

Lamb Center kitchen volunteers (from left) Robert Lindsey; Kedidja, Belai and Kijani English; Angel Lindsey and Pamela Allen. Last Saturday, Feb. 13, there was a beam-signing ceremony at the construction site for the new building.



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PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

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County Budget: About \$300
More per Household

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Rally to 'Invest in Kids'

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The Lamb Center's John MacPherson and Dave Larrabee (both in light-blue jeans) join hands with others in a prayer circle.

Seeing Faith in Action

Inspirational messages written inside new Lamb Center building.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

It was 19 degrees outside when about 100 people gathered Saturday afternoon at the site of the new Lamb Center for a beam-signing. But inside the building still under construction, it might as well have been 90 degrees – warmed by all the love and well wishes of those attending.

“This has been a long time coming, and now we finally have solid ground under our feet,” said Lamb Center operations director

Dave Larrabee. “Every Saturday at 1:30 p.m., we met and prayed about this building and the future of the Lamb Center. And to see this here, right now, is absolutely incredible.”

Since 1992, The Lamb Center in Fairfax has served the poor and homeless. It is a daytime, drop-in shelter providing hot meals, showers and laundry services, plus recovery and employment counseling. Open six days a week, it receives about 150 people/day. In 2014, it had 31,103 guest visits and provided 44,567 meals, 12,033 showers, some 9,700 loads of laundry and more than 10,000 group and individual counseling sessions.

And as Fairfax County's homeless population grew, so did the number of people flocking to the Lamb Center. More room was

SEE MESSAGES, PAGE 3



From left are Michael DeMarco, Ellie Schmidt, John MacPherson, Scott Silverthorne and David Meyer.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBERT LINDSEY

Saturday kitchen volunteers (back row, from left) Kedidja English, Pamela Allen, Robert Lindsey, Patrick Walsh, Kijani English and Angel Lindsey, and (front) Belai English.

Messages of Hope, Love at New Lamb Center

FROM PAGE 2

needed; so this spring, the Center will move from its current rented site off Old Lee Highway to its new home on more than one-third of an acre on Campbell Drive.

Having a larger, two-story building will enable The Lamb Center to provide more services. It will add a clothing closet and food pantry, as well as office space for its staff. Future plans include offering dental care and a nurse practitioner.

THE FACILITY will be open Monday-Saturday, with four full-time staff members and four volunteers there at all times. There will be a great room where meals are served, plus rooms for classes and social workers. And the kitchen, laundry and bathrooms will all increase in size.

Last Saturday, Feb. 13, people attending the 1:30 p.m. beam-signing ceremony at the construction site began by holding hands in a large circle and saying prayers. Among them were Lamb Center executive director John MacPherson, Fairfax City Mayor Scott Silverthorne and City Council members David Meyer, Ellie Schmidt and Michael DeMarco.

"Lord, we're grateful for this moment and we owe it all to you," said one woman. "God, this is Holy ground and we're grateful that, in this place, your lambs will be tended," said another.

"Lord, thank you for this day and bless everything that goes on in this place," said Larrabee. Then a woman thanked God for "all the lives that will be healed here." Also saying a prayer was Meyer, who said, "May

"This is a new place for people who need it in the bitter cold winter."

—Belai English, 10

these walls and this roof be a place of God's love, peace and justice and a place of healing and wholeness.

Next, everyone sang "Amazing Grace." Then they used markers to write Bible verses and the names of people they are praying for on the beams and floor of the new building, imbuing it with love, hope and blessings to carry it forward.

Meyer wrote, "In memory of James Conklin, Sr., a servant of God at The Lamb Center." He was a retired, Fairfax County schoolteacher who lived in the City. "He was a friend of mine, went to Fairfax United Methodist Church and volunteered for many years at The Lamb Center," said Meyer. "He helped by leading worship, making meals and being a friend to the homeless."

Schmidt was pleased to be there, too. "I think this is an important day in the beginning of this new Lamb Center," she said. "And it's impressive to see as many friends and supporters here on this cold day to mark this milestone."

One of the youngest participants was Bailey Libby, 7, who came with her brother Riggs, 9, and their parents, Roger and Lisa. Bailey attends Mantua Elementary and her message was straight to the point and heartfelt. She wrote, "To The Lamb Center, God



Councilman David Meyer writing on a vertical beam in memory of a friend.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Riggs Libby, 9, watches as his sister Bailey, 7, writes a message.



Belai English, 10, writes "God is awesome" on a beam.

Loves you, from Bailey."

"The Lamb Center has been a part of our family for years," explained her father. "We've donated items from dishwasher detergent to salt, food and paper towels. It's those small things that bring us together, and we wanted to make sure our children got a chance to see our faith in action and to see people the way God sees them."

Meanwhile, Belai English, 10, wrote "God is awesome." He came with his mom and others who volunteer on Saturdays in The Lamb Center's kitchen. "This is a new place for people who need it in the bitter-cold winter," he said. "They can get clothes here, dine here and learn about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit."

