

# Project BEST Brings Fun Science to Middle Schools

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Students line up for a physics lesson in momentum by standing on a spinning wheel at the youth conference at Langston Hughes Middle School.

## Bulova: 'This Will Be a Challenging Budget'

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## SingStrong for a Cause

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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

**F**airfax 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.



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

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PHOTO BY ETHAN MCLEOD/THE CONNECTION

Dr. Roian Egnor shares some of her experiences as a behavioral scientist with the auditorium of about 150 students.

# Project BEST Brings Fun Science to Middle Schools

The nonprofit started last year by five Thomas Jefferson High School students brings its youth conference to Langston Hughes Middle School.

BY ETHAN MCLEOD  
THE CONNECTION

Thomas Jefferson High School senior Robert Young peered over a table of middle-schoolers gathered in a cafeteria on Saturday morning to observe their progress dissecting a brain made of Jell-O. The students' mission in this activity was to simulate a precise act of brain surgery, using only tweezers and the steadiness of their hands.

The brain dissection simulation was just one activity in an entire lineup at the 2014 Science Innovation and Inspiration Youth Conference on Saturday, March 1 at Langston Hughes Middle School. Project BEST, a nonprofit organization started by five Thomas Jefferson juniors in 2013 dedicated to promoting fun in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education, hosted the conference for middle school students from around Fairfax County. (The "BEST" in their name stands for "Building Excitement for Science and Technology.")

"Going to TJ, we've had a lot of great opportunities, especially in science and technology. We really felt that the best way to learn in these subjects is through hands on activities," said Young, co-founder and chief operations officer for Project BEST.

Principal founder Parth Chopra said that his approach when starting Project BEST had to do with taking some of the focus away from the heavy memorization involved in learning science subjects to concentrate on the fun of STEM subjects.

"By actually being able to learn with hands-on activities, students can learn the STEM concepts. They're not just memorizing concepts, they're actually learning," said Chopra.

Project BEST has spread quickly as an appealing

extracurricular group at 14 middle schools in Fairfax County. Schools in Virginia Beach and even Kansas have also started their own chapters, according to Chopra.

In addition to science-themed activities, the event also featured engineers and doctors from Northrop Grumman, one of the organization's corporate sponsors, L-3 Unmanned Systems, Microsoft, and Janera Farm Research Campus.

Dr. Roian Egnor, a behavioral scientist and Fellow at Janelia Farm, captivated her audience with stories about working with animals ranging from mice to seals and owls all over the world. Her presentation focused on sound identifiers and the ways that vocalizations carry social information for a variety of creatures.

"You're wandering through the world and building up your library of sounds," said Egnor to the group of about 150 middle school students.

After her lecture, Dr. Egnor spoke of how impressed she was with the questions some students posed to her, calling it a good sign for the future scientists in the audience.

"The key to being a good scientist is wanting to know the answer to a question. I think most of the scientists that I know are extremely enamored with the beauty of the world," said Egnor.

From speaking to students who attended the Saturday workshop, it appeared that Egnor helped Project BEST to spread their goal for students to be curious and explore fun ways to pursue science.

"This kind of event helps us all to try new things," said Dillon Davenport, a student at Lanier Middle School in Fairfax. "We can choose from a variety of things of what we might want to do when we're older."

Dr. Egnor noted that it was due to having great teachers and mentors when she was young that she was able to be successful today. Both Young and Chopra echoed what her words about the importance of becoming inspired early on, and clearly it has paid off for them. Young has been accepted to both Harvard and Yale for Fall 2014 and is still deciding, while Chopra has committed to studying computer science, engineering and business at the University of Pennsylvania.

"One great teacher is all it takes to get inspired with a subject," said Young. "Sometimes students don't have that teacher, so we can be that for them and get them excited about learning more about science."

