

Farmers Come Back to Lake Anne

WELLBEING

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At Reston
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Photo Gallery

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Your co-hosts and Co-Market Masters
John and Fran Lovaas welcome you to
Opening Day of the Reston Farmers
Market's 17th season at Lake Anne.

The Red Hot Chili Puddings won the state tournament on Saturday, April 26.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



NEWS

A Little Team That Could

Forest Edge Elementary team goes to the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals.

In March an intrepid group of third and fifth graders from a Reston elementary school entered a regional competition and pulled off a surprise win against students twice their age. On April

26, they doubled down at the state tournament. The Red Hot Chili Puddings are a team of rookies led by rookie coaches. Their pursuit, Odyssey of the Mind, is a worldwide creative problem-solving competition involving students of all ages. It pits bright and creative kids against each other in both spontaneous and long-term tests of intellect and creativity. This little team with the long odds won first place in their division at the regional competition — and then some.

They competed in the one event that has an objective measure than can be compared across all divisions from kindergarten through college. The Stackable Structure problem involves building a feather-light (18 gram) balsa wood tower that holds a stack of heavy iron weights. The team's tower held 219 pounds at the tournament, besting all other elementary schools in the region. To everyone's surprise, the team's structure also supported more weight than those of all the middle and high schools at the event. Since the region is shared by Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, this means that Forest Edge Elementary School fielded a team of 8 and 10-year-olds that out-engineered the number-one ranked high school in the nation. Virginia is highly competitive in the U.S. region of Odyssey of the Mind, so the Red Hot Chili Puddings entered the state tournament on Saturday, April 26 with the simple expectation that they would experience their very first competition of any kind outside their hometown.

The children knew that Thomas Jefferson High School would be there and they were sure that the nation's top school would do everything in its power to prevent a repeat of the upset at regionals. But the little team that could marched to a first place finish with 412 pounds of iron perched atop their wisp of balsa. And once again, this improbable weight topped that of Thomas Jefferson High School's. Now this team is off to the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals in late May.

And perhaps for the first time ever, the first-ranked Chinese teams are looking over their shoulders not at their college peers, but a bouncy bunch of 8 and 10-year-olds from Reston.

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Taking “fresh from farm to table to a new level.” The Diehl family of Reston - Tiffany, Clinton and 9 year-old Ryan - purchase a still growing lettuce bowl from Virginia Vistas of Berryville.



It's oysters for breakfast for Liz Schiavone of Herndon, freshly shucked by Matt and McKaylah Corbin of Arnest Seafood. “Yum!” was Schiavone's comment.

PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

Farmers Come Back to Lake Anne Reston opens 17th Farmers Market season.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

They're back! And judging by the crowds wandering the stalls at the Reston Farmers Market (RFM) at Lake Anne on Saturday, May 3, quite a lot of folks could barely wait. “There are other markets open during the winter, but this is the one we really enjoy,” said Sue Anne Miller of Burke, who arrived just after things got under way at 8 a.m. “Bringing the family to Opening Day is like the official start to Spring for us,” said Miller, juggling her coffee cup, a yummy from vendor Grace's Pastries and a handful of reusable shopping bags.

John and Fran Lovaas are your Co-Market Masters, expertly handling the logistics of the day. The Lovaas' are proud of their association with the RFM. John was recruited to run the event from Day 1. “True story,” said John. “The “Friends of TOMATO” (Organic Market at Tall Oaks in Reston) got pushed out by the grocery store there and were looking for someplace to hold a farmers market. They contacted the Reston Association Board for help (John Lovaas was a RA Board member at the time) and Lake Anne was suggested as a great spot.” Then the TOMATO folks asked for some seed money and for someone to run the market. “Somehow, that ‘someone’ was me,” laughed John. “Eventually we dragged Fran into the Farmers Market business, and the rest is history.”

STARTING WITH JUST TWELVE VENDORS, over the years the market has become such a successful venue that 27 of the 28 vendors from last year's season are back for 2014 and the market was named the “Best Market in Northern Virginia for 2013” by Virginia Living Magazine. About 25 percent of the vendors are “originals,” bringing their home-grown wares to the RFM since the first market was held 17 years ago. “That's a pretty good retention rate,” noted John Lovaas. “And we are really fortunate to welcome Smith Meadows Farm of Berryville to the fold this year.”



Mike McCormick of Ladybug Mountain Farm in [“We don't think of ourselves as ‘little’”] Washington, Va., offers wheatberry to sprout for yourselves. “Should be able to mow them pretty soon after planting,” says McCormick.



“We go to the Falls Church farmers market in the winter, but we can't wait until Spring and the Reston market to get here,” said Heather Neumeyer. At the Opening Day of the 2014 market, Neumeyer introduces 5-month-old Grayson to the joys and wonders of shopping in a village atmosphere.



The Open Air Market in the Lake Anne Plaza is also open for business. Featuring artisans, global imports and health products like the many “Beehive Remedy” offerings of InterNutritionals, LLC of Oakton. Michele Bucharnikov had her hands full with customers a plenty.

Like many of the vendors, Smith Meadows produces all grass-fed, humanely handled cattle, pigs, goats, sheep and chick-

ens that are never fed animal by-products or given growth hormones or antibiotics. Their pastures are not chemically fertilized

or treated with pesticides or herbicides. The result, according to farmer and acclaimed author Forrest Pritchard, is healthy, leaner meats with beta-carotene, Omega-3 fatty acids, CLA and even the anti-oxidant Vitamin E, derived from the fresh pastures. At the Opening Day Market, Nancy Polo, owner, manager and chef at Smith Meadows Farm Kitchen, was on hand to tell the farm's story and to sell their products, including her own organic pastas and pastries.

The RFM is also pleased to announce that the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will be offered at this year's market. “Great news,” said John Lovaas. “Big thanks to the Park Authority and the folks at Cornerstones (formerly Reston Interfaith) for bringing SNAP.” Cornerstones will administer the program for the market.

WHILE BROWSING, MIXING AND MINGLING, market-goers are also treated to entertainment. The Split String Soup Band was scheduled as the Opening Day bluegrass musical treat. Clutching goodies of fresh produce, pastries and bags of Colonial Kettle Corn, many of the RFM shoppers wandered deeper into Lake Anne territory to check out the artisans at the Reston Open Air Market, organized by Friends of Lake Anne. A natural companion of the RFM, and solidifying the “village market” atmosphere, the Open Air fair showcases dozens of crafters and importers of goods from around the globe, as well as highlighting the resident merchants, restaurants and service providers and Reston's “First Village” community. Lots more entertainment is planned for the months ahead for both the Reston Farmers Market and the Lake Anne Open Air Market, so come as often as you can, bring the whole family, and a lot of those shopping bags for a day out with friends, neighbors, fun, interesting gift items and good healthy food. The Reston Farmers Market has a website at www.restonfarmersmarket.com, and a Facebook page, as well for more information.

