

In Solemn Remembrance

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Theodore Smith and his bugle on Sept. 11, 2014. Smith, an 83-year-old volunteer with Bugles Across America, went to four different sites and played "Taps" in remembrance of all those who lost their lives on 9/11.

A New Face at Laurel Ridge

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In Solemn Remembrance

Local bugler plays
"Taps" in honor of the
Sept. 11 victims.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Throughout Virginia and the U.S., people commemorated last Thursday's 13th anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy. Locally, Theodore Smith, an 83-year-old volunteer with Bugles Across America, did it in his own, special way.

He went to four different sites and played "Taps" in remembrance of all those who lost their lives that September morning. He began in front of the Fairfax County Government Center in Fair Oaks at exactly 8:46 a.m., the time when American Airlines Flight 11 flew into the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City.

Next, Smith did the same thing in front of Fairfax Fire Station 40 on West Ox Road. He played at 9:03 a.m., when United Airlines Flight 175 struck the South Tower. Said Smith: "This second sounding was chosen to honor all of the heroic police and firefighters who gave their lives that day in order to save hundreds more."

He then performed "Taps" at Paul VI Catholic High School. He did so at 9:40 a.m., when American Airlines Flight 77 struck the Pentagon. "It was to honor the diversity of citizens of all backgrounds that perished that day, and since, from evil terrorism," he explained.

Finally, Smith played his bugle in front of the flag outside The Woodlands Retirement Community in Fairfax. The residents and guests placed their hands over their hearts while he performed at 10:06 a.m., when



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION
Del. David Bulova (on left) and others sing the "Star-Spangled Banner" outside The Woodlands.

United Airlines Flight 93 crashed in a field in Shanksville, Pa.

THIS EFFORT, said Smith, was "to honor all of the courageous passengers whose resistance prevented another possible crash into a vital, Washington, D.C., target, which saved hundreds more lives."

Afterwards, he played "The Star-Spangled Banner" in recognition of the 200th anniversary of its writing by Francis Scott Key. He also chose that selection, he said, "for those who have since sacrificed their lives for the freedoms that we Americans must never take for granted."

One of those attending the musical tribute at The Woodlands was Del. David Bulova (D-37th). "My father-in-law was in

the Pentagon the day it was hit," he explained. "We lost a lot of great people that day, and I am very happy that Mr. Smith continues to keep their memories alive."

Smith, who lives at The Woodlands with his wife, Mary Frances, does similar bugle performances each Sept. 11. He's played both trumpet and bugle for many years and started his 9/11 musical commemoration when they lived in McLean. This was his fifth year doing it.

And as a proud member of Bugles Across America, he and his co-musicians also play at veterans' funerals and, he said, "Their families appreciate that."

SMITH SERVED in the Coast Guard for two years and the Air Force, five years, and



Theodore Smith and his bugle on Sept. 11, 2014.

then owned an aerospace consulting firm in McLean before retiring. He and Mary Frances moved to The Woodlands in 2012 and reside in the independent-living section.

"We have a number of ex-military and ex-government personnel here, so they appreciate the 9/11 observance," he said. "We had a good turnout for this ceremony, and it was nice of David Bulova to come out, too."

So why does Smith do it, each year? "As we get farther away from 9/11, we need to remind people about it," he said. "Some people weren't born, yet, or others were so young then that they barely remember it. So it's a commemoration and my small contribution."

A New Face at Laurel Ridge

Tonya Cox takes the helm as principal.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Born in Norfolk and raised in the Alexandria part of Fairfax County, Tonya Cox figured she'd either go into education like her mother or ministry like her father. Then, while in college, she substituted for her mother, during spring and summers, and was hooked.

"When I spent time with the special-ed kids, I fell in love with them," she said. "I loved working with kids and found I had a knack for teaching and a soft spot for kids needing help."

Cox eventually became both a teacher and an administrator and is now the new principal of Fairfax's Laurel Ridge Elementary. She replaced interim Principal

Laura Adams, who was there for a year.

When Cox heard about the opening, she interviewed for the job and researched the community to see if she was a good fit for it – and she decided she was.

"This school has had a lot of different principals in recent years," she said. "So I felt it needed consistency, and I hope to stay for a long time."

Cox obtained a bachelor's in education from JMU and a master's in Education Leadership from GMU. She's also certified as a principal and as a K-12 special-education teacher with endorsements in Emotional Disabilities and Learning Disabilities.

She taught at four schools before becoming an administrator. "I loved being a teacher; it was very rewarding working with students with emotional and learning dis-



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION
Tonya Cox is the new principal of Laurel Ridge Elementary.

abilities," said Cox. "I felt like I had a good grasp on working with kids with challenging behaviors. It was like a puzzle, trying

to figure out the reason for their behavior and channel it more appropriately.

"I enjoyed the challenge and seeing them change their behavior," she continued. "So that led me into the administrative track. As a teacher, I felt like I made a difference [to students]; but as an administrator, I could have an impact on a community."

Cox was the assistant principal at William Halley Elementary from October 1997-June 2004 and principal of Gunston Elementary from September 2004-July 2012. "Halley was a very diverse community with lots of needs," she said. "At one time, we had 950 kids and worked with and helped many families

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COMMENTARY

September is Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month

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



The numbers are staggering. In the United States, one person dies by suicide every 18 minutes. It is estimated that 5 million people in the United States have lost a loved one to suicide in the past 25 years. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of all deaths in the United States, and mental health problems will strike one in five adults each year. In Fairfax County alone last year, there were over 150 suicides. As overwhelming as the problem may feel, we can all take small steps to help those struggling and help them find hope.

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among youth between the ages of 15 and 25, and the second leading cause of death for college students. That's why the Fairfax – Falls Church Community Service Board (CSB) has partnered with CrisisLink to make it easier for adolescents and young adults in our community to just text their thoughts and concerns. This option provides prompt response, counsel and referral using technology familiar to this age group. CrisisLink is adapting to more readily help those in trouble. All they have to do is text NEED HELP to 703-940-0888.