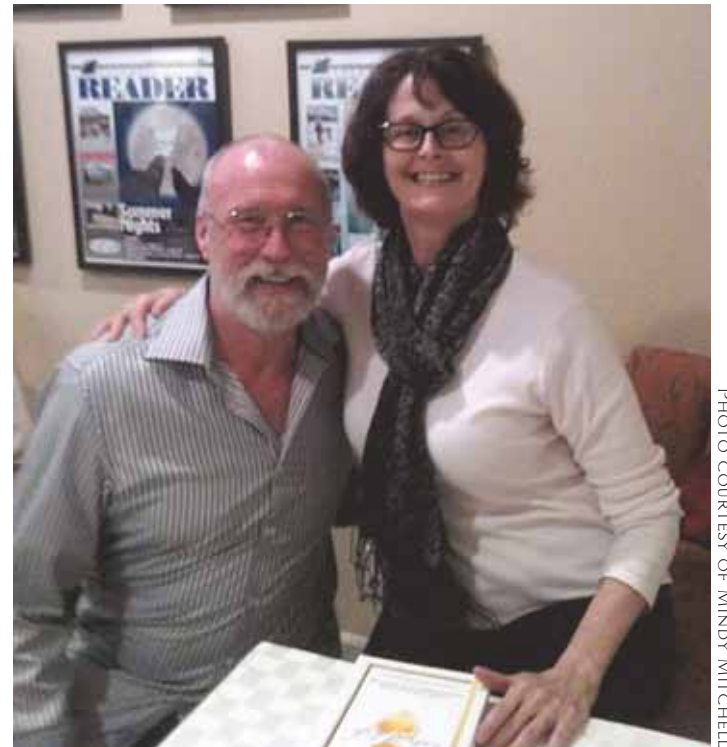


PHOTO COURTESY OF MINDY MITCHELL

Mindy Mitchell of Reston, Va., is writing a screen play based on her book, "Lube of Life: A Tribute to Sex, Love and the Pursuit of Happiness in the Boomer Age." She is pictured here with the book's co-author Edward Land.

## Local Author Turning Book Into Screen Play

Great Falls Writers Group: Evening with the Authors.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

A local author is planning to put the story of her life on the silver screen. Sixty-one-year-old Mindy Mitchell of Reston is writing a screenplay based on her book, "Lube of Life: A Tribute to Sex, Love and the Pursuit of Happiness in the Boomer Age," which she released last year along with her co-author, 63-year-old Edward Land of Hampton, Va. "The content [and] energy contained in our book, 'Lube of Life,' would adapt easily to film: a comedic yet poignant tale of

late-in-life love," said Mitchell. "A 'When Harry Met Sally' all grown up."

Land and Mitchell met online and began dating. "Lube of Life" chronicles the couple's online dating adventure. They hope their story will inspire other single baby boomers who are searching for mates.

Mitchell and Land will be among a group of authors at the "Great Falls Writers Group: Evening with the Authors" on April 5 at 7 p.m. at the Great Falls Library in Virginia. The pair will answer questions and sign copies of their book. "I encourage people to give online dating a try, if they are so inclined," said Mitchell. "There are all kinds of dating and social sites on the internet. Be hopeful and hang with other people of like-minded energy. Be cautious, but be open to possibilities. Life is just too darn short."

### BULLETIN BOARD

To have community events listed in the Connection, send to [reston@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:reston@connectionnewspapers.com) by the Friday prior to the following week's paper.

#### WEDNESDAY/MARCH 5

**Free Dual Seminar.** 7 - 8:30 PM, 12700 Fair Lakes Circle, Suite 120, Fairfax. Simplified Stock Investment Management and 1031Tax-Free Property Exchanges. 703-969-4966.

#### SUNDAY/MARCH 9

**Friends of Runnymede Park**

**Annual Meeting.** 7-9 p.m., ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. The program, "Chimney Swifts: America's Mysterious Birds above the Fireplace," takes a close look at the chimney swift tower that was recently constructed in Runnymede Park; refreshments provided. [friendsofrp@yahoo.com](mailto:friendsofrp@yahoo.com) or 703-437-7451.

#### ONGOING

**Fairfax County's Meals on Wheels**

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 5

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## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

urgently needs drivers in the Annandale, Franconia/Kingstowne, Reston, Mount Vernon and McLean areas. 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults).

**Knitting Enthusiasts, Musicians Needed.** 10:30 a.m.-noon, at Herndon Senior Center. Herndon Senior Center seeks a knitting enthusiast to teach basic procedures. Musicians to play soothing music on weekend mornings also needed. 703-324-5406, TTY 711, [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadult](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadult) or [VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov).

**Habitat Heroes Project.** The fourth Saturday of each month. Join the Habitat Heroes in protecting Reston's forests from aggressive plants and restoring them to their natural state. Wear long sleeves, long pants, and if possible, gardening gloves to protect from insects and dangerous plants. R.A. will provide tools, gloves, snacks, and water. To volunteer and find more information, contact [habrock@reston.org](mailto:habrock@reston.org) or 703-435-7986.

**Arabic-speaking Older Adult Social Visits.** Fairfax County needs volunteers who speak Arabic to provide social visits to an elderly person in Reston for four hours per month. 703-324-5406, TTY 703-449-1186, [VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov) or [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices).

