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# Little Connection, Big Impact

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**A stretch of sidewalk along Burke Commons Road was a missing link in the community's multi-modal transportation infrastructure.**

## 'Another Step in a Long Ladder'

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## Little Connection, Big Impact Completed sidewalk connects Burke Commons Road to Roberts Parkway.

BY TIM PETERSON  
THE CONNECTION

**C**onstruction of a new stretch of sidewalk along Burke Commons Road only took about six months to complete. But getting to that point took much, much longer.

There was already a paved path, set in from the road, leading from Burke Centre Parkway towards Roberts Parkway; however, that path ended at Meredith Circle. What followed was a shoulder of roadside parking for about 20 vehicles, a guardrail and a sharp hill down away from the road.

"It was literally a missing link," Patrick Gloyd, Burke Centre executive director, said of the old stretch of road. "You got to this point and you were forced into the road. This helps us connect all pedestrian trails and paths."

With two shopping centers and Terra Centre Elementary School around the south end of Burke Commons and the Commons Community Center and Burke Centre Amtrak-Virginia Railway Express station accessible from the north end via Roberts Parkway, having a complete protected pathway was crucial for increasing the multimodal accessibility of Burke.

"This little connection has a big effect," said Supervisor John Cook (R-Braddock) at an April 16 ribbon-cutting ceremony for the



**From left, Lee Schmidt, Burke Ponds trustee; Renée Mumford, Burke Landings trustee; Supervisor John Cook (R-Braddock); Paul Viano, Burke Centre Station community manager; Patrick Gloyd, Burke Centre executive director; Tim Conley, Fairfax County Department of Transportation; Chris Wells, Fairfax County Department of Transportation; James Horstman, Fairfax County Utilities Design & Construction; Ken Atkins, Fairfax County Utilities Design & Construction and John Honnick, Fairfax County Land Acquisition, cut the ribbon officially opening a new stretch of sidewalk along Burke Commons Road.**

completed sidewalk. Cook was optimistic community members will take advantage of the new connection to leave their cars at home and make trips to the shopping cen-

ters or train station on foot or bike instead.

Chris Wells, the pedestrian program manager for Fairfax County Department of Transportation, said the Board of Supervisors authorized funding for the project from commercial and industrial tax revenue in October 2009. Wells also said similar projects typically take around three to four years to complete from start to finish, so this was a little longer than average.

But because Fairfax County had to retro-active-engineer the entire patch of roadway, it was much more complex than simply pouring a few hundred feet of concrete.

According to James Horstman, an engineer with Fairfax County Utilities Design & Construction, a laundry list of modifications needed to be approved by the Burke community, the county and be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act: The top layer of road asphalt was milled in order for the street to be widened and accommodate an all-new curb, gutter and storm sewer structure; handicap-suitable ramps were added to each end of the sidewalk; and the new guardrail and handrail were added to replace the old guardrail.

All told, the construction cost \$324,000, Horstman said.

"We're used to projects taking time," Gloyd said. "And it becomes much bigger than it seems. But this is a microcosm of community and local government coming together to accomplish a goal."

PHOTO BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

## Budget Gets Marked Up Supervisors scheduled to adopt budget next Tuesday, April 28.

BY KEN MOORE  
THE CONNECTION

**T**he Board of Supervisors marked up the proposed budget Tuesday, April 21, by increasing school funding, adding key economic growth positions and restoring money to suggested cuts to "critical" human service programs Tuesday morning, April 21, according to its Chairman Sharon Bulova.

The board is scheduled to formally adopt the FY 2016 Budget next Tuesday, April 28.

See the Mark-up Package at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/> "This is a responsible budget that responds to the needs of our community and takes into account the feedback we received during public hearings, town hall meetings, letters, emails and phone calls from our constituents," Bulova said. More than 200 people testified and the board listened to more than 14 hours of testimony from the public between April 7-9.

"Speakers during our three days of public hearings adopted as their theme a call to invest in Fairfax and that is what

this mark-up package seeks to do," said Bulova.

The marked-up budget maintains the current tax rate at \$1.09, implements a new compensation plan for county employees with an average increase of approximately 3.6 percent (including a "market rate adjustment of 1.1 percent), comes close to fully funding the School Board's transfer request, and restores a number of Human Services reductions proposed in the original advertised budget, Bulova said.

Because of an increase in property assessments, the average homeowner will pay \$185 more in property taxes, even though the tax rate will not increase. Kimberly Adams, president of the Fairfax Education Association, responded immediately.

"FEA has rallied both in Fairfax and in Richmond to tell elected officials that the community wants greater investment in our community and our schools," said Adams. "Here in Fairfax, the Board of Supervisors has tied their own hands, apologized for this being an election year, and then said they 'wish they could do more.'"

Our schools are not funded by wishes; they are funded by a dedication to actually invest in Fairfax before more damage is done to our community."

Three supervisors voted against the marked-up package, including Pat Herry (R), Michael Frey (R), and Linda

Smyth (D).

"I am disappointed that not only did the board raise our citizens' taxes yet again, but the board majority failed to even make the easy decisions to even discuss reducing

**"The Advertised Budget as amended by these actions results in some changes that will make some folks happy, some relieved, and some disappointed."**

**— Sharon Bulova,  
Chairman, Board of Supervisors**

spending to address the \$100 million shortfall we are facing in FY 2017," said Herry. "Under this board's watch our homeowners have seen their tax bills go up by 16 percent in three years, our commercial vacancy rate has spiked to over 16 percent, ... but the board thought they deserved a pay raise for themselves," said Herry.

The revised budget restores the most critical Human Services reductions in the Advertised Budget, including Healthy Families, Parenting Education "Good Touch, Bad Touch" programs, mental health services in jail, and detox diversion positions. It also restores the Enforcement of the Grass Ordinance, Bulova said.

"The Advertised Budget as amended by these actions results in some changes that will make some folks happy, some relieved, and some disappointed," said Bulova. "It is, however, a responsible package that: maintains our current tax rate at \$1.09."

The marked up budget comes close to fully funding the School Board's request with an increase of over \$66 million (including funding for School Debt Service) over last year, Bulova said.



# Best and Brightest?

Some say unbalanced admissions demographics at Northern Virginia's top high school speaks to system-wide equity problems.

BY TIM PETERSON  
THE CONNECTION

**C**onsider: 70.2 percent Asian, 20.7 percent White, 5.1 percent Multiracial/Other, 2.4 percent Hispanic, 1.6 percent Black: This is the ethnic breakdown of the 493 students admitted to the 2019 class of the Fairfax County Public Schools magnet institution Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology.

The Fairfax County released the school's admissions information on March 31. Of the 2,841 students who applied, 51 percent were Asian, 29.7 percent White, 7.3 percent Hispanic, 7.1 percent Black and 5.1 percent Multiracial/Other.

Approximately 78 percent of admitted students are from Fairfax County and 22.3 percent are from Arlington, Loudoun and Prince William counties and the City of Falls Church.



PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION  
**Thomas Jefferson teacher Dr. John Dell explains a rare, powerful X-ray machine and desktop electron microscope in the new quantum physics and optics lab.**



**From left: Justin Yum of Woodbridge, Jacob Benheim of Fairfax, Nihar Gudiseva of Herndon study after school last fall in the new wing's quantum physics and optics lab.**

**"To me, it's the canary in the coal mine about how Fairfax County educates its children. If you're low income, you don't get the same education."**

— Del. Scott Surovell (D-44)



The disparity drew criticism from Mount Vernon School Board representative Dan Storck.

"Admissions to Thomas Jefferson are not representative of the Fairfax County Public Schools population," Storck said, "and certainly not of the Mount Vernon District population. We have some serious issues about equity and how do we address that?"

Data on which feeder middle schools supplied which percentage of students to the new freshman class speaks more to the inequity. Mount Vernon-area Alexandria middle schools Whitman, Carl Sandburg and Hayfield were among 17 of a list of 26 feeder schools released by Fairfax County with the total number of ad-

mitted students to Jefferson redacted.

Spokesperson for Fairfax County Public Schools John Torre explained the redactions are because the numbers are low enough (fewer than 10 admitted) that individual students could potentially be identified.

**"MAYBE WE OUGHT** to rename the school 'Herndon-Falls Church Alternative School for the Gifted and Wealthy,'" said Del. Scott Surovell (D-44), referring to the feeder middle schools supplying the top quantities of students.

"To me, it's the canary in the coal mine about how Fairfax County educates its children," Surovell added. "If you're low income, you don't get the same education."

The release from Fairfax County Public Schools said 8 percent of applicants and 1.2 percent of those admitted qualify for free and reduced meals. Of all students in Fairfax County, by comparison, more than 28 percent receive free and reduced meals.

"Why is this such a significantly skewed distribution?" asked Fairfax Station resident Lolita Mancheno-Smoak, a candidate for School Board in 2011 and co-founder of the school children advocacy group Coalition of the Silence.

"If I go under the assumption we're a top-rated school system, everyone is receiving the same caliber and rigor of education at the advanced academic program centers and there's a fair and equitable process of identification of young people to be admitted into these centers."

Fairfax County's advanced academic program, or "AAP," includes numerous elemen-

tary schools and 12 middle schools where selected students take part in a more challenging curriculum with emphasis on higher intellectual performance. All nine of the schools with 10 or more students admitted to Thomas Jefferson are advanced placement program sites.

**CARRIE HEILBRUN**, Jefferson Class of 2015, first attended Silverbrook Elementary School in Fairfax Station then tested into the advanced academic program at Lorton Station Elementary School in third grade. She continued into the advanced academic program at Lake Braddock Secondary School, where teachers first told her and her parents Mark and Amy that they should look into applying to Jefferson.

Carrie said "fantastic" teachers at Lorton Station sparked her passion for science, technology, engineering and mathematics education.

Her mother Amy agreed that her "amazing" experience in elementary and middle school was crucial to preparing her to both enter and succeed at Jefferson. In the fall, Carrie will attend Yale University and participate on the women's swim team.

Amy Heilburn and Carrie acknowledge observing there is less ethnic diversity at Jefferson. After looking at the demographics release from Fairfax County Public Schools, "I was really shocked. absolutely floored," said Heilburn. "It just doesn't seem like it's possible, there's no way, this doesn't add up, is it our county?"

"I go back to it's what's leading up to it," Heilburn added. "What are those kids getting in elementary school?"

For Carrie, less balance in demographic numbers isn't as significant as the quality of appreciation for the cultures and

ethnicities present at her school, particularly through a plethora of "culture clubs" like Persian, Black student union and Chinese honor society.

"I'm proud of how each culture is represented so strongly," Carrie said, "even if the numbers aren't as large for some. You definitely won't feel alone if you apply to TJ from one of those underrepresented cultures."

The question then is whether as public school students across the county, all who are objectively intelligent enough have the same chance as Carrie to propel themselves towards the school that consistently ranks at or near the top of high schools nationwide.