Hope is also just a phone call away. The National

Suicide Prevention Lifeline has a dedicated phone number for those feeling lost: 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Crisislink is available at 703-527-4077. Last year, CrisisLink handled 2,699 calls including follow-up calls to those at high risk. Of those calls, 311 were suicide related and required de-escalation by a Volunteer Crisis Counselor. Another option for help is the local the PRS CrisisLink website: www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Fairfax County Public Schools are also educating teachers, mentor, coaches and parents on how to recognize signs that youth might be in trouble. Take a moment to explore these two websites, <http://fairfax.kognito.com/> and <http://bit.ly/1m66X0R> if you are involved with students in our community.

Most importantly for those struggling, I urge you to talk to someone you love, even when you don't think anyone can make you feel better. There are more people than you know willing to listen.

If you are chosen by someone looking for support, listen with your heart. You don't have to solve the problem, just hear the person out. Give them the resources listed here. If you are looking for more information about how to be prepared to help loved ones struggling, there is a very helpful video to help answer some of your questions at <http://bit.ly/1D0ixjb>. At one point or another, we will all need some help, and it is okay to ask.

WEEK IN FAIRFAX

Beware of Lane Closures

As part of the Old Town Square project, work on the pedestrian barrier at the southeast corner of the Chain Bridge Road/North Street intersection began Sept. 10. The work zone is adjacent to the north side of Auld Shebeen restaurant.

This work will require the closure of the right eastbound lane of North Street and the right northbound lane of Chain Bridge at this intersection. The sidewalk on the eastbound side of North Street will be closed at the work zone along the side of the Auld Shebeen restaurant.

The sidewalk will remain open along Chain Bridge, and access to the front entrance of Auld Shebeen won't be affected. The entire Old Town Square project will continue through December. Work on this portion, however, will last about a month.

City Council Meets Sept. 23

The next meeting of the Fairfax City Council is Tuesday, Sept. 23, at 7 p.m., at City Hall, 10455 Armstrong St. in Fairfax.

Rock the Block

A free, live music concert and block party will be held Friday, Sept. 26, from 6-9 p.m., on University Drive in Old Town Fairfax. Called Rock the Block!, the event will feature the popular, local band, Leggz, playing covers of favorite hits. City restaurants and merchants will offer food, a beer garden, games and more. Attendees are advised to bring their own chairs.

Local History Revisited in Fairfax

In commemoration of the 200th anniversary of local Fairfax citizens' military role with the Virginia Militias in 1814, Historic

SEE WEEK, PAGE 5

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WEEK IN FAIRFAX

FROM PAGE 4

Blenheim will host a bicentennial commemoration of the War of 1812 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sept. 20 at Historic Blenheim, 3610 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. The day-long event is free and features events for history buffs of all ages. For information, call 703-591-0560.

This event features a living history encampment of the 60th Virginia Militia, portrayals of local landowners, a village blacksmith, fencing demonstrations; talks by historian Stuart Butler, author and reporter Steve Vogel, historian Patrick O'Neill and period music by musician/ musicologist David Hildebrand. Additionally, a grave-marking ceremony for Captain Rezin Willcoxon will take place at 3:30 p.m. by the Society of the War of 1812 in Virginia.

Government Center Farmers Market

Each Thursday, from 3-7 p.m., the Fairfax County Government Center hosts a farmers market in its parking lot. The Government Center is at 12000 Government Center Pkwy. in Fair Oaks, and the next markets are slated for Sept. 18 and Sept. 25.

Child Carseat Checks

City residents may have their children's carseats checked or installed by the City of Fairfax Fire Department. For an appointment, call 703-385-7830.

Fairfax City Farmers Markets

Two farmers markets are still open in the City of Fairfax. They'll run through Nov. 1 at the corner of West and Main streets. The Downtown Fairfax Coalition Community Market is held Saturdays, from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. The Sunday Farmers Market will run from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. For more information, call 703-642-0128.

Police, Fire Games Help Needed

The 2015 World Police and Fire Games will need upwards of 3,000 people to take on a wide variety of roles across the National Capital Region. These include welcoming visitors, transporting athletes, joining the medical team, assisting sports coordinators, helping out behind the scenes on the technology team. For more information or to volunteer, go to <http://fairfax2015.com/volunteer>.

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OPINION

Protecting Those Threatened by Domestic Violence

September marks 20th Anniversary of Violence Against Women Act.

BY GERRY CONNOLLY
U.S. REPRESENTATIVE (D-IL)

This month marks the 20th anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) – landmark legislation in which our nation committed new prevention and response resources so that our mothers, daughters, sisters, and friends would no longer have to suffer in silence through domestic abuse.

Though meaningful progress has been realized, domestic violence continues to be a real and troubling challenge in our communities. Far too many of us have been touched by domestic violence in one way or another. According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, an estimated 1.3 million women are victims each year, and one in every four women will experience such violence

in their lifetime.

Just last year, Turning Points, the only domestic violence intervention program in Prince William County, served 6,000 clients. In Fairfax County there were more than 8,000 incidents reported, and we have seen a 40 percent increase in homelessness due to domestic violence.

This is why I was so disappointed when the House Republican majority blocked a bipartisan modernization of VAWA for 18 months before relenting last year. The Senate passed the bill in a strong and bipartisan 78-22 vote, but some House Republicans objected because they did not want to extend protections to Native Americans, LGBT Americans, and immigrants. Thankfully, House leadership finally put aside this obstructionism and ultimately allowed the House to pass the improved VAWA bill, which I and an overwhelming number of Democrats supported.

Thanks to VAWA, we have strengthened and expanded critical protections for all victims of domestic violence and enhanced our nation's criminal justice response. Specifically, VAWA has instituted stricter sentencing guidelines for repeat federal sex crime offenders and pro-

vided resources to tribal, local, and state law enforcement communities to address violent crimes against women. In addition, VAWA funds specialized training for 500,000 law enforcement officers, prosecutors, judges, and other personnel every year. The National Domestic Violence Hotline, which responds to more than 22,000 urgent calls for help every month, also was created under VAWA.

