

Inside



Senior Living

Cherry Blossom at Fox Mill

NEWS, PAGE 3



From left: Laura Alderson, Fox Mill music teacher; Noriko Otsuka Vankeuren, sixth grade JI Teacher and Fox Mill Cherry Blossom coordinator; and Erin Rosa, Fox Mill music teacher, are three of the teachers making sure students were prepared to sing at the Warner Theater.

Moving: From Institution to Community

NEWS, PAGE 4

First Hand Experience with World War

NEWS, PAGE 9

WE CHANGE LIVES



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Koko is all about family for us... it was my 17 year old who begged me to give it a try. I loved it at first because it was easy to fit into my schedule and was something fun for me



to do with my teenager. Now I love KOKO because I see the results and I feel so much better. KOKO is just a part of my life. KOKO is like no other fitness experience. It's not a regular gym (thank God -- no mirrors!). And it is an easy way to fit exercise into your schedule without it being a drag. I actually like working out now which was certainly not the case before. KOKO is fun because it challenges you individually, is efficient and gets results! I recommended it to my neighbors and now they're KOKO Nuts too!

~ Leesa Donner, Great Falls

I previously belonged to three other gyms in Reston, and I had never made it a full year before my attendance dropped off. With Koko, however, I recently passed my two year anniversary and am still going strong. I love that I can get a full body workout every time in less than an hour.

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~ Watt H., Reston, VA

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~ Scott Kreitz

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Fourth grade students at Fox Mill Elementary School sang “Sakura, Sakura,” one of the songs they will perform at a concert on April 11.



PHOTOS BY MARISSA BEALE/THE CONNECTION

Noriko Otsuka Vankeuren’s sixth grade class. These students are all in the Japanese Immersion program at Fox Mill Elementary, meaning they spend half of the day, five days a week in the immersion class learning math, science and health in Japanese.

Fox Mill Elementary Welcomes Musicians From Japan

School hosts a concert from Aun-J Classic Orchestra, and performs at the National Cherry Blossom Festival.

BY MARISSA BEALE
THE CONNECTION

On a morning not too long ago, students at Fox Mill Elementary School experienced an exciting opportunity to meet the members of Aun-J Classic Orchestra from Japan.

To thunderous applause and an enthusiastic *ohayoo gozaimasu* from the students, the group brought traditional Japanese music with a modern feel to the school for all the students to hear.

The group also performed at the D.C. National Cherry Blossom Festival opening ceremony held on March 21.

In addition, fifth and sixth grade students from Fox Mill Elementary performed the national anthems of Japan and of the United States, in Japanese and English, respectively, at the ceremony.

“I had to sing the Japanese national anthem in front of these famous Japanese people,” exclaimed sixth grader Delia Hartman, one of the students who performed.

“It was really exciting being able to perform at the Warner Theater.”

“Every year we’ve been to the Cherry Blossom Festival, but I never imagined myself performing in it,” said Zen Smith, a sixth grade student in Fox Mill’s Japanese Immersion Program who sang at the festival.

Based on school-wide auditions, a group of 29 students were chosen to perform at the Warner Theater, and directed by music teachers Erin Rosa, Keiko Endo and Laura

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Students at Fox Mill with members of Aun-J Classic Orchestra planting the cherry trees.



Students from Fox Mill Elementary School performed onstage at the Warner Theater during the opening ceremony of the National Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington, D.C.

Alderson.

“It was really cool because I always dreamed of being on the stage...It was work to be in the show,” said sixth grader Natalie Grenfell.

This opportunity was a collaborative effort made possible by Noriko Otsuka Vankeuren, a sixth grade Japanese Immersion teacher at Fox Mill, and connections with the Aun-J Classic Orchestra, the Embassy of Japan, National Cherry Blossom, Inc., and Happi Enterprises, LLC. The president of Happi Enterprises in Arlington proposed that students at Fox Mill sing the Japanese and American national anthems at this year’s Cherry Blossom Festival, a first in the school’s history.

The collaboration also resulted in bringing world-famous group, Aun-J Classic Orchestra, to the elementary school, where they performed for the students and planted three cherry trees, which now sit in the front of the school.

“We are hoping to build close relationships in the coming years by exchanging more video/letters, skyping and, hopefully, visiting each other’s school,” said Vankeuren. Currently 44 percent of students are enrolled in the JI Program at Fox Mill for the 2014-2015 school year, and several students expressed plans to continue their studies in middle school and even high school.

Their study of Japanese is providing students with extensive exposure to and knowledge of the culture of Japan.

Students from Fox Mill will have two separate performances this month during the Cherry Blossom Festival.

On April 11, fourth graders will sing in Alexandria at 2 p.m., at 4603 Green Spring Road. And at 2:30 p.m. the fifth graders will perform at Sakura Stage in Washington, D.C. These performances are free and open to the public, and they would love for all to attend.

To find out more about what’s happening during the National Cherry Blossom Festival, you can also visit <http://www.nationalcherryblossomfestival.org/>.

Moving: From Institution to Community

Northern Virginia Training Center to close by March 2016.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

Joseph McHugh has lived at the Northern Virginia Training Center for 35 years, moving in when he was a teenager. McHugh has cerebral palsy and colostomy and severe spasticity issues.

At the training center, McHugh works with a speech pathologist, nurse, on-campus dietician and is close to an X-ray machine, dental facility and clinic on the grounds.



Dr. Dawn Adams

“My brother would’ve been dead without the training center,” said Chris McHugh, who lives in San Francisco. “He was almost pronounced dead a couple times, except for his proximity to a nurse, the clinic right there.”

Chris McHugh and his sisters Kim Arthurs McHugh of Arlington and Donna McHugh of Centreville are Joe’s legal guardians, and grew up together in Arlington. They’re skeptical about whether there are appropriate placement options so Joe can live successfully outside of the training center, which is slated to close next year.

“I want to be their biggest cheerleader,” said Chris McHugh. “I want to be wrong, to be excited about my brother’s choices and his peer’s choices, but I’ve seen people who

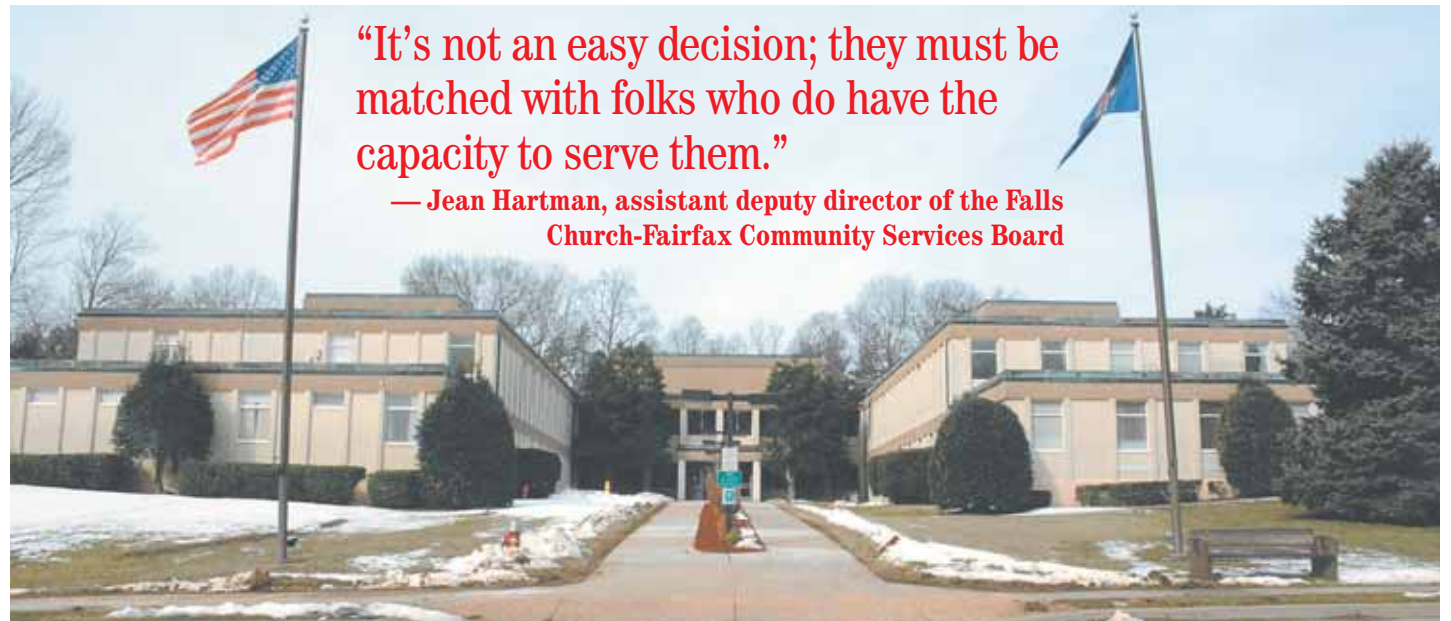


PHOTO BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

The Northern Virginia Training Center on Braddock Road is scheduled to close in March 2016.

“It’s not an easy decision; they must be matched with folks who do have the capacity to serve them.”

— Jean Hartman, assistant deputy director of the Falls Church-Fairfax Community Services Board

don’t have a family advocating for them slip through the cracks, wither on the vine.”

The training center, one of five large regional institutions in Virginia that are operated by the state’s Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, was built to house and provide services for people with intellectual and physical disabilities. The Northern Virginia facility, located on more than 80 acres off Braddock Road in Fairfax, has offered medical, dental and nursing services, physical and occupational therapy, social work and psychology services since opening in 1973.

Though the training centers provided an array of services, the institutional environment also moved people with disabilities out of their communities.

In June 1999, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Olmstead v. L.C.* that segregating people with disabilities from society is tantamount to discrimination and a violation

of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Governments or other public organizations, it said, must therefore offer more integrated, community-based services to people with disabilities.