"There's no guarantee of getting into Thomas Jefferson," said Storck, "but we have to ensure students have equitable opportunity to get in, and I don't believe we're doing that satisfactorily."

It's not that there have been no efforts by the county to help underrepresented populations, Storck conceded. The "Young Scholars" program in 82 schools is aimed at identifying "potential



**Storck**

SEE T.J., PAGE 6

## FCPS Demographic Breakdown

Total Fairfax County Public Schools Demographic Breakdown, out of 2014-2015 school year projected student population of 186,785.

- ❖ African American: 10.2 percent
- ❖ American Indian: .3 percent
- ❖ Asian American: 19.4 percent
- ❖ Hispanic: 24.6 percent
- ❖ Multiracial: 5.0 percent
- ❖ White: 40.4 percent
- ❖ Students receiving free and reduced meals: 28.2 percent
- ❖ English for Speakers of Other languages students: 15.5 percent
- ❖ Students receiving special education services: 13.77 percent

SOURCE: FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

	Asian	White	Multiracial/ Other	Hispanic	Black	Free-Reduced Lunch	ESOL	TOTAL
<b>Applied</b>	1,448 (51%)	843 (29.7%)	143 (5.1%)	206 (7.3%)	201 (7.1%)	227 (8%)	71	2,841 (100%)
<b>Admitted</b>	346 (70.2%)	102 (20.7%)	25 (5.1%)	12 (2.4%)	8 (1.6%)	6 (1.2%)	5	493 (100%)
<b>Fairfax County</b>	36,236 (19.4%)	75,461 (40.4%)	9,339 (5%)	45,949 (24.6%)	19,052 (10.2%)	52,638 (28.2%)	28,870 (15.5%)	186,785 (100%)

SOURCE: FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**For the Class of 2019, 2,841 students applied to Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology and 493 were accepted.**



## News

### Transurban Begins Grant Program

Transurban, the company that operates the 95 and 495 Express lanes, announced earlier this month the launch of a community grant program for nonprofit organizations working in or benefiting the Express Lanes corridor.

Every quarter, the grant program will provide \$1,500 each to three organizations from the fields of environment, community and safety — totaling 12 grants per year.

The first application deadline already passed on March 31, but the remaining deadlines for organizations to apply for the grants are June 30, September 30 and December 31.

For more information visit [www.expresslanes.com/grant-program](http://www.expresslanes.com/grant-program).

— TIM PETERSON

### Robinson Recognized

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) students placed in 45 events at the 2015 Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) State Conference held recently in Reston. Those students who finished first, second, or third qualify for national competition and will travel to Chicago at the end of June for the FBLA National Leadership Conference. The chapter from Robinson Secondary School was named Virginia's Most Outstanding Chapter.

Four FCPS students were elected or appointed to state office for the 2015-16 school year. They are Ryan Apigian of Robinson Secondary School, Virginia FBLA president; Monica Wuhler of Robinson Secondary School, corresponding secretary; Isaias Noda of Robinson Secondary School, state parliamentarian; and Karenna Oner of Robinson Secondary School, vice president representing the Northern Virginia region.

Two FCPS students were named winners of Virginia FBLA scholarships: Robinson Secondary students Ryan Apigian and Nicholas Phan.

The Robinson Secondary FBLA chapter was recognized for having the largest membership in Virginia.



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# TJ Reflects Economic Divide

FROM PAGE 4

high achievers” from these groups, according to Torre.

**JEFFERSON ADMISSIONS** Director Jeremy Shughart said in a statement that last fall the school’s admissions office created an advisory committee tasked with “looking at a variety of admissions components and making recommendations for possible adjustments to future admissions cycles.”

This is a continuation of ongoing debating of modifying the school’s admissions policy, the most recent updates to which Torre said were in 2013.

“The policy now states that students (semi-finalists) will undergo a comprehensive, holistic process that assesses their ability to meet the rigors of the TJ curriculum and the potential to be effective contributors to the school’s learning experience,” he said in an email.

Before that, he said, all the admission components were scored independently of each other and then added together for a final numerical score by which the top students were chosen to be offered admission.

The class of 2013 was comprised of:

Ethnicity—Applied—Accepted
White—1296 (44.2%)—175 (36.5%)
Black—173 (5.9%)—8 (1.7%)
Hispanic—188 (6.4%)—6 (1.3%)
Alaskan/American Indian—9 (0.3%)—1 (0.2%)
Asian/Pacific Islander—1097 (37.5%)—260 (54.3%)
Multiracial—163 (5.6%)—28 (5.8%)
Other—3 (0.1%)—1 (0.2%)
Total—2929 (100.0%)—479 (100.0%)

**A DECADE EARLIER**, near the end of 2003, the School Board appointed a “Blue Ribbon Commission” group of experts to review Jefferson’s admissions practices. The commission’s recommendations led to a revised admissions process that affected the 2004-2005 class of applicants.

The class of 2003 was comprised of:

Ethnicity—Applied—Accepted
White—1590 (61.9%)—297 (69.1%)
Black—146 (5.7%)—7 (1.6%)
Hispanic—105 (4.1%)—10 (2.3%)
Alaskan/American Indian—3 (0.1%)—1 (0.2%)
Asian/Pacific Islander—583 (22.7%)—93 (21.7%)
Multiracial—94 (3.6%)—16 (3.7%)
Other—49 (1.9%)—6 (1.4%)
Total—2570 (100.0%)—430 (100.0%)

Elizabeth Schultz, who represents the Springfield District on the School Board, thinks the revisions haven’t measured up to their intended effects.

“I think we have fiddled and tweaked consistently the admissions practice to the detriment of the quality of students headed to TJ,” she said. “In the end, we have contorted the process so far as to water down what it means to achieve at an academic rigor level necessary to be a successful stu-



Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology added a Monticello-esque dome in the first phase of its renovation project.

dent for all four years at TJ.”

Furthermore, she doesn’t know if leveling the playing field for potential applicants is necessarily the right answer.

“Should we be increasing the rigor of the K-12 math curriculum?” Schultz said. “Absolutely. Rigor and tracking of sustained rigor in math curriculum beginning in elementary schools needs to be improved.”

School Board members other than Storck and Schultz didn’t respond to requests for interviews.

“Could we broaden student participation in higher level math courses earlier?” Schultz added. “I think we could. Does there need to be a systemic delivery of the curriculum across the division? Without a shadow of a doubt.” Schultz referenced a recent School Board work session where a math component audit was discussed.

For Jefferson admissions, Schultz favors a simpler, merit-based evaluation separated from name, school (and advanced academic program) gender and demographics. The viewpoint of bringing in the most objectively qualified applicants is one shared by

Liz Bradsher of of Clifton, who represented the Springfield District on the School Board from 2008 to 2012.

“It’s about the best and brightest in Fairfax County, students who are innately bright,” Bradsher said of the image of Jefferson.

Admissions director Shughart was not available to comment for this story; however, his statement continued: “FCPS will continue to work on increasing diversity at TJHSST and will continue to pursue outreach efforts to ensure talented underrepresented populations of students with a passion for math and science consider, apply to and attend TJHSST as their high school option.”

According to Torre, some efforts already being implemented include information sessions about the Jefferson for rising eighth grade students and their families, explaining some of the programs, admissions process and extracurricular activities. These sessions should engage the other participating school districts as well as all Fairfax County middle, secondary and elementary schools, Torre said.

## Admissions by Middle School

Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology Class of 2019 admission by Fairfax County Public Schools middle school:

School, location	Admitted Students
❖ Rachel Carson, Herndon	88
❖ Longfellow, Falls Church	66
❖ Rocky Run, Chantilly	45
❖ Joyce Kilmer, Vienna	36
❖ Frost, Braddock	21
❖ Lake Braddock, Burke	20
❖ Hughes, Reston	18
❖ Luther Jackson, Falls Church	13
❖ Mark Twain, Alexandria	12
❖ Cooper, McLean	REDACTED
❖ Franklin, Chantilly	REDACTED
❖ Glasgow, Lincolnia	REDACTED
❖ Hayfield, Alexandria	REDACTED
❖ Herndon, Herndon	REDACTED
❖ Holmes, Lincolnia	REDACTED
❖ Washington Irving, Springfield	REDACTED
❖ Key, Springfield	REDACTED
❖ Lanier, Fairfax	REDACTED
❖ Liberty, Clifton	REDACTED
❖ Poe, Annandale	REDACTED
❖ Robinson, Fairfax	REDACTED
❖ Carl Sandburg, Alexandria	REDACTED
❖ South County, Lorton	REDACTED
❖ Ormond Stone, Centreville	REDACTED
❖ Thoreau, Vienna	REDACTED
❖ Whitman, Alexandria	REDACTED

SOURCE: FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Protecting Student Privacy

Protecting student privacy under Virginia Code § 2.2-3705.4.(1) as well as the federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, Fairfax County Public Schools spokesman John Torre said, is the goal with withholding the data. “Without permission of the student, families, it’s not a place we’re going to go,” he said.

“When FCPS publishes reports on student achievement or shares student data,” Torre added in an email, “FCPS must apply disclosure avoidance strategies to prevent unauthorized release of information about individual students.”

Dr. Priscilla M Regan, acting senior associate dean of the George Mason University School of Policy, Government and International Affairs, said this cautious practice is “definitely typical” of what many institutions are doing.

“Health care, education, anything where you’re dealing with anything that could be considered sort of sensitive and personally identifiable — it’s really likely there will be more of this as it’s becoming easier to identify people,” she said.”

Regan’s take is Fairfax County has likely made a calculation as to the line at which they feel individual students become “re-identifiable” and privacy becomes a concern under Virginia Code and federal law.

She added in her interpretation of the threat to students: “An indication of their scholastic achievement, their sense of how they might see themselves, the risk they’ve taken in taking the Thomas Jefferson exam, whether you’re admitted or not admitted, that’s the parents of children in schools’ decision. It’s up to them to reveal that information.”



# ‘Another Step in a Long Ladder’

**Fairfax County pays \$2.95 million to settle John Geer wrongful death case.**

BY TIM PETERSON  
THE CONNECTION

**M**ore than seven months after the Geer family lawyer Michael Lieberman filed a \$12 million wrongful death civil suit in Circuit Court against Fairfax County Police, the two sides reached a \$2.95 million settlement, announced Tuesday, April 21.

The suit sought damages from Fairfax County Chief of Police Edwin Roessler, Jr. and other officers and supervisors related to the killing of John Geer on Aug. 29, 2013. Police had come to Geer’s Springfield home after receiving a domestic dispute call. After a 40-minute conversation with officers, Geer, who was standing in his doorway with arms raised and resting on the frame, was shot and killed by PFC Adam Torres, according to police.

