in the region quarterfinals.

As Koshuta worked her way back onto the court, she spoke with Floyd, who she knew through AAU ball, about returning from an ACL injury. Floyd explained the need for hard work and remaining mentally strong.

"[Koshuta] came up to me [and] she asked how long it took for me to get back and I told her it took me a full eight, eight-and-a-half months," Floyd said. "She said she was just getting back and I told her



Madison junior Kelly Koshuta goes up against Stonewall Jackson senior Nicole Floyd during the 6A North region semifinals on Feb. 27 at Robinson Secondary School.

just take it slow. It's a tough, terrible injury to have. It's a terrible process, just keep rehabbing."

Koshuta spoke highly of Floyd. "She's amazing. She's my idol," Koshuta said. "She tore her ACL, too. She recovered from it. I watched her recover and I love that. When I [injured] mine I actually talked to her about it and it was great. Seeing her recover is amazing. She's going to Wake Forest and that's a great accomplishment."

Floyd appeared flattered when informed Koshuta referred to the Stonewall star as her "idol."

"That's really good to hear," Floyd said. "I always want to set a positive example for somebody else looking up to me; what they can do as a player, and not just as

a player, [but] as a person off the court, also. That's a great thing to hear from an opponent, especially after a big game like this."

Floyd and Koshuta both performed well during Thursday's "big game," and Floyd did so while battling the flu. Floyd's 18 first-quarter points, including a pair of 3-pointers, helped Stonewall build a 25-17 lead by the end of the period.

"Kelly did the best she could on defense," Madison senior guard Katie Kerrigan said. "Nicole, give a lot of credit to her, she has the flu, but she was still knocking down those shots. She would not miss. Kelly did a good job. She did all she could do."

"I think that they played really tough," Madison head coach

Kirsten Stone said. "I was proud that they came back from the [18-point deficit]. I think that takes a lot of gumption, a lot of strength. I'm really proud of them."

While Madison cut Stonewall's lead to two twice during the final minute, the Warhawks would get no closer as the Raiders scored seven of the game's final 10 points.

Sophomore guard Aidan McWeeney scored 13 points for Madison, including a trio of 3-pointers. Kerrigan finished with 12 points and sophomore Alexis Hermes added six.

DESPITE LOSING its first four games of the season, Madison ended the year with a 19-9 record and finished runner-up in Conference 6. After a loss to South Lakes on Jan. 10, Madison responded by winning its next 12 games and 14 of its final 16.

Stone, the region Coach of the Year, figures to have a strong team next season. Kerrigan was Madison's only senior starter Thursday night, and Koshuta, a first-team all-region selection, figures to be even better.

Plus, Floyd will have graduated, improving the chances of Koshuta crying tears of joy at regionals in 2015.

"We're going to come back stronger," Koshuta said. "That's my second time losing in the [semifinals] and next year I'm not ending my last high school game in the [semifinals]. We're going to go all the way — that's the plan."

Saxon Ice Hockey Season Ends with Semi-Final Loss

The Langley hockey team played four games in their final week of the season and came one goal away from upsetting Stone Bridge a second time deep in the playoffs.

The playoffs opened with a lackluster start against Osbourn Park. Osbourn struck first with a power play goal and went into cruise mode until senior Jeremy Kim scored the equalizer midway through the second. Both teams traded scoring chances until Osbourn scored the go-ahead with six minutes left in the game. The stunned Saxons continued battling and with just two-and-a-half minutes left in the game, assistant captain Will Clemson teed up a slap shot from the



The Langley hockey team celebrates after scoring against Stone Bridge.

point that was tipped in by captain Drew Schneider to tie the game at 2. Barely a minute later, freshman Sam Shapiro fired a lobbing clear that landed on streaking winger Lizzy Weingast's stick

at the top of the circle in Osbourn's zone. Weingast buried the puck 5-hole and Langley went ahead for good. The game ended 4-2 after an empty-netter by Jason Guidi.

