

Fairfax Station ♦ Clifton ♦ Lorton
CONNECTION

WELLBEING

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Lommasson in Philadelphia during
Serena's radiation therapy treatment.

FEBRUARY 5-11, 2015

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Geer Documents Made Public

FCPD report confirms John Geer was shot while unarmed, hands raised.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

Of the seven eyewitness accounts of the shooting death of John Geer, only one describes Geer quickly bringing his hands down to his waist. That was the perspective of PFC Adam Torres, the officer who shot Geer in the chest, killing him in the doorway of his home on Aug. 29, 2013.

Torres' account appears in several of the approximately 11,000 pages of discovery from the Fairfax County Police Department investigation released to the public by Fairfax County on Jan. 30, about 17 months after the shooting. The release also contains more than 50 audio files and five videos related to the incident.

The six other eyewitnesses included four different police officers, John Geer's father Don Geer and friend Jeff Stewart. Their stories in the investigation documents all describe a similar scene: Geer had been standing in his doorway, hands resting on the frame, speaking calmly with officer Rodney Barnes for about 40 minutes before he was shot.

"I'm comforted the officers at the scene support what I saw," said Stewart.

The detective who interviewed Barnes noted him referencing Geer as saying "he did not want to get shot and did not want anyone else to get shot." Barnes also said that before he arrived, he was told Geer had threatened the officers, but he himself "did not hear any verbal threats while he was on the scene."

Barnes described Geer as periodically asking permission to lower his hands to scratch his nose, as well as Geer asking for Torres to lower his gun. Each of the other officers had guns down and in cover position, while Torres held his raised and pointed at Geer.

Torres recounts seeing Geer quickly lower his hands to waist level, a threat provoking him to fire. The other accounts describe Geer's hands at either shoulder or ear level.

"Finally shooting him for scratching his nose," said Stewart. "Four other officers support that testimony, support that John was not a threat."

Stewart and Michael Lieberman, the lawyer representing the Geer family and Geer's longtime partner Maura Harrington in a civil suit against the county, have keyed into additional commentary in the reports that describe Torres as having just finished an argument with his wife before arriving at Geer's house. Further pages reference an incident on March 5, 2013, in which officer Torres had a "meltdown" and outburst with



John Geer standing in his doorway in Springfield, minutes before he was shot by a Fairfax County Police officer.

PHOTO COURTESY
OF MICHAEL
LIEBERMAN



COURTESY OF JEFF STEWART

John Geer

Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Charles Peters in a courtroom. That incident became the subject of an Internal Affairs investigation by the FCPD, the results of which were not included in the discovery materials.

In his interview for the investigation, Peters referenced that internal affairs file being sought by Commonwealth Attorney Raymond F Morrogh while his office was still working on the case. FCPD refused to cooperate, Peters said.

Some have called that type of action in this case "stonewalling" by Fairfax County, including the police department and the governing body they answer to, the Board of Supervisors.

Jerry Santos, another friend of Geer's, said, "At this point, while Torres' past and his management or mismanagement remain relevant and important, it's all overcome by the cover-up by the board's and chief's and county attorney's arrogance and frankly foolishness in the manner in which they've conducted themselves in the matter of the killing of John Geer."

ONE DAY AFTER the county posted the

files on its website, Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova and Mount Vernon Supervisor Gerry Hyland fielded questions about the Geer case at the Mount Vernon Town Hall Meeting.

Bulova held the position that this case presented unprecedented circumstances.

"Our policies have not fit with this particular scenario," Bulova said. "Do we get it? Absolutely."

Hyland responded in calm and paced phrasing. "I questioned immediately whether the force that killed him was appropriate," he said. "Now everyone pretty

much knows what happened. Obviously people have questioned whether it was just. This never takes that long with a typical case and the frustration has been awful for us."

Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) followed the release with a statement saying: "It is a shame we are where we are," and that the latest action by the county was "making up for lost ground on transparency."

"I encourage the public to view this release as what it is," Herrity continued, "peoples' honest perceptions of the facts mixed in with hard evidence."

LIEBERMAN SAID the release is beginning to ease Don Geer's "torture" of the last 17 months being left in the dark.

"I don't know how many days he's been able to sleep through the night," said Lieberman.

Though he said he was upset at times that

nothing was going to happen with his son's case, Don Geer said the county's handing over documents, videos and audio is "encouraging."

"We're going in the right direction finally; these have been sitting around on somebody's desk and finally we're getting some action," Don Geer said.

Having witnessed the shooting himself, Don Geer was initially concerned "possibly there would be some conflicting stories," he said. But the incident report "came out exactly as I saw it," Don Geer continued. "Fortunately we were all on the same page."

Except for Torres.

Torres' internal affairs file is the subject of one of three motions Lieberman is planning to bring to court Friday, Feb. 6. "What did the county do in light of the fact Torres had a meltdown in court?" said Lieberman. "Mediation of some sort? Counseling? Did they conclude he was a loose cannon and didn't do anything

about it?" Lieberman insists the court dates won't stop there, that even though Morrogh has handed the case to the Department of Justice civil rights division, "I don't see why the state can't take another look, say we should bring it to the grand jury or raise some special prosecutor."

The county's materials, first produced under court order to the Lieberman, the Geer family and Maura Harrington on Jan. 21, can be found online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news/2015/geer-case-materials.htm>.