HIS MENTOR, Fairfax's Pamela Allen, is among the kitchen volunteers. "We wanted to come here today to show our love for people," she said. "We're also part of the Saturday praying crew. God is bringing this property to pass, and it's going to be a beacon of light, a blessing and something good in the community."

Also there was Peaches Pearson with daughter Valisha Jackson. Pearson's volunteered with The Lamb Center for several years and, when her office was nearby, she collected items for it from her co-workers.

"I also did Thanksgiving baskets and Christmas stockings, and my daughter collected things for gift bags for the homeless," said Pearson. "We've been homeless in the past, ourselves, so we wanted to help others."

She is also excited about the Center's new location. "I'm a member of Fairfax County's advisory council to end homelessness in the county by 2018, and my daughter and I help the homeless any way we can," said Pearson. She now has a good job and her own home but, she said, "I was homeless as a teen, sleeping in cars and laundromats, so I know how difficult it is."

"I especially love The Lamb Center because it also incorporates religion and helps people find their strength and spirituality," she continued. "I've been driving by, watching the building take shape, and am looking forward to it opening in the spring."

About \$300 More per Household

County Executive: Revenue growth is insufficient to fund all priorities. Schools still \$68 million short.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

County Executive Ed Long recommended a four-cent increase to the real estate tax rate. But to meet the full request of Fairfax County Public Schools, he said, would require a three-cent increase on top of the budget he built.

Long presented the FY 2017 Advertised Budget Plan to the Board of Supervisors Tuesday morning, Feb. 16.

"The budget is a discussion with the community," said Chairman Sharon Bulova.

"This is the first step," said Lee Supervisor Jeff McKay, head of the board's budget committee.

"We have to see what the reactions are," said Long.

Bulova is scheduled to advertise the FY 2017 tax rate on March 1. At that point, the board can lower but not increase from the tax rate advertised.

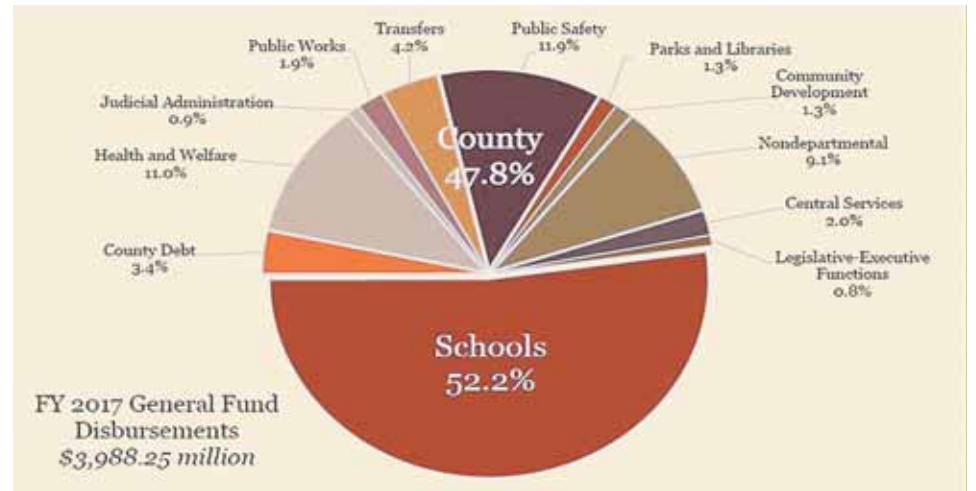
The projected value of each penny is \$23.3 million to the county, Long said.

"At the current real estate tax rate, revenue growth is insufficient to fund all of our priorities," Long told the Board of Supervisors.

But even with the increase, he warned, there are "many unmet needs and investment requirements that remain unfunded."

Each member of the Board of Supervisors will hold local community dialogues in their respective districts; then the board will hold public hearings on the budget from April 5-7.

The board will adopt the final budget on April 26.



More than 50 percent of Fairfax County's \$3.988 billion budget will be transferred to Fairfax County Public Schools, \$68 million less than FCPS requested.

THE FEUD resumed between the School Board and the Board of Supervisors before Long's speech even concluded, with his proposed budget falling \$68 million short of what FCPS Superintendent Karen Garza

says is needed.

"We are dismayed that Fairfax County Executive Ed Long has ignored the pleas of

SEE COUNTY BUDGET, PAGE 8



Hundreds of parents and community supporters turned out to spread the message "Invest in Kids" after an advertised Fairfax County budget announced Feb. 16 leaves the public schools system around \$68 million short of its requested transfer.



Parents and children held up homemade signs urging support for full funding of Fairfax County Public Schools' FY 2017 budget as adopted by the School Board.

PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

Parents, Community Supporters Rally to 'Invest in Kids'

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

Emotional independent outbursts and communal chants of "Fund our schools" and "Invest in kids" echoed through the grand amphitheater just beyond the entrance to the Fairfax County Government Center.