Fairfax County, citing ongoing investigations of the incident, released little information to the public or the family until an order from Fairfax Circuit Court judge Randy Bellows finally prompted action, including divulging the name of the officer who fired the shot, on Jan. 21, 2015.

**FILES RELEASED** from the Police Department’s own investigation into the incident include an account from Torres that he saw Geer’s hands lower suddenly towards his waist when he shot him.

Investigators learned on the same day Geer died, Aug. 29, 2013, that at least five witnesses including the police officer talking to Geer at the instant he was shot, disputed Torres’s version of events. None of the other witnesses saw Geer’s hands move below his head.

“Now that the family knows who killed John and knows the facts and the unjustifiable decisions that led to this tragedy, the family wants to put this legal battle behind them so they can attempt to move on,” said Geer family attorney Michael Lieberman following the settlement.

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors chairman Sharon Bulova said in Tuesday’s release: “I am pleased that a fair settlement has been reached and I hope this may bring some measure of closure to the family of John Geer.”

Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) echoed the sentiment in an interview, saying “Although nothing can replace the loss of John Geer, the big thing is this brings closure to the family that’s been through a very difficult ordeal. Based on what we had in front of us, this is the right decision.”

John’s father Don Geer responded that



**John Geer’s father Don spoke at a meeting of the Virginia Citizens Coalition for Police Accountability held in the Martha Washington Library in Alexandria.**

**Sal Culosi, father of Dr. Salvatore Culosi who was shot by a Fairfax County Police officer, addressed Don Geer at the April 21 meeting of the Virginia Citizens Coalition for Police Accountability.**



**Jeff Stewart, a friend of John Geer who witnessed him being shot, plans to push the ad hoc commission reviewing Fairfax County Police Department policies to discuss creation of an independent citizen’s oversight board to look at police incidents.**

**Nick Beltrante, executive director of the Virginia Citizens Coalition for Police Accountability and member of the Fairfax County ad hoc commission to review police policies for disclosure of information and use of force, speaks at a Coalition meeting held April 21 at the Martha Washington Library in Alexandria.**



while the settlement will provide some financial stability to Geer’s two daughters, it doesn’t go far enough.

“This is another step in a long ladder of steps to get things accomplished,” Don Geer said in an interview. “It’s just one of many. As far as I’m concerned, until charges are pressed with Torres, it won’t be a closure. ... Fairfax has still done nothing as far as he’s concerned.

He’s still on the doggone payroll. I’m paying his salary. That’s really quite disgusting.”

“I understand Mr. Geer’s frustration,” said Bulova in an email. “A criminal charge would have to come from either the Commonwealth Attorney who is an elected official, independent of the Board of Supervisors, or the Justice Department. I am not happy with how long it is taking for a decision, one way or another.”

One step Bulova and the supervisors have taken is the creation of an ad hoc commission to review police policies for release of information and use of force, comprising lawyers, academics, members of the media, citizens and police representatives.

Its first, largely introductory meeting was held at the Fairfax County Government Center March 23.

Its second meeting is scheduled for the same location on April 27.

“While the family is hopeful that the recently created public commission will result in meaningful changes,” Lieberman said, “it remains important that the residents of Fairfax County continue to demand actual change from county officials as to the police department’s use of force, its lack of transparency and accountability, as well as many other issues that have come to light through this tragedy.”

Jeff Stewart, a close friend of John and Don Geer, who witnessed Geer being shot and now sits on the ad hoc commission, believes the case “is half over” with the settlement.

“We still have an officer that hasn’t been held accountable for his actions,” Stewart said. “I hope that people don’t forget about it.

“Money doesn’t solve the problem,” he continued. “It helps the girls out long term, but money doesn’t hold anyone accountable.

For me it doesn’t bring a lot of closure. John would still be dead, no officer would still be accountable, we’re right back where we were when Culosi was shot and [David] Masters was shot.” Both died in Fairfax County police-related shootings.

**THE COMMISSION** is scheduled to make recommendations for Fairfax County Police policy changes to the Board of Supervisors in October.

For more information on the commission and its schedule, visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/policecommission](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/policecommission).

PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON  
THE CONNECTION



# Connection Papers Win Awards

Variety of coverage honored at annual Virginia Press Association conference.

**O**n Saturday, April 18, a group of journalists from the Connection Newspapers traveled to Roanoke for the annual Virginia Press Association event to collect awards

for business reporting, government writing, writing about health, science and the environment, feature writing, sports writing, column writing, obituaries, cartoons, entertainment pages and writing, public safety writing, editorial pages and writing, page design, informational graphics and more.

A look at the themes of some winning entries gives some insight into the mission at the Connection: to tell stories of significance, using reporting, data and analysis while getting to the heart of why the issues matter in local lives. In a time that we, like all newspapers, are functioning with reduced resources, it helps affirm that the effort can make a difference.

Bonnie Hobbs won for ongoing coverage of

## EDITORIAL

a family's efforts to provide the best life for a son they call "not special needs, but a special person," and a second award for coverage of issues related to affordable housing and homelessness.

Judges call Michael Pope's business reporting "first-rate, data-driven reporting and analysis on important issues." Stories on driving habits, cesarean deliveries and the Affordable Care Act are called "well-researched, clearly written and engaging. The use of real-live people high up in stories to illustrate makes for very compelling material."

Vernon Miles won for breaking news coverage of Arlington's first same sex marriage, being "on the scene of a local event that has local, statewide and national significance. ... The story is multi-sourced; has a strong lead that gives readers a sense of the scene; places the

event in historic context; and captures the celebratory feel of the event."

On Pope government reporting: "Rather than regurgitating official statements, the reporter tells people's stories to illuminate the consequences of government decisions. This represents a model for all government reporting."

On Marilyn Campbell's reporting for Wellbeing: "These articles amount to personal guidance in the best sense of the term."

Even in recreation and entertainment, our mission is to provide our readers with the information they need to have fun, and our annual update to the "Insiders Guide to the Parks," brainchild of Jean Card, is designed to do that.

What are we missing? We rely on our readers to let us know. We invite your story ideas, your tips, your letters to the editor, calendar listings, photos of mothers for Mother's Day and fathers for Fathers Day, and more. Visit [www.connectionnewspapers.com](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com) and click on "contact us," or email [editors@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:editors@connectionnewspapers.com)

— MARY KIMM

[MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](mailto:MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

## Winners

Truncated list, for a complete list, see [www.connectionnewspapers.com](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com)

**Jon Roetman**, The Vienna/Oakton Connection — Sports Writing Portfolio, First Place. *Madison's Koshuta Scores 39 Against 'Idol' Floyd; Oakton Girls' XC Repeats as State Champs; Madison Volleyball Drops Heartbreaker in State Final.* Judge's comments: Strong and clear writing and excellent storytelling helps game stories feel more like features. Excellent work.



**Jon Roetman**



**Victoria Ross**



**Joan Brady**

**Victoria Ross**, Oak Hill/Herndon Connection — Government Writing, First Place. *Let Sun Shine on Virginia's Financial Disclosure Laws, Mr. Horejsi Goes to Richmond; Bulova: 'This Will Be a Challenging Budget.'* Judge's comments: An engaging look at a lobbyist who fights for the little guy; an entertaining story on a political candidate, helping readers put the upcoming election into context; one of the better budgeting stories I've seen lately that helps readers understand how the county's budgeting process is going to cost them more money. The supporting sidebars help bring the message home.



**Mary Kimm**



**Marilyn Campbell**



**Bonnie Hobbs**

**Joan Brady**, Great Falls Connection — Column Writing, Second Place. *No, I'm Not a Parent; I Just Act Like One; Small Acts of Kindness; Nurturing Happy Memories.* Judge's comments: Brady draws on her wealth of experience with the foster parent system to write empathetically but authoritatively on family ties. And she does so with humanity and in-

sight. Her writing combines depth and subtlety with eloquence of expression. In some senses, her subject matter is narrow. But viewed through a different filter, it is universal. She writes engagingly on a consistent basis.

**Marilyn Campbell**, Chantilly Connection — Health, Science and Environmental Writing, Third Place. *Spiritual Wellness in the New Year; Consistent Bedtimes Aid Children; How To Age in Place Safely;* Judge's comments: These articles amount to personal guidance in the best sense of the term. They should serve as very helpful resources for readers of a variety of ages. In concise manner, they effectively made the

concepts clear and applicable to the reader. The aging in place article was particularly relevant and insightful, the childhood sleep story was unlike anything I'd ever read (and I have two kids) and really summed up how a specific approach to children's health makes sense. The spiritual health article was unusual, refreshing to see, and I love the variety of sources and comments.

**Bonnie Hobbs**, The Fairfax Connection — Personal Service Writing, Third Place. *Affordable Housing Lack Can Lead to Hunger; 'Help Us, Will You Please?' City of Fairfax to Tackle Affordable Housing; Council 'Honored to Support this Project;' 'Dream Come True' for Lamb Center.* Judge's comments: Solid writing and good follow-through on the housing issues. The writer did a good job of including income and free lunch data without breaking the flow of the story.

**Mary Kimm**, The McLean Connection — Editorial Writing, Third Place. *Trending in the Right Direction; Virginia Proves Elections Matter; More Affordable Housing Needed; Tragic Consequences; Deadly Medicaid Debacle.* Judge's comments: This submission consists of five well-articulated and well-grounded pieces tackling access to affordable housing and health care, a pair of closely related state and national issues with important local ramifications. The work combines passion with a persuasive factual underpinning.

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# First Year Teachers Honored

**Award ceremony and fashion show at the Springfield Golf and Country Club.**

BY MARISSA BEALE  
THE CONNECTION

**A**t the Springfield County Club, the Beta Delta Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma Society International honored four novice teachers for excellence in their first year of teaching, presenting each of them with \$300 grants. The honored teachers were Julia Davis, a third grade teacher at the Browne Education Campus in Washington, D.C.; Abeer El-Baz, a math teacher at Marshall High School; Brittany Heath, an English teacher at Hayfield Secondary School; and Tammy Wong, a math teacher at Metz Middle School.

"What I love the most about teaching is having the ability to make a difference in the lives of our youth," said El-Baz, who teaches at Marshall. "My goal is to acquire more strategies in the coming years to help my students more and more. I also want not only to be their teacher, but their mentor too."

"Teaching is a hard profession, and I often find that our hard work is underappreciated in many aspects, so this award was a nice reminder that there are people who recognize the effort it takes to be a good teacher," said Heath, who teaches at Hayfield High School.

In addition to receiving awards, all of the teachers enjoyed lunch and a fashion show at this annual event.

The fashion show featured clothing from The Pink Armoire, an online exclusive boutique that pro-



**From left: Emily Gregory (sponsor), Brittany Heath (Hayfield SS), Judith Cosgriff (President, Beta Delta Chapter/sponsor), Abeer El-Baz (Marshall High School), Iris Warren (Chair, Scholarship Committee).**

vides "looks for every day of the week reflecting what women really want to wear – at an affordable price." The Pink Armoire clothing is inside of a brightly-colored pink bus that is best described as a mobile shop.