Meals Tax Possible for Fairfax County

Tax could generate \$88 million in revenue.

BY JANELLE GERMANOS
THE CONNECTION

At a public hearing on the 2015 budget, Fairfax County resident Kimberly Adams joined numerous other individuals who urged the Board of Supervisors to consider a meals tax.

"To have the quality of life that we've come to depend on in Fairfax County, we must move the needle closer to the regional average when it comes to taxes. We must not be afraid to look for new streams of revenue, such as a meals tax for instance," Adams told the Board of Supervisors at the budget hearings. "Never have I actually thought, well, there's a meals tax in Alexandria, so I'll drive 10 more minutes into Fairfax and order my pizza. I go to the place that's convenient and where I want to eat."

Echoing the concerns of citizens like Adams, Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova announced the establishment of the meals tax referendum task force on April 22, which will study this possible source of revenue and make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors by June 17.

"Throughout the past months as this board and the community have deliberated on the advertised fiscal year 2015 budget, a number of individuals and organizations have urged us to put the question of a meals tax to the voters," Bulova said at the meeting.

Kate Hanley and Tom Davis, former chairmen of the Board of Supervisors, will lead the task force in deciding whether a referendum for a meals tax should occur, and when this referendum would appear on the ballot.

IN VIRGINIA, counties are only able to establish a meals tax with a voter referendum.

At a rate of 4 percent, a meals tax could generate at least \$88 million.

Many cities within and around Fairfax County have a meals tax.

"Several of our surrounding jurisdictions have a meals tax, but the Town of Clifton, Prince William and Loudoun counties do not. I have and will continue to be adamantly opposed to a meals tax and any referendum on this issue as it is directed at a single industry. I believe this is the wrong time to add another tax on our county residents and while some of it will be paid by visitors the bulk will be paid by our county residents," Springfield District Supervisor Pat Herrity wrote in an email on April 30.

In April 1992, voters struck down a meals tax proposal that appeared on the ballot in Fairfax County.

"There has been a growing sentiment during recent years for our board to once again allow the voters to decide whether or not they wish to avail themselves of this additional source of revenue. Reasons for urging this include the desire to diversify the revenues we have available to fund schools, public safety, parks, libraries and human services," Bulova said.



Kimberly Adams spoke in favor of a meals tax at the public hearings on the Fairfax County budget in early April.



Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova announced on April 22 the creation of a meals tax referendum task force.



PHOTOS BY JANELLE GERMANOS/THE CONNECTION

At the public hearings on the Fairfax County budget, several citizens urged the Board of Supervisors to consider a meals tax in order to continue to "Invest in Fairfax."

Mount Vernon District Supervisor Gerry Hyland, who has proposed a meal tax several times in the past, said that voters need to be better informed this time as to why they should vote for the tax.

"To be quite frank, the last time we put it to referendum, there was almost silence on the side of why we were asking people to do it. Most important, the questions should be what are we going to do with the money if it passes and we have a meals tax," Hyland said.

Adams, who is president of the Fairfax Education Association and part of the new "Invest in Fairfax" coalition, said at the budget hearings that the extra revenue is needed for Fairfax County services that citizens depend on.

"If you can afford to eat out in a nice restaurant, you can afford to pay the four percent tax," she said.

AT A RECENT Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce event, Lee District Supervisor Jeffrey McKay told members that Fairfax County needs to diversify its revenue and that there was pressure from school advocates to consider a meals tax.

"Will it pass if it's put on the ballot? I don't know. I think it's unlikely, to tell you the truth," McKay said at the event.

The meals tax referendum task force includes a coalition of organizations within the county, including the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce, the Fairfax Education Association, the Fairfax County Taxpayers Alliance, and the Federation of Citizens Associations.



PHOTO BY REENA SINGH/THE CONNECTION

Joe Meyer takes on new responsibility as Shelter House's executive director.

Shelter House Names New Director

Joe Meyer worked with organization for nine years.

BY REENA SINGH
THE CONNECTION

The new executive director for Shelter House isn't new to the organization at all.

Joe Meyer, who has worked with Shelter House for the past nine years, was named the head of the nonprofit helping to put an end to homelessness and fight domestic violence in Reston and beyond.

"My main focus and goal is to serve the staff at Shelter Homes and provide the support they need to get the job done," he said.

Shelter House Board President Denise Miller said he was chosen from a pool of 50 applicants. The board hired an outside search firm and put together a task force to whittle the pool down to their final choices.

Many of the board members were involved in the process to find a new executive director.

"His commitment to the organization, the leadership he has shown for the past nine years," said Miller, listing reasons why he was a good fit for the position. "I think he also has a good vision for the future of the organization."

Meyer grew up in Johnstown, Pa., and has a degree in Social Work from Slippery Rock University.

He started at Shelter Homes in 2005 after working at Cornerstones - then called Reston Interfaith. He served as the

Patrick Henry Shelter director for two years, then was promoted to deputy director in 2007.

He wants to help raise awareness in the community about the issues the organization is helping to end.

"The other positions were more internal operations, and now I'll be out there to pull the community together around the issue of homelessness and domestic violence," said Meyer.

He has worked with county Director to Prevent and End Homelessness Dean Klein since he started with the organization. Klein said Meyer's leadership helped turn Shelter House into a great organization.

"I think he's a true professional," he said.

Shelter House owns two homeless shelters and one domestic violence shelter in an undisclosed location. On any given night, he said, the shelters can house more than 80 families. It employs 50 full time and 60 part time employees.

"All the facilities are open 24-7," he said. "It takes all of us to operate the facilities as we do."

He credits much of his success to his predecessor.

"Jewell Mikula served as the executive director for 13 years and had a very big impact on our community" he said. "That's another reason it's a good transition for me - because of her work to set the foundation of this organization."

BULLETIN BOARD

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

SATURDAY/MAY 17

Nature Walk: Twin Branches Trail. 2 - 3:30 p.m. Twin Branches Trail – Park on Glade Drive near Twin Branches Road. Join a naturalist for a hike along the renovated Twin Branches Nature Trail to experience its diverse habitats. Discover dragonflies and tiger beetles in a sunny meadow. Reservations required by May 14. Free. For more information, email naturecenter@reston.org, or call 703-476-9689 and press 5.

