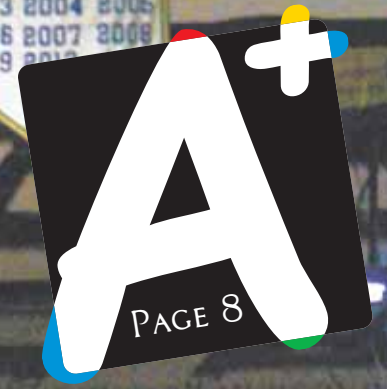


Springfield CONNECTION

Franconia ❖ Kingstowne ❖ Newington



Going to Oakton For All-Star Game

SPORTS, PAGE 12

West Springfield senior Amy Berglund will compete in the 10th Suburban Classic girls' basketball all-star game on Sunday, March 23 at Oakton High School.

Community Welcomes Homeless Into New Homes

NEWS, PAGE 5

Springfield Art Guild Holds a Birthday Party

NEWS, PAGE 11

FOLLOW ON TWITTER: @SPRCONNECTION

ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 10 ❖ SPORTS, PAGE 12 ❖ CLASSIFIED, PAGE 13

PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Rep. Gerry Connolly speaks at his 20th annual St. Patrick's Day Fete.

Connolly Kicks Off His 2014 Campaign

Pledging to continue to fight on Capitol Hill for the values and rights of Northern Virginians, Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11) kicked off his campaign for a fourth term in the U.S. House of Representatives Monday night before a packed house of supporters at his 20th annual St. Patrick's Day Fete. More than 1,000 supporters from Fairfax, Prince William, and across Northern Virginia defied the

aftermath of the region's latest snowfall, which dropped between 5 and 10 inches across Fairfax, to attend Northern Virginia's largest annual Democratic gathering.

Introduced by Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova, Connolly praised the assembled Democrats, elected officials, and candidates for "transforming the political landscape of Virginia." Connolly reaffirmed his commitment to a woman's right to choose, access to health care, and equal protection under the law for all Americans. He also reiterated his support for federal workers and "ensuring that the right to vote is universal, early, easy, and for everyone." Many attendees cast their votes in a straw poll measuring support among the 11 Democrats seeking the Democratic nomination to succeed retiring Rep. Jim Moran as Virginia's 8th District congressman. Don Beyer topped the field, followed by Charniele Herring, Lavern Chatman, and Adam Ebbin.

Beyer, the former lieutenant governor and Ambassador to Switzerland, garnered 34 percent of the vote from the assembled Democrats for the 8th Congressional District nomination followed by Herring, a Virginia delegate and former state Democratic Party chair with 13 percent, Chatman, the former NoVA Urban League president with 12 percent, and Ebbin, a state senator, with 11 percent.

Alexandria Mayor Bill Euille and Virginia Delegates Patrick Hope and Alfonso Lopez each received 7 percent of the votes cast, while talk show host and lawyer Mark Levine got 6 percent. Candidates Satish Korpe, Bruce Shuttleworth, Nancy Najarian, and Derek Hyra each received 1 percent or less.

Connolly was joined on stage by Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring, Fairfax County supervisors, state senators and delegates, and many other elected officials and candidates from across Northern Virginia. Attendees at the annual event dined on a full spread of traditional Irish fare and enjoyed Irish music at the annual event which began two decades ago as a small gathering in Connolly's backyard when he first ran for a seat on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. The event has grown to be the largest annual political event in Northern Virginia. An army of dedicated community activists, assisted by the Fairfax County Fire Fighters and others, come together year after year to help plan and stage the event on what Connolly calls his "holiest day of the year."

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Mr. Horejsi Goes to Richmond

In the fight for social justice with patience and persistence.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

Every year, dozens of high-priced lobbyists descend on Virginia's state capitol.

Some tantalize with promises of business investment and jobs; others represent important campaign contributors, while some say they can deliver votes from key constituencies.

They are often joined by Vienna resident John Horejsi, 71, who offers legislators, a simple, singular opportunity: to do the right thing for the socially disadvantaged.

Part Mr. Smith Goes to Washington, part Don Quixote tilting at windmills, Horejsi is regarded by many lawmakers as a man of conviction and persistence.

Those traits often give him the credibility other lobbyists lack, when his idealistic — and sometimes naïve — pleas for social justice collide with more powerful and persuasive agendas.

And like Jefferson Smith — the character played by Jimmy Stewart in Frank Capra's timeless parable of Good vs. Evil — Horejsi believes that lawmakers have a moral imperative to care about the powerless and voiceless, the "least among us."

"There are times when he's a little bit like Robin Hood," said state Sen. Barbara Favola (D-31), a potent ally who has helped Horejsi advance legislation that helps the poor, the homeless, prisoners and children. "The difference is that John doesn't have a bow and arrow to convince the rich to help the poor."

"I guess that's true. I don't have a bow and arrow, and there are times I feel like Mr. Smith in Richmond," Horejsi said, smiling. Like Jefferson Smith, Horejsi said he wouldn't give "two cents for all the fancy rules if, behind them, they didn't have a little bit of plain, ordinary, everyday kindness, and a little looking out for the other fella too."

After speaking to a group about homelessness and hunger during a Catholic Charities conference in 1981, Horejsi found others willing to fight for "the other fella" in Richmond. He and a "ragtag band" of eight formed Social Action Linking



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

The SALT "gang" on one of many trips to Richmond. Bob Stewart of Chantilly, John Horejsi, David Balducci of Arlington, a national work sharing expert, and Maddie Lupu gather with Sen. George Barker (D-39) (second from right), who worked with Sen. Bill Stanley and various coalitions and agencies to push work sharing legislation through this year.

Together, commonly known as "SALT."

What began with a few social justice pioneers is now one of the most active and influential nonpartisan advocacy groups from Northern Virginia with 1,200-plus active members.

SALT's mission is simple: keep social justice issues front and center with Virginia lawmakers. But the group's legislative initiatives touch a staggeringly wide range of public welfare issues. Since the early 1980s, SALT has introduced bills benefitting the homeless, children, families, employees who face discrimination and other low-income Virginians who lack a secure safety net.

According to Robert Stewart, a founding member of SALT, members bring "the social, economic and justice teachings of their faith to bear on public policy and legislation."