Hand-crafted gift baskets from American Girl books, to gardening tools were raffled off at the end of the program.

Entertainment included an a cappella performance of cabaret-style music by Robinson High School student, Madyson Hanton.

DKG Society International is an organization of key women educators dedicated to excellence in education and to the promotion of professional and personal growth in women educators.



**Elizabeth Mason, founder of The Pink Armoire, which provided clothing used in the fashion show.**

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

## Area Students Earn Awards at 2015 Virginia History Day

**F**airfax County Public Schools (FCPS) students earned five first place awards at the 2015 Virginia History Day competition, held last weekend at Mount Vernon.

First place award winners were:

❖ Aaron Granstedt of Langley High School, Senior Individual Exhibit, "Joseph Goebbels: The Legacy of Public Enlightenment" (Christina Banker, teacher).

❖ Josh Dow of Whitman Middle School, Junior Individual Exhibit, "Ralph H. Baer, The Father of Video Games" (Melissa Chesney and Jeff Smith, teachers).

❖ Lane Conzone and Madison Fletcher of Langley High School, Senior Group Exhibit, "Exposing the Horrors: The Truth Behind the Middle Passage" (Christina Banker, teacher).

❖ Dorothy Adu-Amankwah and Shirley Kabir of West Springfield High School, Senior Group Website, "The Iron Lady of India: Indira Gandhi" (Cathleen Boivin, teacher).

❖ Noah Stroup, Jorge Palomo, and Sajel Behari of Lorton Sta-

tion Elementary School, Junior Group Website, "Admiral Rickover" (Laurie Hartt, teacher).

The following students won second place awards:

❖ Tsuyoshi Nemoto of Mount Vernon High School, Senior Individual Exhibit, "442nd Regimental Combat Team" (Amelia Bochain, teacher).

❖ Emma Hogan of Whitman Middle School, Junior Individual Exhibit, "Knowledge is Power—Emma Willard" (Melissa Chesney and Jeff Smith, teachers).

❖ Hyunha Hwang of West Springfield High School, Senior Individual Website, "The Korean Independence Movement: Leading the Country Out of Japanese Control" (Stephanie Shimp, teacher).

❖ Grace Eassa, Sophia Cronin, and Alicja Galecka of West Springfield High School, Senior Group Exhibit, "The Butcher of the Balkans" (Cathleen Boivin, teacher).

❖ Francesca DeLeos and Candice Wong of West Springfield High School, Senior Group Website, "Corazon Aquino and the Fight for the People's Power" (Cathleen Boivin, teacher).

PHOTO COURTESY OF JUDITH COSGRIFF

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## ENTERTAINMENT

Send notes to the Connection at [south@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto: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.

### FRIDAY-SATURDAY/APRIL 24-25

**Seussical, the Musical Jr.** 7:30 p.m. on April 24. 1:30 & 7:30 p.m. on April 25. Family Worship Center, 7719 Fullerton Road, Springfield. Northern Virginia Players is thrilled to present Seussical, the Musical Jr. All of your favorite Dr. Seuss characters spring to life onstage in a fantastic musical extravaganza from TONY winners Lynn Ahrens and

Stephen Flaherty. For more information and ticket purchase, please visit our website at: [NVPlayers.com](http://NVPlayers.com). For Group Information or further assistance, please call 703-866-3546.

### SATURDAY-SUNDAY/APRIL 25-26

**The Emperor's New Clothes.** 1 p.m. Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Presented by Pandemonium Theatrical Productions. Guess who's got a passion for fashion? In this musical adaptation of the classic tale, Emperor Augustus has been led astray of his once kind-hearted nature by a villainous duo who are

eager to take over the throne. In his newest quest to be the best-dressed man in town, Augustus seeks the help of two mysterious tailors who promise a magical Suit of Honor that is sure to amaze. Running time approximately 75 minutes, with one intermission. Appropriate for all ages.

### SATURDAY/APRIL 25

**Model Classic 2015.** 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Fairfax High School, 3501 Rebel Run, Fairfax. Annual exhibit of scale models. Event will feature: A display of hundreds of museum quality scale models. A modeling contest consisting of over 80 categories. 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place awards in each

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

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## CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

category. Admission Fees: Adults \$8 ( \$10 entire family). Junior (Under 18) free. Adult Contestant \$10 (includes admission). [www.novaipms.org](http://www.novaipms.org)

**Mothers, Daughters and Special Friends Tea.** 2-4 p.m. Historic Pohick Church, 9301 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Join the Historic Pohick Church Docent Guild for their annual Signature Tea. The theme this year will be "Mothers, Daughters, and Special Friends." New children's tours of the historic church for our young guests will be held before the tea beginning at 1 pm. The special afternoon tea with a Colonial Living History program follows the tours at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$15 for children under 12. Seating is limited. For reservations and more information please contact Helen Parker at 703-497-5927 or email at [helenandjeffp@verizon.net](mailto:helenandjeffp@verizon.net).

**Spring Fest Fairfax 2015.** 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Spend the day at the historic Workhouse Arts Center learning about environmental projects and programs, tasting food from around the world, playing games, and riding ponies! Don't miss Billy B! on the main stage. Other activities include a petting zoo, rock climbing walls, bounce houses, face-painting, plant sales, wagon rides, and dozens of exhibits and vendors. Admission is free; some activities require a \$5 wristband. For more information, please visit: <http://www.springfestfairfax.org/>.

**Bill Gaither & Gaither Vocal Band.** 6 p.m. Patriot Center, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Multi-Grammy Award-winner Bill Gaither will host a spectacular evening of music, laughter and encouragement featuring the talent of the prestigious Gaither Vocal Band and several talented musical guests. Tickets are also available in person at the Patriot Center Box Office, as well as all Ticketmaster outlets. Group rates are also available by calling 703-993-3000.

**Community Wellness Fair.** 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. 9316 Old Keene Mill Road, Burke. Body composition measurements – find out how old your body really is. Nutritional consultations; exercise demonstrations.

## WEDNESDAY/APRIL 29

**Prison Lecture Series: Life After Prison.** 7:30 p.m. Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Many prisoners gained new vocational and academic skills while incarcerated. The first panel consists of former officials who share their experiences with prison industries. The second panel will include parole officers who describe the reintegration of inmates into the real world community.

## SUNDAY/APRIL 26

**"Images of Rails."** 1-4 p.m. 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. A special photographic exhibit of Virginia railroad sites, past and present, will be on display. Museum members and children 4 and under, free; children 5-15, \$2; adults 16 and older, \$4. [www.fairfax-station.org](http://www.fairfax-station.org).

## FRIDAY-SATURDAY/MAY 1,2,8,9

**"Les Miserables."** 7 p.m. South County High School, 8501 Silverbrook Road, Lorton. Tickets will cost \$12 for general admission or \$10 for students and seniors.citizens. You can order tickets online at [southcountytheatre.org](http://southcountytheatre.org). "Les Miserables" is famous musical adapted from the novel by Victor Hugo in 1862. The story revolves around former convict Jean Valjean and his pursuit of self-redemption by breaking his parole, thus having to escape the fleet of Inspector Javert. Intertwined are the students' revolution to combat the monarchy and a love triangle between schoolboy Marius, Valjean's daughter Cosette, and the poor Eponine. Taking place in France in the early 19th century, the central themes are compassion and social injustice.

## SATURDAY/MAY 2

**Derby-Q Festival.** 2-7 p.m. City of Fairfax. This outdoor community festival will showcase the area's premier brew master and BBQ vendors. The festival will feature bourbon and scotch whiskey tastings. Live blues bands will perform on stage while the crowds anxiously await the Greatest Two Minutes in Sports – the Kentucky Derby, shown on the big screen. To purchase a ticket for this event please visit [www.derby-q.com](http://www.derby-q.com).

**Creative Writers Club.** 2:30 p.m. Burke Centre Library, 5935 Fred Oaks Road, Burke. Do you enjoy writing fiction, poetry, non-fiction and/or memoirs? Join us for sharing, discussion and feedback of works in progress. Ages 12-18.

**Historic Pohick Church Saturday Tour.** 1-3 p.m. Pohick Church, 9301Richmond Highway, Lorton. The Historic Pohick Church Docent Guild willgive free guided tours of the historic colonial church. <http://www.pohick.org>.

## FRIDAY/MAY 8

**Spring Concert.** 7:30 p.m. St. Stephen's United Methodist Church, 9203 Braddock Road, Burke. The Maranatha Singers will present an enjoyable evening of music with a guest appearance by the St. Stephen's Orchestra. The theme of the concert will be "Jammin' Juke Box". Refreshments served after the concert in the Welcome Center. Everyone is invited to attend. Free.

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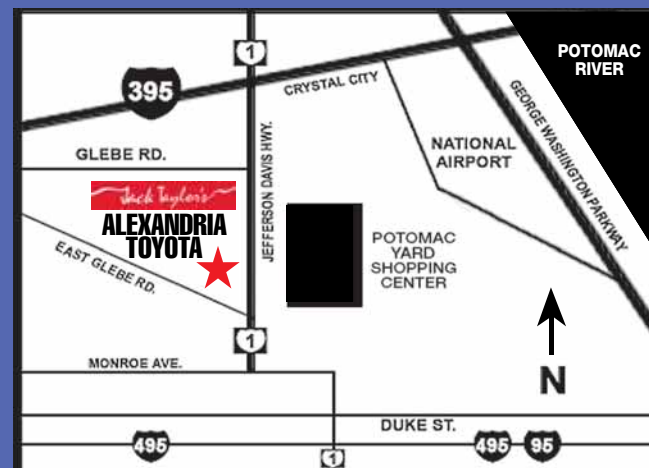


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2. 0.9% APR financing up to 60 months available to qualified buyers thru Toyota Financial Services. Total financed cannot exceed MSRP plus options, tax and license fees. 60 monthly payments of \$17.05 for each \$1,000 borrowed. Not all buyers will qualify. See dealer for details. ToyotaCare covers normal factory scheduled service. Plan is 2 years or 25k miles, whichever comes first. The new vehicle cannot be part of a rental or commercial fleet, or a livery/taxi vehicle. See participating Toyota dealer for plan details. Valid only in the continental U.S. and Alaska. Roadside assistance does not include parts and fluids. Plus plug-in hybrid comes with an extra year of roadside assistance, for a total of three (3) years from date of purchase. Lease, APR and Cash Back offers may not be combined. See dealer for details.