Virginia Code § 37.2-319 calls for a Behavioral Health and Developmental Services Trust Fund that “shall be used for mental health, developmental, or substance abuse services and to facilitate transition of individuals with intellectual disability from state training centers to community-based services.”

Then in a 2011 letter, Assistant U.S. Attorney General Thomas E. Perez notified then-governor Bob McDonnell that the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division had conducted an investigation into the Central Virginia Training Center in Madison Heights, questioning the state’s compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The investigation concluded that Virginia “fails to provide services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs in violation of the [American with Disabilities Act],” Perez’s letter read.

“The inadequacies we identified have resulted in the needless and prolonged institutionalization of, and other harms to, individuals with disabilities in [Central Virginia Training Center] and in other segregated training centers throughout the Commonwealth who could be served in the community.”

The other segregated training centers included the one on Braddock Road.

In January 2012, the U.S. Department of Justice and Commonwealth of Virginia filed settlement in U.S. District Court, calling on the state to “create or expand a range of supports and services to individuals with [intellectual disabilities or developmental disabilities] and their families.”

The settlement summary referred to the continued operation of all five regional training centers as “fiscally impractical” and that the state should submit a plan for considering closing all but one institution. In his 2012 letter, Perez wrote the average cost of serving one person in a training center was \$194,000 per person annually, while offering them services outside the center averaged \$76,400.

According to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, the average cost of care per individual for FY2014 was \$342,504. For FY2015 (through October 2014), the cost rose to \$359,496 per individual.

Dr. Dawn Adams, director of health ser

SEE FINDING HOMES, PAGE 6

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From left: Joseph McHugh Jr. and Yvette Roberts, students at the Co-op School for Handicapped Children in Arlington, meet with First Lady Pat Nixon and Secretary of the Interior Rogers C.B. Morton at The White House in 1972 as poster children for a United Way campaign.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHRIS MCHUGH

(Rear, from left) Donna A. McHugh, Kim McHugh Arthurs, Joseph F. McHugh Sr. and Chris McHugh celebrate with their brother and son Joseph F. McHugh Jr., who has been a resident at the Northern Virginia Training Center for 35 years.

Girl Scouts Raise Money for Honor Flights

Film and presentations explain the importance of getting veterans to Washington D.C. to see their monuments.

Girl Scout Troop 3651 organized a screening of the moving Honor Flight, and invited two World War II veterans, Howard Jester and George Hanna, to speak to the audience after the film. Forestville Elementary teacher Lisa Goglio-Zarczynski also spoke and was featured in the film for volunteering to help veterans get to Washington D.C. to see their monuments.

At the movie screening, the girl scouts announced that Bob Nelson of Keller Williams, who runs the military appreciation fundraiser dinners at the Old Brogue in Great Falls, will host a fundraiser dinner on Monday, May 11 for their efforts, according to Karen Joostema, troop leader. "Our girls will give a presentation on what Honor Flight is about and our involvement in it," she said.

The girl scout troop raised more than \$5,000 by showing the film, which will go to will flying veterans to Washington, D.C. They hope to raise enough to fly 10 veterans later this spring, and the girls plan to greet veterans who arrive in Washington and visit the monuments with them.

"Guests simply call The Brogue for reser-



PHOTOS BY KEN MOORE/THE CONNECTION

Girl Scout Troop 3651 sold out their fundraising screening of Honor Flight at Herndon's Worldgate 9 theater on March 16. Honor Flight tells the story of a nationwide effort to fly World War II veterans to Washington, D.C., to visit the monuments built in their honor.



Veterans Howard Jester, a paratrooper, and George Hanna spoke to the audience after the girl scouts showed Honor Flight. The girl scouts asked them questions about their service.

ervations on May 11 for either the 5:30 seating or 7:30 seating of the Military Appreciation Dinner," according to Joostema.

"It's very important that the veterans who served in World War II will be remembered," said Caroline Healy, 11.

The 12 scouts from Colvin Run Elementary School first worked with the Honor Flight organization two years ago as Brown-

ies, when they greeted an Honor Flight of veterans at Dulles Airport who were here to visit the memorials, according to Karen Joostema.

"We got to shake hands and hug them and sing songs to them," said Kyra Joostema, 11. "We sang 'America the Beautiful,' 'You're a Grand Old Flag,' and 'God Bless America.' They seemed very happy."

When it was time for the girls to decide on a community project this year, the girls wanted to get more veterans to Washington and decided to set up their own community viewing of "Honor Flight."

"We want people to have a chance to see it and understand what happened and to understand that people around us did a good thing," said Caroline.

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Getting into Marian Homes

Remodeling project to provide for residents with intellectual and or physical disabilities.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

When the new residents of Marian Homes' latest remodeling project move in to the Gresham Street house in north Springfield, Fairfax resident and Marian volunteer John Germain hopes they feel at home.



Bill Crowder

The retired Marine engineer has been helping supervise the remodel of the more than 60-year old structure, retrofitting it for the specific needs of five people with intellectual and or physical disabilities. Some of the most noticeable changes are doorways that have been widened to 42 inches to accommodate wheelchairs and a wide-open entryway leading to a main dining room bathed in sunlight from numerous windows.

"When they come in, this will help them feel welcome," said Germain, "that this is a home, not an institution." The remodel began Feb. 25 and the team expects residents will be able to move in by July.

More than re-painting, Marian Homes is converting it from three bedrooms to five, adding a walkout entry, putting in all new flooring, super-sizing the bathroom with a hoist mechanism and redoing the kitchen.

This is the third private residence Marian Homes has bought and redesigned. Its first is a home for five women in the Brecon Ridge subdivision of Fairfax, dedicated in 1998. The second, a home for five men, is a house in the Fairfax subdivision of Greenbriar, purchased in 2010. All 10 resi-



PHOTO BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

Marian Homes volunteers from Fairfax (from left) — Walter Purdy, Michael Perri and John Germain — work on converting a north Springfield home to make it accessible for people with intellectual disabilities.

dents were formerly living at the Northern Virginia Training Center on Braddock Road.

The all-volunteer, non-profit organization was started by Knights of Columbus St. Mary of Sorrows Council 8600. They purchase and maintain homes for people with disabilities; Chimes of Virginia takes referrals from Fairfax County to select individuals for the homes and independently manages the round-the-clock care for the residents.

Chimes of Virginia is part of the larger, Baltimore-based nonprofit corporation Chimes Foundation. Before Marian House purchased its first group home, the Fairfax Community Services Board assigned Chimes of Virginia to provide services once the house was completed.

People with intellectual or physical disabilities were once centralized in large institutions around the country, where it was believed more robust infrastructure and staffing could better meet the diverse health needs. The Northern Virginia Training Center, opened in 1973, is one example.

But over the last several decades, states have been closing their larger institutions

in favor of finding smaller housing and service alternatives that are more integrated into communities. The Northern Virginia center, scheduled to close in March 2016, has been discharging residents and currently has 74 remaining.

"This isn't anything new, in terms of federal standards," said Chimes Chief Operating Officer Nancy Eisele. "We just want to make sure we do it right in Fairfax County. We look at it as permanent housing for people, we want this to be their home."

TO FUND the first two residences it remodeled, Marian Homes has depended on rental payments from Chimes of Virginia, voluntary donations and grants from the Knights of Columbus Council and St. Mary of Sorrows Parish. The state-level Knights of Columbus organization KOVAR, dedicated to helping people with intellectual disabilities, has also offered Marian Homes loans and grants.

For the Springfield house, Marian Homes received financial assistance from Fairfax County's Department of Housing and Community Development.

In September 2014, the county issued a Request for Proposals to take advantage of \$1.8 million in federal funding for acquiring and rehabilitating affordable housing. The Fairfax County Housing Blueprint prioritized expanding housing options for the people with disabilities as well as homeless people.

In December, Marian Homes, along with the non-profit organizations Community Havens in Chantilly, Cornerstones Housing Corporation in Reston and Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services in the Mount Vernon area of Alexandria, was awarded funding in the form of deferred loans from the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority.

"This funding not only ensures persons with disabilities, the homeless and other people with special needs have a place to call home in Fairfax County," Kurt Creager, director of Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development, said in a statement. "It also supports efforts to provide a wide variety of affordable housing types and sizes to meet the diversity of needs in our community."

The \$510,000 mortgage Marian Homes received from the Redevelopment and Housing Authority helped cover the cost of the Springfield house, while the organization says it is costing \$103,000 to remodel it. Marian Homes president Bill Crowder called it "a very workable model, from the county standpoint and our standpoint."

Crowder said Marian Homes is beginning to reach out to local corporations for assistance as well. "This is a community effort," he said, "not just one organization. This is something we got underway but there's more than enough space for you to get in and help."

To find out more about Marian Homes, visit www.marianhomes.org.

Finding Homes for Those Hard To Place

FROM PAGE 4

vices with Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services helps oversee the clinical organization of Northern Virginia Training Center, making sure the new community settings for transitioning residents meet their specific needs.

Adams says that of the 73 people still living at the center, down from 152 residents in 2012, more than half have already started a 12-week discharge process.

"It's a very thoughtful, specific process to ensure there is choice, that there's a good fit with the provider and they're able to offer specific supports for that unique individual," Adams said.

Since October 2011, the state agency has identified 106 community options for Northern Virginia Training Center residents. The options include using individualized Medicaid waivers to acquire services either at home, in a group home setting, or at another intermediate treatment facility.

The key is that residents, their parents and associates should have more choices about



PHOTO COURTESY OF JUDITH KORF

Judith Korf's son Adam Bertman celebrates his 43rd birthday in a Northern Virginia Training Center dining room, August 2014.

how and where they live, ones that are integrated rather than segregated.