Rain Barrel Workshop. 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Walker Nature Center, 11450 Glade Drive, Reston. Rain barrels are a great way to help capture and control stormwater from rooftops, prevent erosion, improve water quality, and conserve water. This workshop is a quick and inexpensive way to recycle a black pickle barrel into a rain barrel for your home. Participants must register and submit payment online at www.arlingtonenvironment.org/barrel.php. Reservations required by May 14. Fee: \$55 per barrel (Limit 2 per household.) For more information, email naturecenter@reston.org, or call 703-476-9689 and press 5.

SUNDAY/MAY 18

Eggs-traordinary. 2 - 3 p.m. Walker Nature Center, 11450 Glade Drive, Reston. All ages. Eggs are the beginning of life for many animals. See examples of many different types of eggs, and try to guess who comes out of them. Touch real birds' eggs, big and small. Find out how squishy frog eggs can be. Learn how animals hide their eggs to protect them. Reservations required by May 15. Fee: \$5.00/person RA members, \$7.00/person non-members.

For more information, email naturecenter@reston.org, or call 703-476-9689 and press 5.

ONGOING

Fairfax County's Meals on Wheels urgently needs drivers in the Annandale, Franconia/Kingstowne, Reston, Mount Vernon and McLean areas. 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or 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 or 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 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 or www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices.



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MOTHER'S DAY PHOTO GALLERY



Tracy Rutledge, of Reston, with her children Jackson (14), Brooklyn (7), Zach (10) and new baby Wyatt born on Nov. 25, 2013.

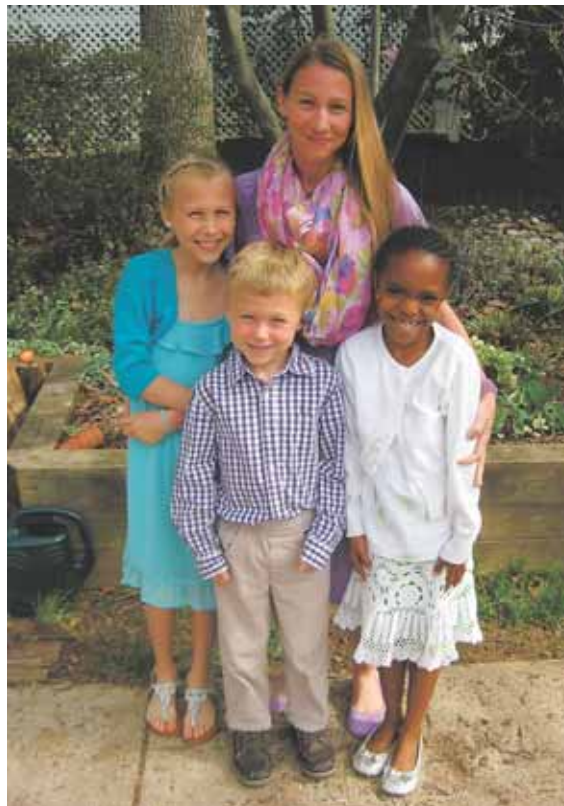
— SUBMITTED BY GRANDMOTHER LINDA RUTLEDGE



Fran Lovaas with grandson, Cole, in their backyard at Lake Anne, with a large mouth bass caught on April 18 from the Lake. He loves to fish in Lake Anne but always releases the fish after a photo op.



Photo from 22 years ago with Grandma Mary Lovaas (soon to be 95), Fran Lovaas (Reston resident) and Jenni Lovaas (South Lakes HS graduate). Happy Mother's Day to Grandma Lovaas!



Phoebe, Forrest and Verlande Adams, of Reston, celebrate Easter with their mom Sharon.



Katy Curran, of Reston, with her children Maureen (15), Bri (17), Kerry (15) and Hugh (15).

— SUBMITTED BY GRANDMOTHER LINDA RUTLEDGE

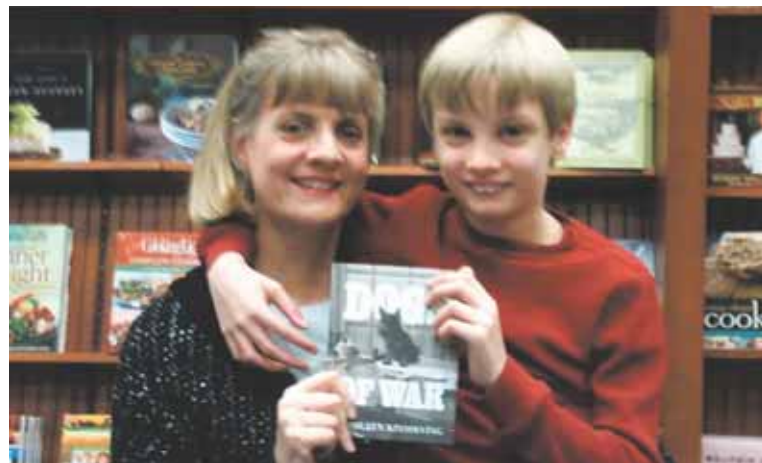


Tiffany (14) and Sydney (11), of Reston, with mom, Judy Rutledge.

— SUBMITTED BY GRANDMOTHER LINDA RUTLEDGE



Julie, of Reston, and her daughter Elle.



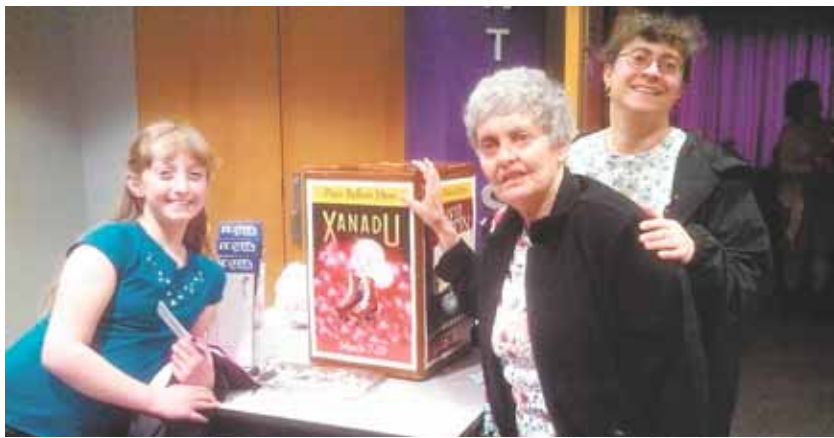
Kathleen Kinsolving with her son Spencer at her book signing last year at Barnes and Noble (Book title: Dogs of War: The Stories of FDR's Fala, Patton's Willie, and Ike's Telek).