3. \$1,250 Cash Back from Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A., Inc. available on new 2015 Prius. Customers can receive cash back from Toyota or can apply to down payment. Excludes plug-in models. See dealer for details. ToyotaCare covers normal factory scheduled service. Plan is 2 years or 25k miles, whichever comes first. The new vehicle cannot be part of a rental or commercial fleet, or a livery/taxi vehicle. See participating Toyota dealer for plan details. Valid only in the continental U.S. and Alaska. Roadside assistance does not include parts and fluids. Plus plug-in hybrid comes with an extra year of roadside assistance, for a total of three (3) years from date of purchase. Lease, APR and Cash Back offers may not be combined. See dealer for details.

4. 0.9% APR financing up to 60 months available to qualified buyers thru Toyota Financial Services. Total financed cannot exceed MSRP plus options, tax and license fees. 60 monthly payments of \$17.05 for each \$1,000 borrowed. Not all buyers will qualify. ToyotaCare covers normal factory scheduled service. Plan is 2 years or 25k miles, whichever comes first. The new vehicle cannot be part of a rental or commercial fleet, or a livery/taxi vehicle. See participating Toyota dealer for plan details. Valid only in the continental U.S. and Alaska. Roadside assistance does not include parts and fluids. Plus plug-in hybrid comes with an extra year of roadside assistance, for a total of three (3) years from date of purchase. Lease, APR and Cash Back offers may not be combined. See dealer for details. Offers expire 4/30/2015.

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## 21 Announcements

## 21 Announcements

## Abandoned Watercraft

Notice is hereby given that the following watercraft has been abandoned for more than 60 Days on the property of: Hillcrest Marine Inc. 10117 Richmond Hwy, Lorton VA 22079 703-339-6200. Description of watercraft: 1972 Glastron 16' Yellow #1422045. Application for Watercraft Registration/Title will be made in accordance with Section 29.1-733.25 of the Code of Virginia if this watercraft is not claimed and removed within 30 days of first publication of this notice. Please contact the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries with questions.

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#### 21 Announcements

**PUBLIC HEARING FOR TOWN OF CLIFTON, VIRGINIA  
PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO SPECIAL USE PERMIT  
PUBLIC HEARING OF TOWN COUNCIL  
May 5, 2015**  
Notice is hereby given that the Town Council of the Town of Clifton, Virginia will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, May 5, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. at the Clifton Town Meeting Hall, 12641 Chapel Road, Clifton, VA 20124 to consider the amendment of the special use permit of Clifton General Store / Main Street Pub, located at 7140 Main Street, to include and authorize an increase in number of seats and increase in parking onsite and off-site for the public and employees. The application for the proposed amendment to Clifton General Store / Main Street Pub special use permit is available for review and downloading on the Town's website at [www.clifton-va.com](http://www.clifton-va.com) and a hard copy may be examined at the Clifton Post Office, 12644 Chapel Road, Clifton VA, 20124. All interested parties are invited to attend and express their views with respect to the requested amendment to the Clifton General Store / Main Street Pub special use permit.

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-Archimedes

#### 21 Announcements

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#### 21 Announcements



**Fairfax senior Christian Leckert threw a three-hit shutout against McLean on April 17.**

PHOTO  
BY CRAIG  
STERBUTZEL/  
THE CONNECTION

## Fairfax Pitcher Leckert Throws 3-Hit Shutout Against McLean

### Rebels improve to 8-4 with 1-0 win over Highlanders.

BY JON ROETMAN  
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax pitcher Christian Leckert stepped off the mound, took a deep breath and regrouped.

The senior right-hander had a 1-0 lead against McLean in the bottom of the fourth inning, but outfielder Matt Collins had nearly put the Highlanders in front with a two-run homer. Collins' blast down the left-field line landed in the parking lot at McLean High School, but had curved foul. "... [I] thought about location [and] how I can get him out," Leckert said. "So I just kept pitching [with a] short memory."

Leckert responded by striking out Collins and getting Billy Gerhardt to fly out, ending the threat.

As it turned out, Collins' long foul ball was the closest McLean would get to scoring against the Fairfax hurler.

Leckert, who will play for James Madison University, tossed a three-hit shutout and led the Fairfax baseball team to a 1-0 victory over McLean on April 17.

Leckert walked two and struck out six. The Highlanders did not have runner reach third base.

"[Leckert] is a heck of a pitcher, obviously," Fairfax head coach Rick Freeman said. "Everybody knows that. When he throws his curveball for strikes consistently, that's the kind of game he gets. He's able to pitch backward to a lot of hitters and get them off balance early in the count and then his fastball looks a lot better than it is. He's a heck of a pitcher."

"When he throws his curveball for a strike, he's really lights out."

Freeman praised Leckert's ability to bounce back after Collins' long foul ball.

"That's who he's become," the head coach said. "He's a senior now and he pitches with a lot of confidence and a lot of leadership. I don't think he was rattled by it. I think he looked at it and said I can still get this guy, I've just got to make a good pitch."

A two-out single by McLean's CJ Downey and a wild pitch by Leckert gave the Highlanders a runner in scoring position in the bottom of the seventh inning, but Leckert got Frank Minamino to ground out to end

the game.

"He's an absolute workhorse," Fairfax shortstop Jason Waldman said about Leckert. "He's been doing this since sophomore year for us. He pretty much goes the distance every single time. It's fun to play behind him. He just gets groundballs, weak fly balls all the time. It's fun to watch."

McLean head coach John Dowling praised Leckert's effort, but said the Highlanders' inability to adjust contributed to their lack of production.

"All the credit in the world to Leckert," Dowling said. "He threw strikes and we did not come into the game with a strong approach and we did not adjust to what he was doing. If I'm him, I'm going to do the same thing: a lot of breaking balls that were effective."

What would Dowling have liked McLean batters to do differently?

"Adjust to a lot of breaking balls," Dowling said. "We were taking fastball swings in fastball counts and he was not throwing fastballs. And for seven innings, we continued to do the same thing. That is not acceptable."

While Leckert shut down the McLean lineup, the Highlanders found success by using four different pitchers against the Rebels.

Jon Clines, Charles Groppe, Downey and Gerhardt limited Fairfax to four hits, including none in the final three innings, but the Rebels managed to score the one run they needed.

Waldman, who will play for William & Mary, led off the top of the fourth with a double and advanced to third on a wild pitch. Senior third baseman Victor Danieletto then singled, driving in the winning run.

Waldman finished 2-for-3 with a pair of doubles. Sophomore Tommy Bradley had a single for the Rebels.

The win improved Fairfax's record to 8-4. The Rebels started the season with six consecutive victories, but lost four of their next five.

The Rebels will travel to face Yorktown at 6 p.m. on Thursday, April 23.

"This group is probably one of the more talented groups that have come through Fairfax in a while," Waldman said. "I think if we can play like we did tonight every single night, [there is] no reason why we shouldn't be taking a regional championship home."

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# On Tour: Aging in Place Renovation

BY JOHN BYRD

A Vienna whole house remodel that incorporates an Aging-In-Place solution will be featured in the Parade of Homes/ Remodeled Home Tour April 25-April 26.

The circa-1970s split-level owned by Andre and Katy Hollis was substantially repurposed and renovated by Sun Design Remodeling of Burke.

"I decided that I really liked our neighborhood and that with changes we could stay in the house indefinitely," Katy Hollis said.

Mindy Mitchell, the Certified Aging-In-Place Specialist (CAPS) at Sun Design Remodeling who executed the Hollis design solution, says such inquiries have become more common in recent years.

After considering options, the Hollis family settled on several revisions: a spacious first floor bedroom; a gourmet kitchen; a better entertainment plan; and a guest suite with dedicated bath.

"I thought we probably had enough

square footage to achieve what we wanted," Katy Hollis said, "but there were lots of functional problems, and we weren't sure how to address them." The challenge was reconfiguring adequate existing space into a better plan serving long term horizons.

Katy wanted both a guest suite and a larger, more private master bedroom suite.

The former master bedroom suite now becomes spacious guest quarters. A corner bedroom has been transformed into a second upstairs bathroom.

Mitchell and team re-deployed 300 square feet on the rear of the first level for a very private master bedroom suite that includes a master bath and generous walk-in closets.

A home office behind glass-facing French doors opens directly into the redecorated living room.

"It's a terrific solution in every detail," Hollis said. "And knowing we've already made some solid decisions about the future has really given me peace of mind."

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A whole house aging-in-place solution by Sun Design Remodeling will be featured in the Parade of Homes' Remodeled Homes Tour, April 25 and April 26. The firm executed a top-to-bottom makeover to a circa 1970s split-level, creating a first level master suite and a gourmet kitchen.

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# Spring Real Estate & New Homes

## Staged to Sell

Real estate agents give the lowdown on getting your home ready for the market.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

When a Burke family hired E. Diane Neustrand to sell their home, she did her standard walk-through of the house to assess it, but when she reached the dining room, she stopped cold.

"It was painted with three different shades of orange and accessorized with black, white and gold furniture," said Neustrand, a real estate agent with Long and Foster Real Estate, Inc. in Burke, Fairfax Station and Clifton.

First on Neustrand's chopping block: a pair of zebra print chairs. The boisterous wall colors were next.

"It wasn't harmonious at all," said Neustrand, who also works as a professional home stager. "We had to calm that down because orange is not a color that sells well. You want neutrals in paint and furniture, so potential buyers can visualize their own items in your home."

Residential real estate staging, the practice of preparing a home to go on the market for sale by making it aesthetically appealing, is credited with giving homes an advantage over the competition.

Staging can range from rearranging furniture, decluttering and painting the walls to furnishing a home in which the seller no



PHOTO BY ROBERT WHETZEL

**Realtors say professionally staged homes spend less time on the market.**

longer resides.

The National Association of Realtors' 2015 Investment & Home Buyers Survey showed that staging can have a positive impact on the number of days a home sits on the market and the amount of money potential buyers a willing offer for the home.

**"STAGED HOMES** traditionally present themselves better than the competition by being clean, clutter-free and ready to show to prospective buyers," said Mona Bekheet, a real estate agent with McEneaney Associates, Inc. in McLean. "Home staging is decluttering, depersonalizing and preparing a seller's home to look like a model

home so the potential buyers can see themselves living in the home."

The survey showed that 49 percent of agents say most buyers are affected by home staging, while a 2013 study by the Real Estate Staging Association showed staged homes sold 83 percent sooner than houses that weren't staged.

Realtors also believe buyers usually offer a 1-5 percent increase on the value of a staged home.

"Staged homes take less time on the market and they sell at the best price," said Bekheet. "Buyers view them as well cared for properties and appraisers are more likely to appraise staged homes at a full or higher value."

That increase can offset the expense of having a home professionally staged. Services, including consultations and furniture rental, can cost \$250 to \$2,000. Neustrand uses as many of the homeowners' possessions as she can to minimize out-of-pocket expenses.

"Since staging gives a home a clean, fresh, current look, it makes a home more attractive to buyers," said Betsy Schuman Dodek of Washington Fine Properties in Potomac, Md.