"We're going in the right direction finally; these have been sitting around on somebody's desk and finally we're getting some action,"

— Don Geer

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NEWS

Dream Team

Sixteen-year-old South County student battles brain cancer, wins \$1,000.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

While spending a month in Philadelphia, Catherine and Serena Lommasson of Lorton found the best cheesesteak in town. Beck's Cajun Cafe, a vendor in the train station won their favor with andouille sausage added to the iconic sandwich.

The Lommassons (mother and daughter respectively) would haul cheesesteaks back from the City of Brotherly Love on the train home for periodic visits. On the pair's final homecoming, they brought enough for a party.

Catherine and Serena spent the end of 2014 and beginning of 2015 away from home so Serena, 16, could undergo a 30-day cancer treatment. The proton radiation therapy she endured in Philadelphia was meant to specifically target the tumor in Serena's adolescent brain.

DOCTORS FIRST DIAGNOSED Serena the month before she turned 2 years old. She had surgery almost immediately and began her first round of chemotherapy when she turned 3. That treatment lasted a year.

Serena had another year of chemo at 5 years old and has gone through numerous subsequent surgeries to remove fluid buildup in her brain, replacing the brain's fourth ventricle with a device called a ventriculoperitoneal (VP) shunt.

"In a six-month period in 2009, she had 15 surgeries to replace the shunt," said Catherine, Serena's mother. "That was almost scarier than anything else I have to deal with."

Save another surgery to go at the tumor, Serena's options for chemotherapy or new drugs were limited. And she didn't have the right mutation required to take part in a clinical trial.

One other opportunity was radiation. "As she's nearing adulthood, I wanted to be able to be there 100 percent for her," said Catherine, "and do this before it disrupted her adult life. We decided to go ahead and try, and hope that ends our fight with this."

The Lommassons went to the radiology department at Inova Fairfax Hospital. There they received a rec-



PHOTO COURTESY OF SERENA LOMMASSON

Serena (left) and Catherine (right) Lommasson, enjoy some mother-daughter bonding while in Philadelphia for Serena's radiation therapy.

ommendation for a second opinion in Philadelphia, one of the few locations in the country that does pinpoint radiation therapy on brains.

Catherine said they were told that type of treatment would do less overall damage to the brain than traditional radiation, and patients typically see fewer negative side effects.

They decided to go through with the treatment, beginning in December 2014. Catherine took off work and Serena took a break from South County High School while they relocated to Philadelphia. Catherine's younger daughter Stella, 11, stayed home with family friends.

Catherine's friend Bridget Kelly has known Serena since she was born, since she was diagnosed with cancer and began having surgeries. She knew the strain of cancer on the Lommasson family, and the added pressure on Catherine of having to take a month off work, pay for train tickets to Philadelphia and hotel rooms.

A former Vienna resident, Kelly used to bank with Burke & Herbert Bank. When one of Kelly's friends told her about the bank's Dreams Do Come True giveaway contest, she immediately thought of Catherine and Serena.

"I didn't know what the giveaway was," Kelly said, "it was something, it was anything. Catherine was off work the whole time and a single mom. It can't hurt."

SEE SERENA, PAGE 5

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NEWS

Serena Goes Back to South County

FROM PAGE 4

The online promotion from Burke & Herbert Bank ran in November 2014, through Facebook and the bank's website. Kelly used Facebook to nominate Serena and Catherine for the giveaway, and encouraged other friends to do the same.

On Dec. 10, 2014, Burke & Herbert Bank announced that the Lommassons had won and would receive \$1,000. The support Kelly raised on Facebook helped distinguish Serena's story.

"It's obviously a tough situation on the entire family," said Burke & Herbert Bank Senior Vice President Terry Cole, "one of those where you could really feel the passion and care for these people."

"It blows my mind a mom could survive something like this," said Kelly. "And Serena, dealing with this as a teenager — there's no way she could've taken cancer on top of it. She has this quirky sense of humor. Somehow, she's just been fine through the whole thing, she just adapts. I have no idea how they do it."

"You get used to whatever you have to deal with," Serena said, about the new treatment. "All the stuff that seems really unpleasant. You don't have a choice."

THE NEXT STEP for her is an MRI to see how effective the radiation was. Serena has to wait three months for that; to do the scan now, her brain would look inflamed.

One of the hardest parts, she said, was missing school and friends. "I just miss talking to people,"



PHOTO COURTESY OF SERENA LOMMASSON

Serena Lommasson explores Philadelphia during a month-long cancer radiation therapy session.

said Serena. "I'm a talkative, social person. That's my element."

After taking classes at home for a week, Serena went back to South County on Monday, Jan. 26.

While Serena and Catherine were in Philadelphia, they tried to make the most of the trip anytime Serena was feeling up to moving around, taking in the Liberty Bell, museums and movies.

"We did whatever we could to make it an adventure," said Catherine. "That's what life is."

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OPINION

No Justification for Secrecy, Delay on Geer Shooting

Everything about this case erodes public trust and demonstrates police departments should not be allowed to apply “blanket” exemptions to release of information.

After waiting 17 months for any information about the investigation into the shooting death of John Geer, the information released last week is deeply troubling.

Fairfax County Police officer Adam D. Torres shot and killed John Geer of Springfield inside the doorway of his own home in Springfield on Aug. 29, 2013. Police were called to Geer's home following Geer's argument with his longtime partner. Police spoke with him for more than half an hour while he stood in his doorway, unarmed, with his hands raised and resting on the frame. As he began to lower his hands, by all accounts still at shoulder level, he was shot in the chest and died in his house without receiving medical attention.