Whether lawmakers support SALT's message or not, many respect the messenger, who has a knack for being pushy without being rude and insolent.

"He is a very nice man with a big heart. He states the way we all wish the world would be," said Del. David Albo (R-42), the most senior Republican from Northern Virginia in Richmond. "But the world is not always like the way we want it to be."

"(His) work with the Homeless Intervention Program (HIP) and SALT alone has done more good for more people than most citizens are capable of imagining," said Del. Ken Plum (D-36), who has served in the Virginia legislature since 1982.

As an elected official, Plum said he hears regularly from constituents who sometimes lack the basic necessities in life.

"I know what John's activism over the years has meant to Northern Virginians," Plum said.

A TRANSFORMING MOMENT

Like most movements that have a profound and lasting impact, SALT was years in the making.

For Horejsi, the seeds of compassion were planted early.

He was born and raised in the tiny farming town of Bechyn, Minn. — which listed its population as 30 in the 1920 U.S. Census. Shortly after World War II, Horejsi's mother died and his father was unable to care for him.

He was taken in by impoverished relatives, who treated him, he said, with kindness.

"When my mother died everything changed. Since my father was unable to care for me, I was placed into the state social services Kinship Care system," Horejsi said.

"Who knows what would have happened to me or where I would be today without their help and the support of social services. Being aware of my personal situation sensitized me and always made me feel like I should do something," he said.

Horejsi said another powerful event in his life was meeting a 16-year-old homeless teen in Alexandria in 1985. When the girl's mother was laid off from her job, they became homeless, living out of their car for a short time before moving to a homeless shelter for six months.

"After meeting her, I felt strongly that we should help the homeless. That's when we started our successful advocacy for the Homeless Intervention Program (HIP) to prevent homelessness," Horejsi said.

Thanks to programs and services available to the homeless, the young woman went on to study with the Virginia Ballet School and Company and earned a law degree from Catholic University in 1993.

Horejsi said he will never forget her. "In fact, many people might know her name today, because they voted her into office," Horejsi said.

Q&A with John Horejsi

Q: Where did you grow up?

A: "I was born and grew up in a small Czech community called Bechyn, Minnesota — named after Bechyn located south of Prague in the Czech Republic, and the place where my family immigrated from to settle in Minnesota. Bechyn is located about 40 miles from the South Dakota border in southwest Minnesota."



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

John Horejsi, a Vienna resident and founder of SALT, with his wife Mariann.

Q: Who is your hero?

A: "Hubert Horatio Humphrey — vice president from 1965-69 under President Lyndon B. Johnson. He best exemplified 'selfless and devoted service in the cause of human dignity for the poor.' He knew that a government that cares about the unfortunate is a government that deserves our respect. He understood that compassion is not weakness and that concern for the unfortunate is not socialism."

Q: What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

A: Enjoy Vienna restaurants, visiting family and friends in Minnesota during Bechyn CzechFest celebration of Czech heritage/culture during the summer, and spending time with granddaughter in Virginia Beach. Also, love visiting friends in the Czech Republic. I also love to attend weekly free "Concerts on the Green" in Vienna during the summer Concert series.

Q: What's the best advice anyone ever gave you?

A: A workplace Motivational Speaker advised that if your impact on this world is limited because you're not allowed to practice your social work training and skills, on your job, then you should use your skills to volunteer on your own time to make a difference. When I contacted then Supervisor Jim Scott, he immediately appointed me to the Fairfax County Social Services Advisory Board, and the Bishop of Arlington appointed me to the Catholic Charities Board of Arlington Diocese. From there, the founding of SALT (Social Action Linking Together) and many advocacy successes followed.

Q: What is the best advice you've given your children?

A: Make a difference with your life by working with people - to serve; not to be served.

The homeless teen Horejsi met was Charneille Herring, who has served as a Democrat in the Virginia House of Delegates, representing the 46th district, since 2009. In December 2012, she became the first African-American elected chair of the Democratic Party of Richmond.

"These kinds of life events cause you to think, 'What are you doing for others?'"

A MAJOR VICTORY; A STUNNING DEFEAT

The political culture in Richmond is frequently compared to a Greek tragedy — most of the plot twists and turns happen off stage. Those who don't know how the system works, or who don't know how to work the system, soon get frustrated and give up.

"Richmond is not constituent-friendly," Horejsi said. "It is very frustrating and disappointing that many of our bills pass the Senate with overwhelming bipartisan support and then die in some sub-com-

mittee."

The political winds are constantly shifting, and Horejsi said he and other SALT advocates must constantly monitor bills during session, so they have an opportunity to educate legislators and influence their votes.

"This year started off as an amazing surprise," Horejsi said. "During our first visit we met with 11 legislators — not just their aides. This was a record."

"There seemed to be a new era of good feeling and cooperation. Almost all our bills began to pass quickly through assigned subcommittees and then full committees unanimously with lightning speed," Horejsi said.

But during "crossover" — when bills pass from the Senate to the House — several SALT-backed bills stalled, getting caught in the larger political crossfire that goes hand-in-hand with crossover.

Take Medicaid expansion, for ex

SEE SOCIAL JUSTICE, PAGE 4

Fighting for Social Justice with Patience and Persistence

FROM PAGE 3

ample, which was SALT's number one priority this session.

On Saturday, March 8, the General Assembly adjourned its 60-day session, yet lawmakers left Richmond without passing Democratic Gov. Terry McAuliffe's number one priority — a \$96 billion budget that included expanding Medicaid eligibility for roughly 400,000 Virginia residents.

Republicans in the GOP-controlled House opposed the expansion, saying the rapidly-growing program still needs reform, and the debate should be separated from the budget.

A key part of the new federal health care law, the issue deadlocked the GOP-controlled House and the Democratically-controlled Senate. In response, McAuliffe immediately called for a special session to begin in two weeks.

SALT members argue that turning down roughly \$5 million a day in federal funds associated with expanded Medicaid eligibility could have severe consequences, such as shutting down many hospitals in rural communities.

SALT also lost its battle to "Ban the Box." If passed, Virginia would have joined the growing number of states that give job applicants with a prior criminal conviction a "fair chance" at getting a job.