"While the training center model developed over time, it didn't necessarily keep up with the idea that health services have changed quite a bit," said Adams. "These are individuals, they're people, their spe-

cial issues are around the potential vulnerability and a whole bunch of different diagnostic items they embody. The challenge is working towards bringing people into the community, so it's no longer so foreign, due to lack of exposure."

Another challenge is the number of waivers; there's a waiting list, said Jean Hartman, assistant deputy director for the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board. "The need far exceeds the number of waivers by the General Assembly every year," said Hartman.

The Community Services Board runs an intake for people with intellectual or physical disabilities, then determines whether they have an urgent or non-urgent need for a waiver based on the acuity of their conditions.

"The waiver has made it possible for individuals to live and work with their friends and families in their home communities, and made those communities stronger and healthier as a result," Hartman said.

SEE PLACEMENT, PAGE 7

Training Center Timeline

April 1973: Northern Virginia Training Center opens.

1977: Average residents numbered 230.

1989: Average residents numbered 263.

1999: Average residents numbered 185.

June 1999: In *Olmstead v. L.C.* ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court calls for public entities to provide community-based services for persons with disabilities.

June 2011: 157 residents

2011: Assistant U.S. Attorney General Thomas E. Perez notified then-governor Bob McDonnell that the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division investigated Virginia's training centers and concluded that Virginia "fails to provide services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs in violation of the ADA. ... The inadequacies we identified have resulted in the needless and prolonged institutionalization of, and other harms to, individuals with disabilities in CVTC and in other segregated training centers throughout the Commonwealth who could be served in the community."

July 2012: 152 residents.

January 2012: Settlement reached between Virginia and the U.S. Department of Justice regarding violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

June 2014: Southside Virginia Training Center in Petersburg, Virginia, closes.

March 2015: Initial scheduled closing for NVTC. 73 current residents.

March 2016: Current scheduled closing for NVTC.



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES.

The Northern Virginia Training Center spreads over 80 acres along Braddock Road, including facilities for administration, food service, programs, residences, a warehouse, transportation and therapy.

Finding Appropriate Placement

FROM PAGE 6

According to Hartman, in Fairfax County there are 450 people receiving services in the community through Medicaid waivers, from 30 providers in Fairfax County. However, 858 people are still on the “urgent” waiting list for waivers and 375 are on the non-urgent list.

Once you have a waiver, it’s a matter of matching up with the right provider and environment. For this, the Community Services Board, Northern Virginia Training Center staff and family or guardians collaborate to find the right fit.

“Those are hard times,” said Hartman. “It’s not an easy decision; they must be matched with folks who do have the capacity to serve them.”

SOME FAMILIES of residents of the Northern Virginia Training Center have viewed the closing as too hasty, that more time is needed to identify proper support providers. Several parents and guardians testified at the public hearing before the northern Virginia delegation headed to Richmond for the 2015 General Assembly session in January.

At the session state Sen. Stephen D Newman (R-23) introduced SB1300, which sought to extend the Northern Virginia Training Center closing until Dec. 31, 2016, prevent the land from being declared surplus once it’s closed and keep three of the remaining regional centers open. The bill, which was co-patroned by numerous Northern Virginia senators and delegates, only made it as far as the Finance Committee.

Reston resident Judith Korf, co-president of the Parents and Associates of Northern Virginia Training Center group, spoke at the hearing on behalf of her son Adam. Adam is 43 and diagnosed with autism and mild learning disability; he has severe behavioral issues and requires a high level of skilled supervision.

“The hardest ones to place are the ones that are left,” said Korf.

Chris McHugh is hopeful the process will be successful, but has seen his brother passed up for discharge from the center for more than two decades.

“His friends and peers, some would find appropriate group home placements,” said Chris McHugh. “They would go through his checklist of needs and Joe would never make the cut. He requires a bit more

in terms of therapy and care. A day at the bathroom with my brother is an adventure.”

However Adams remains confident all the residents will be able to find proper home and service combinations by the training center projected closing of March 2016.

ONCE THE LAST RESIDENT leaves, the Northern Virginia Training Center, the campus’ future is still uncertain. Dena Potter at the Virginia Department of General Services said the campus is currently in “the surplus property review process to make a decision on whether the property would be sold.” The state owns the land; several properties were purchased for the site from private owners while one was obtained under eminent domain.

Because the 1973 opening predates the county’s Zoning Ordinance of 1978, the underlying zoning for the property is R1, meaning new construction would be limited to one house per acre, without being subject to public hearings and a change to the comprehensive plan.

According to the Virginia Code, if the buildings or property are sold, the money must first be used to make sure the same level and variety of services offered at the training center are available for former residents.

Parents and associates of center residents were scheduled to meet with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services Commissioner Dr. Debra Ferguson at the end of March to learn more about the plan to close the training center.

“Theoretically, we’re all supposed to get at least three viable options to choose from and that just isn’t happening,” said Korf. Of around 40 parents and associates who attended the meeting, many, she said, were “very frustrated” with the provider options they’ve been sent to assess so far. “They’ve looked at everything there to look at and it just wasn’t panning out.”

In the mean time, Adams said the campus will continue to provide dental services, something more difficult to establish than a primary care provider.

Joe Rajnic, the NVTC acting facility director, was not available to comment for this story.

The Northern Virginia Training Center website is www.nvtc.dmhmsas.virginia.gov.



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OPINION

Family Matters

BY MEGAN BEYER

COMMENTARY

It may never feel like a “good time” to have a colonoscopy. You might have already used the excuse that the preparation day before a colonoscopy is unpleasant and cuts into your busy schedule — and then you put it off another year. But momentary discomfort or inconvenience is a small price to pay for saving your life.

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of death from cancer in the United States. Only 40 percent of colorectal cancer cases are found in the early stages when it is most treatable. Consider the implications of not getting screened, or of a family member putting off screening until it is too late. If you are over 50 years old and of average risk, you should get screened for colorectal cancer. Those at higher risk may need to be screened earlier. And colorectal cancer, long thought of as a disease of older adults, has been rising in young adults — which makes it especially important for people of all ages to be aware of risk factors like tobacco use, obesity and heavy drinking, as well as family history.

March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. There is no need to be uncomfortable talking about colorectal cancer. Make this a conversation topic in your family and encourage them to speak with their health care professionals about getting screened. Nearly

everyone has lost a loved one to cancer, and colorectal cancer is a disease that takes too many lives each year. This year an estimated 132,700 people will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer. Worse, nearly 50,000 people will die from it. In 2014 about 136,830 people are predicted to be diagnosed with colorectal cancer in the United States, and about 50,310 people are predicted to die of the disease. Don't become a statistic. Start taking preventive steps today.

Determine your family history of cancer and talk with your health care professional about colorectal cancer screening options. Experts recommend both men and women over 50 of average risk get screened. A colonoscopy allows medical professionals to examine the entire colon and remove any polyps (pre-cancerous growths) before they ever become cancerous. When colon cancer is found early, it is more treatable, and the five-year survival rate is 90 percent. If you cannot or will not have a colonoscopy, there are a variety of other screenings available, such as a virtual colonoscopy, flexible sigmoidoscopy or double-contrast barium enema. Talk to your health professional about what is best for you.

Some people need to start screening earlier because they are at a higher risk of colon cancer — they have personal histories of colorectal

Prevent colon cancer for self and loved ones.

cancer, pre-cancerous polyps or inflammatory bowel disease; family histories of colorectal cancer, polyps or a hereditary colorectal cancer syndrome; or have Type 2 diabetes. Colorectal cancer incidence and mortality rates are highest in African-American men and women; incidence is about 25 percent higher and mortality rates are about 50 percent higher than those in Caucasians.

Healthy living is a vital step to cancer prevention and can lower risk for colorectal cancer. Maintain a healthy weight and stay active by exercising regularly for 30 minutes at least five times a week. Eat a nutritious diet low in red and processed meats (such as bacon or sausage) and full of fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Do not smoke and only drink alcohol in moderation. Use these tips to live a healthier life today, and share this information with family and friends.

Colorectal cancer is treatable, especially if caught early. Talk with your family and loved ones about ways to reduce their colorectal cancer risk. Visit www.preventcancer.org for more information about cancer prevention and early detection.

Megan Beyer is the wife of U.S. Rep. Donald S. Beyer Jr. (D-8) and is a member of Congressional Families Cancer Prevention Program of the Prevent Cancer Foundation. All statistics are provided by the American Cancer Society.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Turning Every Rock For Education Budget

To the Editor:

Fairfax County is cited as having an average household income that is one of the top ten of all the counties and cities in our nation. Yet the proposed budget for the county's fiscal year 2014 reads in part: “We cannot fund all our priorities and investments,” and “We have turned over every rock looking for increased savings opportunities.”

Clearly they have neglected turning over every rock looking for increased revenue opportunities,

and they should have. Increased revenues could be found by increasing the county's real estate tax rate, now at \$1.09 per \$100 of assessed value of properties. Each penny of increase in the tax rate would yield the county an additional \$22.6 million.

By leaving the county tax rate unchanged for another year, we are short-changing our public school students. The teachers for these students have starting salaries that are 3 percent lower than teachers in neighboring counties. This small gap, however, increases to 20.5 percent for teachers with a Masters degree in their tenth year. Difficult to retain the best teachers in these circumstances.

There is another opportunity to

be found under another rock in the projected 2014 budget, viz: The meals' tax assessed on meals in restaurants. A tax of a mere 4 pennies on the total dollar expended by a restaurant patron would yield some \$80,000 to the county's coffers. No one is hurt. Thus, it's politically safe.

In conclusion, it is certainly not too much to ask our community with the 10th highest average income in the US to be a leader of our country in caring for the education of our children. Retaining the best qualified teachers to inspire our children requires us to lead in the salaries for those teachers.