The same day Fairfax County Executive Ed Long announced his proposal for a nearly \$4 billion county budget at the Board of Supervisors morning meeting,

school advocacy groups including IamFCPS, the Fairfax County Council of PTAs, Fairfax Education Association, Fairfax FLAGS and Fairfax Arts Coalition for Education, organized a rally in the evening calling for the supervisors to fully fund the FY 2017 budget adopted by the School Board.

That budget, a \$121.4 million increase over the previous year, represents not only a 6.7 percent increase in transfer from the county, but also enables Superintendent Dr. Karen Garza to steer the school system forward with no additional cuts to programs

or services.

Though Garza won't formally present her budget to the supervisors until early April, Long's \$3.988 billion proposed budget falls short of the current requested transfer to the school system by nearly \$68 million.

"This is not good enough," said Fairfax Education Association president Kimberly Adams. "Our children are worth more, our community is worth more, and Fairfax is willing to invest a few cents more to make sure our next generation has a bright future."

Adams was one of several speakers scheduled to speak who also included Debbie Kilpatrick, president of the Fairfax County Council of PTAs; Shirley Ginwright, president of the Fairfax County NAACP; and Garza.

Several members of the Fairfax County School Board were in attendance, as well as Supervisor Cathy Hudgins (D-Hunter Mill) and Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova.

SEE COMMUNITY, PAGE 15

WEEK IN FAIRFAX

Scout Collects Home Welcome Kits for Formerly Homeless

Over the next five months, a nonprofit organization called Pathway Homes will be moving formerly homeless people into new homes. Life Scout Will McLaughlin needs your help rounding up cleaning items for their new homes as part of his Eagle Scout Project. He has put up an Amazon wish-list of all the items he needs for Home Welcome Kits. Here is a link to his list: <https://goo.gl/uqk4Gd>

How can you help?

❖ Send anything you would like to buy from the Amazon wish-list. Or you can send similar items from any store.

❖ Send items to: Pathway Homes C/O Will McLaughlin 2505 Red Clover Court; Reston, VA 20191.

McLaughlin and his Scout supporters will organize your gifts into Home Welcome Kits for Pathway Homes to give to its clients as they move in. For more details about Pathway Homes see: www.pathwayhomes.org. If you have any questions, you can email McLaughlin at Willmcl@yahoo.com or call him at 571-355-4068.

Purim Celebration at Jewish Community Center

The Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia invites the community to a Purim celebration, It's a Laugh!, on Sunday, March 6, 3-5 p.m., at 8900 Little River Turnpike in Fairfax. Activities include making your own hamantaschen (triangle cookies) with Lauren Katz, the winner of ABC's Great Holiday Baking Show; The Great Zucchini; Voted Best Children's Entertainer by the readers of Arlington Magazine; a children's costume Purim Parade; making gift bags for the hungry; and crafts for all ages, even newborns. Admission: \$5 per person; adults and children 2+ (including snack)/Children under 2 free. Register online at: JCCNV.org, code#7343; or www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2506048. Contact: Samantha.Brown@jccnv.org or 703.537.3019.

Vietnam Combat Art Exhibit Extended Through Feb. 29

The traveling exhibition of "Vietnam Combat Art," which commemorates the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War, has been extended through Feb. 29 at the Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, 10209 Main Street.

This traveling exhibition features 39 pieces of art from the collection of the Department of the Army's Center for Military History.

Admission to the exhibit is free. The Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Information: www.fairfaxva.gov, 703-385-8414.



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VDOT Virginia Department of Transportation

Transform 66 Inside the Beltway Project
Arlington County, City of Falls Church and Fairfax County
 Design Public Hearings

All hearing times are 6-8 p.m., with a brief presentation beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Monday, March 7, 2016
 Washington-Lee High School Cafeteria
 1301 N. Stafford Street
 Arlington, VA 22201

Tuesday, March 8, 2016
 Eagle Ridge Middle School Cafeteria
 42901 Waxpool Road
 Ashburn, VA 20148

Wednesday, March 9, 2016
 VDOT Northern Virginia District Office
 4975 Alliance Drive
 Fairfax, VA 22030

Visit Transform66.org to view a live stream of this presentation at 6:30 p.m.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), in partnership with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), will host Design Public Hearings for the Transform 66 Inside the Beltway Project. Improvements involve converting I-66 to dynamically-priced toll lanes in the peak direction during morning (eastbound) and afternoon (westbound) rush hours between I-495 (the Capital Beltway) and U.S. Route 29 in Rosslyn, along with implementing a series of multimodal improvements that will benefit toll users of I-66. Information related to proposed locations and design of toll gantries and signage will be available at the hearings, as well as a presentation on how the toll system will operate.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 CFR 771, draft Categorical Exclusion (CE) documentation has been prepared in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration and is available for review and comment. VDOT staff will be available to discuss the environmental studies underway and the coordination with appropriate regulatory agencies to obtain information about the resources in the project's vicinity. A public notice for review and comment on the final CE documentation will be posted at a later date. In compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 and 36 CFR Part 800, information concerning the potential effects of the proposed project on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places is also provided in the environmental documentation.