Corbin Benesch and his mother, Gamble Gilbertson, of Reston, enjoy a kiss from a sea lion during their recent spring break trip to Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.

MOTHER'S DAY PHOTO GALLERY

In March, three generations of Reston residents enjoyed the Reston Community Players' production of Xanadu to celebrate the birthday of Andrea Isserlis, grandmother to Madeleine Steppel (left) and mother to Debra Steppel (far right).



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OPINION

Yes to the Meals Tax Referendum

Voters could decide on the tax in November.

Economic diversification is worthy goal. All of your eggs shouldn't be in one basket. All of your revenue shouldn't come from one source.

In Fairfax County, adding a meals tax at the same level as Arlington, Alexandria, Falls Church and the City of Fairfax, 4 percent, could generate \$88 million a year. The county estimates that 25-30 percent of the meals taxes collected would be paid by non-county residents.

The inability to implement alternative revenue sources will mean continued dependence on one basket. The combined increase in the real estate property tax rate and home values

means that most homeowners will be paying hundreds of dollars more in property taxes regardless of their ability to pay.

In Virginia, localities have only the powers explicitly granted to them by the General Assembly. In Northern Virginia, the economic engine of the state, this has translated into heavy dependence on the real estate property tax to fund everything, because localities are allowed few revenue options.

EDITORIAL

Fairfax County has a task force studying the possibility of holding a required referendum to let voters decide on adding a meals tax. It would applied to "ready-to-eat foods and beverages wherever they are sold," but not vending machines.

Former Board Chairman Kate Hanley and former Board Chairman and U.S. Rep. Tom Davis will chair the task force and report back to the Board of Supervisors in mid June. If su-

pervisors approved the referendum, it could appear on the November ballot.

It's interesting that historically, Fairfax County voters overwhelmingly give the thumbs up to authorizing capital improvements to schools, parks and roads via bond sales, but in 1992, voters said no to the meals tax. It will be up to elected officials and advocates for schools, parks, libraries, public safety and human services to help make the case for the increase.

(Taxing income is a power the Commonwealth of Virginia retains for itself, and it is a mechanism that sends money from Northern Virginia to other parts of the state while forcing Northern Virginia localities to depend on property taxes.)

— MARY KIMM,
MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Contrasting Views

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

Last week I had the honor of meeting Stan Brock, the legendary "Wild Kingdom" TV star and founder and president of Remote Area Medical (RAM). He held a press conference in Richmond to announce the details of expanding the Remote Area Medical program in Virginia. (www.RAMUSA.org) Already

RAM sponsors a once-a-year health clinic in Wise County in Southwest Virginia where thousands come on a weekend for the only medical care they will receive all year. The expanded effort in Virginia will be headed by Dr. Vicki Weiss who has been providing volunteer eye care with RAM for over 15 years. Also participating in the press conference was Dr. Teresa Gardiner who serves on the Health Wagon in the region that was featured on 60 Minutes recently.

Stan Brock started RAM in 1985 primarily to help people in South America who did not have access to health care, but as he explained at the press conference he soon expanded to this country for the needs in Appalachia, Virginia, and other parts of the country are as great as any third world country. Last year RAM served nearly 2,000 people in Virginia, but with the expanded program "Stop the Suffering" over the next two years RAM expects to have a clinic within driving distance of everyone living in Appalachia. Stan Brock talked about "the people we do not see but whose health care needs in Virginia could not be greater" with no references to politics, ideology, or partisanship.

In contrast, there were several informational meetings on Medicaid expansion held last week in locations through-



out the state, including one in nearby Ashburn. From talking to persons who attended the meeting and reading press accounts, I was struck by the sharp contrast with the press conference I had attended. These "informational" meetings were sponsored by the Koch Brothers

funded Americans for Prosperity that is spending millions in the state to defeat what it disdainfully refers to as Obamacare. Invited to participate in these meetings were only delegates opposed to any expansion of Medicaid. The meetings focused on legislative maneuvering, constitutional issues and placing blame for the budget impasse. There was talk of a "clean budget." By separating the budget negotiations and the expansion of Medicaid, Americans for Prosperity and their legislative puppets hope to defeat expansion of Medicaid in the state. What wasn't said is that separating Medicaid expansion from the budget would ignore 20 percent of current expenditures and the potential for five million dollars a day in revenue to serve those most in need of health insurance. Noticeably absent from the delegates were real-life references to the people in need of health care.

It is time for legislators in Richmond to stop talking politics and start listening to the people in need of health care and to those in the community who have health insurance but are concerned for the people who do not. The contrast is stark between those who want to wage a partisan ideological battle to deliver a defeat to the President and those who want to help people who desperately need health care.

Timely Discussion On Drug Abuse

To the Editor:

Through columns on your newspaper website like "Avoidance Better Than Arrests, Prison, Death" my attention has been drawn to your spotlight on forums focused on drug prevention in high schools. With the increase in use of drugs for recreational use among youths, this is a timely and well-covered issue in your newspaper.

The drug prevention forum covered by your paper called "Protecting Against the Realities of Substance Abuse," put on by Parents Reaching Out To Educate Communities Together (PROTECT), provides a new approach to talking about drug awareness and prevention that could help parents better understand and approach the rise in drug culture in youths. By bringing in police officers, former drug users and dealers, and families affected by drugs, parents were able to hear their stories and learn ideas like how to recognize signs earlier that may indicate drug use in their children.

As a former student at the [Madison] high school where the forum was held and as an adult now who has had friends struggle with drug addictions, I find it extremely important and well received that this topic is being highlighted in your publication. This is an issue in children today that needs to be addressed because prevention of drug use is always better than detection of drug use for all parties involved.

Rebecca Rosen
Vienna

Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors. Send to:

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Alexandria VA 22314
Call: 703-917-6444.

By e-mail: info@connectionnewspapers.com

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WELLBEING



Speech-language pathologist Erin Weiner holds a therapy session with a young patient in a natural environment.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIN WEINER

FOUNDING OF RESTON — 1964 — 50 YEARS — 100 YEARS — BIRTH OF ITS FOUNDER — 1914 —

Reston's civic and community organizations will be celebrating anniversaries all year. Check out all the fun in store for the community at www.restoncelebrates.org. For information about how to add your organization's anniversary-themed event, please email restoncelebrates@myerspr.com.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS:

WWW.RESTONCELEBRATES.ORG

Hearing Loss Doesn't Have to be Life-changing

“What?” May is Better Hearing and Speech Month.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

On any given workday, you might find Arlington resident Erin Weiner sitting in a family-friendly restaurant causally coloring or playing games with a young child. At first glance, she might be mistaken for any young mother entertaining her offspring while they wait for a meal. In actuality, Weiner, who is a speech-language pathologist, is employing what she describes as an innovative approach to therapy that involves working with a child in his or her natural environment.