Bob Simon
Reston

Fatally Flawed Police Policy Review Commission

To the Editor:

The recently created Ad Hoc Police Review Commission is fatally flawed by the limitation to examine only policies, practices, and programs regarding the release of information on police-involved in-

cidents. Only when Fairfax County eliminates the conflict of interest between police and the Commonwealth Attorney who prosecutes criminal cases will the county have an effective way to examine police-involved incidents.

Public prosecutors must work closely with police to build criminal cases on evidence collected by the police. In cases where police officers themselves may have committed crimes, such as the recent shootings of unarmed citizens, it is beyond reason to expect that State attorneys will be able function independently of their close working relationship with the police department.

Fairfax County needs an independent prosecutor to handle cases of police-involved incidents involving citizens. The idea of a citizen review board to provide independent oversight of the police department also should be considered, as suggested by Jeff Stewart, a member of the review commission.

The Police Review Commissions must go beyond just police policies and procedures to examine structural changes in the relationship between the police department and the citizens of Fairfax County.

Ralph Craft
Fairfax

Mother's Day Photos

Mother's Day is May 10, 2015, and every year at this time, The Connection calls for submissions to our Mother's Day photo gallery. Send photos of mothers, grandmothers, great-grandmothers, with children or without children in the photos. Please name everyone in the photo, the approximate date, de-

scribe what is happening in the photo and include your name, address, email address and phone number. (We will not print your full address or contact information.) You can upload photos and information directly to our website at www.connectionnewspapers.com/mothersday/ or email to editors@connectionnewspapers.com.

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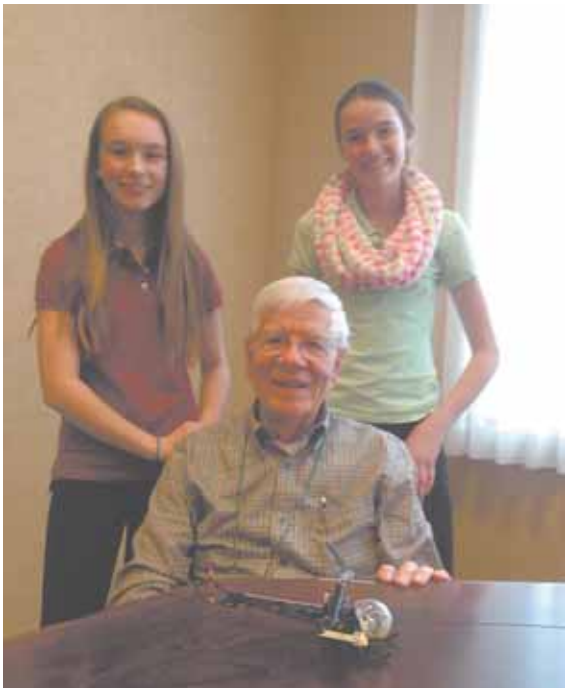
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Al Burris, formerly of Springfield, helped evacuate medical patients in the Korean War. He is pictured here with Alexandra Murphy and Anika Schipma, students at The Nysmith School in Herndon.



Keith Wilkinson enlisted in World War II when he was 17 years old. He shared 32 years of his military experience with Nysmith Students from Herndon who recorded veterans experiences for a Library of Congress Veterans History Project.

First Hand Experience With World War

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Richard Graff didn't hesitate to describe his darkest days while serving in World War II. "Every combat soldier has to get used to the bodies," he said.

"Whenever I think back to that one day when I didn't think I would have another day, you bet, I'm glad to be here," Graff said.

When speaking about World War II, Graff, formerly of Vienna, also brings a portrait photo taken on V-E Day, May 8, 1945, when war in Europe came to an end nearly 70 years ago. He has a captured Nazi flag which is signed by comrades he served with.

Seventh and eighth graders from The Nysmith School in Herndon visited Ashby Ponds retirement community to record one-hour interviews with six veterans for The Library of Congress' Veterans History Project, including Graff, formerly of Vienna, Al Burris, formerly of Springfield, Keith Wilkinson, Al Beyer, Lee Holmberg and Bruce Petree.

More than one-quarter of the 850 residents at Ashby Ponds are military veterans, said Jessica McKay, public affairs manager.

"Who wouldn't want to hear the experience of a veteran?" said Nysmith student Emily Elkas, who talked to and recorded Keith Wilkinson. Wilkinson, formerly of



Richard Graff, formerly of Vienna, showed Nysmith students from Herndon a photo taken of himself on V-E Day in 1945 when war in Europe came to an end 70 years ago. He still wears his uniform when sharing experiences of the war, and brings a Nazi flag he captured.

New Hampshire, spent 32 years in the military, "mostly in the Air Force," he said. "As we talked more and more, his story got so interesting," said Emily Elkas.

"I think it's wonderful that we live in a time that we have technology so we can record their stories on video," said Anika Schipma, who talked with Al Burris. Burris brought a model of the helicopter he flew to help evacuate soldiers who needed medical attention. "Thank you so much. And thank you so much for your service," Alexandra Murphy,

told Burris. "I learned a lot, so much that I didn't learn from textbooks at school."

Graff also told the Nysmith students some advice he learned from war and from the relationships through serving in the war.

"Learn all you can about every subject you can," Graff said. "Next, make all the friends you can. It always helps." Finally, "have all the fun you can," he said.

Nysmith students will return to Ashby Ponds, located on a 132-acre campus in Ashburn, throughout the spring.

He has Risen indeed!

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Local Potters Help Fight Hunger

“Families Helping Families” event to be held April 10 at Floris United Methodist Church in Herndon.

Marianne Cordyack, a local potter, is again making bowls for the upcoming Empty Bowls event, which is sponsored by The Giving Circle of HOPE. The event will raise funds for the nonprofit Food for Others, the largest distributor of food in Northern Virginia. Marianne was part of the precursor to Empty Bowls, which was started in 1993 by a clay group of which she was a member. When the event became too large for a small group to organize, The Giving Circle of HOPE took it over, and for the 8th consecutive year, it will help raise funds for those facing hunger.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED
Marianne Cordyack at her studio in Reston making bowls for the Empty Bowls event.

“Thousands in this area are unable to face the high costs of living here without outside help. The Giving Circle of HOPE, by running our largest annual fundraising event, helps neighbors in need receive free food all year,” said Roxanne Rice, Executive Director of Food for Others.

Cordyack has been a potter for 25 years. In addition to having her own studio in her home with an electric kiln, she has a large brick kiln in West Virginia. It is fired with propane and salt is added at

the end of the firing process to create the glaze on the pots. She has contributed bowls for over 20 years to the cause of fighting hunger. “It means a lot to me to continue to make and donate bowls, as the money is used to help so many and we get to promote hand-crafted pottery,” said Cordyack. This year about 25 potters will contribute bowls to the event in April.

The theme of this year’s event is “Families Helping Families” and children are encouraged to attend the event with their families on April 10, at Floris United Methodist Church in Herndon. Every-

one with a ticket will receive a unique pottery bowl made by local potters, as well as soup, bread and dessert donated by local businesses. A potter’s wheel will be demonstrated to show people how bowls are hand-crafted. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$15 for children under 12 and can be purchased at www.givingcircleofhope.org. Activities will be provided for children and they can learn that hunger is an issue in their neighborhoods.

CALENDAR

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

THURSDAY/MARCH 26 - FRIDAY/APRIL 3

Herndon High School Art Exhibit. Times vary. ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. 703-956-6590.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/MARCH 28-29 AND SATURDAY-SUNDAY/APRIL 4-5

**Reston Zoo’s Easter Eggs-
Travaganza.** Reston Zoo, 1228 Hunter Mill Road, Vienna. Join your friends for two weekends packed with Easter fun! Feed baby lambs, goats and bunnies. Enjoy excellent photo opportunities with the Easter bunny and have your face painted with your favorite animal before venturing out to take part in an Easter egg hunt. We will have a touch station with baby chicks and bunnies! Have fun with bubbles, a slide, hula hoops, yard balls and more. All Easter egg hunts will include eggs filled with candy, stickers, toys, and more. Children must attend the Easter egg hunts by age group. Safari Egg Hunts are for children 4-12 years old and Toddler Egg Hunts are for children 3 and under only. Children are encouraged to bring their own Easter baskets for collecting eggs. Please plan to arrive early for this popular event. Last admission will be at 3pm each day of the event. \$12.95, \$3. Call for times, 703-757-6222.

FRIDAY/APRIL 3

Art House Cinema Presents: Trois films du Cinéma Français. 7:30 p.m. ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. The April film will be *The Man Who Loved Women* (1977) with a brief talk by George Mason University Professor Martin M. Winkler. Tickets are \$7.50* per person for the movie and fresh popcorn. Beer, wine, water, and concessions will be

available for purchase. The doors open at 7. To buy tickets: <http://www.artspaceherndon.com/art-house-cinema-presents-trois-films-du-cinema-francais/>. For more information call 703-956-6590.

SATURDAY/APRIL 4

Easter Egg Hunt. 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. Herndon Municipal Center, 777 Lynn St. Herndon. Children are invited to bring their parents, cameras, baskets and egg-hunting shoes for a fun-filled morning in the park. Games, arts and music, along with a photo opportunity with the Easter Bunny. Ages 7 and younger. 9\$ registration. http://www.herndon-va.gov/content/parks_rec/specialevents/.