**Long-Term Care Volunteer Ombudsman Program Needs Volunteers.** Ombudsmen advocate for the rights of residents of nursing and assisted living facilities—they also help residents resolve conflict and improve their quality of life. 703-324-5861 TTY 711 or [Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov).

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# 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.

**G**ov. 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.

EDITORIAL

Under the Affordable Care Act, if states opt in to the expansion of Medicaid, Federal dollars would pay the costs for five years to cover people with incomes up to 138 percent of pov-

erty, \$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 lawfully-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.

# Marriage Equality Moves Forward

BY KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM  
STATE DELEGATE  
(D-36)



**A**s one who has worked on human rights issues for many decades, I am excited about the positive changes that are occurring at such a rapid pace in laws and in peoples' attitudes about sexual orientation, especially same-sex marriage.

COMMENTARY

Most of the people I talk to under age 30 don't understand why this is even an issue. Unfortunately because of some of my colleagues in the legislature, action by federal courts will be necessary to bring about changes in the law. As time passes there will continue to be residual harsh and discriminatory feelings on the part of a minority who cling to the past as there has been with every advance in civil rights, but most will look back in bewilderment over what people were thinking in refusing to grant the same rights to all people.

Virginia's marriage amendment defining marriage as being between a man and a woman has been declared unconstitutional as have such laws in other states including Texas, Utah, and Oklahoma. Those cases will be appealed to the Supreme Court that has already struck down the fed-

eral ban on same-sex marriage. A recent news story indicated that there were 47 lawsuits challenging same-sex marriage laws in 25 states. Same-sex marriages are now permitted in 17 states and the District of Columbia. As

Judge Orlando Garcia said in striking down the Texas ban on same-sex marriage, "equal treatment of all individuals under the law is not merely an aspiration it is a constitutional mandate."

New laws are being introduced in some states to legalize anti-gay prejudice under the guise of religious freedom. Economic boycotts of these states if they adopted such legislation may like in Arizona prevent these bills from becoming law. Another argument behind this kind of discriminatory legislation is the right of a state to determine its own definition of marriage, but as we learned through the Civil Rights Movement, individual rights supersede a state's right to decide.

I voted against Virginia's marriage amendment when it was before the legislature, I campaigned against it when it was on the ballot to be approved by the people, and I voted against it in the referendum. I am pleased that Reston was one of the few communities in the state that voted against the amendment, but I wish there had

SEE PLUM, PAGE 7

# Teachers Undervalued, Dominion Owns Legislature

BY JOHN LOVAAS  
RESTON IMPACT  
PRODUCER/HOST



**F**airfax County is preparing to stick it to our public school teachers again, as they have done for several years. New Superintendent Karen Garza has submitted a 2015 budget to the nominally Democratic Board of Supervisors, a budget including serious cuts (though not so much in fat central admin) and a modest 2 percent pay boost for teachers who've not had one in last three years, counting the year they got a nominal salary raise more than offset by an increase in their retirement contribution. But, the Supes promptly pleaded dire poverty in this county with incomes averaging over \$105,000/year. The Supes say they will cut the budget. Now Ms. Garza and School Board are already in retreat, offering to continue the effective freeze on teacher pay. Teachers are justifiably upset and getting tired of being frankly disrespected. The work expected of them grows and grows—and unlike Police, who are paid more than teachers and are frequently paid overtime upping their incomes to well over \$100,000—teachers don't get paid overtime. They just shoulder all the additional paperwork and student/family services time voluntarily and soldier on. But, some teach-

INDEPENDENT PROGRESSIVE

ers are now so fed up they are threatening job actions—i.e., doing just what their contract requires and NO more. While teachers love their work and are generally unlikely to carry out massive job actions, particularly ones affecting students, the continued lack of appreciation for their work is seriously damaging morale, and will result in excellent teachers and staff looking for better-paying positions elsewhere. The news from the legislative session in Richmond ranges from bad to disgusting. Expanding basic health care to 3-400,000 lower income Virginians faces huge House of Delegates opposition and the promised ethics reform package is a joke, continuing to encourage limitless gifting and unregulated campaign cash. In a blatant example this corrupt model in action is legislation adopted overwhelmingly to give Dominion Power a \$400 million tax break, courtesy of us taxpayers, on investment in nuclear power. Dominion invests almost nothing in renewable energy, but pretty much owns the legislature. Check for yourself. Ask your state Delegate Ken Plum and State Senator Janet Howell if they voted for or against the windfall for Dominion, and ask them how much they received in: 1) campaign money in the last couple of years, and what was the value

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## NEWS

### Plum

FROM PAGE 6  
been more.