The legislation, filed by Del. Rob Krupicka (D-45), would have removed the box on applications for state jobs that asks people if they have been convicted of a felony.

"This is not about hiding an individual's past," Krupicka said in a letter to constituents, noting that employers can still ask about criminal history during the interview process.

"All this bill aims to do is help offenders reach more job interviews that hopefully will lead to more jobs ... In Alexandria alone, 13 people are released from jail every day. In trying to re-integrate into society, finding employment can be one of the most useful factors in reducing recidivism rates," Krupicka said.

Horejsi called Ban the Box an "essential" component of any meaningful program designed to help former prisoners reenter society, and said he was extremely disheartened when it failed — at the 11th hour — in the House Courts of Jus-

tice Committee, chaired by Del. Dave Albo.

"I wish the world was like John (envisioning it), but taxpayers are maxed out, and there are violent people among us that the only place safe is to have them in prison," Albo said in an interview Sunday. "We have limited money and there are bad guys out there that want to hurt people. John's positions are always what we could do with unlimited money and assume that all criminals could be rehabilitated."

In the plus column, SALT was successful in moving work share legislation through the General Assembly and on to the governor's desk for his signature.

State Senators George Barker (D-39) and Bill Stanley (R-20) were instrumental in getting the legislation passed this year, after it failed last year. Horejsi said both senators, and SALT advocates, worked closely with the Virginia Employment Commission to ensure that the bill works with current VEC programs.

The program lessens the impact of layoffs by allowing employers to reduce the hours of their existing work force instead of letting employees go. A kind of unemploy-

ment insurance in reverse, the program comes with free federal dollars to keep workers in their jobs instead of supporting them after they're laid off.

"Having been through the recession and recent slight increases in Virginia unemployment rates as federal sequestration takes effect, it is important that we give Virginia businesses all the tools we can to help them and their employees get through challenging times. This bill does that," Barker said in an interview at the beginning of this year's legislative session.

Horejsi admits there are times when he gets discouraged by "politics as usual."

"What keeps me going are notes like this, from a parishioner of St. Anne's," Horejsi said:

"John, I just want you to know I appreciate all of these emails you send. I was at St. Ann's community weekend today. I saw your sign-up sheet. I feel bad that with all that is going on with my life right now, that I haven't had time to help, but please keep the emails coming. I enjoy your posts. Every once in a while it is a helpful reminder that there are others who care."

"I truly believe there is always hope," Horejsi said, after the General Assembly session ended. "For example, Sen. Jill Vogel, the only Republican senator to vote for our Ban the Box bill during a lively debate, made a beautiful and inspiring speech about some of her most loyal employees being those with former convictions."

Horejsi is already gearing up for next year's session, studying legislation and organizing constituent education meetings.

Despite the sometimes overwhelming odds against social justice bills, Horejsi said he refuses to let social justice issues become submerged in the tide of legislation that benefits only wealthy corporations and constituents.

"Legislators have told us that what they really respect about us is that we're not asking anything for ourselves," Horejsi said. "We're asking on behalf of those who are the most desperate and in the greatest need ... That's why SALT will remain intimately involved in the process."

For more information on SALT, and how to get involved, visit the SALT website at www.S-A-L-T.org.



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Matthew Poggi, MD, Medical Director



Community Welcomes Homeless Into New Homes

PHOTOS BY JANELLE GERMANOS/THE CONNECTION

FACETS TRIUMPH II Housing is part of the 100,000 homes campaign.

By JANELLE GERMANOS
THE CONNECTION

As part of the 100,000 Homes Campaign, FACETS welcomed 18 previously chronically homeless individuals into housing on March 18 at a housewarming celebration.

"These are the days that I love, love, love my job because we get to celebrate welcoming home 18 people who have been homeless for many years and finally have housing. We are so excited about that," said Amanda Andere, the executive director of FACETS.

100,000 Homes is a national movement to house 100,000 chronically homeless individuals. Last year during the 100,000 Homes Fairfax Registry Week, FACETS joined several other organizations in going out into the community and interviewing homeless people.

"I'm so proud today to say a year later, we didn't just go out and talk to people and create a registry list, we created a plan, we took action. We had a goal of housing 50 of our most vulnerable in our community. With our partners in the room today, we housed 45 people," Andere said.

The 18 previously homeless individuals moved into housing this month by FACETS are now part of TRIUMPH II Housing, funded by a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant.

Organizations such as Gracing Spaces have helped to furnish apartments that are part of TRIUMPH II Housing.

"It just helps them get a first leg-up and a fresh start," said Kathie Baumgart, director of Gracing Spaces.

Andere said that while programs like shelters are important, the community needs to focus on providing permanent housing



David Vernon recently moved into the FACETS TRIUMPH II Housing program, which houses individuals who were previously chronically homeless. In this picture, Elsbeth Hoff of the Gracing Spaces program greets Vernon with a donation basket at the housewarming celebration welcoming 18 previously homeless clients into their homes.

for those who are homeless.

"If we want to make change in our community, we have to figure out how we are going to end homelessness and that is through moving people into housing," she said.

Sandra Perry, 29, a FACETS client who just moved into TRIUMPH II housing, shared her story at the housewarming event.

Perry, who grew up in the Mount Vernon area, says her family had alcohol addictions, which led to Perry entering the foster care system.

"I pretty much had to find my own way. I am a product of an addict," Perry said.

Although she has faced homelessness and used to sleep in the woods, Perry said she is making the best of her situation.

"Without the people in FACETS and the other organizations that are helping these people, honestly I wouldn't be standing here right now," she said. "People do appreciate everything you guys are doing. I'm very grateful."

Perry welcomed attendees of the housewarming event into her apartment, which

was decorated and put together thanks to Gracing Spaces.

David Vernon also opened his new apartment up to visitors.

"I really like it here," Vernon said.

Andere said FACETS is growing and moving in the right direction.

"Five years ago when I started at FACETS, we had just spent a year moving nine

people into housing. And then we moved in 10. Just this last month, we moved in 18," she said.

Of the almost 2,900 homeless people in Fairfax County, 14 percent are chronically homeless. As the 100,000 Homes Campaign moves forward, organizations like FACETS are working to house these chronically homeless individuals.