Stop by to learn more about the project, discuss your questions with project staff, and attend the formal presentation.

Review project materials at the hearings, including the draft CE, traffic technical report, plans, project schedule, and right-of-way, environmental and civil rights information. Materials are available for review at www.Transform66.org, at public locations listed on the project website, or VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office at 4975 Alliance Drive in Fairfax. Please call 800-FOR-ROAD (800-367-7623) or TTY/TDD 711 to ensure availability of appropriate personnel to answer your questions.

Give your written or oral comments at the hearings or submit them to Amanda Baxter, Special Projects Development Manager, at the VDOT Northern Virginia District Office (address noted above). You may also e-mail comments at any time to Transform66@VDOT.Virginia.gov. Please reference "Transform 66 Inside the Beltway" in the subject line. Comments must be postmarked, emailed or delivered to VDOT by March 24, 2016 to be included in the public hearing record.

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT's Civil Rights Division at 800-367-7623 or TTY/TDD 711.

State Project: 0066-96A-358, P101 UPC: 107371

OPINION

Fairfax Presses Ahead with Diversion First

When police encounter someone in mental health crisis, they can transport them to Merrifield Crisis Response Center instead of jail.

Natasha McKenna died a little more than a year ago on Feb. 7, 2015. McKenna, with a long history of severe and often untreated mental illness, had been deteriorating in the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center since Jan. 26, 2015, arriving directly from release from the hospital on an outstanding warrant from the City of Alexandria charging felonious assault on an Alexandria police officer.

We can't know whether new efforts to provide people in mental health crisis might have saved her life if they were available and put in place early in this particular crisis, which appears to have begun a month before her death. McKenna's death is a terrible tragedy, and no new program will remove that horror.

But it's clear that treatment rather than jail can make all the difference for many people who come into contact with law enforcement in a mental health crisis. Diversion First is a collaborative effort in Fairfax County to reduce the number of people with mental illness in the county jail by diverting low risk offenders experiencing a mental health crisis to treatment rather than bringing them to jail.

Sheriff Stacey Kincaid estimates that 40 percent of detainees at the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center have mental illness. Notably, it is far more expensive to house someone in county jail than to provide treatment.

The collaborative effort was in no small part launched by Supervisor John Cook when he

asked that the Board of Supervisors to add crisis intervention training to the scope of work of the Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission. The Mental Health subcommittee along with the Community Services Board, the Sheriff's Department, police and mental health advocates set and met an aggressive agenda and timetable for implementation, with the program actually beginning in less than a year, on Jan. 1, 2016. In the first month, the Merrifield Crisis Response Center handled more than 100 cases involving police and people in mental health crisis.

Merrifield Crisis Response Center operates as an assessment site where police are able to transfer custody of nonviolent offenders who may need mental health services to a CIT-trained officer or deputy assigned there, instead of taking them to jail.

How far-reaching, life-saving and resource-preserving Diversion First will turn out to be will depend on how it is implemented and the discretion and policies of the police and prosecutors, among others.

Freedom of Information on Life Support in General Assembly?

Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34) cites FOIA on life

support in his blog oxroadsouth.com:

"Last week, the Assembly passed SB 202, which undid a major push eight years ago to ensure that all of our public spending was 'online' and searchable by ordinary citizens. This, of course, meant disclosing the salaries of public employees over a certain income level. However, SB 202

has undone all of that, which means that you will no longer know how much a public employee (even a city manager) is paid unless you make a formal FOIA request. (Because we all have time to do that).

"This bad idea passed on a 27-12 vote.

"Today the Senate passed SB 552 which is even more sweeping. It actually prohibits from disclosure not just the salary information but even the names of public safety personnel, including the Sheriff, the Chief of Police and the Fire Chief.

"On the floor today, I pointed out that a Chief of Police could put his own family on the payroll and be protected from disclosure. This could also be an issue if a law enforcement agency hires an officer with a poor record from another jurisdiction — and nobody knows. Again, who are we protecting?"

"Again, the bill passed 25-15."

"If I'm making a veto list, these two are definitely on it."

We agree.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Regional Gas Tax, Digital Divide and Identity Protection

BY SCOTT SUROVELL
STATE SENATOR (D-36)



The fifth week of the General Assembly Session brought some long days and nights as we rushed to complete work on bills before our mid-session deadline called "Cross-over."

First the Senate passed legislation to plug a hole in the Northern Virginia 2.1 percent regional gas tax that is used to fund transit. This legislation was the top priority for Fairfax, Prince William and Stafford counties.