“Real-time therapeutic sessions help children develop skills that they can effectively apply to day-to-day life,” said Weiner, of Erin’s Place for Therapy in North Potomac, Md.

Hearing loss affects more than 36 million Americans. During the month of May, Better Hearing & Speech Month, Weiner and other speech and hearing professionals are working to raise awareness about communication disorders and the treatments that are available.

“Most people don’t realize how the loss of hearing is interfering with their lives,” said Michael V. Massa, AuD., of Massa and Associates, Doctors of Audiology, with offices in Springfield and Mount Vernon. “Hearing loss is usually gradual and a spouse or family member will notice it first.”

Massa says that while hearing loss is most common in people aged 50 and older, it can affect patients from newborns to the elderly. Recognizing the warning signs and finding the proper treatment can be life-altering. “People come back and say ‘if I had known how much this would have helped, I would have come to see you much earlier,’” said Massa.

EARLY DETECTION IS CRITICAL. “Hearing loss can affect one’s ability to communicate with and engage others in the community,” said Jeffrey Edge, rehabilitation services manager for the Fairfax County Health Department. “The earlier you detect a hearing loss, the sooner you can take steps to hopefully decrease the impact of the loss on communication. Early detection of hearing loss is most important with infants and children as hearing is critical to developing speech and language skills and learning.”

Edge points to research from the National Institute of Health, National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, which shows that speech and language development begins in the first six months of life and children who get treatment

early develop better language skills than those who don’t.

There are certain signs that tell parents their children might be experiencing hearing loss. “Is the child responding to their name when the child isn’t looking at you?” asks Weiner. “Are they speaking as much as their peers? Are they saying ‘What?’ a lot? Do they seem to be reading your lips? If a fire truck with its sirens on goes by does the child look up? Are they having problems speaking at the right volume?”

Weiner, who provides oral, motor articulation, language therapy and auditory processing treatments, said problems with audio processing can often be difficult to diagnose. “You have to determine if the issue is auditory processing or hearing loss. This can be difficult to distinguish. With auditory processing, someone might keep saying ‘What?’ and they probably heard you, but the message is not getting to their brain.”

Hearing loss in newborns can be hereditary or congenital, said Massa, but it is often caught early because of state laws that require newborn hearing screenings. “At birth we can tell if a child’s hearing is normal or not and this is critical because they have to develop speech,” said Massa.

MASSA SAID THAT the number of Americans with hearing loss has doubled within the past 30 years. “Some of that is due to the fact that we have so many baby boomers,” he said. “Inner ear hearing loss is the most common type of loss.”

Sudden hearing loss is another common hearing disorder that usually occurs in one ear. “With sudden hearing loss, time is of the essence,” said Massa. “The person needs to be seen right away. Studies show that they have a better chance of recovering if treatment begins right away.”

When it comes to treatment, advancements in hearing devices now include the latest digital and Bluetooth technology, which can connect patients to their electronic devices, such as a television, a computer, a smart phone or cellular telephone phone, as well as induction loop systems found in theaters.

“Hearing devices have gotten really good with digital technology.

How well a person is going to do with a hearing device is dependent on the type of hearing loss,” said Massa, who has been practicing for more than 30 years.

“Fortunately most people can be helped by hearing devices. It is extremely important for those people to be seen by a doctor of audiology.”

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CALENDAR

Send announcements to reston@connectionnewspapers.com. The deadline is the Friday prior to the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged.

WEDNESDAY/MAY 7-SUNDAY, MAY 25

Far & Wide: Travel as Muse. - In Far and Wide. ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Join artist Trisha Adams on a journey where unique architecture and distinctive trees offer interesting new shapes, where plants, earth, and buildings present novel color palettes, where each painting imparts a part of itself to the next as the viewer circles the gallery. www.artspaceherndon.org.

FRIDAY/MAY 9-SATURDAY/MAY 10

"Chapter Two." 8 p.m. Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Neil Simon's sparkling comedy. Tickets can be purchased at www.restonplayers.org.

FRIDAY/MAY 9

Tour the Solar System. 7 - 8 p.m. Walker Nature Center, 11450 Glade Drive, Reston. Ages 5 to 12. Compare weather conditions, size, and the length of years and days of all the planets in the solar system (even Pluto) through interactive activities. Get all the information you need to select your new planet without leaving the safety of Earth! Reservations required by May 6. Fee: \$5/child RA members, \$7/child non-members. For more information, email naturecenter@reston.org, or call 703-476-9689 and press 5.

SATURDAY/MAY 10



PHOTO BY TRACI J. BROOKS STUDIOS

From left: Jeff Breslow as George Schneider and Greg Lang as Leo Schneider in Reston Community Players' production of Neil Simon's 'Chapter Two.' Playing at CenterStage, Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Hunters Woods Village Center, Reston through May 10. Friday & Saturday evenings at 8 p.m.

Bicycle Safety Rodeo. 1-4 p.m. Lake Newport Pool Facility, 11601 Lake Newport Road, Reston. Join the Reston Association, RA's Bike and Pedestrian Committee, and The Reston Bicycle Club for their Annual Bicycle Safety Rodeo. Children will complete 8 safety stations and earn their bicyclist's license. Children must bring their own bicycles and helmets. No registration required. This event is cancelled in the event of rain. Contact 703-435-6577 for information.

The 2nd Annual Green Lizard Half-Century Fun Ride Bike-A-Thon. Advance registration, now through May 1st is \$40.00; May 2nd-May 10th registration is- \$50.00. Payment can be made by mail or in person. Cash, check, debit or credit card accepted. For debit and credit card payment contact the Green Lizard at (703) 707-BIKE (2453). All riders may participate by securing a

minimum of \$50.00 in pledges in lieu of registration fee. Pledge sheet may be picked up the Green Lizard Cycling downloaded from their website. Pledge sheets must be presented at check-in.

Snyder Family Band. 7:30 p.m. Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 1090 Sterling Road, Herndon. Admission \$15. <http://www.snyderfamilyband.com>.

SUNDAY/MAY 11

Lake Anne Summer Film Festival: Mamma Mia! 8 p.m. Lake Anne Plaza (Waterfront) - 1609 Washington Plaza, Reston. Watch classic movies under the stars. Check the Lake Anne Plaza website for approximate sundown times each night. Website: www.lakeanneplaza.com

FRIDAY/MAY 16-SUNDAY/MAY 18

23rd Annual Northern Virginia Fine Arts Festival. Reston Town Center - 12001 Market Street, Reston. Contemporary artwork from over 200 artists in 16 categories. www.restonarts.org.