It took more than 16 months, a \$12 million civil suit by Geer's family and a court order to get the first tiny bit of information on the shooting, which came earlier this month when police named the officer who fired the shot that killed Geer.

On Friday, Jan. 30, 2015, in response to a court order, Fairfax County released more than 10,000 pages of documents about the shooting and the investigation.

We now know that investigators learned on

the same day Geer died, Aug. 29, 2013, that at least five witnesses including the police officer actually talking to Geer at the instant he was shot, disputed Torres's version of events. Torres said Geer suddenly dropped his hands to his waist; none of the other witnesses saw Geer's hands move below his head.

EDITORIAL

On the day of the shooting, investigators and prosecutors had compelling information to take to a grand jury. Instead, after a long period of silence, obstruction and obfuscation, the investigation was turned over to the Justice Department, where there is no timetable for resolution (and no adequate explanation for punting the investigation to the feds).

Without the Geer family lawsuit and the court order to turn over documents as part of discovery, the public might never know what really happened that day.

The question of accountability for what happened remains.

As we have said many times, the problem goes beyond Fairfax County, and beyond police shootings.



520 days

It took a court order and 520 days after Fairfax County police officer Adam D. Torres shot and killed John Geer of Springfield for basic information about what happened that day to be released. The public now knows what investigators learned on the same day Geer died, Aug. 29, 2013, that at least five witnesses including the police officer actually talking to Geer at the instant he was shot, disputed Torres's version of events. Torres said Geer suddenly dropped his hands to his waist; none of the other witnesses saw Geer's hands move below his head.

Police officials in Fairfax, Arlington and Alexandria have adopted what they call a “blanket” approach to using their exemption. That means they have decided to withhold any document they can without any analysis of whether they should.

It's past time for change.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

An Open Letter to Virginia Delegates

Dear Delegate:

Many of you know our story well. We are the parents of Morgan Harrington. Morgan, a student at Virginia Tech, went to a rock concert in Charlottesville in 2009 and never came home. Her remains were found 100 days later.

We've made it our life's work in honor of Morgan to support victims of sexual assaults and to make sure that all students are safe on our college campuses – even if they're just visiting.

That's why we're asking for your support of HB 1343, a bipartisan bill by Delegate Eileen Filler-Corn and Chief Co-Patron Dave Albo.

Once a victim reports a sexual assault to campus and/or local law enforcement, HB 1343 calls for the local Commonwealth's Attorney to be notified within 48 hours of the reported incident.

We agree with Del. Filler-Corn who said: “By passing this bill, we can show victims that we will not

tolerate sexual assault on campus. We can show them they can have faith in our justice system.”

Chairman Albo has said that this “bill ensures that allegations of sexual assaults on college campuses will receive the same level of attention by police and prosecutors that off campus sexual assaults receive. This bill strengthens our justice system and encourages collaboration between victims, college staff, police and prosecutors.”

The reality is that too often sexual assaults aren't reported to the police.

A December report by the U.S. Justice Department found that 80% of students do not report rape and sexual assaults to the police.

That same report also found that fewer than one in five female student victims received assistance from a victim services agency.

This is where HB 1343 can make a difference.

HB 1343 works to restore victims' faith in the justice system and to show that they will be heard and supported. The bill expedites investigation of the case once reported to campus law enforcement, while ensuring the proper course of action, due process and any necessary legal filings are completed.

It also lets each Commonwealth's Attorney's Office Victim/Witness program get involved early on in the investigation, which helps provide counseling and can help educate a victim about her or his options going forward with a criminal prosecution.

Supporters of the bill include:

Michael R. Doucette, Commonwealth's Attorney for the City of Lynchburg
Mary Gavin, City of Falls Church Chief of Police
Stacey Kincaid, Fairfax County Sheriff
Denise Lunsford, Commonwealth's Attorney for

Albemarle County

Trina Murphy, Aunt of Alexis Murphy, Help Save the Next Girl supporters

Ray Morrogh, Commonwealth's Attorney for Fairfax County

Virginia Sheriffs Association, representing 95 sheriffs

Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance

We know this bill isn't a silver bullet when it comes to the complex problem of solving campus sexual assaults. But it is a good first step and that's what is needed.

Passing this bill can help us make sure that all students are safe on our college campuses.

We urge you to join us and support passage of HB 1343.

Gil and Dan Harrington

Parents of Morgan Harrington
Founders of Help Save the Next Girl

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NEWS

Pancakes, Candy, Fudge, Ice Cream and More

Fairfax's Chocolate Lovers Festival is Feb. 7-8.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Cet your sweet tooth ready – the 23rd annual City of Fairfax Chocolate Lovers Festival is this weekend, Feb. 7-8.

Featuring delicious, chocolate fun for both children and adults, the event includes a Taste of Chocolate, a Chocolate Challenge, musical performances, a chocolate movie – “Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory” – fairy tales, a fire-safety puppet show, face-painting, a Chocolate Caper mock trial, cupcake-decorating, magic, juggling and open houses in historic buildings.

A Chocolate Express will provide free, shuttle service between event locations. It'll run Saturday, Feb. 7, from 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., and Sunday, Feb. 8, from 11:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The fun begins Saturday at Fire Station 3, at 4081 University Drive, with the annual, Kiwanis Club Pancake Breakfast and Bake Sale, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Feast on regular or chocolate-chip pancakes, plus sausage, coffee, juice and milk. Cost is \$7, adults; \$4, children ages 4-10. Children 3 and under eat free with a paying adult (limit two children per adult). Face-painting will be available.