The updated VAWA is renewing our successful partnerships with local nonprofits and law enforcement agencies. It is improving protections for underserved communities, particularly immigrants and victims of human trafficking. And of particular importance for helping victims through the recovery process, the new bill is expanding housing assistance and providing support regardless of sexual orientation.

Sadly, recent events in the news demonstrate that although we have made great progress, as a community we must remain vigilant in protecting those threatened by domestic violence. Please know that I will continue to push Congress to maintain and expand the investments needed to support these critical programs in our community and continue to be a voice of support to those who might otherwise not speak up for themselves.

COMMENTARY

School Board Ready to Tackle Fiscal Challenges

BY TAMARA DERENAK KAUFAX
CHAIRMAN, FAIRFAX COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

I am honored to have the opportunity to serve as the chairman of Fairfax County School Board for the 2014-15 school year. My colleagues on the board and I – working closely with our superintendent, Dr. Karen Garza – have an ambitious agenda for the year ahead. Our top priority remains adequate funding for our schools at both the state and county levels. State support for education remains at unacceptable levels and we will continue to work with our county Board of Supervisors to provide our schools with an adequate level of financial support when the state fails to do its job. As a consensus builder, I will continue to urge the School Board to work in partnership with the Board of Supervisors to find solutions to our budget dilemma.

We have already taken steps to build a stronger relationship with the Board of Supervisors. This past year, Dr. Garza provided a new level of transparency in the budget process by meeting with the Board of Supervisors and other community leaders, conducting listening tours in each of the magisterial districts, and developing the Citizens Guide to Understanding the Budget, all of which were well received by the supervisors and the community. Our boards have already met jointly in September to outline our fiscal forecasts. In addition, we have established the Joint Budget Development Committee composed of three supervisors and three School Board members. The committee will review budget factors impacting Fiscal Year 2016 and provide guidance to both boards. The committee will deliver a report to both boards

before the County Executive presents his Advertised Budget and before the superintendent presents her Proposed Budget in early 2015. Last year, the county and School Board created the joint Infrastructure Financing Committee to review the facilities needs of both FCPS and the county. The committee report released earlier this year resulted in an additional \$13 million that will be invested each year beginning in FY 2016 for school infrastructure upgrades. I will continue to encourage this kind of collaboration to build trust and realistic expectations for the supervisors, the school board, and the community.

In the next few weeks we plan to make a final decision regarding school start times for the 2015-16 school year. Superintendent Garza made her recommendation to the board at a meeting in early September. We will provide the community with sufficient time to comment on the proposal before we take final action at our Oct. 23 meeting. As you may recall, the School Board adopted a resolution in April 2012 with the stated goal to start high schools after 8 a.m. The board subsequently hired Children's National Medical Center to serve as consultants to develop a plan to achieve that goal. CNMC developed four options. Those options were taken to the community in a series of eight public meetings held in May and June. After analyzing the feedback from parents and the community, CNMC made their recommendation and, based on school board direction, Option 3 is the framework being used to develop a final recommendation for school board consideration. I invite you to learn more at www.fcps.edu.

Other new initiatives include the FCPS Por-

trait of a Graduate, which will serve as a foundation on which to build a long-range strategic plan for FCPS. Once a strategic plan is in place with a direct and clear vision for our schools, our work will be very focused and the outcome will be improved student achievement for every student.

We have had great success with our launch of full day Mondays for our elementary students. The community is very supportive of the change which will increase instructional time for students and dedicated planning time for teachers. Beginning this school year, we also have a new standard school calendar in place that eliminates the need to make up inclement weather days at the end of the school year, if fewer than 13 days are missed.

The Bailey's Upper Elementary School for the Arts and Sciences opened Sept. 2 with a community ribbon-cutting celebration scheduled for Oct. 15. This new school was converted from a five-story office building on Leesburg Pike and will solve the overcrowding problems that have plagued Bailey's Elementary School for the Arts and Sciences. Under the leadership of one principal, the new campus houses grades 3-5 while the existing campus remains home to preschoolers through second graders.

The start of a new school year is always an exciting time for students, parents and teachers. As chairman, I pledge to maintain and build upon the excellence for which our schools are known. Working with our state elected officials, supervisors, superintendent and other stakeholders, I am confident that we can solve our most pressing problems while continuing to offer a world-class education for our families. Have a safe and productive school year.