It now goes on to an uncertain future in the House of Delegates, but without the legislation, localities will be under even more pressure to raise real estate taxes if we expect to maintain the same level of transit service.

Eleven of my bills have passed the full Senate with two more still waiting for final passage. One bill involved improving the fairness of protective order proceedings and another ensured that Virginians

can enforce subpoenae in civil and criminal cases in Virginia due to a recent Supreme Court of Virginia opinion.

My legislation to help close the Digital Divide moved through committee this week. Today's children learn digitally and digital literacy is a key job skill in a modern workforce. However, low income families often cannot afford devices or broadband connections.

After I learned Fairfax County was using electronic textbooks and failing to provide computers for low income families to use them at home, I introduced legislation to require any school using electronic textbooks to provide a digital device to every student. The legislation was vetted and approved by the Joint Commission on Technology and Science but was tabled in the House. Last week, the Senate Education, Health and Welfare Committee

passed the bill on a 14-1 vote.

The proliferation of companies providing background checks for people has led to an increase in dissemination of inaccurate information. This severely limits Virginians' opportunities, especially in employment and housing. My legislation to create a Virginia-based cause of action to remedy these situations and hold companies accountable for putting out inaccurate information passed the Senate.

Several of my law firm clients and lawyers in Northern Virginia have told me that some orthopedic practices are refusing to see individuals who have suffered injuries in vehicle collisions — even if they have insurance. My bill to require insurance companies to contractually prohibit doctors from refusing patients based on how they were injured was continued to 2017 so we can convene meetings between insurance companies, doctors, and other stakeholders to mediate a resolution.

If you have any feedback, please send me a note at scott@scottsuovell.org. It is an honor to serve as your state senator.

Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors. Send to:

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OBITUARY

Leah Angela Socha, 66, of Fairfax, Dies

Leah Angela Socha was born Aug. 28, 1949 in Meriden, Conn. to George Kakis and Evelyn Mitchell. She attended High School in Wethersfield, Conn. then moved to Massachusetts where she met her husband Bernie. Leah lived in New England for over 25 years, moved to Chicago for a short time with her husband and son and eventually settled down in Virginia, living in Springfield, Fairfax and Burke, where she raised her growing family for over 35 years.

Leah and Bernie raised four children who now live in Burke, Denver, Colo. and Los Angeles. She had four grandchildren.

Leah met her husband Bernie at their place of work in Massachusetts. She was an avid cook, famous for her Greek dishes (including an incredible baklava) and a mouth-watering meatloaf, which is now served at Bernie's Deli in Fairfax. She passes down an extensive book of recipes to the next generation, many hand-written or with hand-written notes, to guide them through the years.

Leah was a partner with her husband in Wagshals, a Washington, D.C. institution, which was purchased from the Wagshal family in the early 90s with the Fuchs family of Burke and expanded over the years. Leah was also a partner in



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Lela Angela Socha

Bernie's Delicatessen and Market in Fairfax. Many may not know that she also worked for some time as a licensed private investigator for a Virginia law firm. She had many talents.

Leah was 100 percent Greek and has family in Greece to this day. She traveled throughout the world including Greece, England, France, Switzerland, Italy, Egypt, Caribbean Islands, Mexico and the Virgin Islands. She was a league bowler for many years, frequenting Bowl America in Burke with her bowling buddies. She loved going to the beach, visiting extended family in Massachusetts, hosting Memorial Day 'Chicken

Fire' barbecues for friends and family for over 15 years and spending time with her family.

Leah is survived by her husband Bernard Stanley Socha, sons Michael David and Matthew Bernard; daughters Victoria Lynn and Jennifer Michelle; four grandchildren Benjamin, Brooke, Jessica, Rachel; many loving nieces, nephews and a large extended family. Leah was a loving mother, wife, grandmother and friend to so many. Her memorial service was on Saturday, Feb. 13 at Fairfax Memorial Funeral Home in Fairfax.

Memorial donations may be made to the American Lung Association in Leah's name to honor her life and help fund research to find a cure for interstitial lung disease and lung cancer.

Donate at www.lung.org or in honor donation at https://secure3.convio.net/ala/site/Donation2?df_id=31272&31272.donation=form1.

To send condolences to the family you may email one of the family members for more information or send to the funeral home directly. The family would also love for you to leave a comment and share your memories of Leah at <http://www.fairfaxmemorialfuneralhome.com/obituary/Leah-Angela-Socha/Fairfax-VA/1587999>.

FAITH NOTES

Lenten Soup Supper. Fridays from Feb. 26-March 18, 5:30-7 p.m. will be offered at **Holy Spirit School Cafeteria**, 8800 Braddock Road, Annandale. Meatless soup suppers on Fridays during Lent, followed by the Stations of the Cross in the Church at 7 p.m. Free. Contact Lambie Renner, renner@holyspiritchurch.us.