The Taste of Chocolate will be held Saturday, Feb. 7, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, Feb. 8, from noon-4 p.m., on both floors of the Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive (corner of Main Street and University Drive).

Attendees may feast on a vast array of chocolate cakes, chocolate candies and bars, chocolate-covered strawberries, fudge and ice cream. There'll even be chocolate fountains into which people may dip fruit, cream-filled doughnut holes or marshmallows. Admission is free; visitors buy pogs for \$1 each and then browse around the



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION
Allie Moss, 7, is about to eat a chocolate-covered marshmallow.

WHERE TO PARK

Free parking is available at the following locations, with handicapped parking offered at all sites, except for Sager Avenue:

- ❖ **Bank of America**, 10440 Main St. (accessible from Route 236 and North Street).
- ❖ **City Hall**, 10455 Armstrong St. (accessible from Route 123/Chain Bridge Road and George Mason Boulevard).
- ❖ **City of Fairfax Regional Library**, 10360 North St. (accessible from University Drive and Old Lee Highway).
- ❖ **East Street parking lot** (accessible from Route 236/Main Street and East Street).
- ❖ **Fairfax County Courthouse Garage B**, 4400 Chain Bridge Road (accessible from Page Avenue).
- ❖ **Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center**, 10209 Main St.
- ❖ **Fire Station 3**, 4081 University Drive.
- ❖ **Old Town Plaza**, 3955 Chain Bridge Road (accessible from Route 123/Chain Bridge Road and University Drive).
- ❖ **Old Town Village** (behind Pacer's, 10427 North St.) Open at noon Saturday and all day Sunday; (accessible from University Drive).
- ❖ **Sager Avenue parking lot** (accessible from Sager Avenue and University Drive).

vendors' tables to check out the wide array of chocolate treats being offered. When something catches their fancy, they pay for it in pogs.

There's also the Chocolate Challenge competition to see who can make the most beautiful and creative chocolate sculptures, cakes and cupcakes. It's held at the Nutrition Kitchen, 3950 University Drive, and runs Feb. 7, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Feb. 8, from noon-4 p.m.

Both professionals and amateurs participate, and judges and visitors judge them in various categories. Donated cakes and other items will be open for silent-auction bidding through Feb. 8 at 2:30 p.m. Admission is \$1/adult; children under 18 are free.

For a complete list of events, plus their times and addresses, go to www.chocolatefestival.net.



Some decorated cupcakes in last year's Chocolate Challenge.

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WELLBEING

Mental Health First Aid

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Leslie Roberts recalls hearing a mother talk about getting her stepson admitted to a psychiatric hospital.

"Her stepson was angry and acting out," said Roberts. "She didn't understand what her stepson was doing."

The woman had completed a mental health first aid class that Roberts teaches. Mental Health First Aid is offered by the staff of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board Wellness and Health Promotion. The goal of the class is to offer insight into mental illness and teach strategies for intervention.

"She was grateful that the class had taught her what those signs and symptoms were," said Leslie. "Before the class she thought he was being a problem teenager. After the class she understood that he was suffering from depression, and his behavior had a lot more meaning."

That is the goal of the eight-hour



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Jamie MacDonald and Leslie Roberts of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board Wellness and Health Promotion teach a Mental Health First Aid class.

certification class, which is taught in both English and Spanish. Students learn the warning signs of such mental illnesses as depression, anxiety, trauma, psychosis, substance use disorders and self-injury. They also get a five-step action plan to help the individual in crisis connect with appropriate professional care.

"Students learn specific behaviors or comments that individuals will make," said Roberts, who is a

Wellness and Health Promotions Supervisor. "Such as, 'Things are never going to get better. I feel like I'll always be sad. What's the point?'"

"They get background and statistics on these illnesses, as well as a basic understanding of risk factors, signs and symptoms," added Jamie MacDonald, wellness health promotion and prevention manager.

There is a standard curriculum

and class instructors must be certified to teach it. The class is typically taught on two separate days. "We offer an open enrollment class for adults once each month," said MacDonald. "It's a 'come one, come all.' Anyone from Fairfax County can sign up." Students learn to assess for suicide or harm, listen non-judgmentally, give information and assurance, encourage appropriate professional help and self-help, and other strategies.

"We use the acronym ALGEE, which is the first letter of each skill the students learn," said MacDonald. "Then they get skills around how to approach someone who might be showing early signs of a mental illness or how to recognize when someone is in a mental health crisis." After the class, students take a test. If they pass, they are certified for three years.

"There is a lot of repetition and practice. There are live simulations and scenarios where small groups will practice what they learn," said MacDonald. "We try to gear their minds toward, 'What will I do when I'm experiencing a mental

health crisis? How will I support someone like a colleague, friend and even a stranger?'"

The re-enactment scenarios also help set limits. "We make their role clear," said MacDonald. "You're a mental health first aider when you get your certification, you're not a mental health crusader. You're not trained to provide treatment, counseling, or make a diagnosis. That is pounded into their heads."

Safety is another aspect of the training. "Students are taught to decide if a situation is safe for them to enter and whether or not they have time. If they start providing assistance, do they have time to finish it," asked MacDonald. "Being clear, careful and thinking through what steps they want to take is important. In a crisis, they have to decide: 'Do I want to step in or will I be in over my head? Do I need to grab my phone and call someone else? Your first and best action might be a call to 911.'" For information on schedule of classes, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/events/mental-health-first-aid.htm.