FACETS executive director Amanda Andere stands with Sandra Perry in Perry's new apartment.



Sandra Perry poses in her new bedroom at the FACETS TRIUMPH II Housing program. Perry shared her story of homelessness at a housewarming celebration on March 18.

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Income Gap Alive and Well

Statistics make life in the area sound idyllic, but many families are left out in the land of plenty.

Northern Virginia is a place of wonder and plenty. So says the New York Times this past week in, "Income Gap Meet the Longevity Gap," (March 15, 2014).

Fairfax County is cited as place whose residents "are among the longest-lived in the country," and compared to McDowell County, W.Va., where residents have one of the shortest life expectancies. In Fairfax, "men have an average life expectancy of 82 years and women, 85, about the same as in Sweden. In McDowell, the averages are 64 and 73, about the same as in Iraq."

If you are reading this, chances are that the Connection was delivered to your single family home in an affluent neighborhood. In fact, many of us do live in the Northern Virginia described in the New York Times. All it takes is money.

"In Fairfax, there are ample doctors, hospi-

tals, recreation centers, shops, restaurants, grocery stores, nursing homes and day care centers, with public and private entities providing cradle-to-grave services to prosperous communities."

But here is where the crack in the wall appears: "The jobs tend to be good jobs, providing health insurance and pensions, even if there is a growing low-wage work force of health aides, janitors, fast-food workers and the like."

In Fairfax County Public Schools, more than 49,000 of the 185,000 students are poor enough to qualify for subsidized or free meals. In Fairfax County, more than 100,000 people lack health insurance, including 35,000 who could be covered now at no cost to themselves or the state if they lived in West Virginia because West Virginia has embraced the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, so its poorest residents do have access to health care. Not so in Virginia.

In Northern Virginia, we have our own income gap, and likely our own longevity gap. In Northern Virginia, we have a health care crisis. In Northern Virginia, we do have an affordable housing crisis.

Tens of thousands of working poor people in Northern Virginia, families with at least one full time job, cannot afford to rent an apartment. Earnings of at least \$1,100 a week would be required to afford market rate rent in Fairfax County according to the Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance. But the county's 50,000 retail workers, for example, average about \$635 a week according to the Virginia Employment Commission. The county's 40,000-plus food service workers average \$415 a week. Even the county's 38,000 local government employees average \$950 weekly, a stretch in this area.

To read the story in the New York Times, go to www.NYTimes.com and search "income gap."

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Celebrating Inclusion Board of Supervisors Names March Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Inclusion Month.

BY SUPERVISOR JOHN C. COOK
(R-BRADDOCK DISTRICT)



The Board of Supervisors has designated March "Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Inclusion Month" in Fairfax County.

Both those with disabilities and those without have their lives enriched when people with disabilities are fully included in the community. This special month seeks to help those with disabilities find ways to be involved in the community, and bring awareness to others of these engaged neighbors.

On March 29, a special movement of inclusion will take place. In Fairfax County and in communities across the country, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities will spend time doing things they love out in the community. The ARC, an organization that advocates for and serves people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our

area, explains that this "simple day out and about is designed to help raise awareness and generate some conversation about people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This one-day move-

ment will serve to harness our collective power to gain allies, foster understanding, dispel myths and encourage a greater understanding among people without a disability." The ARC of Northern Virginia provides many resources to people with disabilities in our area including support for families, employment programs, and leisure and recreational programs.

An organization here in Braddock that also offers services for adults with life-long disabilities is SPARC (Specially Adapted Resource Club). By providing a different solution for long-term care, SPARC helps parents answer the difficult question "What will my adult child with disabilities do

after high school graduation? The club focuses on offering life-skill and vocation skill development as the club members learn to become self-advocates. Demand for these services is so high that the club has a waiting list of individuals that would like to join.

In addition to the great resources available through the ARC of Northern Virginia and SPARC, Fairfax County offers opportunities for community involvement for individuals with disabilities. The County assists these community members through increased transportation, training, community advocacy, and more. The John Hudson Internship Program is a great example. This paid internship program in Fairfax County Government is for college students and recent graduates with disabilities, and is accepting applications through April 13.

All of these organizations seek to empower individuals as they

move toward a more independent life. Whether or not intellectual or developmental disabilities directly affect your family, this is a community issue that affects all of us. I am confident through these initiatives and more we can develop strong partnerships to improve lives, so let's continue the discussion here in Fairfax County about steps we can take to make our area more inclusive. We should use this celebration as an opportunity to strive for an inviting and engaging community.

For more information on The ARC of Northern Virginia please visit www.thearcfnova.org. For more information on SPARC please visit www.sparcsolutions.org. For information about resources available for those with disabilities in our area, please visit the Fairfax County Long Term Care Coordinating Council website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/lccc/.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Commending Election Officials During Sunshine Week

To the Editor:

During this year's Sunshine Week, the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area salutes the Fairfax County Electoral Board, General Registrar and employees of the Fairfax County Office of

Elections for their transparency and willingness to share information with the public in the follow-up to the 2013 general election.

Their handling of the election reporting, canvass, provisional ballot determinations and re-

counts in the races for Virginia Attorney General and 33rd District Senate seats exemplified the best principles of open government. The Office of Elections frequently published updates on election reporting problems and the ex-

tended provisional ballot determination process, later on providing details about the progress of the recounts, all the while describing the safeguards in place to protect the integrity of the ballot.

That integrity is essential for our

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 7

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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 6

system of government to work.

This is why during Sunshine Week we commend the Fairfax County Office of Elections for sharing important voting results and information with the residents of Fairfax County, detailing exactly how their votes in these important elections were counted and protected.

Jones and Helen Kelly,
Co-Presidents
League of Women Voters
of the Fairfax Area

Saying 'No' With No Alternative

To the Editor:

Thank you for your considerate opinion that a vote against Medicaid expansion is a vote against Virginia. This opinion unfortunately gets little attention in the debate.

Those opposed to health care for the working poor in Virginia also opposed an increase in the minimum wage, which has not been increased at the Federal level since 2009.