FRIDAY/MAY 16

Jazz Dessert Concert. 7:30 p.m. Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Featuring the South Lakes High School Jazz Hawks and Langston Hughes Middle School Jazz Ensemble. \$15 Adults, \$8 Students, free for age 5 and under with an adult. Tickets at the door or online at www.SouthLakesBand.org.

SATURDAY/MAY 17

Community Yard Sale. 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Reston Association parking lot, 12001 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston. Come by to browse for great bargains at our 95 family yard sale.

This event is an opportunity to find great buys for a new home or college dorm. Vendor space is sold out. Contact Ashleigh@reston.org or call 703-435-6577 for information on weather related cancellations.

Open Mic Night. 7-9:30 p.m. ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Open Call for singers, dancers, musicians, poets, actors. This is your chance to try out that new routine on an audience of fellow performers, family, and guests who share your love for the performing arts. Youth Performances aged 10 and up start at 7 p.m., and adult Performances start at 8 p.m. To register go to www.artspaceherndon.org.

WEDNESDAY/MAY 28

Modern Moves, in partnership with Dance Place. 8 p.m., at The Centerstage, Reston Community Center Hunters Woods. Three of D.C.'s most prominent choreographers - Daniel Burkholder,

Daniel Phoenix Singh and Erica Rebollar - come together to create an eclectic evening of thrilling modern dance. \$15 Reston/\$30 Non-Reston. www.restoncommunitycenter.com or 703-476-4500.

Reston at 50: Looking Back at Forward Thinking" Symposium. 7-9:30 p.m. The Reston Community Center, at 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston.

SATURDAY/MAY 31

Raul Midón. 8 p.m., at The Centerstage, Reston Community Center Hunters Woods. Blind since infancy, Midón uses his songwriting and musical talents to shatter stereotypes while establishing himself as one of music's most distinctive and searching voices. \$20 Reston/\$40 Non-Reston. www.restoncommunitycenter.com or 703-476-4500.

SUNDAY/JUNE 8

SpeakeasyDC's Born This Way: Stories About Queer Culture in America. 3 p.m., at The Centerstage, Reston Community Center Hunters Woods. One of the region's premiere storytelling theatres presents an adults only afternoon of entertaining and thought-provoking true stories that showcase a range of perspectives from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) community. \$15 Reston/\$30 Non-Reston. www.restoncommunitycenter.com or 703-476-4500.

ONGOING

Free Comedy Showcase. Thursdays 8:30 p.m., at Kalypso's Sports Tavern, 1617 Washington Plaza N., Lake Anne Village Center, Reston. Kalypso's hosts weekly comedy shows that feature some of the best national touring and local comedians in the area. Free of charge.



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Photo by Kenneth M. Wyner

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ENTERTAINMENT



Nancy Riley



Beverly Cosham

Reliving Musical Memories

The Reston Chorale presents 'Feelin' Groovy: Reston's Early Years.'

Reston's 50th Anniversary celebration continues on May 10, with The Reston Chorale's spring Pops Concert. Feelin' Groovy: Reston's Early Years will feature songs topping the charts when Reston was new—from The Beatles' greatest hits to songs by Joni Mitchell, Otis Redding, Pete Seeger and other artists from the 1960s and 70s. The concert will also showcase songs from Hair and Pippin, two Tony Award-winning rock musicals from that era.

Guest artist Beverly Cosham will be among the concert's featured soloists, performing Paul Simon's Bridge Over Troubled Water. One of the Washington area's most popular song stylists, Beverly Cosham is a long-time resident of Reston and a founding member of both The Reston Chorale and the Reston Community Players.

Two performances will take place on Saturday, May 10, at 4:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., at the Reston Community Center, Hunters Woods, located at 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston, Virginia. Tickets may be purchased online at www.restonchorale.org, as well as RCC's CenterStage Box Office (703-476-4500 ext. 3). Tickets are \$25/Adults (18-61) and \$20/Seniors (62+). Youth 17 and under will be admitted for free with an adult or senior ticket holder. For more information, visit www.restonchorale.org or call 703-834-0079.

The Reston Chorale (TRC), es-

When & Where

The Reston Chorale's spring Pops Concert celebrates

Reston's 50th Anniversary with a musical flashback to the 60s and 70s. Saturday, May 10, 4:30 and 7:30 p.m., Reston Community Center, Hunters Woods. Tickets are now available at www.restonchorale.org.

Reston's 50th Anniversary celebration continues on May 10, with The Reston Chorale's spring Pops Concert. established in 1967, is a mixed-voice, auditioned chorus with a full repertoire including pops, masterworks, American classics, and new works. In March 2014, TRC presented the world premiere of Donald McCullough's The Essential Life, which commemorated the 50th Anniversary of Reston and the 100th birthday of founder Robert E. Simon, Jr. 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 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.

Singer and actress Beverly Cosham has performed her cabaret act at nightspots from Los Angeles to New York, as well as Blues Alley, the Kennedy Center, the National Theater and many other Washington, D.C. venues.

She has appeared with the Navy Commodores and such jazz luminaries as Clark Terry, Mose Allison, and the Heath Brothers. Ms. Cosham has produced four recordings with life-long friend and music director George Hummel. She has received a Helen Hayes nomination and two WAMA (Washington Area Music Award) nominations.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Pet Fiesta Held At Reston Town Center

Thousands attend pet focused May 3 event.

BY RYAN DUNN
THE CONNECTION

Visitors and participants of the annual Reston Pet Fiesta enjoyed sunny mild weather on Saturday, May 3. One of the signature events of Reston Town Center, this outdoor event was open to the public and brought together local businesses, animal rescue groups and pet owners for a day of activities and demonstrations. The event was also an opportunity to put in volunteer hours with animal adoption groups.

"Today we have about 100 volunteers," said Lisa Stern, a resident of Arlington and volunteer coordinator with K-9 LifeSavers. Partners and volunteers with K-9 LifeSavers drive dogs from rural shelters to the D.C. area. A portion of each adoption fee goes towards the cost of transport. Approximately 38 dogs were adopted on Saturday at Reston with K-9 LifeSavers. "We were very happy to place some dogs in homes and save them from high kill rate shelters," said Stern. Other pet adoption groups attending included Capitol Canines Animal Rescue and Lucky Dog Animal Rescue. Fifty-eight dogs were adopted on Saturday through the group Lucky Dog Animal Rescue. "We have been coming to this event in Reston every year since our organization began," said Lucky Dog founder and executive director Mirah Horowitz. "I would say this is one of our favorite events of the year. It is a well organized opportunity for rescues to adopt out a large number of dogs while ensuring adopters meet high standards."