COMMENTARY

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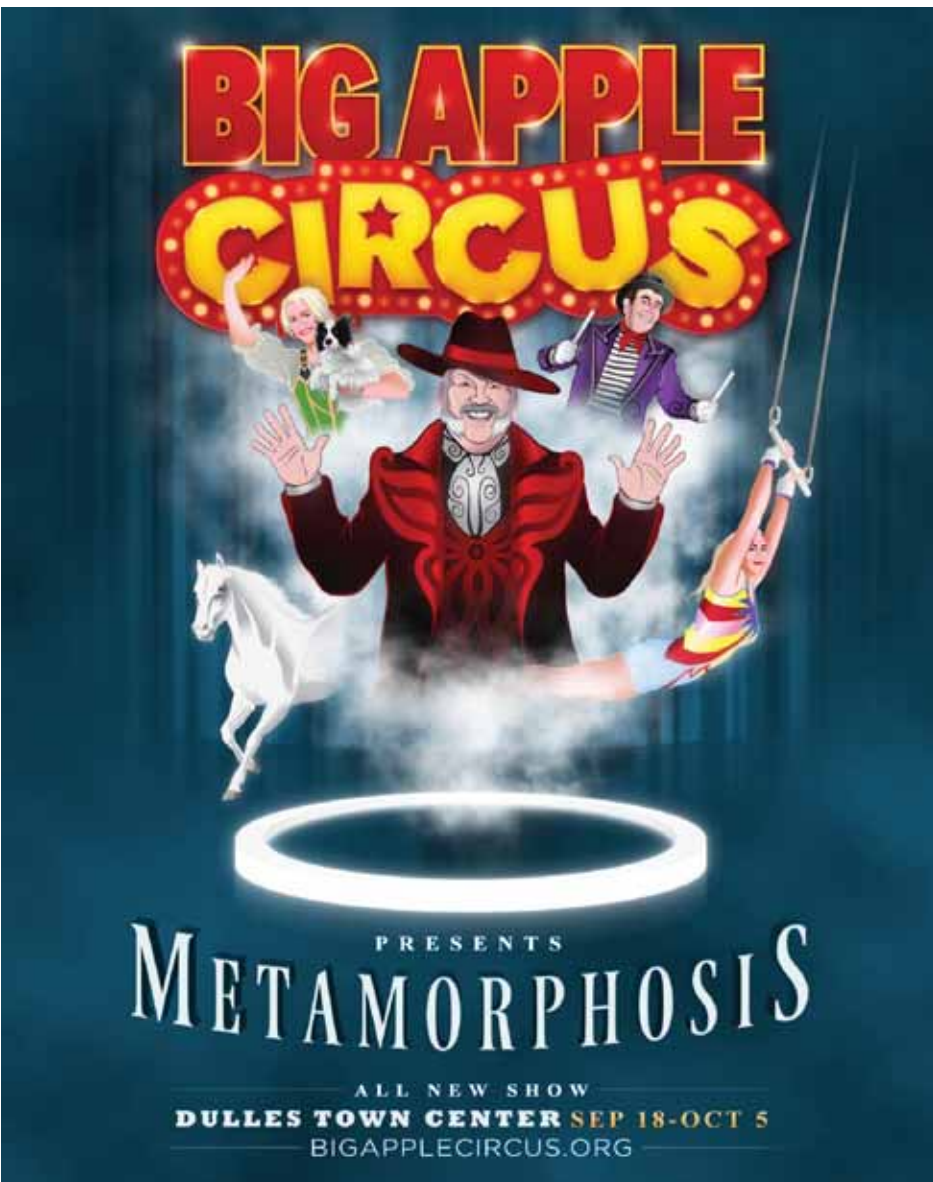
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PHOTO COURTESY OF NOOR NAVEED

Noor Naveed hopes to become the first person in her family to graduate from college. After graduating from NOVA, she transferred to George Mason University.



PHOTO COURTESY OF AMY ZUASO

Amy Zuaso became the first person in her family to graduate from college. She says the guaranteed admission agreements at NOVA allowed her to complete her associate's degree and transfer to her dream school: James Madison University.

A Different Path to a 4-year Degree

NOVA's Guaranteed Admissions Program gives students opportunities to attend their dream schools.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Noor Naveed immigrated to the United States from Pakistan with her family shortly after the 9/11 attacks. The family settled in Northern Virginia and, years later, Naveed graduated from Hayfield Secondary School in Alexandria. She dreams of becoming the first person in her family to graduate from college.

"My mother was forced to drop out of junior high and at 32 got her GED. I just knew that there wasn't anyone in my immediate family who had graduated from college and was determined to be the first person," said Naveed. "I knew I wanted to [go to] George Mason because I didn't want loans and I knew I could pay for George Mason out of pocket."

Naveed used Northern Virginia Community College's Guaranteed Admissions Program to complete her associate of arts degree and is now finishing a bachelor's degree in criminology, law and society at George Mason University in Fairfax.

"Counselors were great at telling me what classes I should take so they would transfer," she said. "Almost all of my classes transferred."

NOVA's admissions agreements guarantee current and future NOVA students who earn associate degrees admission to more than 40 four-year colleges and universities.

Students do have to meet certain academic requirements, such as earning a minimum grade point average, in order to be accepted into their chosen four-year colleges.

"It's very beneficial to the students because before these agreements, there weren't any perimeters as to what it takes to be admitted to universities," said Julia Brown, coordinator for transfer policy at Northern Virginia Community College. "As long as you have a certain GPA, the guaranteed admission agreement takes all of the guess work out of whether you will qualify. It is a huge relief. ... Students don't want to waste money or time by taking a class that isn't needed."

NOVA officials say that popular majors include engineering, nursing, computer science and general studies.

For example, a student can earn an associates degree in engineering from NOVA then transfer to Virginia Tech's College of Engineering or the University of Virginia's School of Engineering and Applied Science. A student who might be unsure of the major he plans to pursue can earn a general studies degree and then transfer to George Mason University.

George Mason University, University of Virginia and Virginia Tech are the top transfer schools for NOVA graduates.

"The [Guaranteed Admission



PHOTO COURTESY OF NOVA

NOVA Community students can earn admission to more than 40 colleges and universities through the school's guaranteed admission agreements.

Agreement] program allowed me to complete my associate's degree close to home. The GAA gave me the opportunity to transfer to my dream school, James Madison University, with ease and with no debt," said Amy Zuaso, a first year advising specialist at NOVA. "At NOVA, I met with a JMU transfer representative that informed me about a full ride scholarship program, The Centennial Scholars Program, that I applied for and was awarded. Start-

ing at NOVA first and using the GAA helped me graduate from a four-year school and to be the first person in my family to graduate from college."

Zuaso is now completing an online Master's Degree in counseling at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va.

THE PROGRAM WAS CREATED after the release of a workforce trends report prepared by George Mason University's Center for Regional Analysis showed professional, scientific, technical and health care fields as the key sources of new net job growth in Northern Virginia from 2010 to 2020.

"The GAA is designed to offer students a seamless transfer process," said Darren Troxler, associate dean of admissions and chief transfer officer at George Mason University. "Students who meet all of the requirements for GAA admission are not only guaranteed transfer admission to Mason, but are considered juniors for class standing, registration and financial aid purposes, and are considered to have completed the Mason Core, our lower-level general education requirement."