And there is no logic to their reasoning why they oppose an expansion in health care coverage for as many as 400,000 Vir-

ginians. Nor do they offer an acceptable alternative.

Bruce Neilson
Fairfax

Not Cute at All

To the Editor:

There you go again, Mary, spotting that "free" federal money ["Voting against Virginia?" - Connection, March 12-18, 2014]. Don't you realize that many, if not most, of your readers see through your flowery attempts to sell an imaginary utopia? I mean, it used to be cute to read your "pie in the

sky" collectivist fantasies when one could assume that your "intentions were good." But that same old intellectually deficient, emotional appeal doesn't manage to pass the sniff test anymore. It isn't cute at all, but rather sad; for those that unknowingly read your predictable, shortsighted and poorly vetted "opinion" with the hope that there is a feasible, sustainable solution to be found in there somewhere. But also rather insulting; that you do not realize that most of your readers are not so gullible. At least the Connection is "free;" even if federal money isn't.

Brent Emory
Vienna

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“I'm Isabel and I like to dance.”

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Art Educators, Galleries Celebrate Youth Art Month

Experts say art can teach valuable life skills.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Brightly colored self-portraits, landscapes dotted with spring flowers and hand-carved sculptures fill a gallery at the McLean Project for the Arts in McLean. All of the art was created by local school children. Meanwhile, in Alexandria, parents and tots dip their fingers in glue, clay and paint to create collages, sculptures and paintings.

“It is a true delight to see parents and children making things together in the studio. Joy is found in the stuff they make — the collages, paintings, drawings and sculptures — as well as the more intangible things we build: relationships, confidence, creativity, persistence and the many ways we make meaning through art,” said Kathryn Horn Coneway of Art at the Center in Mount Vernon.

These are just some of the local art activities for children. In fact, Youth Art Month is an annual observance held each March to emphasize the value of art and art education. This year's theme is “Start With Art, Learn for Life,” which was chosen by the Council for Art Education, a sponsor of Youth Art Month.

Local art educators are using the month as an opportunity to emphasize the importance of art education and raise awareness about the important life skills it can build.

“We believe art is important to study for its inherent value, but art also promotes life skills, including creativity, problem solving, determination, concentration, collaboration and confidence,” said Samantha Marques-Mordkofsky, education and outreach manager for the Arlington Arts Center in Arlington. “Regardless of what field a child pursues later in life, these skills will translate and he or she will be better rounded because of ... art. We also offer multidisciplinary classes like Book Illustration, Amazing Architects & Engineers, and Murals: Big Art, Big Ideas where students have the opportunity to master technical skills in art while simultaneously learning about other subjects.”

“What our art educators have known for many years research is now confirming,” said Benita Cathey, director of admissions at Grace Episcopal School in Alexandria. “Art helps develop critical thinking and reading skills. Art education is vital because it builds concentration, motivation and confidence.”

Jorge Luis Somarriba, art teacher and artist-in-residence at Norwood School in Bethesda, Md., says the school is a community of artists. “We believe in a process-oriented and child-centered philosophy,” he said. “Art nurtures self-confidence through self-discovery and personal visual expression. Art education is instrumental in the holistic development of a human being: spiritual, mental, emotional and physical. Art making develops the right brain, empowering individuals to become creative, problem-solvers who may think ‘outside the box.’”

Experts said art education also develops self-expression and an appreciation for the work of others. “Elementary school students create art with such unbridled enthusiasm for painting, drawing and creating things,” said Dabney Cortina, communications director for the McLean Project for the Arts. “I think it's because they haven't been told that there is anything wrong with how they create art. Currently going on is our youth art show featuring Fairfax County Public Schools in the McLean area. It is incredible to look at. You see the talent they have. It is totally amazing.”

Eileen Lyons, chair of the Fine Arts Department at Connelly School of the Holy Child in Potomac, Md., said that the arts are a vital part of the school's curriculum. “Arts

education helps students learn how to solve problems in unique ways and it deepens their overall learning experience,” she said. “Through collaboration and cross-curricular projects, teachers at Holy Child work closely together to engage students in the arts on many different levels. Art teachers collaborate with language, social studies, English and geometry teachers to bring deeper meaning to learning.”

For example, said Lyons, on a recent trip to the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C., art and French teachers worked together to bring the Van Gogh Exhibition to life in both English and French.

Stacie Steinke, chair of the Arts Department at The Madeira School in McLean suggests art education might not be taken as seriously as other disciplines. “Schools in general have been responding to trends that you need more science and math education and have been teaching to tests. Not at Madeira, but at some other schools, art education has diminished,” she said. “We look at arts as a process. Our students learn to work effectively with others. Our approach draws on a student's natural curiosity, ability to perceive art in different forms and ability to think spatially. They develop cognitive growth, so they learn to see how parts relate to a whole.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MADEIRA SCHOOL

A student at The Madeira School in McLean enjoys art in the school's art room. Stacie Steinke, chair of the Arts Department, says the school's approach to art draws on a student's natural curiosity, ability to perceive art in different forms and ability to think spatially.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MCLEAN PROJECT FOR THE ARTS

Visitors look at art created by students from Fairfax County Public Schools in the McLean area as part of the McLean Project for the Arts' youth art show.

Greenspring resident, Marie Warnock, reads to students at Crestwood.



Greenspring Residents Donate 600 Books, Read to Local Children

Residents at Greenspring retirement community recently donated 600 books to Crestwood Elementary School in Springfield. On Friday, Feb. 28, several residents visited Crestwood and read some of the donated Dr. Seuss books to first and second graders in recognition of Dr. Seuss Day and also Read Across America Day, as sponsored by the NEA (officially Monday, March 3).

About 400 residents at Greenspring retirement community in Springfield identify themselves as Catholics. Over the past year, the Catholic residents have been raising money to provide books to students at a

nearby elementary school. They have worked in partnership with Scholastic to ensure that the students at Crestwood Elementary School will be able to have appropriate grade-level books that they can call their own.

Greenspring resident Paul Quinn, of the Catholic Council at the community, was integral in the development of the program; he indicates that about \$2400 was raised for this initiative.

Crestwood Elementary School is made up of about 600 students in Kindergarten through sixth grades.