FRIDAY/APRIL 10

Empty Bowls Fundraiser. 5:30-8 p.m. Floris United Methodist Church, 13600 Frying Pan Road, Herndon. An Empty Bowls fundraiser for the benefit of Food for Others and hunger relief in Northern Virginia. Hosted by the Giving Circle of HOPE. Tickets are \$25 and guests will receive a handcrafted ceramic bowl to keep and a simple soup supper. All proceeds raised will go to hunger relief in Northern Virginia. Pre-event tickets can be purchased by mailing a check made out to *Food for Others* and sent to Giving Circle of HOPE, P.O. Box 8832, Reston VA 20195 or purchase tickets online atwww.givingcircleofhope.org. Prepaid tickets will be held at the door. For questions please email emptybowls@givingcircleofhope.org or call 703-665-9334.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

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THE CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS

Founder's Day

Don't miss: Founder's Day - celebrate Reston's 51st anniversary and founder Robert E. Simon, Jr.'s 101 birthday on Saturday, April 11 from 12 - 1:30 p.m. at Washington Plaza, Lake Anne Village Center, Reston.

Elected officials representing Reston on Capitol Hill, in Richmond and in Fairfax County will participate in a fun game of "Random Reston." A variety of local talent will provide musical entertainment. The dedication of commemorative bricks will be followed by birthday cake and more music.

Founder's Day raffle tickets are on sale now, offering an opportunity to support the Reston Historic Trust &

Museum Endowment Fund. This is your chance to win stunning "inside out" diamond hoop earrings valued at \$2,500. These earrings, donated by Aspen Jewelry Designs, contain 50 diamonds weighing 1.01 carats. Tickets are \$10 each, 3 for \$25 and 7 for \$50. They can be purchased at the Museum, online at restonmuseum.org or at the Wine Cabinet at North Point Village Center. The drawing will follow the celebration. You do not have to be present to win.

Admission is free. For more information, contact the Museum at 703-709-7700; e-mail restonmuseum@gmail.com

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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

Senior Tea. Friday. 1 - 2 p.m.

ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Every month seniors are invited to visit the gallery to view the current exhibit and enjoy a cup of tea and a sweet treat. Seniors from the Herndon Senior Center are regular visitors. All teas are free and open to the public. For more information call 703-956-6590 or <http://www.artspaceherndon.com/events-2/senior-tea/>

SATURDAY/APRIL 11

Behind The Scenes With Loudoun Sketch Club Artist Reception. 7-9 p.m. ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Please join us in celebrating a body of work which draws upon a rich tradition of talented local artists who truly appreciate the unique beauty and heritage of Northern Virginia. The exhibit and artists reception are free and open to the public. For more information visit <http://www.artspaceherndon.com/behind-the-scenes-with-loudoun-sketch-club-2/>. 703-956-6590.

SUNDAY/APRIL 12

Mayor's Volunteer Appreciation Night. 7 p.m. Herndon Community Center, 814 Ferndale Ave, Herndon. This special event is to congratulate and to extend the Town's appreciation for many volunteers who have worked diligently throughout the year to make herndon an outstanding community. http://www.herndonva.gov/content/government/town_council/mayors_volunteer_appreciation/.

Jumping Jamboree. 2 - 3 p.m. Walker Nature Center, 11450 Glade Drive, Reston. Ages 3 to 5. Bring your jumping shoes as we learn about frogs, grasshoppers, rabbits and more. Participate in a jumping contest and see if you can leap as far as a frog or a high as a flea. Make a jumping craft and look for hopping creatures along the trails. Reservations required by April 9. Fee: \$7/child RA members,

\$9/child Non-members. For more information, email naturecenter@reston.org, or call 703-476-9689 and press 5.

MONDAY-TUESDAY/APRIL 12-13

Fascinating Fish. 10 - 11 a.m. Walker Nature Center, 11450 Glade Drive, Reston. Ages 18 months to 35 months. Which fish live in Reston's lakes and streams? Get up-close looks at local fish, both wild and not-so-wild. Enjoy a fishy snack, make a fishy craft, and listen to a fishy story while learning about our wild fish. Reservations required by April 8. Fee: \$7/child RA members, \$9/child Non-members. For more information, email naturecenter@reston.org, or call 703-476-9689 and press 5.

THURSDAY-SATURDAY/APRIL 23-25

"Book of Days." 7 p.m. Hunter Woods Elementary School, 2401 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Langley High School presents "Book of Days," a murder mystery that raises questions about small town politics and society.

SATURDAY/APRIL 25 - 26

Performance of Act I Cinderella. Classical Ballet Theatre Herndon Studios, 320 Victory Drive, Herndon. Don't miss Cinderella and her Fairy Godmother as they teach the stepmother and stepsisters, "Haughty" and "Spiteful," that nice girls do finish first! For more information visit <http://www.cbntva.org/cinderella>.

THURSDAY/MAY 7

Farmers Market. 8 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Old Town Herndon, 700 block of Lynn Street, By the Red Caboose. Every Thursday vendors sell products they grow and are located within a 125-mile radius of Fairfax County, ensuring that your purchases will be fresh. For information visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/wp-farm-mkt.htm>.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Help Pack Food for Kids

Assistance League of Northern Virginia needs energetic volunteers to help pack food for the Weekend Food for Kids program which benefits school children who receive free or reduced priced meals during the week. This month's event will be held on Thursday, April 9, at 10 a.m. at Dominion Virginia Headquarters, 3072 Centreville Rd., Herndon. Arrive at 9:30 a.m. if you would like to help with set-up. karenamster@aol.com. For more info about 100 volunteer nonprofit, visit www.northernvirginia.assistanceleague.org.

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Seahawks Earn State Honors

Fourteen South Lakes indoor track athletes honored at 6A Indoor Championship.

Junior Golden Kumi-Darfour finished fifth in the 500 meters and anchored the second place girls 4x400 meter relay team for South Lakes High School at the VHSL 6A Indoor Track and Field Championship March 9-10 at the Boo Williams Sportsplex.

SLHS finished 17th out of the 29 teams in the girls division while the boys were 18th out of 34 teams.

Kumi-Darfour ran a season best time of 1:17.43 in the 500. She teamed with senior Claire Nieuwsma and sophomores Devyn Jones and Nikayla Hoyte for a 4:04.07 in the 4x400 relay.

Nieuwsma, Hoyte and seniors Jordan Lozama and Samantha Webb finished eighth in the 4x200 relay (1:47.35).

The boys 4x200 team of senior Sam Arpee, juniors Skander Ballard, Eric Kirlew and sophomore Timiebi Ogobri ran a season best time of 1:33.81 for sixth place. Kirlew and Ballard also placed in the triple jump with personal bests: Kirlew, 46-04.25, 7th; Ballard, 45-06, 8th.

Arpee, senior Andrew McCool and juniors Connor Smith and John LeBerre ran a 8:19.34 for eighth in the 4x800 meter relay.

Other SLHS performances at the state meet:

Long jump: Comfort Reed 15-04.25 19th

Triple jump: Comfort Reed 34-08.50 15th

55 meter Hurdles: Devyn Jones 8.81 prelims, 8.83 finals 12th;



Golden Kumi-Darfour, of South Lakes High School, ran a season best time of 1:17.43 in the 500.

PHOTO BY ED LULL

Anas Fain 7.82 prelims, 7.86 finals 8th; Nathan Stone 8.01 prelims 55 meter Dash: Jordan Lozama 7.39 prelims, 7.53 finals 11th

Oakton Baseball Improves to 3-0

Members of the Oakton, left, and Lake Braddock baseball teams race to the first-base bag during Monday's game at Lake Braddock Secondary School. Oakton won, 7-5, improving its record to 3-0.



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/
THE CONNECTION



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Katie Sciandra and the Madison girls' lacrosse team beat South Lakes 13-6 on March 26.

Madison Girls' Lacrosse Beats South Lakes

Despite a slow start hampered by severe downpours, the Madison girls' lacrosse team beat South Lakes at home on March 26, 13-6.

South Lakes scored two quick goals in the first half to lead the Warhawks. Head coach Amanda Counts called a timeout and the Warhawks responded with ball control and goals.

Kierra Sweeney and Katie Sciandra led Madison with four goals apiece. Maddie Roberts contributed three goals and three assists.

Rounding out the scoring was Anya Saponja and Andie Battin

each with a goal. Sigourney Heerink was once again strong in goal for Madison with 15 saves.

Midfielder Megan Greatorex and goalie Caitlyn Maginniss stood out for South Lakes. Greatorex scored two goals while Maginniss stopped 13 shots.

Next up for the Madison Warhawks (2-0) is an away game against the Centreville Wildcats on Friday, April 10 at 7:30 p.m.

South Lakes (2-1) will host Herndon at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 9.

Paul VI Names Joe Sebastian as Head Football Coach

Paul VI Catholic High School in Fairfax has announced the hiring of Joe Sebastian as Head Football Coach. Sebastian has taught at PVI for 14 years and was the head coach on the JV and freshman level the past two seasons. He has coached high school and college club football for the past 19 years, serving as an assistant at various schools including George Mason University, W.T. Woodson High School and Frederick Douglass High School. "I thank my Principal and my AD for this opportunity. It's an honor to be the new head coach at a great Catholic high school like Paul VI. I hope to carry



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Joe Sebastian

on the great work and build on the foundation established by our recent coaches Pat McGroarty and Gordon Leib. I am really looking forward to the challenge," Sebastian said.

PEOPLE

Oak Hill Resident Performs 10 Months of National Service

Rubina Ellis of Oak Hill is one of 96 men and women that pledged to perform 10 months of national service as part of the Atlantic Region's 21st Class of the National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), an AmeriCorps program.

As a Corps Member, Ellis has spent 10 months getting things done for America while strengthening communities and developing her leadership. Ellis and her team have worked on a variety of projects focusing on disaster response and recovery efforts. She has already worked with such organizations as Habitat for Humanity, American Red Cross and various state agencies.

"I heard about the program through my brother who did AmeriCorps NCCC standard and was inspired to serve through him," said Ellis.

Ellis will graduate from NCCC in May 2015 with an education award of \$5,645, which can be used to continue education or pay back student loans.