County offers program to offer insight into mental illness and teach strategies for intervention.

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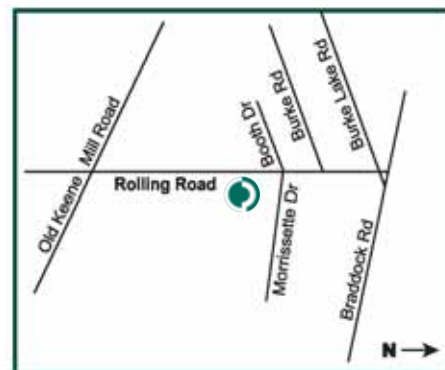
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SPECIAL CONNECTIONS CALENDAR

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday unless noted.

FEBRUARY

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2/11/2015 HomeLifeStyle
2/11/2015 Valentine's Dining & Gifts II
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News

A wrecked barge in Belmont Bay once carried materials for constructing the Fairfax Yacht Club.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOE CHUDZIK

Derelict Barge Remains in Belmont Bay

This ship hasn't come in: A 50-foot, steel-hulled landing craft resting about 110 feet offshore in Belmont Bay has held its position for years. The WWII-type landing craft was used as a barge to haul materials for constructing the Fairfax Yacht Club in the 1980s.

In 2009, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) Marine Debris Program completed a survey of the abandoned ship and submitted a 38-page final report to U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11). The report recommended removing the rusting, nonfunctional mass, estimated to weigh 20 tons, by cutting it into smaller scrap pieces and hauling them out during low tide.

The barge remains in the bay, however, while local residents like Joe Chudzik of Lorton are working to renew efforts to have it removed. Community members are concerned over the water quality hazard the rusting metal presents.

Chudzik submitted written testimony regarding the removal of the barge to the Fairfax County Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC) ahead of their Jan. 21 meeting. According to the EQAC, the topic was not discussed but the testimony has since been added to the public record.

— TIM PETERSON

AREA ROUNDUPS

Comstock, Herrity to Join 'Stuff the Bus' Drive

U.S. Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-10) and Fairfax County Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) will participate in Fairfax County's "Stuff the Bus:" Helping Fairfax Families' food drive this Saturday, Feb. 7, at the Clifton Giant located at 5740 Union Mill Road, in Clifton from 9:30 to 10 a.m. The food drive will benefit the Western Fairfax Christian Ministries and is an all-day event.

Rodney V. Colbert Named Deputy Fire Chief

Fire Chief Richie Bowers has selected Battalion Chief Rodney V. Colbert for promotion to deputy fire chief, effective Jan. 24. Chief Colbert will be assigned as the Chief Training Officer. Since July of 2011 he has been assigned as a field battalion chief in the Operations Bureau.

Chief Colbert started his career as a recruit firefighter in April 1990, and was initially assigned to Fire and Rescue Station 19, Lorton. Career promotion and subsequent assignments include:

*Technician, November 1993; Fire and Rescue Station 5, Franconia; Lieutenant, November 1995; Fire and Rescue Station 9, Mount Vernon; Captain I, May 2003; Fire and Rescue Station 37, Kingstowne; Captain II, Fire and Rescue Station 34, Oakton; Battalion Chief, September 2008; Resource Management, Support Services Division, Business Services Bureau.

As Chief Training Officer, he will be responsible for basic training, field training, emergency medical services training, and all volunteer training. More than 1,700 volunteer and career personnel train at the Training Academy continuously. He also supports and advises Explorer Post 1949.

Chief Colbert will complete his bachelor's degree in Fire Service Administration, from the University of Maryland, University College, in the spring of 2015. He is also a graduate of the Paramedic Program, George Washington University, Washington, D.C. He is a member of the Fairfax County Professional Firefighters and Paramedics, Local 2068, Progressive Firefighters of Fairfax County, Inc., and the Fairfax County Professional Fire & Rescue Officers Association.

Registration Open for CERT Training Classes

If you have been waiting to take a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) class, there are several upcoming training dates.

*CERT 92 - At the Burke Conservancy. Classes are Monday and Wednesday from 7-9:30 p.m., March 4, 9, 11, 16, 23, 25, 30 and April 1.

*CERT 93 - At the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Academy. Classes are Wednesday from 7-10:30 p.m., March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 8, 15, 22, and 29. (Register for CERT class 93)

*CERT 94 - At the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Academy. Classes are Monday and Wednesday from 7-10:30 p.m., April 29, May 4, 6, 11, 13, 18, 20.

*CERT 95 - At the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department. Classes are on Thursday from 7-10:30 p.m., March 5, 12, 26, April 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30.

The CERT training program is designed to prepare you in the event of a disaster to help yourself, your family and your neighbors. Classroom instruction also incorporates some hands-on skill development and experience in conducting a search and victim assessment.

For more information, contact the Fire and Rescue Department Volunteer Liaison's office at 703-246-4683, TTY 711.

ENTERTAINMENT



Andy Ilachinski describes his colorful, powerful and magically manipulated images as “Synesthetic Landscapes,” referencing the psychological, creative – even mystical – experience of synesthesia, a joining of the senses (smelling sounds, hearing colors, feeling shape) to communicate a point of view to another through his photographs. View his photos through Feb. 9 at the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax.