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com



PHOTOS BY JESSICA MCKAY

Greenspring resident, Paul Quinn, reads to students at Crestwood. Quinn, of the Catholic Council at Greenspring, was integral in the development of the reading program; he indicates that about \$2400 was raised for this initiative.

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CALENDAR

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



Come out to the Northern Virginia's Premier Party-Planning Expo on March 23 for all of your party needs at the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia.

THURSDAY/MARCH 20

"Death at The Devereux." Doors open at 7 p.m. with hors d'oeuvre, show starts at 8. Clifton Town Meeting Hall, 12641 Chapel Road, Clifton. Tickets include dinner and the show and are \$35. The Clifton Dinner Theater spring performance is a musical murder mystery comedy set in the 1920's.

Annie Jr.! The Musical. 7 p.m. Kings Glen Elementary, 5401 Danbury Forest Drive, Springfield. Tickets cost \$4 in advance and \$5 at the door. Call 703-239-4000 today to purchase tickets in advance.

FRIDAY/MARCH 21- SATURDAY/MARCH 22

"The Sound of Music." Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m. The Church of the Good Shepherd, 9350 Braddock Road, Burke. Join in and watch the all time classic musical with family and friends. Tickets are available at the door or at [HTTP://GSPSOUNDOFMUSIC.BPT.ME](http://GSPSOUNDOFMUSIC.BPT.ME)

FRIDAY/MARCH 21

"Death at The Devereux." Doors open at 7 p.m. with hors d'oeuvre, show starts at 8. Clifton Town Meeting Hall, 12641 Chapel Road, Clifton. Tickets include dinner and the show and are \$40. The Clifton Dinner Theater spring performance is a musical murder mystery comedy set in the 1920's.

SATURDAY/MARCH 22

The Annual Antiques & Trinkets Appraisal Show. 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Verbal appraisals given by six appraisers. \$5.00 admission (1 item included), \$3.00 each additional item (limit 2).

Shining Night: A Portrait of Composer Morten Lauridsen. 2:15 p.m. The Angelika Film Center in the Mosaic District, 2911 District Avenue, Fairfax. Screening of this award-winning documentary film, including

a post-film discussion with Mr. Lauridsen. Tickets \$20 at the door or \$18 in advance

on www.fairfaxchoralsociety.org
"Death at The Devereux." Doors open at 7 p.m. with hors d'oeuvre, show starts at 8. Clifton Town Meeting Hall, 12641 Chapel Road, Clifton. Tickets include dinner and the show and are \$40. The Clifton Dinner Theater spring performance is a musical murder mystery comedy set in the 1920's.

The Fairfax Symphony Up Close and Personal. 8 p.m. GMU Harris Theater, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of English composer Benjamin Britten, set in a framework of works traditional and modern.

Gershwin, By George! 8 p.m. Fairfax High School, 3501 Rebel Run, Fairfax. In 1914 a sixteen year old named George Gershwin quit high school to become a "Tin Pan Alley song plugger." One hundred years later, we celebrate this American icon's contribution to the world of music, in an all-Gershwin program featuring his many songs and symphonic work, produced during his tragically short but prolific career.

SUNDAY/MARCH 23

Northern Virginia's Premier Party-Planning Expo. 12-4 p.m. Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. If you're planning a milestone celebration, the NoVA Simcha Expo is your all-in-one shopping experience. Free admission and free parking. Everyone welcome. Vendors include: DJs, photographers, photo booth, entertainment, venues, invitations and decorations, caterers, make-up artists, event planners and more! 703-323-0880.

The Fairfax Symphony Up Close and Personal. 2 p.m. GMU Harris Theater, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of English composer Benjamin Britten, set in a framework of works traditional and modern.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 26- SUNDAY/MARCH 30

6th Annual Used Book Sale. Hours March 26 8 a.m. - 4p.m.; March 27, 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.; March 28 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.; and March 30 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Geshur Jewish Day School, 4800 Mattie Moore Court, Fairfax. Over 10,000 neatly sorted gently read books will be offered for sale at prices from \$0.50 to \$2.50. On March 30, all books are \$5 a bag.

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The Springfield Art Guild (SAG) celebrated 45 years at the Richard Byrd Library in Springfield.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Springfield Art Guild Holds a Birthday Party

The reception room of the Richard Byrd Library in Springfield hosted a festive anniversary on March 12: The Springfield Art Guild (SAG) celebrated 45 years as an organization of artists in Fairfax County by honoring one of their founders and longest standing member, Judy Wengrovitz. Judy and her husband Sy spoke about life in Springfield 45 years ago and Judy's role in the founding of the Springfield Art Guild. Judy shared the story of the handful of artists who decided they needed to organize into a group. From their determination and vision, Springfield Art Guild was conceived and grown to over 100 members. It continues to add new artists to its rolls as a non-profit group.

SAG serves the community's interest in fine arts, crafts and photography. It sponsors education programs, art exhibits, juried shows, classes for adults and children. SAG also provides art scholarships for high school students and local art events.

The event was attended by current SAG members and artists interested in SAG and its relationship to the history and growth of the community. Taylor Holland, Chief of Staff to Supervisor Jeffrey McKay and Christina Ritter, Supervisor Mc Kay's aide, were in attendance.

Everyone enjoyed the birthday cake, punch and refreshments. It was noted by Sy Wengrovitz that



Judy Wengrovitz, right, with husband and SAG member Jackie Allen, was honored as one of the SAG founders and longest standing member.

Springfield Art Guild has returned to the location where it all started, the Richard Byrd Library. Prior to the library, SAG's location for its monthly meeting place and gallery was situated in the Springfield Mall. With the closure of a large portion of the mall, it was necessary to relocate to a temporary site.

Monthly meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month September through June at the Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce Street, Springfield. Doors open at 6 p.m. for a meet and greet with an art-laden agenda that includes a featured speaker at 8 p.m. The meetings are open to all interested artists.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Annandale High School students who work at the student run credit union there, from left to right: Edwin Munoz, Doreen Tetteh, Tony Nguyen, Sergio Martinez, Dominic Maier, Monica Bentley (business teacher and faculty liaison), Issac Kebede.