Fairfax Baptist Temple, at the corner of Fairfax County Parkway and Burke Lake Roads, holds a bible study fellowship at 9 a.m. Sundays followed by a 10 a.m. worship service. Nursery care and children's church also provided. 6401 Missionary Lane, Fairfax Station, 703-323-8100 or www.fbtministries.org.

The Guhyasamaja Buddhist Center, 10875 Main St., Fairfax City provides free classes to both newcomers and advanced practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism. The center emphasizes working with the mind and learning how to understand the workings of the mind, overcoming inner causes of suffering, while cultivating causes of happiness. Under the direction of Lama Zopa Rinpoche, the center is a place of study, contemplation and meditation. Visit <http://www.guhyasamaja.org> for more information.

Lord of Life Lutheran offers services at two locations, in Fairfax at 5114 Twinbrook Road and in Clifton

at 13421 Twin Lakes Drive. Services in Fairfax are held on Saturdays at 5:30 p.m. and Sundays at 8:30 and 10 a.m. Services in Clifton are held on Sundays at 8:15 and 10:30 a.m. 703-323-9500 or www.Lordoflifeva.org.

Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, 8336 Carleigh Parkway in Springfield, supports a Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) program on the first and third Wednesday of each month. Meetings are 9:30-11:30 a.m. at the church. All mothers and children are welcome. The program provides mothers an opportunity to get to know other mothers through discussions and craft activities. Register. 703-451-5320.

First Baptist Church of Springfield offers Sunday school at 9:15 a.m., followed by a 10:30 a.m. worship service at 7300 Gary St., Springfield. 703-451-1500 or www.fbcspRINGfield.org.

Clifton Presbyterian Church, 12748 Richards Lane, Clifton, offers Sunday worship services at 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Nursery care is provided. Christian education for all ages is at 9:45 a.m. 703-830-3175.

St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church, 6720 Union Mill Road, Clifton, conducts Sunday masses at 7:30 a.m., 8:45 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. It also offers a Saturday vigil at 5:30 p.m. and a Thursday Latin mass at 7 p.m. 703-817-1770 or www.st-andrew.org.

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 8304 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield, offers casual worship services on Saturday evenings at 5:30 p.m. featuring contemporary music. More traditional services take place on Sunday mornings at 8:15 and 11 a.m. Sunday School is from 9:45-10:45 a.m. for children and adults. The church also offers discussion groups for adults. 703-451-5855 or www.poplc.org.

JCCNV Mother's Circle program, for women who are not Jewish but are raising Jewish children. Free education in Jewish rituals, practices and values, while respecting the participant's choice to retain her own religious identity. Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike in Fairfax. Contact Laurie Albert, 703-537-3064 or HYPERLINK "mailto:LaurieA@jccnv.org" LaurieA@jccnv.org.

Franconia United Methodist Church, 6037 Franconia Road, Alexandria, offers traditional Sunday church services at 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. plus Sunday School classes for all ages at 9:45 a.m. Childcare is available 8:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. There will be a Terry Hall Concert on Saturday, April 14 at 4 p.m. with old spirituals, classic hymns, southern gospel favorites and more. 703-971-5151 or admin@franconiaumc.org or www.franconiaumc.org.

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County Budget Presented

FROM PAGE 4

parents, students, employees and community members to fully fund Fairfax County Public Schools' budget in FY 2017," said School Board president Pat Hynes in an emailed statement. "Despite calling for a tax increase, Mr. Long's budget signals no increase to the schools above last year's budget guidance of three percent while increasing the county's budget by a greater percentage. ... This news means that, unless the Board of Supervisors provides for a funding increase above Mr. Long's recommendation, Fairfax County Public Schools will once again have to make damaging budget cuts that will reduce educational opportunities for our children."



PHOTO BY KEN MOORE/THE CONNECTION

County Executive Ed Long balanced this year's proposed budget with a three-cent increase on real estate, but recommends a four-cent increase.

McKay, head of the budget committee, immediately countered after the Board of Supervisors hearing. He had already read words from various school officials.

"Expressing to people somehow that the Board of Supervisors is cutting the school budget which was again expressed in writing today," said McKay, "is just technically not true."

"Let's talk about how we can better meet the school's needs but let's be truthful in presenting the facts to people about what is actually happening. While the county has dramatically increased education funding every year that I've been on board, the state has fallen further and further and further behind."

"There is a point in time in which we have to lobby the state to fix that problem," he said.

The board has increased the funding of schools by \$230 million since FY 2008, he said during the presentation. "Clearly this budget doesn't meet the transfer request of the schools and we need to do something to address that."

VIRGINIA RANKS in the top ten in both per capita and median household income but in the bottom 10 for state funding of public education, according to county documents.

"As the county has been saying for many years, the state is not meeting its share of funding for K-12 education in Fairfax County," Long said.

"That puts a tremendous strain on other parts of our budget when the state doesn't come through," Long said.