Troxler says another advantage to GAA enrollment is the significant cost savings for students and parents. "There is a \$271.00 per credit hour differential in tuition rates between Mason and NOVA for Virginia residents," he said. "Students will realize a significantly lower debt burden by taking advantage of the Virginia Community College System."

Portrait of a Graduate Discussed

BY REENA SINGH
THE CONNECTION

The heart of the school system's new strategic plan is closer to being approved.

The Fairfax County School Board discussed the five component Portrait of a Graduate - with some asking for a component emphasizing a caring quality - at Monday's work session.

"We haven't truly captured what we're trying to say with 'goal-directed,'" said Mason District board member Sandy Evans.

She and a handful of other board members felt the last component, "Goal-directed and resilient" came across as cut-throat. She said the word "caring" needed to be in the heading of the component because character ethics is a priority.

THE FIVE COMPONENTS for the Portrait of a Graduate that was created for approval are Communicator, Collaborator, Global Citizen, Creative and Critical Thinker in addition to Goal-Directed and Resilient Individual.

"This is what we call the heart of the strategic plan." — FCPS Chief of Staff Marty Smith

"You can be all of these things and be a horrible human being," said Braddock District board member Megan McLaughlin.

She said her reason for needing the heading's name change stemmed from her social work background.

"It's one of the most important things we can do, create a young person who cares," she said.

Hunter Mill District board member Pat Hynes agreed that the name sounded "pushy."

"It's really all about ambition - that's what it comes across as sounding," she said.

Portrait of a Graduate was announced by Superintendent Dr. Karen Garza last October during an education summit. Since then, stakeholders have sent in a flurry of comments on what the final product should look like.

"We've had hundreds and hundreds of people submit feedback to the committee," she said. "It resonates with a lot of people."

Even retired teachers, she said, have supported the measure.

Part of the new FCPS strategic plan.

FCPS Chief of Staff Marty Smith showed a video about the importance of the five components for a students and what type of student they want graduating from the school system.

"This is what we call the heart of the strategic plan," he said.

Smith said that Portrait looks at skills even the youngest students might need when they graduate. In addition, he said that everyone, including himself, could identify with the qualities they need to be good at school, their job and their life.

"It's not changing the 'what,'" said Garza. "It's changing the 'how.'"

She said she wants to honor the committee's work by keeping most of the wording, but there could be some room to put the word "caring" into the last component's heading.

Several other board members felt that changing the wording was not necessary.

"We're at the Queen Elsa moment where we need to just let it go," said at large board member Ryan McElveen.

Springfield District board member Elizabeth Schultz felt that the words "goal-directed" were being misconstrued. While other members felt that it was pressuring students to become world leaders, Schultz said goals are different from person to person depending on their situation, whether that means having a 4.9 Grade Point Average or dressing themselves.

"Having goals isn't a bad thing," she said. "Being resilient isn't a bad thing."

BOARD CHAIRMAN Tamara Derenak Kaufax encouraged those unhappy with the name to submit amendments by the end of the week. The board is scheduled to vote on the proposal at the next School Board meeting Sept. 18.

The components for Portrait of a Graduate can be found at [http://www.boarddocs.com/vsba/fairfax/Board.nsf/files/9NNHVC4A210A/\\$file/POG%20Chart%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.boarddocs.com/vsba/fairfax/Board.nsf/files/9NNHVC4A210A/$file/POG%20Chart%20FINAL.pdf).

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ENTERTAINMENT

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.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 18 – SATURDAY/OCT. 4

Wake Up Call. Epicure Café, 11104 Lee Highway, Fairfax. A new collection of contemporary art curated by The Bunnyman Bridge Collective. <http://www.epicurecafe.org/>

THURSDAY/SEPT. 18

16th Annual Fall for the Book Festival. George Mason University, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. A week-long, multiple-venue, regional festival that brings together people of all ages and interests. Visit www.fallforthebook.org.

Experience Peru. 11 a.m. Fair Oaks Mall, I-66 at Route 50, Fairfax. Learn about Peru: its culture, natural beauty, music and more.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 19

City of Fairfax Library Friends Fall Children's Book Sale. 10 a.m. City of Fairfax Library, 10360 North Street, Fairfax. Join the Friends of the City of Fairfax Regional Library for the Fall Children's Book Sale. Choose gently-used books for children, for yourself or as gifts. All ages.

How to Train Your Dragon 2. 7-9 p.m. Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Watch How to Train Your Dragon 2 on the big screen. Free.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 19 - SUNDAY/SEPT. 21

Fall Book Sale. Friday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Saturday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sunday, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. Fairfax City Regional Library, 10360 North Street, Fairfax. Sunday bag day, \$5/bag. friendsoffairfaxcitylibrary@gmail.com

SATURDAY/SEPT. 20

Fairfax Symphony Orchestra presents Brahms, Grieg and Glinka by Alexander Schimpf. 7 p.m. George Mason University's Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Come listen to a lecture and evening of classical music at the University Center.

Genealogy Help Desk. 2 p.m. City of Fairfax Library, 10360 North Street, Fairfax. Bring your family history stumbers to the experts. Accomplished genealogists and library staff will be on hand to assist you. Ask the Virginia Room desk or call 703-293-6227. Teens and adults.

Art Guild of Clifton Art Walk. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Chapel Road, Clifton. Fine Art, jewelry, photography, artists and demos. Along the way also see unique shops for gifts, home accessories, papercraft, cupcakes and wine.

Dog Adoption. 12-3 p.m. PETCO, 13053 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, Fairfax. 703-817-9444.

Open Mic Coffee House. 7 -9:30 p.m. Calvary Hill Baptist Church, 9301 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. Free coffee, snacks, amps, and keyboard provided. If you would like to share your talent, call Pete 703-955-2039.

Fairfax Symphony Orchestra. 8 p.m. George Mason University Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive. The September 20th concert at George Mason's Center for the Arts begins with Mikhail Glinka's Overture to the opera Ruslan and Ludmilla. Composed between 1837 and 1842 and based on a poem by the great Russian writer Alexander Pushkin, the opera has been a mainstay of the Bolshoi Opera's repertoire. Purchase tickets at www.fairfaxsymphony.org.