ONE OF THE VOLUNTEERS was Girl Scout Caroline Simmons, who helped educate pet owners and adopters on the importance of preparing pets for emergencies. At the Fiesta, Caroline spoke to people adopting dogs about how to make an emer-



Clare Badgley, a volunteer with K-9 LifeSavers, holds Lima Bean, a dog picked up from a shelter in rural Virginia.



PHOTOS BY RYAN DUNN/THE CONNECTION

K-9 LifeSavers volunteer coordinator Lisa Stern and Rebecca Morgan pose for a photo with Tinkerbell at Reston Town Center.

gency plan for pets in case of a natural disaster. The organizations K-9 LifeSavers and Great Dogs of Great Falls provided items for an emergency preparedness kit which was on display. Simmons, a member of Girl Scout Troop 5324 in Great Falls, put in hours to earn the Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest award one can earn in Girl Scouts. "I attended this event last year for a couple hours as a volunteer," said Simmons. "It was a wonderful chance for pet owners in the area to learn more about how to take care of their animals."

Organizing the Pet Fiesta event was non-profit GoodDogz.org. "We are really thankful to the community and Northern Virginia for hosting this event," said Mark Bates, Director of Events for GoodDogz.org. The organization is dedicated to educating potential dog owners on dog selection and care and supporting efforts of rescue groups. "This is our 14th year, and without local support this would not be possible... we also appreciate the support of our sponsors." Sponsors for the event included Hope Advanced Veterinary Center, NOVADog Magazine, Unleashed by Petco, and The LifeCentre.

ANOTHER NONPROFIT which attended the event was Fairfax Pets on Wheels, Inc. The all volunteer program sponsored by the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging provides pet visitations to improve the quality of life of area nursing home residents. "People of all ages in rehabilitation homes and nursing homes find comfort in petting the dogs, and dogs love it because they get attention," said volunteer Barbara Skouronski, a resident of Herndon.

Also attending the show were many commercial exhibitors, including family owned business Dog Bones Direct. "We drove down from York, Pennsylvania," said owner Bob Strickler. "Sales are usually good, it is a great group of people, very well organized," said Strickler. In 2013 the Reston Pet Fiesta featured 120 exhibitors and drew more than 10,000 targeted visitors. This year by the end of the day approximately 150 dogs were adopted. To learn more about Pet Fiesta, visit www.petfiesta.org.

Many nonprofits and commercial representatives attended the 2014 Reston Pet Fiesta. By the end of the day approximately 150 dogs were adopted.



Senior midfielder Alex Condon scored a goal for Madison during the Warhawks' May 5 contest against St. Stephen's & St. Agnes.



Senior Katie Kerrigan scored three goals against St. Stephen's & St. Agnes on May 5.

PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT/THE CONNECTION

Madison Girls' Lax Learns From Season's Toughest Challenge

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

For the St. Stephen's & St. Agnes girls' lacrosse team, it was a chance to learn from a recent mistake. For the Madison Warhawks, it was a chance to learn from an elite form of competition.

Each team benefited from Monday's private/public matchup of defending state champions. The Saints, however, did so while pulling out a victory.

St. Stephen's & St. Agnes, a private school powerhouse in Alexandria, improved to 23-1 with a 13-8 victory on its home field. Madison, a public school program in Vienna, trailed by two after Kierra Sweeney's goal with 14:42 remaining in the second half cut the SSSA lead to 8-6, but the Saints responded with five consecutive goals and handed the Warhawks (10-1) their first loss of the season. SSSA scored six of the game's first seven goals, but Madison closed the first half with a 3-0 run, cutting the Saints' lead to 6-4 at halftime. During the break, the Saints made it clear they wanted to avoid a letdown similar to what they experienced against Roland Park Country School (Baltimore) on April 26, when they suffered their lone defeat of the season, 12-11.

"A few weeks ago, we played at Rowland Park and it was kind of the same situation," Saints junior Ellie Majure said. "We walked into halftime kind of with our faces



Madison's Rachel Brennan, left, scored a goal against the Saints on Monday.

drawn and we were kind of like, 'We're up by a few goals,' and it did not end well for us. [Today], we went into halftime, we were like, 'This cannot happen again, you need to get pumped up,' and everybody got their adrenaline going and got real excited."

St. Stephen's, the defending VISAA state champion, responded, scoring the first two goals of the second half before pulling away late. Majure led the way with four goals and added an assist. Olivia Mikkelsen, Darby Philbrick and Ellie Carson each scored two goals for the Saints, and Avery Donahoe, Abby Bailey and Sophie Davidson each had one. Donahoe and Philbrick each had two assists.

SSSA head coach Kathy Jenkins, who has amassed more than 600 victories in 39 years with the program, praised the Warhawks, who have won two of the last three VHSL state championships.

"I went to the state finals to watch last year and I was really impressed with their stick skills and how fast they move the ball," Jenkins said. "They're not [a] typical public school [program, where] one girl tries to run it. They move the ball down the field. As you could see, all those passes, kids were breaking. ... I think it's exciting to see the public schools are getting closer to the private. It was a great game. It's too bad more people didn't have an opportunity to see it."

Madison entered Monday's contest with a 10-0 record, with nine wins coming by at least eight goals. The Warhawks' only test came on April 16, when Madison edged Westfield 16-15.

St. Stephen's & St. Agnes, ranked No. 2 in the nation by laxpower.com, provided Madison with its toughest test to date. The Warhawks stayed close early in the second half, but eventually fell short against their only private-school opponent of the season.

"I am very proud of my team," Madison head coach Amanda Counts said. "It was a good, hard-fought game. We appreciate the competition. It was fun."

Counts expressed her competitive nature, as well.

"I hate to lose," she said. "I would have really liked to have been the team to beat the Saints. Hopefully there will be other opportunities in the future."

Madison junior Kierra Sweeney finished with three goals and three assists. Sweeney is committed to



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Herndon High School recently held a signing ceremony for its college-bound athletes. Pictured from left: (front row) Brian Maye (soccer, Shenandoah), Sarah Suter (field hockey, Lynchburg), JJ Murphy (football, CNU), Haley Brazier (soccer, Gettysburg), (back row) Sarah Kurtz (softball, Iowa), Brandon Alston (basketball, Lehigh), Dorian Johnson (basketball, Barton), Andrew Goldman (cross country, Virginia). Not pictured: Carson Moses (soccer, Alderson-Broaddus).