Although we seem to be seeing a tidal wave of getting past the laws and taboos that have prevented same-sex couples from marrying, there are many other areas of discrimination against people in the LGBT community that warrant our immediate attention. Governor McAuliffe has signed an executive order against discrimination in state employ-

ment, but the legislature needs to enact such a prohibition into state law. Criminal acts directed at persons because of their sexual orientation or gender identity need also to be included in the State's hate crime laws. I have proposed legislation in these areas in the past and will continue in the future. Marriage equality is an important step forward, but there is more to be done to ensure equal rights for all.

### Lovaas

FROM PAGE 6

of personal gifts they received from Dominion over the same time. I am not singling out Ken and Janet, because in fact nearly every single legislator in Virginia receives generous (\$2,000/year or more) in campaign money and many receive gifts as well. Your electric bills include a surcharge for investing in Virginia legislators. Is there any good news locally? Yes, there are several excellent candidates running for the Reston Association Board of Directors. You should be getting your ballots for the election—2 At-Large seats and the Hunters

Woods Rep.-early this week. RA has not been doing very well of late. It seriously needs new blood to better protect our natural resource endowment and better address the future direction of our special community, e.g., in shaping phase 2 of the Reston Master Plan, and addressing the failing, outdated air-conditioning monopoly, RELAC. Among the candidates for the 2 At-large seat, Rachel Muir and Colin Mills stand out. Lucinda Shannon, running unopposed for the Hunters Woods/Dogwood seat, will also be an outstanding addition to the Board. Don't forget to vote!

## 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](mailto:dmbinfo@fairfaxcounty.gov).

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Diana Preisler, a member of the vocal band Blue Jupiter, singer and music artist Blake Lewis, and South Lakes High School Choral Director Rita Gigliotti.



Professional beatboxer Kaila Mullady signs the shirt of Madeline Emmbert after a class on beat rhyming held in Reston's South Lakes' cafeteria.

# SingStrong for a Cause

Professional a cappella singers perform at South Lakes High School.

By RYAN DUNN  
THE CONNECTION

For three days at South Lakes High School in Reston, the music of the human voice was celebrated with the sixth annual SingStrong International Charity A Cappella Festival. This event featured five concerts, an auction, and over a dozen classes and coaching sessions from professional musicians.

Event profits supported the Alzheimer's Association and local music programs. "Alzheimer's is a disease that is least funded for finding a cure," said South Lakes High School Choral Director, Rita Gigliotti. "We are very passionate to help find a cure for this illness." Helping to put the event in operation was a team of volunteers. "Our volunteers come from all over," said event registrar Christina Parke, a resident of New York City. "Every year is different and a new experience...we see each other once a year and we are always accepting new members."

South Lakes freshman Madeline Emmbert volunteered for the event. "Our music teacher told us in advance about this event," said Emmbert. "It is awesome that all these fantastic musicians could come perform." Music styles included pop, jazz, rock, barbershop, reggae-tone, beatbox and more, all performed a cappella. Groups used only their voices to perform leads, harmonies and to vocally imitate a virtual orchestra of sounds, including jazz trumpet, classical strings, distorted electric guitar and a full drum set.

On Friday, the SingStrong held a 7 p.m. Friday Night Concert, "ACA-Idol". This was an a cappella competition for profes-



PHOTOS BY RYAN DUNN/THE CONNECTION

Second place winners of the SingStrong High School Competition, Monacan Singers, sang during the Saturday evening concert.

sional and collegiate groups in the style of American Idol. Celebrity judges gave live feedback. The show was hosted by Jonathan Minkoff, executive producer for the annual international a cappella SingStrong festival.

Held on Saturday afternoon, the SingStrong High School Competition was an opportunity for the best high school groups to compete for awards. All performances

loist was awarded to Destiny Jones, student of Henry E. Lackey High School. Best male soloist was awarded to Harrison de Wolfe, student at South Lakes High School.

SingStrong presented over a dozen classes on topics as recording techniques, stage presence, forming and directing an a cappella group, copyright law, and musical arranging. From beginners to pros, these classes were designed to help anyone interested in a cappella take their skills to the next level.

The SingStrong Saturday night main event concert featured multiple professional a cappella groups including Blue Jupiter, Stiletta, The Funx with Nate Tao, Amy "Bob" Engelhardt, and Blake Louis. Between concerts, there was a silent charity auction to benefit the Alzheimer's Association. The SingStrong Saturday concert featured an entirely separate slate of professional a cappella groups, including Classic Sounds, Grace McLean, Kaila Mullady, and Ten. The final show of the event was held Sunday.