Bicentennial Commemoration: War of 1812. 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Historic Blenheim and the Civil War Interpretive Center, 3610 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. In commemoration of the 200th anniversary of local Fairfax citizens' military role with the Virginia Militias in 1814, this event features a living history encampment of the 60th Virginia Militia, portrayals of local landowners, a village blacksmith, fencing demonstrations; talks by historian Stuart Butler, author and reporter Steve Vogel, historian Patrick O'Neill and period music by musician/ musicologist David Hildebrand.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 21

Keyboard Conversations with Jeffrey Siegal: Classics Go Pop! 7 p.m. George Mason University's Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Come join pianist Jeffrey Siegal in his season opener at George Mason and enjoy his concerts with commentary series. Admissions: \$24-\$40. 888-945-2468.

City of Fairfax Library Friends Fall Children's Book Sale. 1 p.m. City of Fairfax Library, 10360 North Street, Fairfax. Join the Friends of the City of Fairfax Regional Library for the Fall Children's Book Sale. Choose gently-used books for children, for yourself or as gifts.

Train Show. 1-4 p.m. Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Museum members, free; adults 16 and over, \$4; children 5-15, \$2; under 4, free. A display of N gauge trains running. Information on the museum and shows is at www.fairfax-station.org or call phone 703-425-9225.

Dog Adoption. 12-4 p.m. Petco, Greenbriar Towncenter, 13053 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, Fairfax.



Gloria Benedetto shares her tribute to the animals she loves by using several techniques of stippling or painting with inks, pastels, acrylics and watercolor. View her exhibit, "You're Such An Animal," at the Workhouse Arts Center until Oct. 5.

Virginia Opera Children's Program - The Empress and the Nightingale.

2 p.m. Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. The Empress and the Nightingale is an adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen's classic children's story of a small bird sharing her gift of song with the ruler of China in ancient times. With a cast of three performing original music, this opera vividly teaches the value of music performed live versus machine-made art.

MONDAY/SEPT. 22

Library Tech Help. 11 a.m. City of Fairfax Library, 10360 North Street, Fairfax. Get your library-related electronic resource questions answered. includes help with eBooks and compatible devices. Bring your library card, eBook reader and laptop.

Crazy 8s Math Club. 4:30 p.m. City of Fairfax Library, 10360 North Street, Fairfax. Join Bedtime Math's Crazy 8s, where you'll build stuff, run and jump, make music, make a mess...it's a totally new kind of math club.

Tales to Tails. 4:30 p.m. City of Fairfax Library, 10360 North Street, Fairfax. Need practice reading? Read aloud to a friendly, trained therapy dog. Ages 6-12.

WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 24

Bilingual Storytime. 4 p.m. City of Fairfax Library, 10360 North Street, Fairfax. Bilingual Storytime in English and Spanish. Build your child's early literacy skills while enjoying stories, songs and activities. Age 3-5 with adult.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 25

Preschool Storytime. 10:30 a.m. City of Fairfax Library, 10360 North Street, Fairfax. Build your child's early literacy skills while enjoying stories, songs and activities. Ages 3-5 with adult.

Tales to Tails. 4:30 p.m. City of Fairfax Library, 10360 North Street, Fairfax. Need practice reading. Read aloud to a friendly, trained therapy dog. Ages 6-12.

Library Tech Help. 6 p.m. City of Fairfax Library, 10360 North Street, Fairfax. Get your library-related electronic resource questions answered. includes help with eBooks and compatible devices.

Magazines with Zino. 7 p.m. City of Fairfax Library, 10360 North Street, Fairfax. Learn to use the library's Zino digital magazine collection where you can read (and keep) digital editions of your favorite magazines.

My Gym-School Age. 4 p.m. Burke Center Library, 5935 Fords Oak Road, Burke. Develop your child's large motor skills, learn basic gymnastics and have fun! Presented by a local My Gym instructor. Ages 6-12.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 26

Rock the Block! #TGIFairfax. 6-9 p.m. Old Town Fairfax, University Drive between North and Main Street, Fairfax. Come celebrate the summer concert series and block party in the heart of Fairfax with music by LEGGZ. 703-385-7858.



PHOTOS BY TERRANCE MORAN/THE CONNECTION

Legacy Brass Quintet by The Wine House.

Music and Food Under the Stars at Fairfax Old Town

The City of Fairfax Old Town and Fairfax Parks and Recreation Department hosted an evening under the stars with music by the Legacy Brass Quintet on Friday Sept. 12.

Terry Bradley of Fairfax, a retired Army officer, led the Legacy Brass Quintet's performance at the Plaza Friday evening. Playing with Terry Bradley were his two sons, Christopher on trombone and Daniel on tuba. Also playing were Alan Cole on French horn, Scott Firestone on trumpet and John Phillip Schmidt on drums. All are members of the City of Fairfax Band Association (www.fairfaxband.org). Bradley has been playing music since he was 10 years old.

The City of Fairfax Old Town Plaza was filled with couples and children enjoying the beautiful weather while eating outside at the restaurants located at the Old Town Plaza. Children danced as the band played a number of hits.

In attendance were John and Kathy Flahive of Fairfax. John Flahive is the President and CEO of the City of Fairfax Band Association. According to him, the City of Fairfax Parks and Recreation Department sponsors the plaza concerts and the City of Fairfax Band Association sends four or five ensembles to play during the summer to help bring people together at various City of Fairfax events. This year the City of Fairfax Band will be celebrating its 45th anniversary.



Legacy Brass Quintet playing in Fairfax Old Town Center.

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Robinson running back Marcus Denham dives into the end zone for a second-quarter touchdown against Lake Braddock on Sept. 12.



Robinson sophomore Roman Lowery carries the ball during the Rams' 19-17 win over Lake Braddock on Friday.