However, real estate agents say initiating conversations with homeowners about their homes and suggesting changes must be

SEE STAGED, PAGE 5

## Optimism for 2015 Real Estate Market

BY ANDREA WORKER  
THE CONNECTION

After what seemed to be an endless winter, spring has finally come calling, signaling the start of the year's first real estate high season. Homes trade hands all year long, but spring is often for buyers, seller, agents, brokers and lenders like those weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas; buyers at full speed searching out the best bargains and sellers looking to move their wares without having to resort to price-slashing sales tactics.

So far, area real-estate experts and the data from sources like the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors (NVAR), Movoto

Real Estate, and SmartCharts (powered by RealEstate Business Intelligence with data supplied from the MLS listing service) are all aligned in their assessment of the outlook for the 2015 market in Northern Virginia. Compared to a lackluster 2014 after a strong 2013, there's reason for optimism.

Veronica Seva-Gonzalez, NVAR board member and Realtor with Compass Real Estate, noted that the spring weather and positive housing market news had arrived simultaneously. "It's great to see how all of the numbers are up from last year and also from the beginning of this year," she said.

Across the board, the numbers do look positive. Combined data collected for the counties of Fairfax and Arlington, the cities

of Alexandria, Falls Church and Fairfax and the towns of Vienna, Herndon and Clifton, show a first quarter increase of total units sold of just over 9 percent, with 3,657 units sold in 2015 compared to 3,352 the prior year. For the same period and for the same localities, days on the market (DOM) per unit actually rose in 2015 and the average ratio of sales price to list price showed marginal slippage, but Realtors and market analysts see the significant improvements in March 2015 numbers vs. March 2014 figures as an indicator of a healthy selling season ahead.

The March 2015 increases were seen in

SEE OUTLOOK, PAGE 4

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## Outlook Optimistic for Local 2015 Real Estate Market

FROM PAGE 3

all sectors of the residential market, with “attached” homes like townhouses leading the way with a 3.6 percent uptick in average sales price. Condominiums came in at second place, with a 1.8 percent increase in the month compared to 2014. Single-family homes came in last for the March 2015 totals, but still better than the prior year by 0.7 percent.

Greatly increased inventory versus last year could be one factor in the more modest single-family home price increases. In 2015, 3,165 new properties came onto the market during the month, while only 2,656 were put on the books during that month last year. A total of 3,381 units were available to buyers in March this year compared to 3,011 last year.

“In some areas and some price ranges, there is definitely more choice,” said Reston Long and Foster Realtor Anita Lasansky. “Sellers are starting to get more confident.”

Realtor Jennifer Boyce, Long and Foster Gold Team, also noted that some buyers were starting to “come out from under,” having held on during the worst of the economic downturn. “Equities are looking stronger, so they can get back in, selling or buying.”

The data does vary around the region. Not all areas experienced an increase in sales prices in the month-to-month comparison. Falls Church City, for example, posted an increase in the numbers of units sold, but a 19.12 percent decrease in median sales price.

Arlington County, on the other hand, saw the largest increase in the March 2015 vs. March 2014 side-by-side; with 24.43 percent more closed sales and a 10.68 percent increase in the median sales price.

Janet Gresh of the Gresh Group in McLean says that her experience so far this year is in line with those numbers. “Arlington is definitely hot right now, close in and enough quality properties that you see serious competition.”

Lasansky gave the numbers she is seeing for Reston a “thumbs up,” as well. “We’re up about 15 percent in the first quarter over last year and about 5 percent up in median sales price.”

In the City of Alexandria, the median sales price rose by more than 10 percent in March on an increase of 14.37 percent in closed sales.

Fairfax County and Fairfax City both saw more moderate improvements in median sales prices at 2.79 percent and 2.00 percent respectively. For Fairfax City, the positive takeaway from the March figures is that the median sales price rose despite a drop in total closed sales of more than 50 percent compared to last year.

While all of the data provided is considered preliminary and still subject to revision, the numbers available to date suggest a good start to the year – and barring the unforeseen negative impact – a positive 2015 real estate market.

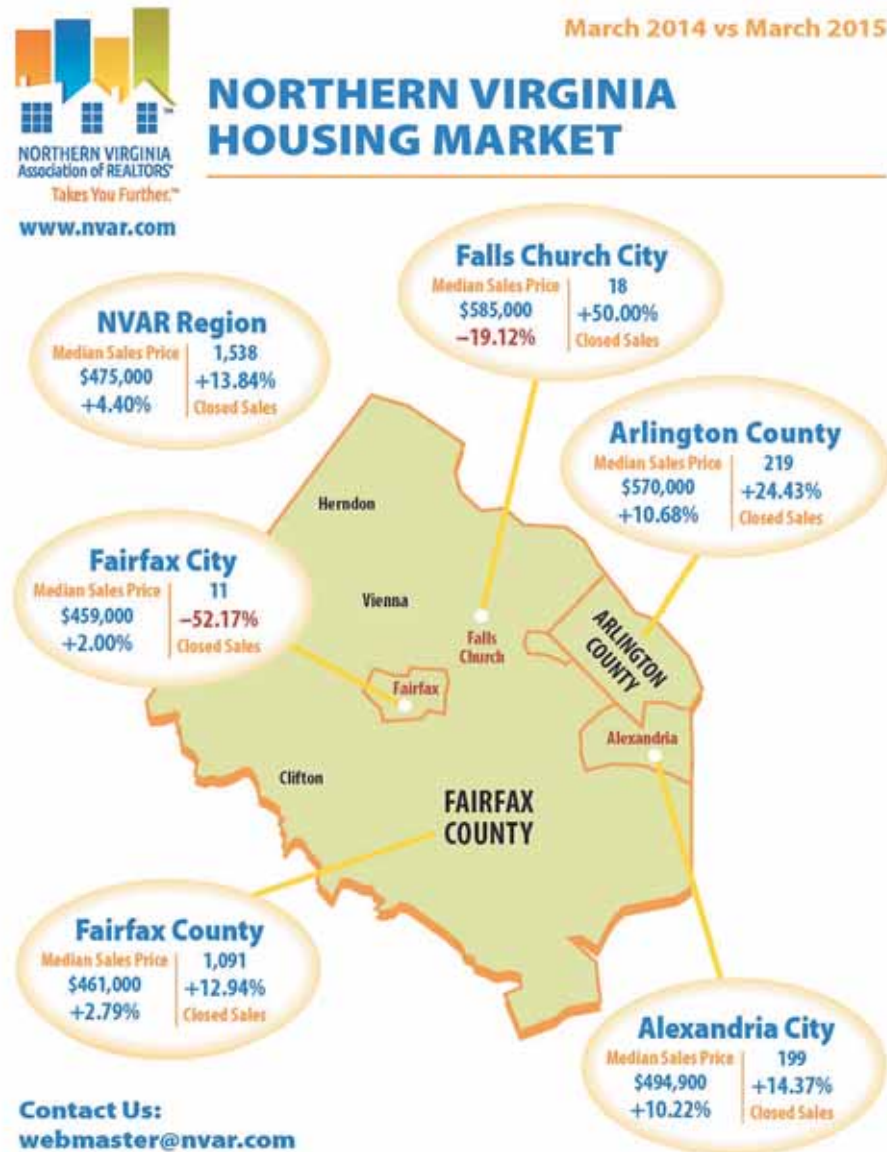


IMAGE COURTESY OF NVAR

Plus-column numbers on the books, the collective optimism of many of the area’s top real estate professionals, and respected organizations like the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors adding that “2015 may be different because of its more sustainable, positive market direction,” all offer signs that the real estate market in the region is looking at a healthy year. Any number of factors, including the ever-present threat of the Federal Reserve raising interest rates sometime this year, could stall or even reverse the positive trends.

Whatever comes along, realtors like Kathleen Quintarelli, Weichert Realtors, Burke, think we will deal with it. “People have kind of stopped believing that the rates will go up again and when they do it will be a shock and have its impact, but we will adjust to that new norm, as well.”

With the latest figures in hand, we asked some of our area’s top real estate professionals for their perspectives, and to offer some expert advice to buyers and sellers alike.

❖ **Virgil Frizzell, Ph.D., MBA**, realtor Long and Foster Reston: “I think the March housing statistics indicate a healthier spring housing market in the footprint of the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors than for the rest of the country. The con-

tinuing improvements ... are good for both homebuyers and home sellers and likely indicate a more balanced market. Buyers should benefit from increasing inventory, still low mortgage [rates] and easing credit standards. The year-over-year increase in housing units sold and modestly rising median prices may embolden sellers.” (Frizzell is the 2015 NVAR Chairman-Elect.)

❖ **Mary Bayat**, owner of Bayat Realty in Alexandria and 2015 NVAR Chair: “Finally, many buyers who had distressed house sales years ago could have enough repaired credit to qualify for a new loan. They will get more house for their money now than if they wait. We expect the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates later this year. Another local indicator is that active listings have risen more than 25 percent.”

❖ **Jennifer Boyce**, Long and Foster Gold Team Burke/Fairfax Station/Clifton: “Don’t price too aggressively in late spring or early summer is my advice. Homes that are well priced and in good condition will sell. The \$500,000-\$800,000 homes are in high demand. Homes that are priced over \$1 million face a smaller and sometimes more exacting buyer base, not willing to compromise much and expecting top quality for their money.”

❖ **Will Farnam**, Long and Foster Falls Church: “I think the data so far for this year would be considered bright - not a boom - but strong. It’s a market that’s good for good properties, not good for just anything. There’s enough choice. One good sign is the traffic at Open Houses. The last two weekends I have had house-fulls, quite different from last year. Smaller down payments on many FHA and VA loans is helping, but despite some lending requirement easing, I find that buyers with credit problems are still struggling to get a loan.”

❖ **Janet Gresh**, The Gresh Group@Keller Williams: “The market is looking good, but it is still a bit more of an art than a science at times. If an under-\$1 million home is priced right, I am starting to see multiple offers, especially in Arlington. ... In some of these areas, if the house doesn’t sell or have offers in the first two weekends, it could be a sign of trouble and time to re-evaluate. ... Don’t overprice and you may end up getting more than you ask for. I have experienced that recently.”

❖ **Anita Lasansky**, Long and Foster Reston: “It’s looking good, strong numbers over last year for Reston especially, what some call the ‘Silicon Valley of the East.’ Some homes are selling now in days, not weeks, if they are well-priced with updated kitchens and bathrooms. Those homes take top dollar and for the first time in years I am seeing multiple offers on those properties. The properties over \$1.2 million are still sitting. Sellers should also be cautioned not to overprice based on the addition of the Metro Silver Line. I see that a lot of people are riding it, but it hasn’t had that much of an impact on house prices in the area, at least not yet, but some sellers are factoring in 5-10 percent in their list price based on the Metro.