"That's an awful lot for our citizens to

bear," said Supervisor Pat Herry (R-Springfield) of the proposed tax increase. "I'm hoping we can do something with our community to take the burden off the backs of our taxpayers."

Supervisor John Cook (R-Braddock) called it a "dark and dreary and ugly day."

"We are getting squeezed by national economic forces that are the worst in our lifetimes," he said. "This is where it comes to roost. Right here."

"We're going to have to get out a pencil and figure out where we can find some savings," said Cook. "Four pennies is nothing I can swallow."

"I'm not gloomy," said Supervisor Cathy Hudgins (D-Hunter Mill). "Four cents sounds like an awful lot, but I can tell you I feel stronger in the way that we can support the schools, and the ways we can support the community."

The countywide average assessment for all homes is \$527,648, and the owner of a home valued that much would see \$304 increase in property taxes. The county average assessment for a single family house is \$632,507. Assessments vary by location. In Great Falls, the average is \$1,055,249. In Centreville, the average is \$385,089.

CRITICAL ITEMS included in the budget, according to Long: FCPS operating increase of three percent; FCPS infrastructure investment; improvements in county employee compensation; investments in public safety including increased staffing, beginning implementation of Ad Hoc Police Commission recommendations and Diversion First,



PHOTO BY KEN MOORE/THE CONNECTION

The Board of Supervisors is scheduled to adopt the FY 2017 Budget on April 26. Chairman Sharon Bulova is scheduled to advertise the FY 2017 tax rate on March 1.

Budget Town Hall Meetings

Hunter Mill District Community Summit

Saturday, Feb. 20, 8:30 a.m.
Vienna Fire Station: Flame Room, 400 Center Street South, Vienna

Mount Vernon District Town Hall Meeting

Saturday, Feb. 27, 9:30 a.m.
Walt Whitman Middle School, 2500 Parkers Lane, Alexandria

Sully District / Sully District Council Budget Meeting

Monday, March 7, 7 p.m.
Rocky Run Middle School - "Little Theatre" - 4400 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly

Providence District Budget Council Budget Town Hall Meeting

Wednesday, March 9, 7 p.m.
Providence Community Center - 3001 Vaden Drive, Fairfax - Multi-Purpose Room 2

Mason District Budget Meeting

Wednesday, March 16, 7 p.m.
Mason District Government Center, 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale - Main Community Room

Springfield District Budget Meeting

Wednesday, March 23, 7 p.m.
West Springfield Government Center - 6140 Rolling Road, Springfield - Community Room

Dranesville District Budget Meeting / McLean Citizens Association (MCA)

Wednesday, March 23, 7:30 p.m.
McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean

Braddock District Budget Meeting

Monday, March 28, 7:30 p.m.
Robinson Secondary School - "Recital Hall" - 5035 Sideburn Road, Fairfax

Lee District Association of Civic Organizations Community Budget Meeting

Wednesday, March 30, 7 p.m.
Lee District Governmental Center - 6121 Franconia Road, Alexandria

Dranesville District / Great Falls Citizen's Association Budget Meeting

Thursday, March 31, 7 p.m.
The Great Falls Grange, 9818 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls

staffing for new police station in South County; spending on Human Services, including full funding for this year's intellectual disability graduates.

Several issues contribute to the revenue challenges, Long said.

❖ The local economy underperformed the national economy from 2011 - 2014.

❖ High office vacancy rate in the county - over 20 million square feet vacant out of 116.5 million square feet. As of mid-year 2015, direct office vacancy rate was 16.5 percent, highest since 1991, when it was 16.8 percent.

❖ Local real estate market is

underperforming the nation, so county's FY 2017 real estate tax growth lower than anticipated.

But "looking forward," Long said, "there's reasons for optimism. I'm optimistic about our local economy."

The board adopted the Economic Strategic Plan, he said.

"The Silver Line is going ahead full steam and we are going to see that opening up in 2019-2020. That gives reason for optimism," he said.

"And all the rezoning in Tysons and Reston, I'm extremely optimistic we are going to grow our commercial base."



PHOTO COURTESY OF DIETRICH'S KARATE FITNESS AND LIFE SKILLS

Students work on light saber skills during a class at Dietrich's Karate Fitness and Life Skills in Burke.

Star Wars Fans Flock to Local Classes

Movie's popularity leaves fans wanting to feel "The Force."

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Beams of neon light flash around a dark room. Young Star Wars fans from a galaxy not so far away wield light sabers and move with carefully choreographed steps. These Jedi-in-training are undergoing a fantasy combat training that melds martial arts with light saber fighting, Star Wars-style.

"Star Wars fans are the ultimate martial arts enthusiasts. Star Wars is 100 percent developed on the concepts and philosophies of martial arts ... the use of the sword, the belief structure," said Michael Dietrich of Dietrich's Karate Fitness and Life Skills in Burke. "Now we have an opportunity to invite students because of their interest in the movie. It's an easy way to bring them into our schools and show them what martial arts are all about."