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.

THROUGH SUNDAY/FEB. 8

Dressing for the Occasion: An Exhibition of Costumes and Textiles Representing Fairfax Personalities and Events.

Exhibition. Fairfax Museum & Visitor Center, 10209 Main Street, Fairfax. Open daily 9 a.m.-5 p.m. 703-385-8414.

THROUGH MONDAY/FEB. 9

The Bravura Ensemble - Chamber Music Classics. 8 p.m. Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. The Bravura Ensemble is a Washington D.C.-based chamber group devoted to performing chamber music repertoire ranging from 18th-century works to modern-day music. Clarinetist Albert Hunt earned a Doctor of Musical Arts Degree from The Juilliard School and has performed around the world as a soloist and chamber musician. He has also played in orchestras such as the Cleveland Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, and the Orchestra of St. Luke's. Violinist Rachelle Betancourt is a member of the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra in Germany and is an international competition winner. She frequently performs solo and chamber music recitals in the Americas and in Europe. Come join us for an evening of chamber music featuring clarinet, piano and strings.

SATURDAY/JAN. 31 - SUNDAY/APRIL 5

Reference. W-16 - Vulcan Gallery, Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Reference is a multi-media exploration of the various modes of influence that inform visual artists in both content and process. In Reference, participating artists incorporate performance, sound, process, and imagery to address the strong influence of other artists, visual and otherwise, upon their creative output as well as their deepest philosophical and spiritual understandings. No ticket required. www.workhousearts.org. 703-584-2900.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 4 - SUNDAY/MARCH 8

Julia Galloway. Building W-8, Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Julia Galloway is a utilitarian potter and professor. She is currently the Director of the School of Art and Professor at the University of Montana, Missoula. Julia makes

useful pottery working at a mid-range firing at c6 in a soda kiln and re-firing her pottery at low temperatures to develop rich glaze surfaces. She combines wheel throwing and hand building techniques to make her pottery. No ticket required. 703-584-2900.

FRIDAY/FEB. 6

Friday Night Film Series: Ivory Tower. 7-9:30 p.m. Accotink Unitarian Universalist Church, 10215 Lakehaven Drive, Burke. As tuition rates spiral beyond reach and student loan debt passes \$1 trillion (more than credit card debt), IVORY TOWER asks: Is college worth the cost? From the halls of Harvard, to public colleges in financial crisis, to Silicon Valley, filmmaker Andrew Rossi assembles an urgent portrait of a great American institution at the breaking point. This is a non-religious event open to the public. www.accotinkuuc.org, administrator@accotinkuuc.org

SATURDAY/ FEB. 7

10th Annual Seed Exchange: Co-Host Washington Gardener Magazine. 12:30 - 4 p.m. Historic Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Bring your extra seeds to swap. Event includes swaps, lectures, planting advice and goody bag. \$15 for FROGS & Washington Gardener Magazine subscribers, \$20 for general public. Registration at 703-642-5173.

Cool Cow Comedy Presents:

Robert Mac. Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. 7p.m. and 9 p.m. Ages 16 & up.*** CLEAN SHOW. The 9 p.m. performance is a fundraiser benefiting Girls Scouts Service Unit 5208. \$20. Come to Cool Cow Comedy's for entertainment! Each month headliners and featured performers take the stage in the W-3 Theatre. Host and Comedian Rahmein Mostafavi has performed outstanding stand-ups in the DC Improv, Richmond Funny Bone and Caroline's on Broadway.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/FEB 7-8

Chocolate Lovers Festival. 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. City of Fairfax. The scrumptious and fun-filled weekend features everything from a competition to see who can make the most beautiful and creative chocolate sculptures, cakes and cupcakes to a chocolate-themed movie and a luscious sampling of chocolate treats from area vendors. It's also a chance to buy mouthwatering presents for Valentine's Day. <http://www.chocolatefestival.net/>

SUNDAY/FEB. 8

T-TRAK Model 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. Information on the museum and shows is at www.fairfax-station.org phone 703-425-9225.

National Concert Band.

3 p.m. Fairfax High School, 3501 Rebel Run Road, Fairfax. In celebration of its 40th anniversary season, the National Concert Band, founded by retired members of the D.C. Services Bands, will perform Gustav Holst's The Planets Op. 32. Here's an opportunity to hear the complete seven-movement suite, each named after a planet of the solar system and its corresponding astrological character, in live performance. Tickets are \$10 General Admission, \$5 Senior/Military. Students/Children are free with a paying adult. For more information, visit www.nationalconcertband.org.

Winter Lecture: Seasonal Floral

Windowsill Displays In Tune with Nature. 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. Historic Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Designer Nancy Ross Hugo inspires to create a simple seasonal windowsill arrangement, showcasing techniques with leaves, flowers and twigs in various flower pots. Foral supplies sales and book signing on site. \$10. (out-of-county and walk-ins \$12.)

Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring using code 290 182 4401 or call 703-642-5173.-

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 11

Coping with Life Behind Bars: Art and Music. 7:30 p.m. W-3 Theatre, Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. A panel discussion about the liberating and rehabilitative power of art and music for offenders of all ages. A special display of art created by D.C. prisoners will be on view. Part of the Prison Lecture Series. Free, \$10 suggested donation. Register in advance. www.workhousearts.org. 703-584-2900.