"It has been so amazing seeing everybody here appreciating the human voice," said musician Blake Louis. A singer-songwriter and beatboxer, Louis was the runner-up on the sixth season of American Idol. The audiences gave standing ovations after the performances. "Sing Strong is in Reston because Rita Gigliotti is based in Reston," said Jonathan Minkoff, who is also a member of the vocal band Blue Jupiter.

Gigliotti expressed much appreciation to the Reston community for their support for SingStrong and the music exposure it gives to students.

To learn more about SingStrong, visit [dc.singstrong.org/](http://dc.singstrong.org/)

## CALENDAR

Send announcements to [reston@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:reston@connectionnewspapers.com). The deadline is the Friday prior to the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged.

### MONDAY/MARCH 3- FRIDAY/APRIL 11

**Artists Honored at LRA's "Winter Dreams" Exhibit.** Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Parkridge 5 Building, 10780 Parkridge Blvd., Reston.

### FRIDAY/MARCH 7

**Nature Game Night.** 7 - 8:30 p.m., Walker Nature Center, 11450 Glade Drive, Reston. Bring the whole family for a game night with a nature spin; refreshments included, reservations required by March 4. Reston Association members: \$6; Non-members: \$8. [naturecenter@reston.org](mailto:naturecenter@reston.org), or 703-476-9689 and press 5.

### SATURDAY/MARCH 8

**Used Book Sale.** 8 a.m. - 4p.m. Herndon United Methodist Church, 701 Bennett Street, Herndon. The sale will include all types of books, including: hardback books, paperback books, children's books, and cook books. CDs, DVDs, VHS tapes, and magazines will also be for sale. Proceeds from this sale will be used to fund HUMC's local, national, and international mission projects.

**Reston Contra Dance.** Beginners' workshop 7:15-8 p.m. Dance 8-10:45 p.m. Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Rd., Reston. Admission: \$9 (workshop free). Partner and experience not necessary.

**"An Evening At the Movies" with The Rainier Trio.** 7 p.m., Herndon United Methodist Church, 701 Bennett Street, Herndon. Themes from classic big-screen favorites such as Schindler's List, The Mission, and more will be played on violin, viola, and piano. (703) 707-6271. [www.herndonumc.org](http://www.herndonumc.org).

### SATURDAY/MARCH 8- SUNDAY/MARCH 30

**"Pinnochio."** Industrial Strength Theatre, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. NextStop Family Theatre presents a new adaptation of Carlo Collodi's classic story. It is adapted and directed by Paul Reisman and co-produced by Faction of Fools. [www.eldenstreetplayers.org](http://www.eldenstreetplayers.org).

### SUNDAY/MARCH 9

**Rennie Harris' RHAW** 8 p.m., at The Centerstage, Reston Community Center Hunters Woods. RHAW will showcase Dr. Rennie Harris' newest and brightest street dancers as they bring hip hop back to basics. \$15 Reston/\$30 Non-Reston. [www.restoncommunitycenter.com](http://www.restoncommunitycenter.com) or 703-476-4500.

**Acoustic Rooster and His Barnyard Band Book Reading.** 2 p.m. ArtSpace Herndon. Each Book Look event features a reading and craft project related to the book. Books will be available for purchase and signing by the author. The readings are free and open to the public, but seating is limited so reservations are recommended. Visit [www.artspaceherndon.org](http://www.artspaceherndon.org)

### WEDNESDAY/MARCH 12

**Lúnasa.** 8 p.m., at The Centerstage, Reston Community Center Hunters Woods. This group of Irishmen continues its 20-year tradition of famed Celtic music. \$20 Reston/\$40 Non-Reston. [www.restoncommunitycenter.com](http://www.restoncommunitycenter.com) or 703-476-4500.