SPORTS BRIEFS

Herndon Baseball Improves to 8-4

The Herndon baseball team beat Robinson 7-4 on May 2, improving its record to 8-4.

The Hornets will host Westfield at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, May 9.

Herndon Softball Beats Robinson

After suffering back-to-back losses, the Herndon softball team defeated Robinson 7-1 on May 2, improving its record to 4-6.

The Hornets will travel to face Tuscarora at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, May 7.

South Lakes Baseball Thumps Yorktown

The South Lakes baseball team defeated Yorktown 13-1 on May 5, giving the Seahawks four wins in five games since returning from a spring break trip to South Carolina.

South Lakes will host Langley at 6:30 p.m. on May 9.

South Lakes Boys' Soccer Wins 4 of 5

The South Lakes boys' soccer team defeated Madison 1-0 on May 1, giving the Seahawks four wins in its last five games.

After dropping its first two games, South Lakes had responded with six wins in nine games, improving its record to 6-3-2. The Seahawks will travel to face Langley at 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 8.

South Lakes Girls' Soccer to Host Langley

The South Lakes girls' soccer team will host Langley at 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 8. The Seahawks are 7-2-2 after playing to a scoreless tie against Madison on May 1.

Dartmouth, where she would play with Davidson and Carson of St. Stephen's & St. Agnes.

"I think we were really excited to play because they are an extremely, extremely good team," Sweeney said. "I think we played really well and I think it was definitely a learning experience because they are such an elite team, where we can really learn from their motions and their stick skills and the way they play. I'm really

proud of the way my team played. I thought we really rose to the challenge and did our best."

Katie Kerrigan, who will play for Ohio State next season, finished with three goals and an assist. Alex Condon and Rachel Brennan each had one goal for the Warhawks.

The Saints will host Holy Child at 4:15 p.m. on Wednesday, May 7. Madison will travel to face Thomas Jefferson at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, May 9.

ENTERTAINMENT



CBT dancers mesmerize their audience in *Après La Pluie*, also choreographed by Tara Henderson.

Celebrating Spring with Dance

Classical Ballet Theatre (CBT) celebrates this spring by sharing its love of dance with the community. In late March, it hosted children and their families at its Herndon studios for shorter, narrated Children's Series performances of *The Sleeping Beauty*, and, in early April, it took the full classic ballet to the big stage at the Ernst Theater. There, dancers performed before hundreds of enthusiastic audience members. In addition to friends and family, these included military personnel and Fairfax County teachers who received complimentary tickets in honor of CBT's Silver Anniversary.

For 25 years, CBT has shared its love of the performing arts with thousands of students and patrons, and its education and performance programs are flourishing. Executive Director Cynthia Donavin and Artistic Director and former Bolshoi Ballet star Alisher Saburov lead the faculty team. Together, they help every student develop to his/her potential by providing hands-on instruction, tailoring programs to meet individual needs, making a commitment to excellence, and sharing core values such as integrity, inclusion, discipline, and respect. They also provide master classes with industry leaders, Youth America Grand Prix coaching, dance conditioning, summer intensives, choreography camps, and multiple performing opportunities.

On May 9, students will have yet another opportunity to perform classical ballet and contemporary dance works. This time it will be for "Friends of Classical Ballet Theatre," the generous supporters who make fulfilling CBT's education, performance, and outreach

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Claire de la Paz performs *Maelstrom*, choreographed by CBT faculty member Meghan Rudorfer. *Maelstrom* earned Claire recognition as a "Top 12" in the 2014 YAGP (Philadelphia), Precompetitive Contemporary Division. She also placed in the "Top 12" with her classical variation.



Alexandra Lopez leaps in *Llegando al Tempio*, choreographed by CBT faculty member Tara Henderson. Her performance of *Llegando al Tempio* earned Alexandra "Top 12" recognition in the 2014 YAGP (Philadelphia), Precompetitive Contemporary Division.

mission possible. Presented by United Bank, the evening will include wine and hors d'oeuvres as well as performances of this season's highlights. CBT thanks

United Bank for making this event possible and invites those interested in being a part of CBT to visit <http://www.cbtnva.org> or call 703-471-0750.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Camille Passante portrays the delicate and beautiful Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty*.



Maren Napolitano of Herndon Classical Ballet Theatre performs *Art & Soul*, choreographed by Meghan Rudorfer and earning Maren "Top 12" recognition in the 2014 YAGP (Philadelphia), Precompetitive Contemporary Division.

A Tale of Two Seasons



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

It is not the best of times, nor is it the worst of times; it is, simply put: the time between the end of winter and the beginning of summer. It is the season known as spring, but more to the point of this column, it is the time when, if the weather cooperates/accommodates, I won't need to turn the heat or the air conditioning on in my house. I will instead be able to ride the wave, so to speak, and not incur any post-winter/pre-summer utility bills. Possibly, I might even be able to pay off my oil-heating budget bill balance for the 2013/2014 season – before the 2014/2015 budget cycle begins, and hopefully not have to cool down the house at the same time – due to an early summer – so that on the day my oil-heating bill is due, it won't be competing for cash with my upstart electric/air conditioning bill for money not well spent and for money hardly in abundance.

As difficult and challenging as our most recent winter has been, and as hot and humid as our summers typically are, I (like many others I'm sure), would certainly appreciate a break/brake in my cash flowing out and instead enjoy its staying power – in my bank. Not that it earns any interest idling as it does there; nevertheless, its presence in my checking account without immediately being in demand would create a sense of solvency, false though it may be (and a temporary sensation at that), and likely make a positive contribution to my seasonal situation. I don't mind being thrown a bone once in a while. Moreover, given the circumstances and reality of living in the never-enough-resources world, any discount, reduction or delay, real or imagined, in the ongoing and recurring utility bills, would be a most welcome improvement. If the heat and air conditioning indeed stayed off, and I didn't need to be warm any more than I needed to be cool, I'm sure I could make the adjustment. Paying less probably wouldn't be a hardship. I'm not too proud to admit it, though I'm not begging.

I'm not asking for a multi-month sojourn from my utility bill reality. I'm just asking for a month. One month where I could stop the bleeding and possibly pay backward to get ahead rather than pay backward to not be in arrears. I don't believe I'm asking for a lot. And neither do I think I'm being greedy. However, I agree it may be wishful thinking. Nevertheless, it's a request worth making. And as unpredictable – respectfully speaking, not criticizing – as the weather can be, a little help would go a long way; in dollars and in sense. Otherwise, I might have a dickens of a time paying for heat AND air conditioning in the same month. Then it would be the worst of times.

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

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