FRIDAY/FEB. 13 - SUNDAY/FEB. 15

Cabaret Series: Dreams of New Orleans. 8 p.m. Fri., Sat. 1 p.m. Sun. W-3 Theatre, Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Our musical romp through the Big Easy celebrates the Golden Age of Jazz! Just in time for Mardi Gras! Join our cabaret 'krewé' on a virtual parade down Bourbon Street, with both classic and contemporary songs from the stage and screen that evoke the spirit of the famed French Quarter. \$30 general, \$25 students, seniors, military. www.workhousearts.org. 703-584-2900.

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SPORTS

FAIRFAX STATION CONNECTION SPORTS EDITOR JON ROETMAN
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Hayfield's Overstreet Wins C6 Bars Title Despite Back Trouble

Fairfax's Barborek qualifies for regionals, wins beam title.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

Hayfield gymnast Molly Overstreet is a two-time state champion, but her junior year has been marred by lower-back pain.

Years of competing has taken a toll on Overstreet's body. On a scale of 1-10, Overstreet said her back pain is a 6 during meets, and a constant 3 or 4 during everyday life.

Overstreet captured a three-way share of the state vault championship as a freshman in 2013. The following year, she won the state bars title with a VHSL-record score of 9.925. Due to back pain, however, she spent most of the 2014-15 season unable to give her best effort.

"I've definitely watered down most of my routines for the preseason," she said.

On Feb. 2, Overstreet competed at the Conference 6 championship meet at McLean High School. The result was a conference bars title and a berth in the 6A North region meet as an all-around competitor.

Overstreet won the bars event with a score of 9.5. She tied for seventh on floor



PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Hayfield's Molly Overstreet earned a berth in the 6A North region meet as an all-around competitor.

(8.8), finished 13th on vault (8.85) and came in 16th on beam (8.525).

She finished eighth in the all-around with a total of 35.675.

The top four all-around finishers qualify for regionals, along with any gymnast who totals a score of 35 or better. The top eight advance in each event, along with any gymnast who scores a 9.0 or better.

Overstreet said she'd like to add to her bar routine for the 6A North region meet, scheduled for Feb. 11 at Lake Braddock Secondary School.

After last year's state-record performance on bars, does Overstreet feel pressure to perform at a high level?

"Definitely, yes," Overstreet said. "I just try to do my best and have fun, but there

always will be that pressure because I was the state champ."

Joining Overstreet as an all-around gymnast at regionals will be Fairfax senior Rachel Barborek, who placed fourth at the Conference 6 meet with a total of 36.25. She won the conference beam championship (9.425), placed second on floor (9.5), finished 11th on vault (9.025) and tied for 12th on bars (8.3).

Washington-Lee senior Sophie Hatcher won the all-around title with a score of 37.625.

"It feels so good because at all my other meets, I didn't ever hit all four [events] — I always had some mistake — but today I hit all four and I'm really happy," she said. "This is the best meet I've ever had in all my four years of high school."



Fairfax senior Rachel Barborek won the Conference 6 beam championship on Feb. 2 at McLean High School.

McLean's Jacqueline Green finished runner-up (36.625) and Lizzy Brown-Kaiser was third (36.425).

McLean won its fourth consecutive Liberty District/Conference 6 championship with a score of 143. Washington-Lee finished runner-up (142.225), earning the conference's other regional team berth.

Yorktown was third (141), Fairfax (125.275), Hayfield (121.1), South Lakes (115.125), Madison (108.7) and Langley (81.3).

"It's a really great feeling because this is our senior year and there was a lot of pressure to keep our conference championship title [streak]," Highlanders senior Lizzy Brown-Kaiser said, "so it feels great to fulfill that."

South Lakes Wins Conference Championship

Both boys and girls win indoor track and field Liberty Conference championship.

Multiple event victories by sophomore Devyn Jones and domination of the relays, led the South Lakes High School indoor track teams to Liberty Conference championships in both the boys and girls divisions Thursday, Jan. 30 at the Prince George's County Sports and Learning Complex Landover, Md.

SLHS girls team scored 147 points for its fourth consecutive title. James Madison was second with 86 while Langley and McLean tied for third with 54.50 points each. The Seahawks boys team won its seventh consecutive title, massing 195 points with McLean second (68) and James Madison and Washington-Lee tied at third (48).

Jones teamed with fellow sophomore Jessica Lister, junior Golden Kumi-Darfour and senior Claire Nieusma in winning the girls 4x400 relay in 4:09.63.

Jones finished fourth in the triple jump (33-07.00) and sixth in the 500 meters (1:23.64). On Day 1 of the championship (Jan. 22), she led a SLHS sweep of the girls 55 meter hurdles, winning the event in 8.85. Seniors Maya Rodriguez (9.44) and Nieusma (9.88) finished second and third, respectively, Jones also won the long jump (16-08.50).

Senior Comfort Reed, who finished third in the long jump (16-03.50) won the triple jump with a leap of 34-11.25. Reed and seniors Ozioma Chinaka, Samantha Webb and sophomore Nikayla Hoyte finished third in the girls 4x200 meter relay (1:48.83). Chinaka also finished third in the pole vault (8-03.00).

Senior Delaney Wickman finished second in both the 300 meters (41.96) and 500 meters (1:18.52). Kumi-Darfour was third in the 1,000 meters (3:07.82).