With the opening round behind

them, the Saxons faced Oakton for a rematch in the quarterfinals. The previous matchup led to a disappointing 12-7 loss as the game was scheduled while all three of Langley's netminders were on holiday break.

This game, Oakton would not be so lucky as senior Ryan Framinan was between the pipes. The Saxon icers came out strong in the first with two goals from Guidi and one from Alsaif to end the period 3-0. They never looked back and closed out the tilt 4-0. With the win on Langley's home rink, they were slated for a rematch against Stone Bridge on their home ice in Ashburn.

Langley knew that Stone Bridge was going to come at them fast after their previous matchup wherein Langley handed Stone

Bridge their first regular-season loss in more than two years. Stone Bridge drew first blood with a goal at the 4:33 mark of the first period and never trailed. The third period started with Langley down 4-1 before Guidi scored at the 13-minute mark followed by Shapiro's strike with the 2:24 left in the game. Down by a single goal, the Saxons pulled their netminder for the extra skater but were unable to capitalize and lost 4-3. Stone Bridge went on to lose in the finals to Briar Woods.

Seniors Schneider, assistant captain Jeremy Kim, Michael Cox, Weingast, and goalies Ryan Framinan and Ryan Guidi contributed to another successful season for Langley Hockey.

Honored for Promoting Peace

The Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County honors 22 students.

BY JANELLE GERMANOS
THE CONNECTION

The Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County, presented by the Herndon Friends Meeting, honored a group of 22 juniors and seniors who were nominated for their dedication to peace and conflict resolution on March 2.

The students, involved in activities such as Amnesty International, Best Buddies, Gay Straight Alliance, Girl Scouts, Student Government, Islamic Presence Club, mission trips, and much more, were recognized for promoting peace and working to remove the effects of war in the community.

Barbara Wien, a peace educator and human rights activist, was the guest speaker. Wien spoke about her experiences as an advocate for peace, including her role in protecting civilians in Colombia from a death squad, and reminded students that war is not an inevitable part of human nature and can be eradicated.

"Many children are also raised to believe that war is inevitable. They're raised to believe that the human race is inherently vio-

lent and will always live with war. Well, I'm here to challenge that notion," Wien said.

STUDENTS WERE AWARDED \$150 and were also able to donate \$100 to an organization of their choice. They also received a copy of the book "Sweet Fruit from a Bitter Tree," by Mark Andreas.

Margaret Fischer, the reception coordinator, read each student's accomplishments and contributions to the community as they received their award from Sharon Bulova, chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, and Providence District School Board member Patty Reed.

"Our last presentation demonstrates the bittersweet nature of working for peace," said Fischer of the award to Woodson High School senior Jordan Felcorn, who was recognized for his restoration of Woodson's Students Against Destructive Decisions Club.

Felcorn said he began his involvement with the club after observing bullying at his school, as well as volunteering with Fairfax County Medical Services and responding to

SEE STUDENTS, PAGE 15

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Not Yet, Really

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



While we're exchanging pleasantries here, in semi real time – although this column will not be most read until March 6th (I need to submit it on Monday, March 3rd as we go to press on Tuesday, March 5th), I feel the obligation, given how last week's column ended, to update you on the results from my February 26th CT Scan. Presumably, by the title you all have determined that as of this writing, Saturday, March 1st, I have not heard back from my oncologist. Typically, I would have already heard from him, electronically. But so far, not a peep, electronic or otherwise and believe me, I've been checking, as you might imagine.

This non-communication has happened twice before that I can remember. The first time, my oncologist did not e-mail results to me because he said, as a presumptive courtesy, he doesn't like to share bad news in an e-mail. The second time he neglected to send a post-CT Scan e-mail, the news was good and sort of not worth mentioning, he said, because the news wasn't bad; if that makes any sense at all. Either way, the silence is hardly golden. And the longer I live, the less patience I have for such irregularities.