Robinson Football Improves to 3-0 with Win Over Rival Lake Braddock

Rams build 19-0 lead, hold on to beat "contender."

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

First-year Robinson football coach Scott Vossler had a message for the Rams entering Friday's rivalry contest against Lake Braddock: It's time to beat an upper-echelon opponent.

Vossler, Robinson's fourth head coach in five seasons, has his sights set on returning the once-powerful Rams to prominence, and that includes knocking off the region's elite. Robinson started the year with victories against Lee and Woodson, programs which combined for a 5-16 record in 2013. The Rams won eight games and reached the second round of the playoffs last season when Vossler was the team's defensive coordinator, but Robinson went a combined 0-4 against Lake Braddock (12-1, reached the region final four), Westfield (region runner-up) and Centreville (state champion).

"We challenged them the other day about beating a contender," Vossler said. "The seniors really hadn't done it yet. I've been here for three, four years and every time we played one of the powerhouses, we've lost."

FRIDAY'S GAME started as a matchup of 2-0 teams. It ended with Vossler motioning from the sideline for Robinson fans to increase the decibel level of their celebration.

Robinson defeated Lake Braddock 19-17 on Sept. 12 at Lake Braddock Secondary School in Burke. The Rams built a 19-0 lead with a bruising running game and strong defense before surviving a late Bruin rally.

Trailing 19-11, Lake Braddock quarterback Kyle Edwards threw to a wide-open Evan Eschenburg for a 21-yard touchdown with 1:08 remaining in the fourth quarter. The Bruins' two-point conversion attempt failed, and Robinson recovered the ensuing onside kick attempt to secure the victory.

"We've got kids that haven't won big in a while and they want it real bad," Vossler said. "... We had an opportunity here and we went at it with everything we had."



Multiple Robinson defenders wrap up Lake Braddock running back Dejour Lee on Friday.

It was Robinson's first victory over Lake Braddock since 2011.

The Ram offense succeeded in traditional Robinson style — lining up in the wing-T and pounding out yards on the ground. Running backs Marcus Denham, Sean Foncha, Roman Lowery and Dajon Lee combined for 51 carries, 252 yards and three touchdowns.

"I thought we ran it well," Vossler said. "... [The Bruins] were loading up [the box]. We probably could have thrown it once or twice but that's not who we are. We think when people put 11 in there, we've also got 11 in there and our 11 are better than theirs."

Denham, a 5-foot-10, 160-pound senior, led the Robinson ground game with 20 carries for 108 yards and a touchdown. He scored on a 26-yard run with 1:39 remaining in the second quarter, diving into the end zone to give the Rams a 13-0 advantage.

"Our mentality is Coach Vossler wants to bring back the Rams' tradition of being a

tough-nosed, physical, run-the-ball-down-your-throat team," Denham said, "and we're going to continue to do that until otherwise shown that we have to change."

Foncha, a 5-foot-10, 195-pound junior, carried 13 times for 67 yards. Lowery, a 5-foot-11, 185-pound sophomore, rushed 14 times for 62 yards and a score. Lowery's 5-yard touchdown run gave the Rams a 7-0 lead with 10:35 left in the second quarter.

Lee, a 6-foot-1, 195-pound junior, had four carries for 15 yards and a touchdown. His 3-yard scoring run gave the Rams their largest lead of the night at 19-0 with 1:09 left in the third quarter.

Senior quarterback Jack Rowlett, a three-year starter, completed his only pass attempt for 22 yards to senior Davante Hicks.

The Robinson defense limited Lake Braddock to just two first downs in the opening half, including one resulting from a pass interference penalty. The Rams forced a turnover on downs at their own 36 late in the first quarter, and Hicks intercepted Edwards at the Robinson 22 late in the sec-

ond quarter.

"We thought our guys were pretty good against [the] spread," Vossler said. "We're pretty athletic, we're a little smaller, we think we match up well against that. Our D-line gets after it. Our kids just played with great effort, and when you do that, you cover up mistakes."

ROBINSON KEPT Lake Braddock off the scoreboard until the final minute of the third quarter. Facing second-and-10 at the Lake Braddock 45-yard line, Edwards completed a deep pass to Eschenburg, who fumbled into the end zone. A Lake Braddock player recovered the loose ball for a touchdown. A two-point conversion cut the Robinson lead to 19-8.

Lake Braddock's next possession started at the Robinson 30 after forcing a turnover on downs. The Rams kept the Bruins off the scoreboard, however, forcing a turnover on downs at the 10, thanks in part to a third-down sack by sophomore linebacker Donnie Warter.

Lake Braddock kicker Nicholas Bruhn booted a 27-yard field goal with 2:50 remaining in the fourth quarter and the Bruins added a late touchdown, but Robinson held on for the win.

"We played amazing," Robinson senior linebacker Nick Roth said about the Rams defense. "Donny Warter, sophomore, played [the game of] his life."

Lake Braddock's Edwards completed 11 of 24 passes for 156 yards. Running back Dejour Lee carried eight times for 31 yards. Senior receiver A.J. Alexander, who is committed to Ohio State, had four receptions for 45 yards.

After winning three straight road games, Robinson (3-0) will host Mount Vernon at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 19. After three straight home games, Lake Braddock (2-1) will travel to face Westfield at 7:30 p.m. Friday.

What did Friday's victory mean to Vossler? "It means the world," he said. "I think it gives us some credibility to what we're doing, that we can play smashmouth football in 2014 when not many people do it anymore, and we're trying to continue that."

'You Just Have to Believe'

Local girl competes in national solo ice dancing championship.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Just 15, Paul VI sophomore LaDan Nemati has a full plate. From November-February, she skates with a synchronized skating team in Delaware; and during the spring, summer and early fall, she does solo ice dancing.

During July and August, the Clifton resident won five gold medals for solo ice dancing in competitions in New Jersey, Delaware and Pennsylvania. And this week, she's in Colorado Springs competing in the Solo Ice Dance National Championship.