### FRIDAY/MARCH 14

**1st Annual Casino Night and Silent Auction.** 7-11 p.m. South Lakes High School, Reston. Gaming, raffles, great prizes, Silent Auction, food, dancing and Cash Bar. All proceeds goes directly to support South Lakes High School Athletic Boosters Club. Get your tickets now as space is limited and there is no guarantee of admission at the door. <http://www.seahawkboosters.com/casinonight.htm>

## The Reston Chorale presents Reston's 50th: Celebrating the Vision and the Visionary

The Reston Chorale announces the presentation of Reston's 50th: Celebrating the Vision and the Visionary in honor of the 50th anniversary of Reston and the 100th birthday of the visionary founder, Robert E. Simon, Jr. The event will premiere the specially commissioned work, The Essential Life, by renowned composer Donald McCullough, featuring 100-plus singers of The Reston Chorale accompanied by the Amadeus Orchestra. This singular performance will take place on Sunday, March 23 at 4 p.m. at South Lakes High School Auditorium, 11400 South Lakes Drive, Reston. For more information, call 703-834-0079, email [info@restonchorale.org](mailto:info@restonchorale.org) and visit [www.RestonChorale.org](http://www.RestonChorale.org). Tickets are now on sale online for \$30/adult; \$25/Seniors (62+) and Students (13 - 17) via [www.RestonChorale.org](http://www.RestonChorale.org).

Reston's founder, Robert E. Simon, Jr. (born April 10, 1914), was also a founding member of The Reston Chorale when it began in 1967. This tribute to his vision and Reston's 50th anniversary has been in the works for months with study, logistics, rehearsals, and especially, fundraising. Donors have pledged thousands of dollars for the production of this distinctive event, but the financial goal is still to be reached. To learn more and to donate, visit [www.RestonChorale.org/support\\_the\\_chorale](http://www.RestonChorale.org/support_the_chorale), or email [restonchorale@gmail.com](mailto:restonchorale@gmail.com). Pre-



Renowned composer Donald McCullough.

senting sponsors for this special performance include The Meredith Foundation, Ruth and Gene Overton, and Craig and Valerie Dykstra. Donald McCullough is a composer and conductor whose works have been critically acclaimed throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe. As a composer, McCullough demonstrates an imaginative flexibility with works that resonate deeply with audiences. Among his many works, McCullough composed Holocaust Cantata: Songs from the Camps, giving voice to the victims of the Holocaust, and Let My People Go: A Spiritual Journey along the Underground Railroad, weaving together spirituals, code songs and first and third-person texts to depict the struggle for freedom of antebellum slaves. He is also considered one of America's pre-eminent choral conductors, with diverse experiences in directing and providing valuable insight for all variety of choirs. In addition to founding and directing the Virginia Chorale and the Virginia Symphony Chorus, McCullough conducted the Master Chorale of Washington at the Kennedy Center for more than a decade be-



fore becoming the director of the Jacksonville Symphony Chorus in Florida in 2012.

The Reston Chorale (TRC), established in 1967, is a mixed-voice chorus with a full repertoire including pops, masterworks, American classics, and new works. TRC performs signature events throughout the year in Reston and at a variety of venues including the Kennedy Center, Wolf Trap, George Mason University, Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, and has been featured along with orchestras of Fairfax, Arlington, Alexandria, Prince William, and Virginia. TRC is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization and is supported in cooperation with the Arts Council of Fairfax County, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, corporate grants, and individual donors. Governed by volunteers, the Chorale relies on the support of its members, the community, and all who value the enrichment that music brings to life. For more information, email [info@restonchorale.org](mailto:info@restonchorale.org), follow The Reston Chorale on Facebook and visit [www.RestonChorale.org](http://www.RestonChorale.org).



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# Creating a Harmonious Family Life

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

**A**s 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 ab-



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.**

solutely 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 ac-

complishments 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."

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

SEE WELLBEING, PAGE 11

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# WELLBEING

FROM PAGE 10

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."

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 important 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."

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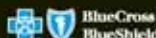
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THE CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS



# SPORTS

## Herndon Loses to Woodson in OT in Region Semifinals

### Hornets shoot 13-for-29 from free-throw line.

BY JON ROETMAN  
THE CONNECTION

**J**immy McLaughlin leaped, snatched the ball out of the air and seemingly secured a state tournament berth for the Woodson boys' basketball team.

The Woodson student section, nicknamed the "Cavalry," stormed the court at Robinson Secondary School in celebration of what they thought was dramatic region semifinal victory over Herndon. In reality, the Cavalry arrived early and could have cost the Cavaliers the game.

As it turned out, Herndon failed to capitalize on its gift of an opportunity and Woodson was indeed moving on.

The Cavaliers defeated the Hornets 63-62 in overtime on Feb. 28 in the semifinals of the 6A North region tournament. With the victory, Woodson earned a berth in the state tournament and went on to beat Lake Braddock in the region championship game. Herndon, the Conference 5 champion, which entered the contest with a 23-2 record, went home empty-handed.