SLHS juniors, led by Eric Kirlew, domi-

nated the boys triple jump. Kirlew won the event with a jump of 44-06.50. Skander Ballard was second (41-08.75), Anas Fain finished third (41-06.00) and Alex Rudison took fourth (39-10.00). Kirlew also led the SLHS boys' long jumpers on Day 1 with a winning distance of 19-10.00. Ballard was second (19-06.00) and Fain finished third (19-05.00).

Fain also contributed to the boys' championship finishing tied for second in the high jump (5-11) and winning the 55 meter hurdles in 7.94 on Day 1.

Kirlew, third in the 55 meters (6.84), sophomore Timiebi Ogobri, who was second (6.68) on the first day of competition, teamed with Ballard and Rudison on Day 2 to win the boys 4x200 relay in 1:35.66.

The 4x400 team of senior Sam Arpee, juniors John LeBerre, Nikolai Waithe and Ballard won the event in 3:35.59. Arpee also won the 500 meters in 1:08.81 and Waithe was second 1:09.58 in that event. In the 300 meters, Ballard finished second (36.73), Arpee was third (37.21) and Waithe finished fourth (38.21).

Highlights from Day 1 of the competition include:

*Senior Nathan Stone, second in the 55 meter hurdles (8.01).

*Senior Jordan Lozama won the 55 meters (7.45) and finished fourth in the shot (27-01.50).

*Senior Ozioma Chinaka won the shot put with a throw of 28-04.50. Senior Natalie Schauer was second (28-01.50).

*In the boys 3,200 meters, senior Andrew McCool ran a 10:04.65 for second and teammate Sean Miller, also a senior, took third (10:11.99).

*Sophomores John Swecker, Ashton Reinhold, juniors Connor Smith and LeBerre finished second in the 4x800 meter relay (8:33.16).

*Freshman Olivia Beckner, Kumi-Darfour, junior Monica Lannen and senior Augusta Durham were third in that event with a 10:00.09.

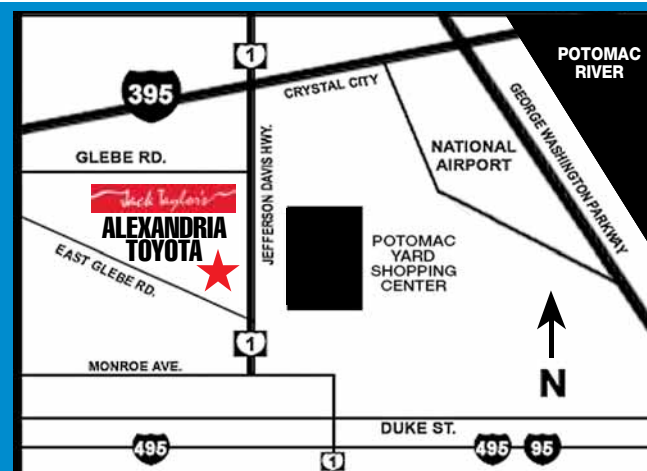
The top six finishers in each event and the top three relays advance to the Northern 6A Regional Championship Feb. 19 at the Prince George's County Sports and Learning Complex in Landover, Md.

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News



From left: Aparna-Cheran-Barb of Burke; Noah Khan-Raffi of Springfield; and Tehan Dassanayaka of Springfield, at basson practice.

PHOTOS BY
TERRANCE MORAN/
THE CONNECTION

Lake Braddock Band Goes National

Lake Braddock Secondary School Symphonic Band has been invited to perform at the 2015 Music for All National Festival, presented by Yamaha, the nation's most prestigious festival for school instrumental music ensemble. The 24th annual Festival will take place in Indianapolis, March 12-14.

The Symphonic Band is under the direction of Michael C. Luley and was selected to perform by a panel of music educators by recorded audition.

Lake Braddock Secondary School Symphonic Band is one of 40 high school and middle school concert band and percussion ensembles from across the nation selected to perform at the 2015 Festival. They will perform in concert, be evaluated by renowned music educators and participate in master classes and special events.

On Friday, Jan. 30, Roy Holder conducted the Symphonic Band to help prepare them for the competition. Holder was Lake Braddock's Band Director for 20 years and currently lives in Tennessee where he travels to assist other bands. "It's like being a grandfather, I can play with the kids, and then give them back to their parents," said Holder. For over an hour Holder broke down the planned piece and drilled them on tim-

ing, dynamics, and phrasing.

Friday was a non-scheduled school day, yet the entire Lake Braddock band was attending this special all-day practice session. Mike Luley, Lake Braddock Band Director, assembled a group of accomplished musicians to assist the band members in refining their skills. This group of volunteers has decades of experience playing in the Army's Pershing Own Band, Air Force Band, and other military bands in the Washington, D.C. area. Many were students of Roy Holder and have a special connection to Lake Braddock Secondary School Symphonic Band.

After the practice session with Holder the various band "groups" met with their "volunteer" expert where they drilled deeper into timing, phrasing, and dynamics.

Lake Braddock Secondary High School has a reputation as one of the better symphonic bands in the United States. Their music room is filled to the rafters with awards over the years and that is due to the continuity over the past twenty-five years between the work of Holder and his many students who now help and teach at Lake Braddock.

— TERRANCE MORAN



Volunteers helping the Lake Braddock Band. From left: Kelly Star Jil, Centerville; Patrick Smith, Falls Church; Lou Bean, South Riding; Mike Luley, Burke; Leslie Rubillard, Burke; June and Roy Holder, Tennessee; Mike Wheeler, Springfield; Ed Aston and Dave Porter, Springfield.



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