"I find I get more self-satisfaction when I see that I've helped someone other than myself, this program gives me the opportunity to be humble and serve others. Not just for myself, but others," said Ellis.

To learn more about FEMA Corps or to apply (individuals aged 18-24), visit AmeriCorps NCCC's website www.nationalservice.gov or FEMA's website at www.fema.gov.

AmeriCorps NCCC and FEMA Corps are programs of the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency that engages more than five million Americans in service through its AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Social Innovation Fund, and



COURTESY PHOTO

Rubina Ellis of Oak Hill.

Volunteer Generation Fund programs, and leads the President's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. For more information, visit NationalService.gov

AmeriCorps NCCC is a full-time, residential, national service program in which 2,200 young adults serve nationwide each year.

During their 10-month term, Corps Members—all 18 to 24 years old—work on teams of eight to 12 on projects that address critical needs related to natural and other disasters, infrastructure improvement, environmental stewardship and conservation, energy conservation, and urban and rural development.

In exchange for their service, Corps Members receive \$5,645 to help pay for college, or to pay back existing student loans. Other benefits include a small living stipend, room and board, leadership development, increased self-confidence, and the knowledge that, through active citizenship, people can indeed make a difference. AmeriCorps NCCC is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency. The Corporation improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering. For more information about AmeriCorps NCCC, visit the website at www.americorps.gov/nccc.



COURTESY PHOTO

Patrick Miller.

Spring Break, Concerts in South Korea

Patrick Miller, a viola player from Herndon, is one 36 students from the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University who just returned from a trip to Seoul, South Korea during Indiana University's spring break last week. The IU Chamber Orchestra performed at Sookmyung Women's University and Seoul National University before entertaining American military personnel stationed at U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan. The visit culminated with a concert at the Seoul Arts Center, the country's foremost art and culture complex.

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**-Theodore
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Manifest Destiny



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I wouldn't say I have symptoms (why would I say that? If I said that, I'd have to admit that cancer is having an effect on me. And I wouldn't want to admit that; admitting that would acknowledge my destiny and perhaps even hasten my decline); no, more like manifestations. Yeah, "manifestations," I think I can live (no pun intended) with that admission. At least I hope so.

The manifestations to which I refer – in the abstract, are not exactly new or out of my ordinary (again, if I said they were in fact new and out of my ordinary, I might have to believe that my underlying problem/diagnosis: stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer, is manifesting itself in a potentially life-altering way), but they are something. The question is: is my body telling me something I already know, or am I looking for trouble in all the familiar places?

I'd rather not be looking for trouble, given that trouble has already found me. I'd rather be minding my own business and not introspecting so much. But the day I received a cancer diagnosis is the day I lost the ability to turn the introspection switch off (if only it were that simple). I can dim it, though, except when I experience some of my manifestations. Then I'm reminded that I'm not in Kansas anymore, especially every third Friday (lab results allowing) when I'm at The Infusion Center receiving my 10 minutes of Alimta intravenously. On those days, I am indeed a victim of my circumstances, and regardless of what I tell myself – repeatedly, in an attempt to blur my reality – when my oncology nurse, Ron, inserts a needle into a vein in my arm and the i.v. starts dripping, the truth does not exactly set me free.

Still, I'm happy to be there (heck, I'm happy to be anywhere, symptoms-I'm-unwilling-to-admit-I-may-have notwithstanding). It's more the inevitability of my diagnosis that wears on me. I wasn't given a "terminal" diagnosis because I was treated at an airport. I was given it because I have malignant tumors that apparently have moved/metastasized from one lung to the other and are inoperable. (Nor was I/am I a candidate for radiation. The tumors are too spread out, I was told, and thus the treatment would prove ineffective.) This diagnosis and related prognosis is hardly for the weak of heart (fortunately I've never been treated for a weak heart; a weak back, maybe). But diseases are sort of like your family: you can't pick them. Hopefully you can live with them, because living without them would likely make an incredibly difficult situation worse. And if there's one thing a diagnosed-as-terminal patient doesn't need is external complications; we already have enough internal complications.

My internal complications are mostly "manifestations," as I've described them, symptoms that occasionally go bump in the night and often cause me to grind during the day ("grind" is an emotional reference). I want to think, I'm desperate to think, that the things I feel are not cancer-related but instead are being-sixty-years-old-related. But since I've never been 60 before with or without cancer, (and neither have I ever experienced six years of non-stop chemotherapy), I don't know whether my cancer is manifesting itself and my predicted future is finally present, or whether I'm destined for an unexpected long life with all the associated symptoms. Certainly I hope for the latter, but it's the former that seems to be driving this bus. And though the bus may need some paint and a bit of an overhaul, the wheels have yet to come off.

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

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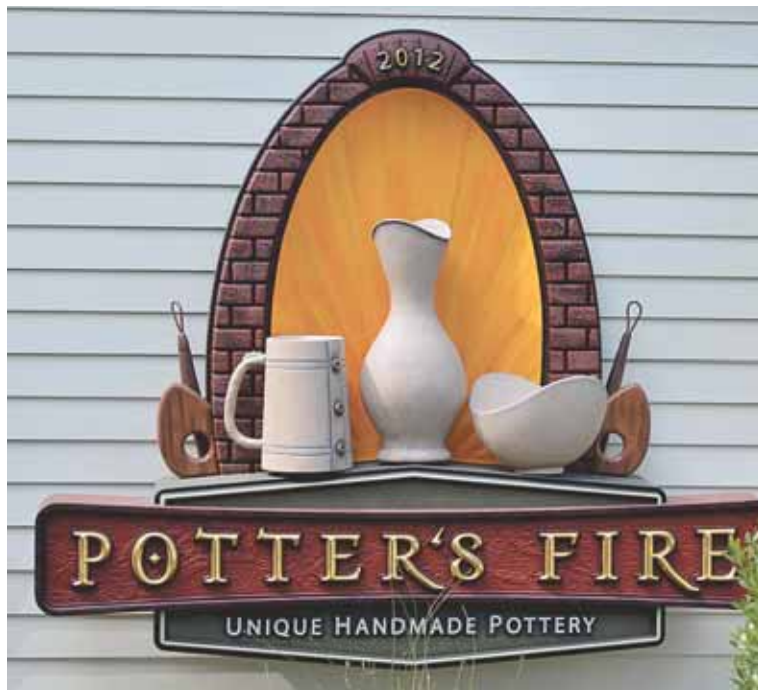
The Potter's Fire studio based in Herndon offers a variety of ceramics and pottery. Owner Mike Faul was able to construct his business with the assistance of Mayor Lisa Merkel and the Herndon Town Council.

Herndon Potter's Fire Helps Scholarship Program

Pottery business makes contribution for military scholarship program.

The Herndon based business Potter's Fire has donated \$10,500 in handmade pottery to be auctioned off at Bootlegger Bash for the Fort Campbell Spouses Club on March 20. Proceeds from the auction go toward welfare requests and will provide scholarships to high school seniors and family members of military personnel accepted into higher education programs. Potter's Fire is a pottery studio which makes handmade pottery using raw materials and tools sourced within the United States. "This was a special project," says Mike Faul founder and owner of Potter's Fire.

Located at 797-B Center Street in Herndon, Potter's Fire sells three lines of 100 percent American handmade ceramics. One of these lines, the Heritage Line, celebrates military service. In summer 2014, Potter's Fire launched 101st Airborne Division tankards on Facebook. Within days, the division swarmed Potter's Fire's Facebook page, purchasing thousands of mugs and steins. The support of the 101st Airborne launched both the Heritage Line and Potter's Fire's business. It left



Outside the Potter's Fire studio at downtown Herndon. The business has been active within the regional art community and the talented potters can regularly be found at the wheel or putting the finishing touches on handcrafted pieces.

the company looking for an opportunity to say thank you.

"It didn't take long after receiving an email from the Spouse's Club at Fort Campbell to know, that this was our opportunity to say 'Thanks' to the 'Screaming Eagles,'" says Faul. Potter's Fire donation to The Fort Campbell Spouses Club includes up to 150 handmade mugs, cups and tankards. It will be enough to equip an entire airborne company of soldiers. Recipients have the opportunity to have their pieces customized with various glaze schemes,

unit insignias and hand-engraved personalization. The Fort Campbell Spouses Club is ecstatic to receive this gift.

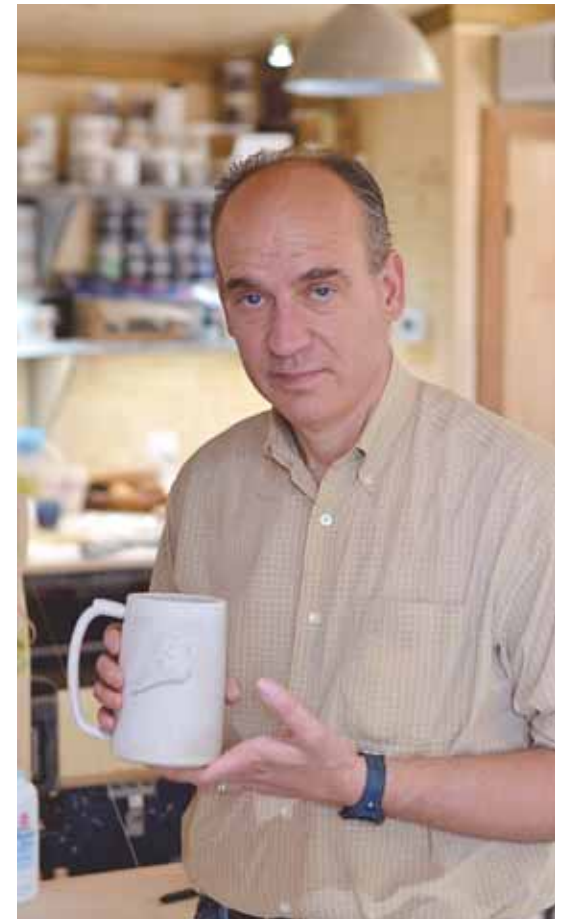
"I am completely overwhelmed," says Jessi Mitchell, president of the Fort Campbell Spouses' Club. "[Potter's Fire] has gone above and beyond anything we could have ever imagined. As an artist by trade, I appreciate the impeccable craftsmanship and uniqueness of each piece. Each one is truly going to add something so special to this year's event, which is already setting records by being sold out



PHOTOS BY RYAN DUNN/THE CONNECTION

Olivia DiBenigno, employee with Potter's Fire, works on a piece of pottery. A resident of Alexandria, DiBenigno graduated from Maryland Institute College of Art with a major in ceramics.