**THE WIN** was an emotional one for the Cavaliers, as two Woodson students died during the week.

"We're doing this for the community," Woodson senior Michael Szabo said. "We feel like this can bring it together in a positive manner in a negative time."

Woodson head coach Doug Craig praised the Cavaliers for responding well to tough times.

"It's been a really difficult week in the community and I thought our kids really showed their character," Craig said. "To fight through and play that well on a big stage

against a great team ... and for our kids to fight through all the adversity and find a way at the end to pull out the game [was big]."

Woodson led 62-59 in overtime when Herndon's Brandon Alston was fouled while attempting a 3-point shot with 1.3 seconds remaining, resulting in three free-throw attempts. Alston made the first two but missed the third. McLaughlin grabbed the rebound and was fouled with 0.4 seconds on the clock and Woodson leading 62-61. With the Cavaliers in the double bonus, the game should have been all but over with McLaughlin shooting two free throws at the other end and Herndon needing a miracle with less than a second remaining. Instead, Woodson fans rushed the court, thinking time had expired.

Officials gathered and discussed how to handle the situation. After a few moments, officials issued Woodson a technical foul, which would give Herndon two free-throw attempts.

"That was a little stressful out there," Szabo said. "It was a little bit overwhelming thinking that [Cavalier fans] could have cost us the game when they've been there for us all year."

McLaughlin went to the line first and made one of two, extending Woodson's lead to 63-61. Herndon then sent Dorian Johnson to the line for the two technical foul shots. Johnson made the first attempt but missed the second, leaving the Hornets



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

**Herndon senior DeAndre Thomas goes up for a shot against Woodson in the 6A North region semifinals on Feb. 28.**

trailing 63-62 with 0.4 seconds on the clock. Herndon had the final possession, but the Hornets' inbound pass was swatted away and Woodson secured the win.

"You can't really plan for something like that and it's a shame," Craig said. "Our kids

were just excited. I'll take our Cavalry anytime. They've bailed us out a couple times, we figure we can bail them out."

Herndon led 26-22 at half-time. Woodson trailed by just four points despite standout point guard Eric Bowles sitting on the bench for more than 12 minutes of the first half after picking up his second foul with 4:25 remaining in the first quarter.

The Hornets opened the second half with an 8-2 run, taking a 32-24 with a Kent Auslander putback with 5:17 remaining in the third. Woodson countered with a 10-0 run to take a 34-32 lead. The teams went back-and-forth from there, with neither leading by more than five points for the remainder of the contest.

**BACK-TO-BACK 3-POINT-ERS** by Szabo gave Woodson a 50-45 lead with 3:07 remaining. The Cavaliers led 54-52 late in the fourth quarter, but Alston scored with 5.5 seconds left to force overtime.

Bowles led Woodson with 14 points. Szabo scored a career-high 13 points and went 4 of 6 from 3-point range. Tre Johnson finished with 11 points. Andy Stynchula scored nine points and grabbed 13 rebounds, and McLaughlin finished with four points and 13 rebounds and Tyler Wilson totaled eight points and seven rebounds.

Alston led Herndon with 23 points. Kent Auslander scored 12 points and DeAndre Thomas and Johnson each had 11.

Herndon made just 13 of 29 free-throw attempts.

## South Lakes Ends Season One Win Shy of States

The South Lakes boys' basketball team's strong second half of the season came to an end on Feb. 28.

The Seahawks lost to Lake Braddock 78-61 in the 6A North region semifinals at Robinson Secondary School. South Lakes finished one win shy of reaching the region championship game and earning a state berth.

Lake Braddock led 40-22 when freshman Corey Pelham buried a 3-pointer with 4:42 remaining in the third quarter. South Lakes countered with a 9-0 run to cut the Bruins' lead to 40-31, but Lake Braddock eventually pulled away and led by as many as 19 in the second half.



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

**South Lakes junior Brandon Kamga goes up against three Lake Braddock defenders during the 6A North region semifinals on Feb. 28 at Robinson Secondary School.**

Dre Puryear led South Lakes with 18 points and was named to the all-tournament team. Brandon Kamga finished with 12 points, Clayton O'Neill scored nine and Zach Pearl added eight.

Will Gregorits had 22 points and 15 rebounds for Lake Braddock. Reagan Jones scored 20 points and A.J. Alexander finished with eight points and nine rebounds.

"We have three bigs, and [South Lakes] had a situation where they tried to play two bigs and the problem is one [of ours] is open," Lake Braddock head coach Brian Metress said. "The problem we were having was trying to diagnose which guy was open. I thought early in the game it was A.J., middle of the game it was Reagan, and the end of the game

it was Will. You just have to pick your poison."