Promoting Financial Literacy

As the National College Athletic Association launches its annual national basketball tournament, students at more than two dozen Northern Virginia high schools kick off a March Madness of their own. Instead of scoring baskets, they are scrambling to sign up the most new members this month to their school's student run federal credit union in a competition sponsored by Apple Federal Credit Union.

Students who work at an Apple-affiliated school credit union meet the relatively new Virginia financial literacy requirement passed in 2009. This year's high school juniors are the first class required by law to take at least one course in economics and personal finance in order to graduate. The competition adds even more incentive: the student run credit union that open the most new accounts will win a trophy and \$200 cash prize.

"The SRCU is run by advanced accounting students, who have

been trained on handling the transactions so they run the show," says Monica Bentley, SRCU liaison and business teacher at Annandale High School. "The program teaches about saving and managing money. It's an in-school tool for deposits and withdrawals."

Dominic Maier, an Annandale High School senior who is the SRCU marketing manager, says his strategy is to secure discount fast-food cards from restaurants students like, such as Chipotle and Firehouse Subs and offer them as incentive for participation.

"Apple wants to make financial literacy not only valuable but fun for the kids," says Apple Vice President Robert Sowell. "So the March Madness competition is a way to do that. "It allows students to be creative and come up with marketing/advertising plans. Their role at the credit union teaches financial management, people skills which can translate into real-world jobs."

March Madness, Then and Now

At this time of the March Madness, Steve Guback, a resident at Greenspring retirement community in Springfield has vivid memories of the 1959 tournament in which California beat West Virginia, the 1976 reigning, undefeated season of Indiana University, and the 1979 famed Magic Johnson vs. Larry Byrd showdown. He experienced these in person.

Guback was a sportswriter with The Washington Evening Star and covered his first conference tournament in 1959. From then on, he covered the NCAA tournaments from Round 1 through the

tournament's championship game. An alumnus of Indiana University, Guback was the president of the United States Basketball Writers Association in 1976 when Indiana University won the conference championship. Today, they are still the only team in history to have an undefeated season.

This year, Guback will be watching the beginning of the tournament from his cruise ship cabin in the Caribbean; he sets sail Tuesday morning and returns March 28.

Also of note, Guback was inducted into the United States Bas-

ketball Writers Hall of Fame in 1989, was elected to the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame in 2005, and was voted the Virginia/DC Sportswriter of the Year three times. He has served on the Professional Football Hall of Fame Selection Committee, on the Board of Directors for the United States Olympic Committee, and as president of the Atlantic Coast Sportswriters Association.

Guback has worked in some capacity with the Washington Redskins for 55 years since covering his first game in 1959; he still serves as a spotter in the press box.



PHOTO FROM THE VSHFM WEBSITE

Steve Guback, right, watches a practice with Vince Lombardi.

SPORTS

Lake Braddock Baseball Looking for Missing Pieces

Bruins graduated five Division I players from last season.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

The Lake Braddock baseball team entered the 2013 season in a cloud of uncertainty, with several key athletes battling injuries. The Bruins managed to right the ship, however, winning the Northern Region championship and reaching the state semifinals.

One year later, the Bruins again face a sense of uncertainty. This time, graduation, not injury, is the culprit.

Lake Braddock, a perennial Northern Virginia power two years removed from winning its first state championship, enters the 2014 campaign having graduated five Division I players from last year's team. Gone are pitcher Thomas Rogers (North Carolina), outfielder Alex Gransback (VCU), catcher Garrett Driscoll (George Mason), and infielders Alex Lewis (Longwood) and Mitch Spille (Radford). Pitcher Nick McIntyre went to Division III Mary Washington.

The Bruins return a solid group of talented athletes, but the team has more holes to fill than usual.

"We've got a talented core back, it's just at the level we're used to playing, it's going to take nine guys and we're trying to figure out who our best nine are right now and where they fit in and where they're going to play," head coach Jody Rutherford said. "In the past three or four years, we needed to find one, two, three pieces. This year, we're looking at five pieces that we need to find."

SENIOR SHORTSTOP Jack Owens, who will play collegiately at East Carolina, is Lake Braddock's top returning player. Owens is working his way back from an injury to his right wrist, but said he should be fine.

"What we lost were good, all-around baseball players — hitters and pitchers," Owens said. "Trying to fill their positions is something we can't do, but we can find other ways to win. ... We'll always find ways to win. If it's not hitting home runs and hitting doubles, it will be bunting and dribbling balls between infielders."

Junior infielders Nick Neville and Evan Eschenburg, and seniors Ryan Henderson (outfield) and Joe Darcy (pitcher/outfield) will provide Lake Braddock with strength at the top and in the middle of the batting order.

"Our top of the order is pretty good," Rutherford said. "It's just as good as it has been the past couple years. [It's all about] finding who is going to produce at the bottom of the order. That's what separates your offense from other [teams]."

Rutherford said senior Ian Reilly and junior Matt Supko have a chance to be contributors in the Bruin lineup.

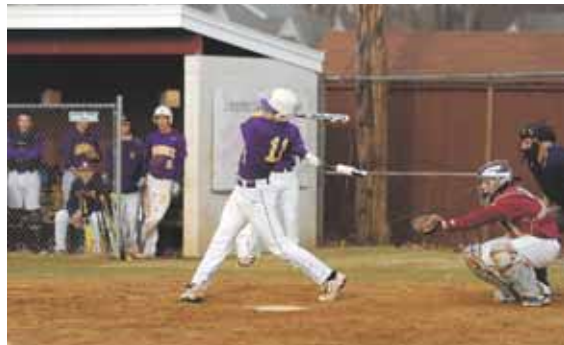
"In the past three or four years, we needed to find one, two, three pieces. This year, we're looking at five pieces that we need to find."

— Lake Braddock baseball coach Jody Rutherford



Senior right-hander Joe Darcy enters the 2014 season as the ace of the Lake Braddock pitching staff.

PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION



Lake Braddock junior Nick Neville will move up in the batting order this season and pitch for the first time in years.

On the mound, Darcy, a 6-foot-2, 200-pound right-hander, transitions into the role of staff ace. Darcy gained experience as a starting pitcher last season and has "established himself as the go-to guy right now," Rutherford said.

