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Two Lee HS Students Get Full Ride to College

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Springfield CONNECTION

Franconia ♦ Kingstowne
Newington

Members of the Spartans Against Human Trafficking club manage a bake sale after the public forum on trafficking at West Springfield High School on Jan. 28.

(From left) Seniors Kyra Beckman, Nujuma Moussa, Lauren Cattington, Allison O'Rourke, Juliana Kreuscher, junior Alyssa Wenklar and senior Elaine Stewart.

WELLBEING

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Teen Sex Trafficking a Growing Problem

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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

Teen Sex Trafficking a Growing Problem

Information forum held at West Springfield High School.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

Amy DiGiulian of Springfield came to the meeting for general information on human trafficking. “I had an overall concern,” said the mother of students at Robert E. Lee High School, Key Middle School and Garfield Elementary School.

According to Detective Bill Woolf of the Fairfax County Police Department’s Human Trafficking Unit, children as young as 12-17 years fall within the typical range of those involved in commercial sex in the United States, a number totalling 100,000 victims annually.

Of those, Woolf said, citing the National Human Trafficking Resource Center, Virginia ranks fifth for the number of potential trafficking cases. In the last 12 months, his office has seen 156 leads in Northern Virginia, often with multiple victims. Over the same period, they’ve identified over 261 victims and recovered 108 of them.

“My concern has been heightened,” DiGiulian said after the meeting.

West Springfield High School counselor Jeff Stahl opened the Jan. 28 program on human trafficking, not intending to frighten but inform. “Is this really a problem in Fairfax County?” he said. “Yes, yes it is. A growing problem, an urgent prob. Our goal is to raise awareness with community, parents, students and children.”

IN HIS PRESENTATION, Woolf explained that of all the human trafficking cases, 44 percent are juveniles being exploited for commercial sex.



Detective Bill Woolf of the FCPD Human Trafficking Unit speaks at West Springfield High School Jan. 28.



Lance Fitzmorris, a partner with Det. Woolf and the Just Ask human trafficking prevention project, discusses the phases of trafficking.



Dr. Liz Payne, FCPS coordinator for Family Life and Physical Education, speaks at West Springfield High School about how students in different grades are educated on human trafficking.



Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) expressed the Board of Supervisors’ commitment to “tackling this problem head on” and raising awareness about human trafficking.

“The traffickers out there understand human nature, the vulnerabilities that exist among our youth population,” Woolf said. “The number one reason preventing getting services to those individuals is misidentification: not understanding what’s actually going on in the teen’s lives.”

Woolf went on to share statistics that the majority of both victims and traffickers are American citizens, and that Northern Virginia has certain attractive qualities for these criminals to operate here.

“We have more prosecutions than any other jurisdiction in the United States because we have a high level of education, are significantly wealthy and think we’re somewhat immune to these crimes,” Woolf said. “But that makes us more vulnerable. Trafficking is a business. We have the demand here, as one of the top five hubs for sex trafficking in the U.S.”

Woolf stressed that education is key in solving this problem, a collaboration among law enforcement, schools, parents, children and community members to understand what the risks are and how to act to prevent or intervene in a bad situation.

Lance Fitzmorris, a father and partner of Woolf’s with the Just Ask human trafficking prevention project, spoke about the traf-

ficking phases of scouting and manipulation, the slow process of grooming a victim to submit to their trafficker.

“It’s called Just Ask because that’s pretty much all you have to do,” he said. “Students ask classmates, parents ask children, community members ask if they see something out of place.”

West Springfield senior Kyra Beckman was involved with the Just Ask production of a public service announcement about human trafficking. She also started the club Spartans Against Human Trafficking. “The biggest power is your voice,” said Beckman, following the meeting.

Beckman’s club will be running a wristband campaign for raising awareness in late February or early March. The campaign includes handing out wristbands, showing the public service announcement and hanging posters about human trafficking around school. “We want to make it a topic of discussion,” Beckman said.

Dr. Liz Payne, FCPS coordinator for Family Life and Physical Education, shared a portion of a video about human trafficking, produced by the school system to be shown to students of various grade levels. Younger students watch less of the video and longer segments are revealed to higher grades as

part of the emotional social health component of their Family Life Education unit.

PAYNE SAID teen sex trafficking information is first taught in sixth grade, with more safety education introduced in seventh grade and then added to in eighth through tenth grades.