❖ **Kathleen Quintarelli**, Weichert Realtors, Burke: “I’m excited. 2015 looks slightly better already. Open Houses are really packed. With interest rates staying so low, more choice, the easing up on credit requirements, and fewer short sales and foreclosures - all those factors are really giving the market energy. There’s just not enough inventory in some categories, especially anything around \$350k - \$450k. Anything in good condition in that price range can go in the first week. My advice to sellers: Price well, prepare your home and stage it. And have your photographs taken by a professional. If the potential buyer comes in and says “Wow! This place looks a lot better than the pictures on the internet!” then your agent - or you - have done something wrong. Sellers should be ready to buy, even the same day you see the house you want. That means pre-approval and preferably by a local lender that we can work with quickly, especially if you’re faced with multiple offers or counters.



# Staged to Sell

FROM PAGE 3

handled delicately.

“You don’t want to hurt someone’s feelings by telling them that they need to move items or get rid of items like the wrong artwork or too much furniture,” said Maria Smith of Arlington Realty in Arlington. “But the homeowner’s objective should be to sell the home.”

Staging helps when a home is too cluttered, or even if a house is already empty. It’s also a good idea “for those with dated, mismatched furniture or too many pieces in a room,” said Realtor Marsha Schuman of Washington Fine Properties. “For homes that don’t have a traditional floor plan, staging helps a buyer see how the rooms can be laid out.”

“Even if you have a large home, if your closets are over-stuffed or if you have too much furniture, a prospective buyer can’t get a sense of the space and dimension of a room or visualize themselves in the home,” said E.J. Stone, a real estate agent with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Alexandria.

**REMOVING ULTRA-PERSONAL ITEMS** like family pictures or bills is another part of the staging process.

“You want to get a potential buyer to envision their things in the home,” said Stone. “Neutrals can help with that. Those are things that a home stager can suggest.”

**“Staged homes traditionally present themselves better than the competition by being clean, clutter-free and ready to show to prospective buyers.”**

— **Mona Bekheet, McEneaney Associates, Inc., in McLean**

Less is often more in the home staging game, say Realtors. “I tell my clients to take stuff off the walls, rent a storage space and take all the stuff you don’t need and put it into a storage unit, so it opens up more space,” said Michael Richter, real estate agent for residential preferred properties at the Richter Group in Burke.

Realtors rank the living room as the number one room to stage, followed by the kitchen. Also in the top five rooms are the master bedroom, dining room and the bathroom.

“Your home should be a model home, like no one lives there,” said Neustrand. “The bathroom counters should not have products or clutter. There should not be trash in the garbage can.”

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## Aging in Place Renovation Tour

A Vienna whole house remodel that incorporates an Aging-In-Place solution will be featured in the Parade of Homes/ Remodeled Home Tour April 25-April 26.

The circa-1970s split-level owned by Andre and Katy Hollis was substantially repurposed and renovated by Sun Design Remodeling of Burke.

“I decided that I really liked our neighborhood and that with changes we could stay in the house indefinitely,” Katy Hollis said.

Mindy Mitchell, the Certified Aging-In-Place Specialist (CAPS) at Sun Design Remodeling who executed the Hollis design solution, says such inquiries have become more common in recent years.

“I thought we probably had enough square footage to achieve what we wanted,” Katy Hollis said, “but there were lots of functional problems, and we weren’t sure how to address them.”

Katy wanted both a guest suite and a larger, more private master bedroom suite.

The former master bedroom suite now becomes spacious guest quarters. A corner bedroom has been transformed into a second upstairs bathroom.

“It’s a terrific solution in every detail,” Hollis said. “And knowing we’ve already made some solid decisions about the future has really given me peace of mind.”

Call 703-425-5588 or [www.SunDesignInc.com](http://www.SunDesignInc.com).

**Countries are well cultivated, not as they are fertile, but as they are free.**

—Baron de Montesquieu

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# Trendy Bathroom Transformations

## Designers share the hottest ideas in lavatory design.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

Imagine stepping into a resort inside the comfort of your own home. Contemporary, spa-like bathrooms with clean lines and features such as floating vanities, open shelving, innovative storage and low-maintenance materials are on trend this year in bathroom remodeling projects.

When the main level master bathroom in a 1970s-era Reston home got a major facelift earlier this year, Dean Turner, of Evolution Design & Build in Reston was tasked with addressing structural issues as well updating the entire space.

"This bathroom had a sunken tub and shower combination that was leaking into the basement below," said Turner. "They wanted me to solve their water problems ... update their bathroom, and they



PHOTO COURTESY OF NICELY DONE KITCHENS AND BATHS

**Low maintenance porcelain tile accented with river rock stone are used in this Burke bathroom.**

were very interested in a floating vanity."

The floating, walnut piece was made by a local cabinetmaker and hovers 12 inches above the floor, and Turner was able

to give the homeowners an abundance of storage by incorporating cabinetry into the vanity. A simple touch of the fingertip opens and closes its drawers and doors, eliminating the need for visible hardware. Motion detecting, LED lighting under the vanity is another convenience.

Turner's team removed the existing wall and floor tile, replacing it with scratch- and stain-resistant porcelain tile that has the appearance of natural stone, while the wall tiles were made in the image of natural wood.

"When you look at it," said Turner. "It looks just like hardwood flooring on the wall."

**AFTER MOVING** into a retirement community, an empty-nester couple decided to overhaul the builder-grade bathroom that came with their home. They enlisted the help of Stephanie Brick, of Nicely Done Kitchens and Baths

in Springfield, who designed a contemporary space.

"The homeowners were looking for something that was calming and had a spa-like

energy," said Brick. "They also wanted more storage, especially open storage for linens and displaying items."

Brick and the Nicely team installed cabinetry with open shelving over the toilet. The vanity has a quartz countertop with veins of blue and turquoise that bears a close resemblance to marble. "Those colors were carried through in an accent piece in the shower," said Brick.

The porcelain tile floor has a marble-like appearance.

"You get the beautiful look of marble, but you don't have the maintenance or the cost," said Brick. "The new bathroom has a much more spa-like aesthetic. It was very bland and vanilla and it needed a face lift."

When the owners of a contemporary home in Burke decided to remodel their master bathroom so that it matched the style of the rest of the house, they called on designer Cathy Gross, also of Nicely. She used porcelain tile on the walls accented with river rock stone, a material that she also used on the bathroom floor.

"They wanted to continue the calm, zen, contemporary feel in the remodel of their master bath," said Gross, who also designed the home's kitchen five years prior.

*More designs in the unabridged story at [www.connectionnewspapers.com](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com)*

## Connecting Outside to In

BY JOHN BYRD

"When we started this company twenty seven years ago, our core specialty was opening up views," said Craig Durosco, chairman and founder of Sun Design Remodeling. "Northern Virginians like their green backyards, so finding ways to connect the house with what's just outside your door is a strong local incentive—especially as spring unfolds into summer."

Homeowner expectation for better integrated outdoor spaces evolves with each season, he said. To accommodate, Sun Design professionals constantly assess emerging building technologies, code issues, design literature. "You are always learning," Durosco says. "Improving on the quality of what you stand for as a company is a constant motivator for everyone here."

By way of example, Durosco cites three recent trend-setting projects.

### Poolside Pavilion, Outdoor Kitchen

Entertaining outdoors has become a primary recreational activity for Monte Zaben and family. Though he commutes regularly from his Fredericksburg home to an office in McLean, Zaben's weekends by the pool have become treasured quality time.

"The house was built to my requirements, but I hadn't thought much about the grounds," he says, "We added a saltwater pool a few years ago, only to realize that the back of the house was so sun-

exposed...it was uncomfortable sitting outside."

Zaben set up a meeting with Sun Design.

From the start, the homeowner was impressed with plans for a shaded pavilion outside the home's lower level.

Under roof, a lounge area; a smaller closer-in footprint with a cozy poolside vista; an outdoor kitchen equipped with a traditional grill, a smoker and a power burner. When the summer guest list rises to fifty or more the vaulted canopy is a perfect spot for buffet tables.

"We use our outdoor space on just about every seasonable day of the year," Zaben says. "It's very much part of our lives now."

### Screen Porch, Rear Decking

As Fairfax homeowner Joanne Alger tells it, Sun Design's solution to a previous problem was key to a new project.

Impressed with the outcome, the Algers now sought Durosco's ideas for a grander rear elevation indoor/outdoor component, one that would better connect the sprawling house with its six acre wooded setting.

The Algers embraced a Sun Design scheme with three main components: a 17-by-16-foot screen porch, a grilling deck, and a ground-level patio. The patio, in turn, segues to a hard-scape platform featuring an eight-foot stone hearth and comfortable seating. Overhead fans and portable heaters keep the outdoor room habitable in all but the coldest days of winter.

"It's our preferred gathering place now,



PHOTO BY MITRO HOOD

**The outdoor kitchen is equipped with a grill and a power burner.**

"Alger says. "And so comfortable we can use it from early spring to late fall."

### Bringing the Outside Indoors

Nick Bonadies, Sun Design's Director of New Business Development, points to the 25-by-16-foot custom window wall in a newly remodeled Fairfax home as a kind of triumph of glazing technologies over the strong wind.

"Homeowners come to us for ideas that will open up space and invite visual continuum," he said.

Sun Design had converted Gini Mulligan's 2,200-square-foot 1960s split foyer home into a 4,238-square-foot French colonial complete with wrap-around porches, a new

master bedroom suite addition, and a spacious gourmet kitchen with a jaw-dropping view of towering backyard trees.

"We bought the house over 20 years ago, mainly because of the lovely wooded setting," Mulligan said. "I then spent so many years gazing out of a small back window, trying to imagine how the house would feel if we had a better view." The scale of Mulligan's vision, a two-story window wall, presented feasibility questions.

A steel "moment" frame, unusual in a residential application, allows for as much as a 40 percent increase in unobstructed glass surface. "It all looks very delicate—but this window can withstand winds of up to 90 miles per hour," Bonadies said.