"I'm really excited to get to go there again," said Nemati. "I competed there last year in just one event and came in second in the whole country."

Representing the Eastern Region – states from Maine to Florida – she's ranked as one of the region's top six skaters. She'll compete Thursday-Friday, Sept. 18-19; and if she does well, she'll vie on Saturday in the final round.

But Nemati's worked hard to reach this point. She's skated nine years, starting with group and then private lessons, and hones her skills constantly at Skatequest in Reston.

"During the summer, I practice every day from about 8 a.m.-4 p.m.," she said. "During the school year, I practice from 3:30-5:30 p.m. every day and have synchro practices in Delaware on the weekends."



PHOTOS COURTESY OF LEDAN NEMATI

LaDan Nemati

NEMATI'S COMPETITIONS this summer were against eight to 10 girls, each time, and she represented the Washington Figure Skating Club. She trained hard for each event and was surprised to have won so many gold medals. But, she said, "I was relieved to know all the hard work I put into practicing and preparing for the competitions paid off."

To make it to Nationals, she was ranked by U.S. Figure Skating. "You gain points based on your placement in different competitions," she explained. "I finished first overall in the Pre-Silver [level] Pattern Dance Event – fox trot, European waltz and 14 Step [a march]. And I was second over-



LaDan Nemati strikes her ending pose in her "Come Fly With Me" free ice dance.

all in the Intermediate Combined Event – doing the fox trot or European waltz, plus a solo free dance."

Nemati and her coach choreographed the free dance together; she skated to Michael Buble's version of Frank Sinatra's "Come Fly with Me." At Nationals, she'll be vying against 18 other girls in both events, and she can hardly wait.

"I really love the atmosphere; Colorado Springs is so pretty," she said. "And I'm looking forward to making a bunch of new friends and doing these dances one last time. After Nationals, I'll move up to a higher level of competition. I'm feeling pretty confident about qualifying for the final round. I think that, if I skate like I usually do and believe in myself, I'll hopefully medal."

However, said Nemati, the past few weeks leading up to Nationals have been really tough for her, with the pressure of preparing for the competition, starting school and

practicing for the upcoming synchronized-skating season, all at the same time. "But I enjoy competing at Nationals," she said. "And I love the feeling when all my hard work pays off."

Still, it's difficult balancing skating with schoolwork. "I have lots of homework, which I do from 6:30-10:30 p.m.," she said. "But I'm trying to work faster and do it more efficiently." She's currently considering a career in law or as a nutritionist or an exercise scientist, studying how the body functions during exercise.

NEMATI'S ADVICE to budding, young ice skaters is to keep trying and not give up. "It's hard at first and will feel like you're not getting anywhere," she explained. "But if you continue to practice and believe in yourself, then someday you can achieve your goals and even compete at the national level, if that's your dream. It all starts mentally – you just have to believe."

Cox Named Principal at Laurel Ridge

FROM PAGE 3

and children in poverty. We even 'adopted' families to help at the holidays."

Gunston had an even-higher poverty level but, said Cox, "It was a small-town school where people took care of each other. It was a great school." While there, she developed an early intervention program for students not meeting grade-level benchmarks in reading and math. Also during her tenure, the achievement gap was decreased in SOL reading and mathematics scores for black and Hispanic children, plus students with disabilities.

Then, from July 2012 until this July, Cox coordinated FCPS's pre-kindergarten through grade 12 Office of Special Education Instruction. "I'd always aspired to work in the central office in special-ed so I could make an even bigger impact, system-wide," she explained. "I felt I needed a broader view of how FCPS operates, and I knew that experience would make me a better principal someday."

In that position, she learned about the resources available to principals. "Now I know who specifically to call for advice," she said. "And I have a better perspective on the students' whole, K-12 experience and how they're prepared for each, new grade level."

At Laurel Ridge, said Cox, "We have the Combined Services site for special-ed students with challenging behaviors. So I feel that my experience as a teacher and a principal working with these kinds of kids will be of value here." However, she's also looking forward to working with different demographics here and having a different experience than at her previous schools.

When she found out she got the principal's post, she was elated. "I was very excited and happy," said Cox. "Coming from the central office, I was so happy to be back with kids and families."

"Mrs. Cox brings years of experience as a principal and school administrator to the table," said PTA President Sandy Glotfelty. "I look forward to building a lasting relationship with her at the wonderful community of Laurel Ridge Elementary."

She began July 1 and even worked with Adams for a couple weeks. Before school ended in June, Cox met with the faculty; she later met with the teaching teams in smaller groups. That way, she said, "I could learn their priorities for their students and for the school, such as major initiatives they want to continue."

Cox believes in doing "whatever it takes; but I also know, if it's not broken, don't fix it. I feel like my job as a principal is to serve the community, staff, parents and students here. I think this school is awesome and is filled with nice, friendly and helpful people – I love it."

Regarding her leadership philosophy, she said, "Some simple decisions are unilateral. But I'm mostly collaborative and believe in including staff in the leadership process to help make decisions, look at our programs and determine what course we need to take."

She said it's her responsibility to make sure teachers can advance professionally and students continue to "grow, learn and develop. People don't work for me, they work with me."

At Laurel Ridge, said Cox, "I want to listen and get a feel for what's going on and what are the school's priorities. Probably the most critical thing we do in elementary school is teach kids to read, because it's the key to unlocking understanding in all other areas."

Calling Laurel Ridge a "high-performing school," she said most students are doing really well. So her initial focus will be on "building relationships with the staff, parents and students and getting to know their strengths and challenges."

Delighted when the school year finally began, Cox said, "I loved seeing the kids coming in. They were all excited and were happy to see their friends."

As the mother of a 17-year-old, high-school senior, Cox said the toughest part of her new job will be balancing her home and work lives because "your first year in a new school is pretty all-consuming." But she's up for the challenge and eager to do it. She's looking forward to those new relationships and seeing "student and teacher growth, while ensuring that the school always runs smoothly."

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