“Self esteem is all a part of what we instruct as well,” said Payne, “and outreach to parents. There’s a synergy around this, an awesome opp to bring stakeholders together.”

“I always wanted to volunteer to help against human trafficking,” said Claudia Venereaux of Annandale. After the program, she signed up electronically to help out with the Just Ask project. “I went through some traumas; I feel it’s my outlet. And I have two children at Braddock Elementary School.” Mary Moran of Springfield has children at Lee, Key and Saratoga Elementary School. “I heard about this event at my church, Nativity,” she said. “Then I told my Girl Scouts troop about it. They’re working on a GIRLtopia badge. For their cause to focus on, they chose human trafficking.”

More information on the Just Ask prevention project is available at www.justaskva.org.



Claudia Venereaux of Annandale signs up to volunteer with the Just Ask Prevention Project at West Springfield High School.



Amy DiGiulian of Springfield (left) and Mary Moran (right) of Springfield meet following the human trafficking forum at West Springfield High School Jan. 28.

PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

NEWS

Getting a Full Ride to College

BY ABIGAIL CONSTANTINO
THE CONNECTION

Seniors Sarah Neufcourt and Yishak Desta received four-year scholarships to college from the Posse Foundation. The Robert E. Lee High School students were chosen among 16,000 students nationally.

Neufcourt, 17, plans to study animal science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Desta, 17, is headed to Lafayette College in Pennsylvania and plans to study engineering.

College and career center specialist Carla McInay-Shaw nominated the two to participate in the foundation's rigorous selection process. "They were willing to step outside their comfort zones, explore every opportunity that came their way," she said.

History teacher Corey Illes taught the students this year and said, in an email, that both are outstanding students. He said that Desta has "really matured into a hard-working, focused, and determined student" who wants to be the best in everything he does, while Neufcourt has a "great sense of humor and a very strong work ethic, not satisfied with being second best," said Illes.

The Posse Foundation partners with 51 partner colleges and universities in 22 states. It was founded on the premise that students will do better in college if they have a group of students they can turn to for support to go with them, or a posse.

It recognizes nontraditional leadership qualities in its selection. "They are usually diverse, first generation, not always 4.0 students," said McInay-Shaw.



PHOTO BY ABIGAIL CONSTANTINO/THE CONNECTION
College and Career Center specialist Carla McInay-Shaw (middle) poses with scholarship winners Sarah Neufcourt and Yishak Desta from Robert E. Lee High School in Springfield.

Neufcourt, who emigrated from France four years ago, takes pride on coming to the United States and learning English. She is looking forward to becoming close with her posse and having fun with them, playing tennis, enjoying class, and "going to college."

Desta, who came to the United States from Ethiopia seven years ago, said that he is most proud of running and surpassing his goal of running three miles in under 19 minutes. He is happy that he will have a "posse to fall back on" that will provide reassurance and assistance in college.

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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 DEPARTMENT:
springfield@connectionnewspapers.com

Kemal Kurspahic
Editor ♦ 703-778-9414
kemal@connectionnewspapers.com

Amna Rehmatulla
Editorial Assistant
703-778-9410 ext.427
arehmatulla@connectionnewspapers.com

Tim Peterson
Community Reporter
703-314-0789
tpeterson@connectionnewspapers.com

Jon Roetman
Sports Editor ♦ 703-752-4013
jroetman@connectionnewspapers.com
@jonroetman

ADVERTISING:
For advertising information
e-mail:
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431

Steve Hogan
Display Advertising, 703-778-9418
shogan@connectionnewspapers.com

Andrea Smith
Classified Advertising, 703-778-9411
classified@connectionnewspapers.com

Debbie Funk
National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin
Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor & Publisher
Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Executive Vice President
Jerry Vernon
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor in Chief
Steven Mauren
Managing Editor
Kemal Kurspahic
Photography:
Deb Cobb, Craig Sterbutzel
Art/Design:
Laurence Foong, John Heinly
Production Manager:
Geovani Flores

Special Assistant to the Publisher
Jeanne Theismann
jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com
@TheismannMedia

CIRCULATION: 703-778-9426
Circulation Manager:
Ann Oliver
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com