Potter's Fire founder, owner, and self-described army brat Michael Faul holding a stein at his studio in downtown Herndon. Potter's Fire is a pottery studio which makes handmade pottery using raw materials and tools sourced within the United States.



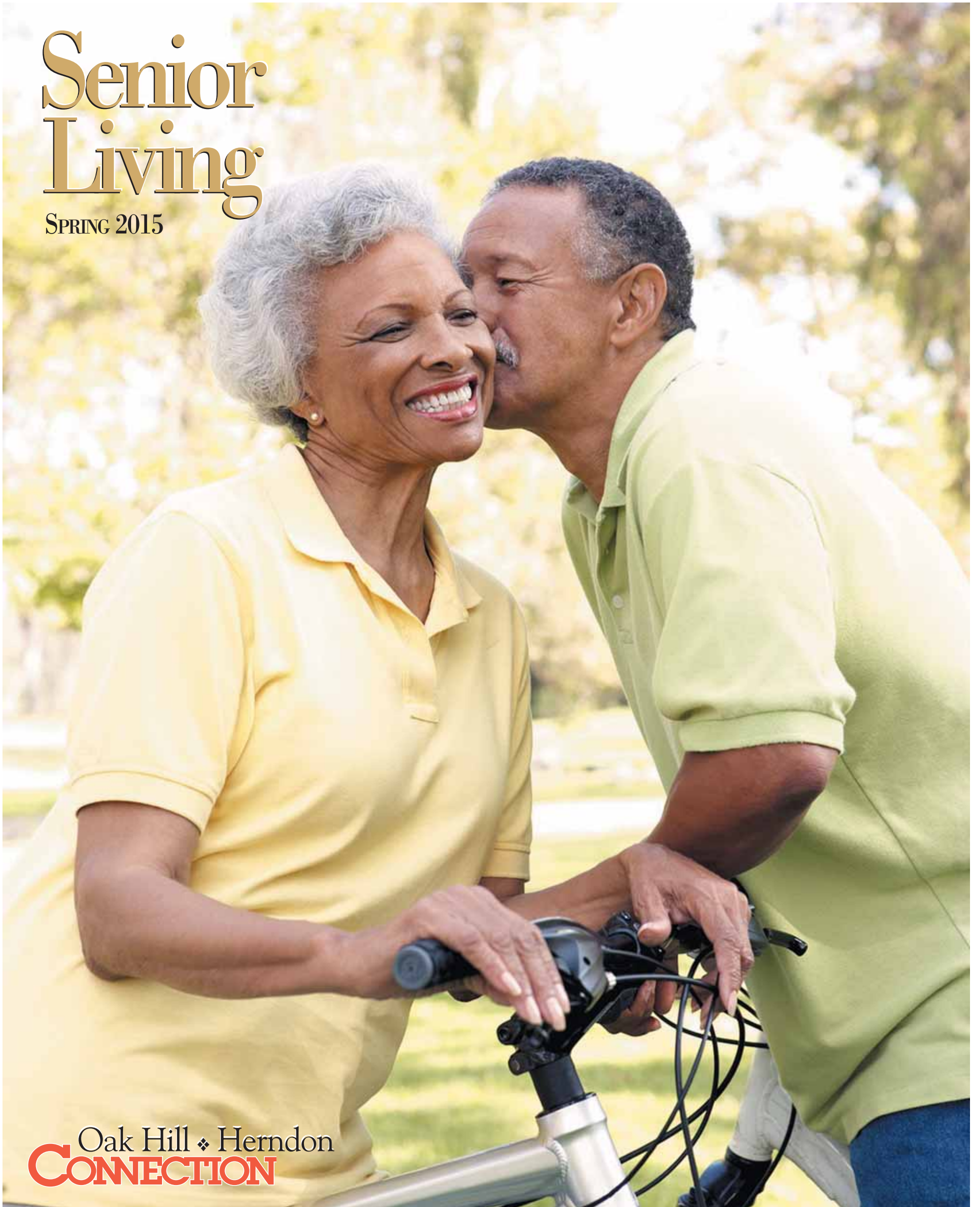
for the first time." The highest bidder will get a certificate for the ceramics which will be available in April.

Faul's father had a full career in the military, retiring as a brigadier general in 1973 and later worked as president and CEO of Vie de France. After his father passed in 2011, Faul took a class in ceramics at the Northern Virginia Com-

munity College (NOVA) Sterling campus. From there, Faul was inspired to begin his new ceramics business in downtown Herndon. For more information about Potter's Fire, visit www.pottersfire.com. To learn more about the Fort Campbell Spouses Club and the Bootlegger Bash, visit www.fortcampbellspousesclub.com.

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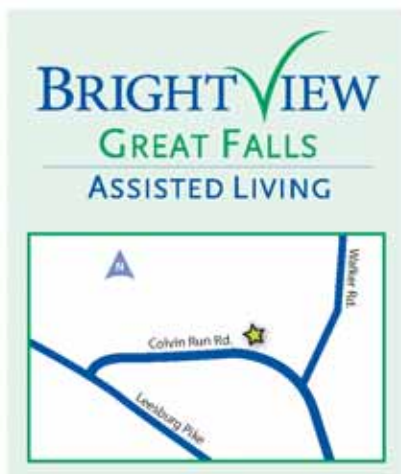
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Women of the Nova United, part of the National Senior Women's Basketball Association get exercise with a team sport. They are part of a new fitness trend.

Fit for Golden Years

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

One night each week, Sue Thompson can be found dribbling a basketball down the court, leading her team, the Nova United, to victory. Thompson, who is in her 60s, is one of the youngest players in her league, the National Senior Women's Basketball Association.

"There are women who play with me who are 80 and living out their dream to play basketball. We were way before Title IX," said Thompson, who is also a professor of physical education at Northern Virginia Community College in Annandale and Alexandria, Va. "The women are fit, but with seniors, the social part is really important. Some of the ladies have been widowed or have spouses with health issues. They've really been a support group for each other."

According to the American College of Sports Medicine, Thompson is part of a national fitness trend: fitness programs for older adults, including strength training and team sports.

"There are a lot of benefits for the aging population," said Lisa M.K. Chin, an assistant research professor at George Mason University's Department of Rehabilitation Science in Fairfax, Va. Exercise "slows physiological changes that come with aging. ... The other thing that exercise manages is chronic diseases that come with aging, such as cardiovascular problems or diabetes."

Mark Brasler, a 69-year-old who lives in Springfield, Va., has been

active for most of the past 20 years. He moved into a retirement community four months ago and got a fitness assessment in the property's gym. The results led him to up his fitness game.

"I still walk every morning and do weights and resistance machines every other day," said Brasler. "I was also told that I needed to take balance class. We focus on agility, how to stand up straight and how to get up when you fall. We also do stretching, yoga and Pilates. I feel more confident about myself."

Such fitness classes can help preserve mobility and cognitive function, say researchers. "It helps in terms of preserving bone mass and maintaining mobility longer," said Chin. "If you're using your muscles, especially during weight-bearing exercises, ultimately it reduces the risk of falling and improves balance."

An exercise class that includes aerobic, strength and balance exercises can help preserve freedom and independence for seniors. "The key components of staying physically active are having strong muscles, reasonable flexibility and endurance," said Rita Wong, professor of physical therapy and associate dean of graduate and professional studies at Marymount University in Arlington. "It's essential to keep oneself mobile and active." It's almost never too late to increase fitness levels, Wong said. "Often with older adults, people think that they can't improve anymore so why bother. But research has shown time and time again that older adults have an ability to improve that is as similar as young adults'."

ideal Insight into Determinants of
Exceptional Aging and Longevity

Why do some people reach age 80, 90, and older living free of physical and cognitive disease? National Institute on Aging (NIA) researchers on the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging (BLSA) are exploring this question through the IDEAL (Insight into Determinants of Exceptional Aging and Longevity) Study. Although research exists on the relationship between long life and functional decline, we still know relatively little about why certain individuals have excellent health well into their 80's while others experience disease and physical decline earlier in life.

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Senior Living

'Your Life Is Today and Tomorrow'

Residents of local senior living communities share their experiences.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

“I didn’t want to come here,” said Bill Woessner, referring to Brightview Assisted Living Community in Great Falls.

“That’s right,” agreed Sheila, his wife of more than 50 years, with plenty of her native Scottish brogue to be heard in her voice. “He really didn’t. We have a lovely house here in Great Falls and I don’t think he was ready to budge. But how long after we got here did that change?” she turned to her husband and asked.

“At least a day,” he laughingly replied. “Seriously,” said Bill Woessner, “it probably wasn’t more than the first 48 hours.”

What changed his mind, especially after what many would call a major life-up-heaval?

“The food!” was his answer. “We have



PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

Always ready for a few hijinks around Brightview Assisted Living Community in Great Falls are L-R: Sheila Woessner, Porta Nickles, Sophia Coulopoulos, Bill Woessner, and director of Community Sales, Joanna Banks.

gourmet food at every meal, served by the nicest people in the most beautiful surroundings, and we never have to cook it or clean up afterwards.”