"Offensively, we're just as good as any other year," Darcy said. "The only area that we lack, really, is pitching, which, we're all trying to step up and be better pitchers and help our team win."

Rutherford said injuries will keep Supko (elbow/Tommy John surgery) and junior Colby Wallmow (torn labrum) off the mound this season. In need of depth, Neville will pitch for the first time in several years.

Neville, a 6-foot-1, 185-pound right-hander, throws a fastball, curve ball and change-up.

"I came up to [Rutherford] this winter and told him that I wanted to pitch," Neville said. "It was just something that I wanted to do to help the team out."

Kevin Haswell, a 6-foot-2, 200-pound junior right-hander, will also pitch for Lake Braddock.

LAKE BRADDOCK will open the season at home against Flint Hill at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 20. The Bruins will host Oakton in a rematch of last season's Northern Region championship game at 1 p.m. on Saturday, March 22.

"We'll find a way to get it done; we'll have to do a better job of coaching," Rutherford said. "It's easy when you have good players to sit back and take all the credit as a coach. I guess I've got to really actually do some work this year."



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

West Springfield senior Amy Berglund will compete in the 10th Suburban Classic girls' basketball all-star game on Sunday, March 23 at Oakton High School.

Going to Oakton For All-Star Game

Edison head coach Dianne Lewis to lead the East team, including Amy Berglund (West Springfield), Amber Bryson (Lee) and Tatiana Torres (Edison).

The 10th Suburban Classic girls' basketball all-star game will be held on Sunday, March 23 at Oakton High School.

The game features some of the top seniors from the 6A North and 5A North regions. There is a 3-point shootout at 2 p.m., followed by the main event at 3 p.m.

The East team, led by Edison head coach Dianne Lewis, includes West Springfield standout Amy Berglund, who led the Spartans to a 25-3 record, a Conference 7 championship and a trip to the state tournament.

The rest of the East roster includes: Amber Bryson (Lee), Tatiana Torres (Edison), Michele Noel (Wakefield), Cami Prock (McLean), Tykera Carter (T.C. Williams), Angie

Schedler (T.C. Williams), Samantha Porter (Mount Vernon) and DJ Jean Pierre (Mount Vernon).

The West team is led by Madison head coach Kirsten Stone. The roster includes: Abby Rendle (South Lakes), Caitlin Jensen (South Lakes), Jenna Green (Centreville), Katie Blumer (Centreville), Bailey Dufrene (Osborn), Arnelle Collins (Freedom-South Riding), Katie Kerrigan (Madison), Kayla Hix (Stonewall Jackson), Nicole Zubovich (Freedom-South Riding) and Alexia Johnson (Broad Run).

Admission is \$5, with senior citizens and children younger than 5 admitted for free. Proceeds help to fund the Northern Virginia Women's Basketball Coaches Association scholarship program.

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-William Van Horne

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FCPS Students Earn 27 National Scholastic Awards

Fairfax County Public Schools students earned 27 national awards in the National Scholastic Art Awards program sponsored by the Alliance for Young Artists and Writers. Nima Jeizan of Marshall High School earned an American Visions Medal—equivalent to a best in show for the nation—and Elisabeth Hughes of Oakton High School earned a Gold Medal and Best in Grade Award.

Gold Key award-winning entries from the Fairfax region were judged at the national level against winning artwork from across the country where they earned Gold Medals, Silver Medals, American Visions Medals, and Best in Grade Awards. National medalists will be celebrated at an award ceremony at Carnegie Hall in New York City in May. Select national award winning work will be included in an exhibition in New York, and a traveling exhibition over the coming year.

FCPS winners from our area include:

◆ Ha Nuel Lee of South County High School, Gold Medal for Digital Art, "She Is Ready."

◆ Ji Whae Choi of Thomas Jefferson High School of Science and Technology (TJHSST), Silver Medal for Art Portfolio, "Diversity."

◆ Soyoung Ha of Fairfax High School, Silver Medal for Painting, "Child's Nightmare."

◆ Junyoung Hwang of TJHSST, Silver Medal for Painting, "Reflection."

◆ Jean Kim of South County High School, Silver Medal for Drawing, "Blue Horse."

◆ Jessica Kim of Westfield High School, Silver Medal for Digital Art, "Bat Girl."

◆ Ha Nuel Lee of South County High School, Silver Medal for Art Portfolio, "When He Gives Her The Flower Shoes."

◆ Emely Pascual of Lake Braddock Secondary School, Silver Medal for Drawing, "Grown Up Too Fast."

◆ William Sullivan of South County High School, Silver Medal for Art Portfolio, "Sexualization Of The Virgin."

◆ Jahyun Yang of Woodson High School, Silver Medal for Art Portfolio, "Front Door Neighbors."

BULLETIN BOARD

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

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City Regional Library Book Sale. 10 a.m. -5 p.m. 10360 North Street, Fairfax. Thousands of gently-read books in all categories including art, history, cooking, gardening, foreign language, travel, spirituality, reference, classic and popular fiction. Plenty of free parking.

SATURDAY/MARCH 22

Dog Adoption. 12-3 p.m. PETCO, Greenbriar Towncenter, 13053 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, Fairfax. hart90.org

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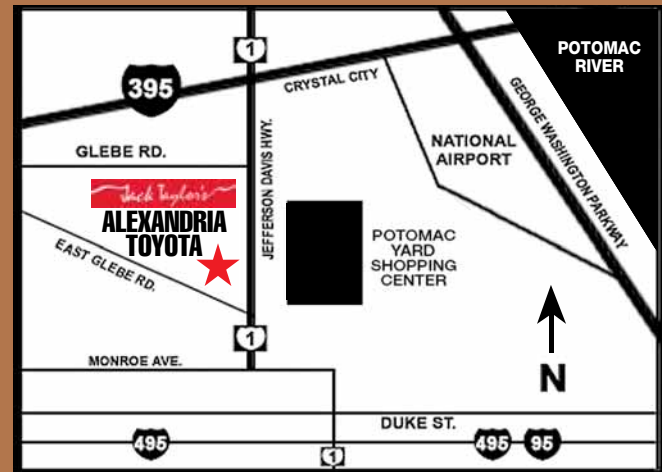
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