Concerts from Kirkwood Continue Feb. 28

Concerts from Kirkwood will continue its 2014 – 2015 season on Feb. 28, 2015, with a concert featuring The Hot Lanes Big Band. The local 16-piece jazz band, led by pianist and recording artist Bobby Jasinski, will present a lively concert featuring its signature mix of original compositions and jazz spanning the age from the big band glory days of the 1930s and '40s to the present time. Concerts from Kirkwood are presented free of charge, although voluntary donations are appreciated and used entirely to support the series. The concert will be presented at 3 p.m. in the church sanctuary of Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, 8336 Carrleigh Parkway, Springfield, near the intersection of Old Keene Mill Road and Rolling Road in West Springfield. For more information: email concerts@kirkwoodpres.com, visit www.kirkwoodpres.com, or call the church office at 703-451-5320.

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.

Creative Aging Festival Comes to Fairfax County.

The Arts Council of Fairfax County invites submissions by Feb. 20, 2015, from arts organizations and arts programmers to participate in the Creative Aging Festival which will be held in May 2015.

The Creative Aging Festival, sponsored by Fairfax County, AARP Virginia and 12 other community organizations, will feature a wide range of arts programs including poetry, visual arts, theater, dance and music. The Creative Aging Festival supports Fairfax County's 50+ Community Action Plan's initiative to promote arts programming for 50+ adults.

Detailed festival and application information can be found at <http://artsfairfax.org/news/creative-aging-festival>.



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Search zillow.com, 8311 Stationhouse Court, 22079 for more details and photographs, and/or call Michael 239-565-1456



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WELLBEING

Free and Low-Cost Dental Care for Children

Special programs available as part of National Children's Dental Health Month.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Dental hygiene should start even before a baby's first tooth emerges. That is one of the messages that dental professionals are hoping to convey this month.

February is designated National Children's Dental Health Month, organized by the American Dental Association, along with the ADA Foundation, to raise awareness about the benefits of good oral health for children. Dental professionals stress children should brush for two minutes twice per day, floss and rinse daily, eat healthy meals, limit snacks and visit the dentist regularly.

"To get babies comfortable with oral hygiene, begin cleaning the baby's mouth by wiping the gums and tongue with a moist washcloth

or gauze shortly after birth until teeth erupt into the mouth," said Jeanne Yang, DDS, a public health dentist at the Joseph Willard Health Center's dental clinic in the City of Fairfax. "It is recommended that parents bring children to their first dentist appointment preferably within 6 months of when the first tooth appears, but no later than their first birthday. And, always, always, always use a soft toothbrush, whether you are 1 or 100. A soft toothbrush should be used by all ages."

Local health departments want the public to know that a child's dental care need not depend on a family's ability to afford such services. Many Northern Virginia dental clinics offer free or low-cost dental examinations, cleanings, fluoride applications, restorative services including fillings and even limited oral surgeries.

"We have three children's dental

clinics in Fairfax County," said Tina Dale of the Fairfax County Health Department. The county's clinics are in Mount Vernon, Fairfax and Reston. "Our dental program is just for children. Their family's income has to be at a level where they meet Medicaid criteria."

The Northern Virginia Dental Society is also hosting a "Give a Kids a Smile Project" on Saturday, Feb. 6 at the Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) Medical Education Campus in Springfield. The project will join dentists and dental hygiene students from NOVA with other community volunteers to offer dental services to underserved children, including preschool students in Arlington County's Head Start program.

"A huge number of children have dental disease earlier and earlier," said Kathy A. Thompson of Northern Virginia Community College. "This is an opportunity to get them

excited about dental care and give them information on how to take care of their teeth, and introduce them to what it's like to go the dentist."

The slogan for the 2015 campaign is "Defeat Monster Mouth." It's plastered on posters that depict dental superheroes fighting to defeat "Plaquer the Monster" for good oral health. Dental providers are hoping to teach children and parents about the timing of a first dental visit, how to brush and floss properly, the effect of thumb sucking on teeth and the importance of regular dental examinations. Although the observance is a month long, health department officials keep up the effort year-round.

"We work with Arlington families on the importance of dental care from day one," said Kurt Larrick of the Arlington County Health Department. "We're working with parents from the times the kids are born to talk about the importance of hygiene, nutrition, tooth brushing."



Dr. Howard Ngo works on a young patient at Northern Virginia Community College's Medical Education Campus in Springfield, as part of the Give Kids a Smile Program.