South Lakes lost its first three games of the season and dropped to 6-7 with a loss to Woodson on Jan. 15. From that point, the Seahawks won their next six games and 13 of their final 15. South Lakes finished with a 19-9 record, including a 60-59 victory over Hayfield in the Conference 6 championship game on Feb. 22 at Fairfax High School.

The Seahawks beat West Potomac in the opening round of regionals on Feb. 24 and defeated Robinson in the quarterfinals the following night.

— JON ROETMAN



## SPORTS

The South Lakes boys' 4x800 relay team finished sixth at the 6A state indoor track meet.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

### Ten South Lakes Indoor Track Athletes Earn All-State

Senior Daniel Johnsen garnered all-state honors in one individual event and two relays for South Lakes at the VHSL 6A indoor track and field championships Feb. 27-March 1 at the Boo Williams Sportsplex in Hampton.

The girls' team finished 12th while the boys were 10th out of 52 schools represented.

Johnsen ran a personal-best time of 1:06.33 to finish third in the 500 meters. He teamed with seniors Michael Kerr, Khayri Denny and Luis Rivas to finish fourth in the 4x400 meter relay (3:28.23). Johnsen, Kerr, Rivas and junior Andrew McCool ran 8:06.12 for sixth in the 4x800 meter relay.

Both Denny and senior Danielle Hale finished third in their respective divisions of the long jump. Denny had a jump of 22-03 while Hale jumped 17-08.25.

Junior Delaney Wickman had a personal-best time of 1:16.65 in the 500 meters for sixth. She teamed

with senior Grace Gillen, junior Claire Nieusma and sophomore Golden Kumi-Darfour for a season-best time of 4:00.36 and fourth place in the 4x400 meter relay.

The girls' 4x800 team of sophomores Kumi-Darfour, Monica Lannen, and seniors Gillen and Abby Reinhold ran a school-record 9:34.74 for seventh place. The previous mark of 9:39.48 was set in February 2013.

Hale placed eighth in the girls' triple jump (36-03) and junior Comfort Reed took ninth (35-11.5).

Freshman Devyn Jones finished ninth in the girls' 55-meter hurdles with a personal-best time of 8.77.

Denny finished 13th in the 55 meters (6.77); Kumi-Darfour finished ninth in the girls' 500 meters (1:17.79); and the boys' 4x200 relay team (seniors Ben O'Connor, Marcus Harrell, Denny, junior Sam Arpee) placed 10th with a time of 1:35.08.

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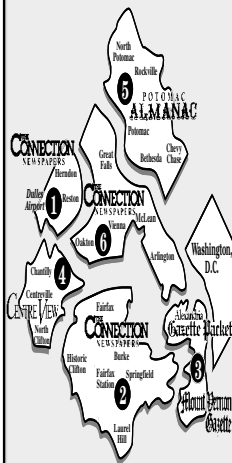
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## FAITH

# Be a Hero! A Purim message.

BY RABBI LEIBEL FAJNLAND  
DIRECTOR OF CHABAD OF RESTON-  
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Close your eyes and imagine the Jewish nation in Persian times (519-465 BC), unwanted guests of an frosty host. An exiled nation still licking its wounds following Nebuchadnezzar - King of Babylons sacking of Jerusalem, and the destruction of Solomon's Temple a mere fifty years prior.

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Why does Haman seek to destroy the Jewish People? Very simple, the Jews were different! As he is quoted in the Scroll of Esther petitioning the king, "There is one nation scattered and dispersed among the peoples, their customs are different from those of all other people... and it is not to the benefit of the king to tolerate them".

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Esther, and her cousin Mordechai become heroes, while Haman suffers an ignominious defeat, hanged on the very same tree he had prepared to hang Moredechai.

Purim is the story of goodness and decency in a world gone mad. When simply being different is a cause for suspicion and worse. The Jewish People know the story well. In a Diaspora for Two thousand years it has seen its share of ups and downs.

At times the spirit of goodness and brotherhood shines bright. At other times, the situation looks bleak and dire. But in the end goodness prevails, for in the battle between good and wicked, goodness will always prevail. Such is its nature.

The question we must ask ourselves is this, in the fight to bring goodliness and G-dliness into our world, in our own fight against evil and injustice, will we be the heroes? The Mordechai and Esther? Or will we relegate ourselves to be mere spectators?

For all Purim related questions and information visit [www.chabadrh.org/purim](http://www.chabadrh.org/purim)

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