# Local REAL ESTATE

## February, 2015 Top Sales



**17** 4608 Fillingame Drive, Chantilly — \$512,000



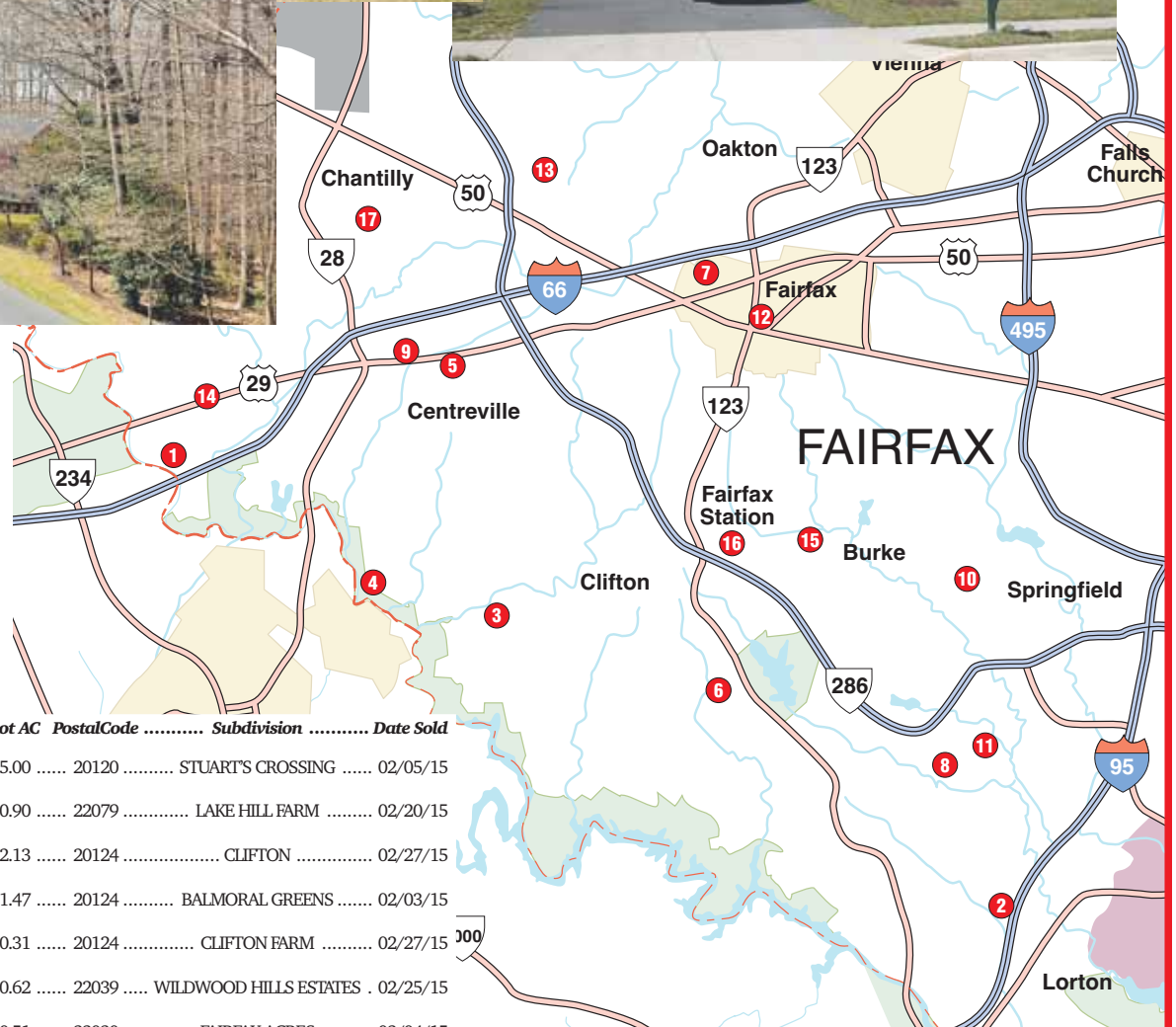
**9** 13529 Lamium Lane, Centreville — \$775,000

**1** 7300 Bull Run Post Office Road, Centreville — \$1,154,990

**6** 10744 Beechnut Court, Fairfax Station — \$815,000



**4** 13745 Balmoral Greens Avenue, Clifton — \$1,415,700



Address	BR	FB	HB	Postal City	Sold Price	Type	Lot AC	PostalCode	Subdivision	Date Sold		
1 7300 BULL RUN POST OFFICE ROAD	5	..	5	..	CENTREVILLE	\$1,154,990	..	Detached	5.00	20120	STUART'S CROSSING	02/05/15
2 9400 BETTGE LAKE CT	4	..	3	..	LORTON	\$1,100,000	..	Detached	0.90	22079	LAKE HILL FARM	02/20/15
3 12801 CHESTNUT ST	4	..	2	..	CLIFTON	\$1,095,000	..	Detached	2.13	20124	CLIFTON	02/27/15
4 13745 BALMORAL GREENS AVE	4	..	4	..	CLIFTON	\$880,000	..	Detached	1.47	20124	BALMORAL GREENS	02/03/15
5 5414 WILLOW VALLEY RD	5	..	5	..	CLIFTON	\$860,000	..	Detached	0.31	20124	CLIFTON FARM	02/27/15
6 10744 BEECHNUT CT	5	..	4	..	FAIRFAX STATION	\$815,000	..	Detached	0.62	22039	WILDWOOD HILLS ESTATES	02/25/15
7 3614 HILL ST	4	..	4	..	FAIRFAX	\$790,000	..	Detached	0.51	22030	FAIRFAX ACRES	02/04/15
8 8017 FLINT ST	5	..	4	..	SPRINGFIELD	\$789,000	..	Detached	0.61	22153	CHAPEL ACRES	02/26/15
9 13529 LAMIUM LN	4	..	4	..	CENTREVILLE	\$775,000	..	Detached	0.19	20120	FAIRCREST SOUTH	02/23/15
10 8552 CENTER RD	4	..	3	..	SPRINGFIELD	\$740,000	..	Detached	0.22	22152	JAMES CREEK	02/03/15
11 8309 KINGS RIDGE CT	5	..	4	..	SPRINGFIELD	\$735,000	..	Detached	0.35	22153	GAMBRILL OAKS	02/05/15
12 10411 WHITEHEAD ST	4	..	3	..	FAIRFAX	\$720,000	..	Townhouse	0.04	22030	MADISON MEWS	02/19/15
13 3419 TILTON VALLEY DR	5	..	3	..	FAIRFAX	\$710,000	..	Detached	1.48	22033	MARY RIDGE	02/12/15
14 15371 WETHERBURN CT	4	..	3	..	CENTREVILLE	\$660,000	..	Detached	0.47	20120	VIRGINIA RUN	02/20/15
15 9931 WOOD GROUSE CT	4	..	3	..	BURKE	\$640,000	..	Detached	0.18	22015	BURKE CENTRE	02/19/15
16 5802 OAK MOSS TER	5	..	2	..	BURKE	\$638,000	..	Detached	0.27	22015	BURKE CENTRE	02/27/15
17 4608 FILLINGAME DR	5	..	3	..	CHANTILLY	\$512,000	..	Detached	0.21	20151	LEIGH PROP	02/26/15

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**15** 9931 Wood Grouse Court, Burke — \$640,000



# Award-Winning Connection Newspapers

More Reasons the Connection Newspapers are the Best-Read Community Papers

**Winners of Awards in the 2014 Virginia Press Association and Maryland-Delaware-D.C. Press Association Editorial Contests**

## First Place Winners

**Steven G. Artley**, *Alexandria Gazette Packet* – Editorial Cartoon. Judge's comments: Smart and insightful.

**Bonnie Hobbs**, *Centre View* – Feature Series or Continuing Story. Judge's comments: Clear and concise writing with a good flow. Journalist captured the emotion of the event and engaged the reader well.

**Michael Lee Pope**, *Mount Vernon Gazette* – Business and Financial Writing. Judge's comments: First-rate, data-driven reporting and analysis on important issues. Fine work.

**Michael Lee Pope**, *McLean Connection* – Health, Science and Environmental Writing. Judge's comments: Michael Lee Pope's stories on driving habits, cesarean deliveries and the Affordable Care Act are well-researched, clearly written and engaging. His use of real-live people high up in his stories to illustrate his findings makes for very compelling material. He seems quite capable of turning some of these topics into a book. If he does, I'll read it.

**Jon Roetman**, *Vienna/Oakton Connection* – Sports Writing Portfolio. Judge's comments: Strong and clear writing and excellent storytelling helps game stories feel more like features. Excellent work.

**Victoria Ross**, *Oak Hill/Herndon Connection* – Government Writing. Judge's comments: An engaging look at a lobbyist who fights for the little guy; an entertaining story on a political candidate, helping readers put the upcoming election into context; one of the better budgeting stories I've seen lately that helps readers understand how the county's budgeting process is going to cost them more money. The supporting sidebars help bring the message home.

**Jeanne Theismann**, *Alexandria Gazette Packet* – Personal Service Writing, Obituaries. Judge's comments: These stories provide a glimpse inside the lives of people who have played significant roles in their communities. The writing is engaging and well-researched. And the stories serve as an example to others of how to live a life of purpose.

**Jeanne Theismann**, *Alexandria Gazette Packet* – Column Writing, Entertainment. Judge's comments: Ms. Theismann's entertainment columns demonstrate a breadth of knowledge that gives her opinions a ring of authority and authenticity.



Steve Artley



Bonnie Hobbs



Michael Lee Pope



Jon Roetman



Victoria Ross



Jeanne Theismann



Jean Card



Steve Hibbard



Louise Krafft



Joan Brady



Veronica Bruno



Vernon Miles



Marilyn Campbell



Mary Kimm



Steven Mauren



Geovani Flores



Laurence Foong



Renee Ruggles



Ken Moore

LOCAL MEDIA  
**CONNECTION**  
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Though I live nowhere near her area, I found it easy to be influenced by her writing and to wish that I had the opportunity to attend some of the events she talked about. All three examples are nicely written.

**Jean Card, Jeanne Theismann, Steve Hibbard, Louise Krafft and Kara Coleman**, *Alexandria Gazette Packet* – Lifestyle or Entertainment Pages. Judge's comments: Good balance. Front page article has good detail and info.

## Second Place Winners

**Joan Brady**, *Great Falls Connection* – Column Writing.

**Veronica Bruno**, *Mount Vernon Gazette* – Feature Story Writing.

**Jean Card**, *Alexandria Gazette Packet* – Page Design.

**Vernon Miles**, *Arlington Connection* – Breaking News Writing.

**Jeanne Theismann**, *Alexandria Gazette Packet* – Headline Writing.

## Third Place Winners

**Steven G. Artley**, *Alexandria Gazette Packet* – Editorial Cartoon.

**Marilyn Campbell**, *Chantilly Connection* – Health, Science and Environmental Writing.

**Bonnie Hobbs**, *Fairfax Connection* – Personal Service Writing.

**Mary Kimm**, *McLean Connection* – Editorial Writing.

**Michael Lee Pope**, *Alexandria Gazette Packet* – Public Safety Writing.

**Steven Mauren, Mary Kimm, Steve Artley, Geovani Flores and Laurence Foong**, *Alexandria Gazette Packet* – Editorial Pages.

**Jean Card, Renee Ruggles and Laurence Foong**, *Mount Vernon Gazette* – Informational Graphics.

The *Potomac Almanac* participates in the Maryland-Delaware-DC Press Association, and while 2014 award-winners there will not be fully announced until May 1, 2015, we do know that Ken Moore and Marilyn Campbell are winners.