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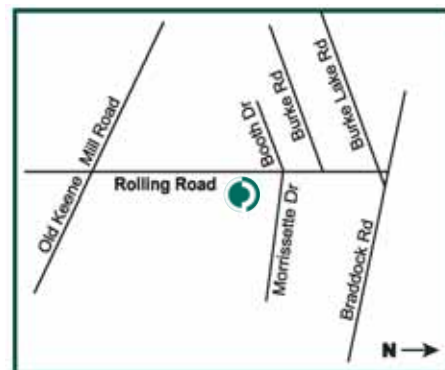
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Saturday, Feb. 21 – Rhode Island (Sponsored by Virginia529 College Savings Plan)



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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.

photographs. Showcase artists: Marcia Gordon, “Gems by Meg;” Piper Strong, Metal Works/Judaica; and Joyce Zipperer, metal sculptor/mixed media/metal shoes and jewelry. www.jcncvarts.org.

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.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

THROUGH MONDAY/FEB. 9

“Synesthetic Landscapes.” Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. 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

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

SPECIAL CONNECTIONS CALENDAR

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday unless noted.

FEBRUARY

2/4/2015 Valentine's Dining & Gifts I
2/4/2015 Wellbeing – National Children's Dental Health Month
2/11/2015 HomeLifeStyle
2/11/2015 Valentine's Dining & Gifts II
Valentine's Day is Feb. 14 • Presidents Day is Feb. 16
2/18/2015 A+ Camps & Schools
2/25/2015 Pet Connection Pullout

MARCH

3/4/2015 Wellbeing
3/11/2015 HomeLifeStyle Real Estate Pullout
3/18/2015 A+ Camps & Schools
3/25/2015 Spring Fun, Food, Arts & Entertainment
FCPS Spring Break 3/30-4/3

APRIL

4/1/2015 Wellbeing – Senior Living Pullout
Easter Sunday is April 5
4/8/2015 HomeLifeStyle
4/15/2015 A+ Camps & Schools
4/22/2015 Real Estate Pullout – New Homes
4/29/2015 A+ Camps & Schools Pullout
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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

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 'krewe' 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.

FRIDAY/FEB. 13

Garden Talks with Master Gardeners: Purple Delights. 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. Historic Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Learn to set year-round garden accents with purple flowers, purple foliage, and purple fruits. \$10/p.p. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring using code 290 102 9101 or call 703-642-5173.

SATURDAY/FEB. 14

2nd Saturday Art Walk. 6 to 9 p.m. Worhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. The 2nd Saturday Art Walk at the Workhouse showcases the diverse work of more than 100 visual artists in a unique historic venue. Guests can tour seven unique studio buildings, mix and mingle with artists, buy original works of art, experience ever-changing exhibitions and meet featured artists. 703-584-2900.
Floral Design Workshop: Victorian Valentine's Day. 9:30 - 11 a.m. Historic Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Learn about Victorian Valentine's floral fashion in England, using masses of flowers, feathers and laces. Perfect timing to create your own lush, elegant bouquet.

Countries are well cultivated, not as they are fertile, but as they are free.
—Baron de Montesquieu

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SPORTS

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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.

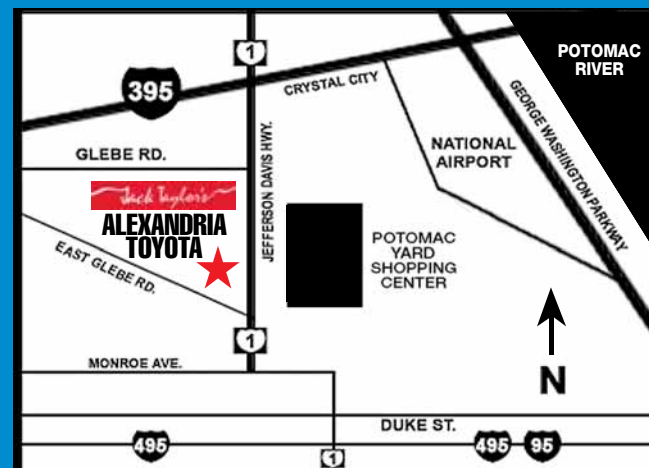
The top six finishers in each event and the top three relays advance to the Northern 6A Regional Championship Feb. 19 at the Prince George's County Sports and Learning Complex in Landover, Md.

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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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