According to Sheila, while the food really is that good, what probably impacted her husband’s initial attitude was “the amazing staff, the friendly and interesting residents, and the freedom. Of course, we’re retired, so we’re not bound to the responsibilities of work.” But neither are the Woessners bound to home maintenance concerns, housekeeping, cooking and cleaning.

Or “shoveling snow, like we would have been doing last month if we weren’t right here,” gloated Bill. “We have the time to do what we like, to try new things and meet new people, without that worry.”

Bill and Sheila Woessner chatted about their experiences as residents in a senior living community with friends and fellow residents Porta Nickles and Sophia Coulopoulos, over lunch in the Brightview dining room.

Porta Nickles, who is 99, admitted to a bit of a sweet tooth. “My father owned a candy and ice cream shop in upstate New York,” she said, recommending the homemade coffee ice cream for dessert.

The ice cream is made using the recipe of the area’s beloved Thelma Feighery. Brightview is built on the site of Thelma’s Ice Cream, once the hotspot for local gathering in Great Falls. Thelma and her husband Frank

started with a gas station on the site in 1950. Thelma took over and served her own recipe ice creams and other goodies after Frank’s death in 1988, until her own in 2001.

Long-time Great Falls resident Sheila Woessner said she used to go to Thelma’s “just to catch up on all the local doings” even though she’s not one for sweet treats. “I think Thelma would be pleased. Not only do we have our own “Thelma’s” on site and make ice cream to her specifications, but it’s still the place for us to gather and keep up with what’s going on.”

Porta Nickles came to Brightview after living the last 70 years in Middletown, N.Y., where she helped run the family’s Coney Island hot dog franchise, and later went on to enjoy a career in education with the local school district. Having lived somewhere that long, it’s understandable that the move took some adjusting to, but Nickles found herself comfortable and more than content in short order. “I was lonely there,” she said. “And I didn’t even know how lonely until I got here, starting making new friends, finding out there were so many things I could still do and learn and enjoy. And now I get to see my kids, grandkids and great-grand kids.”

Having family nearby, the visits, and having opportunities designed to promote interaction with different age groups, all help make Brightview a home environment in the estimation of this group of residents.

“Get involved and take advantage of your time,” was Sheila Woessner’s advice for new residents.

Sheila Woessner has always been a game

player “and she knows the words to every song going,” Porta Nickles said in admiration.

During her days with the British Information Services in New York City with Bill, Sheila Woessner took home some hefty prize money by playing on the televised “Name that Tune” game show, money that she used to finance their wedding. The couple even appeared on Johnny Carson’s “Who Do You Trust?” game show. Nowadays, Sheila uses her ability to help out at the community’s sing-a-longs.

Bingo is Sophia’s favorite. She’s been pretty lucky, winning often enough to splurge with her earned Brightview “bucks” at the monthly “gift shop” where you never know what interesting items might be on offer.



With Dale Jarrett on the piano performing some of the residents’ favorites, Garrey Stinson, owner of Dancing With Garrey, Therapeutic Ballroom Dancing for Seniors, brings a smile to Sophia Coulopoulos.

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Senior Living

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Creative Aging Festival Coming in May

Includes 114 performances, poetry readings, art exhibits, lectures, classes and more.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE CONNECTION

A Creative Aging Festival will take place throughout the month of May at 100-plus local venues in Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax, Arlington and Alexandria. The month-long festival includes 114 performances, poetry readings, art exhibits, lectures, classes and more.



The festival is being sponsored by Fairfax County, AARP Virginia, the Fairfax County Arts Council and several other community organizations and businesses, and

coincides with Older Americans Month. It will also include programs that unlock the creative spirit through yoga, tai chi and even a walk through a garden labyrinth.

“What we’re hoping is that people will discover where the opportunities for art are for Fairfax County. We want them to know that it’s here; it’s in the community and we’re hoping they will participate,” said Grace Lynch, manager of communications with the county’s Division of Adult and Aging Services. She said the festival “gives us permission to do something that we may not have done before and to explore ourselves in a more creative and artistic way.”

“Fairfax County is home to over 200 non-profit art organizations many of them offering exciting events for the 50-plus com-

munity. The Creative Aging Festival is a wonderful opportunity for our arts organizations to market their existing programs by and for 50-plus residents, encouraging older adult participation in the county’s many arts offerings, and showcasing opportunities to engage in our community,” said Lisa Mariam, grants director and master arts plan coordinator at the Arts Council of Fairfax County.

Planners are now developing the program and expect to post the full calendar of events in early April (see sidebar). Some of the examples include:

- ❖ An open house allowing guests to participate in an organization’s dance, music, visual art, yoga, gardening programming;
 - ❖ A speaker on art, gardening, yoga, etc.; or
 - ❖ An older adult artist, writer, actor, poet, dancer or musician to speak about their art.
- “We’re not about bingo anymore. We’ve really raised the bar. We’re focusing on yoga, tai chi, in addition to painting and music, performing arts and dance,” said Julie Ellis, Director of Hollin Hall Senior Center in Mount Vernon.

Many Fairfax County programs will be held at local libraries, 14 senior centers, adult day healthcare centers and park programs are planning to be involved. For example, seniors here will have the opportunity to experience movement classes with professional choreographer Janet Storms of the Choreographers Collaboration Project. “She’s going to talk about the joy of movement as you age,” said Ellis.

The festival’s objectives are to encourage audiences for the arts, especially for art created and performed by older adults; encour-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY STAN SCHRETTER

Seniors take part in programs at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at GMU.

age older adult participation in the county’s many public and private art programs; promote public understanding of the benefits of older adult participation in the arts; establish the festival as an annual event each May with Older Americans Month.

“Research has shown a strong connection between participation in the arts and the cognitive health of older adults,” said Richard Chobot, chair of Fairfax Area Agency on Aging. “The Creative Aging Festival will provide examples of the variety of arts experiences available to older adults, and individuals of all ages.

“The Creative Aging Festival gives the public an opportunity to dive into the soul of the many programs the area offers for adults with dementia,” said Isabel Castillejo, CTRS, of the Herndon Adult Day Health Care Center. “Fairfax County’s Adult Day Health Care Centers understand the value behind creative arts and the opportunity to see someone’s unique expressions through art, music and various other mediums. We encourage the public to get a glimpse of these wonderful gems their community has to offer.”

“The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at (GMU) is excited to take part in the festival, offering four events that will showcase our popular acting and Tai Chi classes, fabulous musical performers, and first rate fine artists and photographers,” said Jennifer Disano, executive director.

As part of the festival, GMU will be hosting an “Arts, Aging & Well-being” panel on Monday, May 18 from 9 a.m. to noon, on the Fairfax campus. “When we connect with others through creative expression, great things happen,” said GMU Associate Professor Holly Matto, Ph.D. “The arts and health research shows that participation in the creative arts can enhance cognitive, emotional and interpersonal functioning,

Reston, Herndon Events

Public Art - Art for the People. This multimedia presentation will focus on a broad range of Public Art in all its many forms. Public art is becoming the most popular form of art. The audience will see examples from around the world, including a special look at Reston and the surrounding area. May 6, 7 p.m.; Free. **At Reston Regional Library**, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Call 703-689-2700/703-662-1812 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/rr/

Entertainment and Art Display. Herndon Adult Day Health Care Center welcomes you to their Open House with program tours, art displays and entertainment courtesy of the National Theatre (11a-12). Light refreshments will be offered. May 15, 10:30 a.m.-Noon; Free. **At Herndon Adult Day Center**, 875 Grace Street, Herndon. Call 703-435-8729 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/adhc/

ArtSpace’s Herndon Senior Tea. Enjoy Behind the Scenes with the Loudoun Sketch Club, light refreshments, and the companionship of art lovers. A local music group will offer entertainment during the tea. May 15, 1-2 p.m.; Free. **At ArtSpace Herndon**, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Call 703-956-6590 or visit www.artspaceherndon.org

Creative Writing Workshop for Seniors. Participants will animate a memorable moment from their life and practice creative writing techniques. March 15, 1-3 p.m.; Free. **Reston Regional Library**, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Call 703-626-3894 or visit rollercoasterlearning.com/

Art Beat Open House. What a great day to visit us! On display will be art from our oil painting, ceramics, and jewelry classes. We’ll also display art from community artists. Three “people’s choice” prizes will be awarded in the visual arts category. On “stage,” some of our many dance and song groups will perform. May 15, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; Free. **At Herndon Senior Center** 873 Grace Street, Herndon. Call 703-464-6200 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/nccs

Blind Curves - One Woman’s Unusual Journey. After completing a 2,500 mile road trip the author tells a story of how a woman of a certain age can break with tradition and turn frustration into triumphant joy. May 21, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. \$15 Reston/\$30 Non-Reston. **At Reston Community Center**, 2310 Colts Neck Rd., Reston. Call 703-390-6157 or visit www.restoncommunitycenter.com

For more see <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/fairfax-creative-aging-festival.htm>

and studies on the arts in health care settings show biological effects such as pain reduction and improved immune functioning.”

Festival partners include: the Arts Council of Fairfax County, the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging, the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, Fairfax County’s Department of Neighborhood and Community Services, Public Libraries, Adult Day Health Care Centers, Long Term Care Coordinating Committee, George Washington University, the National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations, the National Center on Creative Aging, Goodwin House at Alexandria and Bailey’s Crossroads, AARP Virginia, and Pure Prana Yoga Studio. Most programs are free. Because of the variability in venue space, participants should call respective venues to register and inquire about program information, fees and parking.

The festival calendar will be posted by early April at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/fairfax-creative-aging-festival.htm>



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY STAN SCHRETTER

Seniors take part in tai chi programs to stay fit at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at GMU.