And what complicates my interpretation of this most recent electronic silence is that I have previously made it clear to my oncologist that my not receiving these post-CT Scan results, however good, bad or indifferent they may be, is far more difficult for Team Lourie than actually receiving them. So now, after we've established these communication guidelines (expectations, requirements even) it is a bit perplexing as to why we've not heard anything. But is it cause for concern? I'll tell you what it's cause for: unnecessary and barely controllable anxiety and stress concerning the interpretation of what any of it definitively means.

Maybe it means nothing because there was an internal computer problem that "sent" e-mails into cyberspace, rather than their intended recipients? Perhaps the staff Radiologist called in sick that day or had to leave town unexpectedly and no replacement could be found – in a timely manner, to read all the X-Rays, CT Scans, MRIs, etc. that day and as a result, results and communication of said results have been delayed? Maybe my oncologist is on vacation or out sick himself or had to leave town unexpectedly and my scan results/his assessment/summary of them are sitting in his in box and were not sent because, as I would understand, he prefers to send out his own e-mails? Heck, there might even be protocol/privacy issues that prevent such communications from being forwarded unless all parties agree in advance. In fact, never before have I received e-mails from any other oncologist. It's always been Dr. "H." Or maybe, the results are so bad that, despite our previous conversations on the subject, my oncologist is ignoring my preference in order to tell me in person, since he will be seeing me on Friday, March 7th for our regularly scheduled post-CT appointment? Or maybe the results are so good, he wants to tell me in person and see for himself the joy and relief his care has brought to a patient of his whom he originally characterized as terminal and gave a "13-month to two-year" prognosis? Or, as Paul Harvey never said: you don't know the rest of the story.

Consequently, what one experiences, as maybe you can tell from the previous paragraph, is a non-stop rearranging and reinterpreting of one's medical circumstances, potential medical circumstances, real and/or imagined medical circumstances, and anxiety over any and all of them.

Still, I've been through this kind of waiting before for medical results. It's not easy, but I can handle it. Nevertheless, it sort of seems like a waste of my ability to handle such things, given the seriousness of what I may yet have to handle.

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

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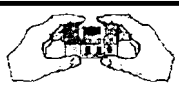
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News



PHOTO BY JANELLE GERMANOS/THE CONNECTION

Sharon Bulova, chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, listens as Jordan Feltcorn, a senior at Woodson High School, speaks after being recognized at the Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County on March 2.

Students Receive Peace Awards

FROM PAGE 13

calls including on drugs and drunk driving.

"The club works towards trying to prevent teens from making decisions such as drinking and driving, bullying, distracted driving, drug use and abuse, and suicide," Feltcorn said. "Unfortunately, this past week at my high school, W.T. Woodson, we experienced the tragic loss of life of two students."

Feltcorn asked the audience to observe a moment of silence in remembrance of two Woodson students who died the week before.

West Potomac High School senior Pamela Molnar was among the students honored for promoting peace in the community. Molnar helped to start and grow the West Potomac chapter of Best Buddies, an organization that advocates for people with disabilities.

"My mom is a special education teacher, which has inspired me," Molnar said. "I think the group has had a big impact on the school."

FOR THE FIRST TIME since the Student Peace Awards began, a school nominated a group of students for the award. The Mountain View Brave Girls Club of Mount View High School was recognized for its work of supporting others through making "truth cards," which provide messages of support and are sent to women throughout the community,

Hannah Piester, a junior at Oakton High School; guest speaker Barbara Wien, and Melissa Schwartz, a senior at Lee High School; speak at the Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County on March 2.



2014 RECIPIENTS OF THE STUDENT PEACE AWARDS

Malaz Namir

Junior, Chantilly High School

Emma Celeste Munis

Senior, Thomas A. Edison High School

Andrew Jhu

Junior, Fairfax High School

Hamima Nasrin

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Mount View Brave Girls Club

Mount View High School

Hannah Piester

Junior, Oakton High School

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Senior, Paul VI Catholic High School

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