Building on the hype surrounding the recent release of "Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awakens," Dietrich began offering classes at his newly created "Laser Saber Academy." Students sign up for a six-week class, where they learn how to use a light saber, tap into "The Force," and improve their focus, discipline and determination.

"Any time a new movie or TV show comes out that features a robot, there is a spike in

interest in robotics," said Dan Gallagher of RobotWorks in Burke. "Every kid I've talked to since the Star Wars movie came out wants to know how BB-8 works. Before that, they talked about other robots like Wall-E, R2D2, and Baymax."

At RobotWorks, Gallagher's students learn basic robot design, construction and programming. "In general, though, kids are always interested in robots and how they work. Robots are fun," said Gallagher. "Building robots is even more fun, so we see a steady interest that might jump a little when a new movie robot makes an appearance because it acts as a reminder of that interest — bringing it back to the front burner."

The concepts of the Star Wars universe are seeping into the extracurricular class choices at local schools, with students opting to take offerings like robotics and 3-D modeling. "I think that there is some interest in our STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics) activities that grows from sci-fi movies like Star Wars,"

said Richard Rho, director of Technology Education and Innovation at St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School. "I have had students 3D model and print the Tie Fighters and X Wing from the movies as well as talking about how we could create our own BB-8 droid in the robotics lab as the off season project."

Educators say that such activities are fun and engaging while also educational. "It's great students are getting inspired by the movie to create ideas and designs and spreading that interest with the rest of our community," said Rho.

"Any time a new movie or TV show comes out that features a robot, there is a spike in interest in robotics."

— Dan Gallagher of RobotWorks in Burke



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For Love of Art and Companionship

Fairfax Art League holds reception, promotes art in community.

BY REEM NADEEM
THE CONNECTION

Local artists and art lovers gathered in Old Town Hall Gallery for a reception hosted by the Fairfax Art League.

Artwork by members of FAL was displayed and refreshments were provided. According to Old Town Hall Gallery Chairman, Carol Caputo, the League displayed a variety of artistic media.

"We have different media that our artists are doing. We have a graphic artist here tonight, we have pen and pencil sketching, we have the photographers, we have some who work in acrylics, some who work in watercolors," Caputo said.

The reception featured artwork that was varied in other ways than just medium as well.

"Some people like to do posies in a vase, some people like to be very avant-garde, cutting edge. And there's room for everybody here," member Ramona Weaver said.

The League also encourages participation from different types of artists as well, including those who create art as a hobby, professional artists and beginners. FAL member and publicist Helena O'Neill said the League can be especially beneficial and inspiring to budding artists.

"There are deadlines to get stuff into the shows and that is wonderful for young artists, it gives you sort of a point in time to finish your work and then grow. Because if you don't experiment and put stuff out there that maybe people are either offended by, or don't like what you're doing or just aren't inspired, you move on, you say 'alright I have got to push myself a little further,'" O'Neill said.

While artistic knowledge and techniques can be traded, some members simply enjoy the company of other artists.

"The only thing that it does for me is to provide companionship with people who are artists and that's important," Weaver said.

Community members also attended the reception to help support the local art scene. UPS driver Mike Gross came to support his neighbor and her daughter, who both had their art displayed.

As a supporter of the arts, Gross said Fairfax could do more for local artists: "Fairfax County has one of the most educated populations



Helena O'Neill, of Burke, Fairfax Art League publicist and artist.

PHOTOS BY REEM NADEEM/THE CONNECTION



Atti Vakili Wheeler, of Annandale, artist.



Melinda Rhodes, of Burke, retired.



Glenda Kirkman, City of Fairfax, secretary at Hart & Horan PC.

in the country and the arts should be part of that. Not that underrepresented and poorer areas shouldn't have access to it and encourage it and everything else, but we have the resources. It's not

like there's extra money laying around but comparatively we're a very rich place, with a lot of educated people that should be able to crack open the wallet a little bit more for the arts."



"Disney Fantasia: Live in Concert" — The Sorcerer's Apprentice scene.

IMAGES COURTESY OF DISNEY

Fantasia at Mason

Legendary animated 'Disney Fantasia: Live in Concert' at Center for the Arts Feb. 27.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

Where and When

If you like Disney today, you owe it to yourself to see the beginnings of what came before contemporary Disney features such as 'Frozen' or 'Toy Story,' said Rob Farr, professor, Film History, George Mason University in a recent interview. "The beginnings even of contemporary music videos can be traced back to Disney and 'Fantasia.'"

If you recall the animated "Fantasia" or "Fantasia 2000" from your own youth, "you definitely want to see this iconic, essential film with live music accompaniment" added Farr. "There is nothing like it. It is great art."

Released in 1940, the original "Fantasia" was a provocative untried film experiment combining classic orchestral music with a full-length animated feature. "Fantasia" was regularly re-released on large screens over the next decades to become an audience favorite. A re-charged sequel titled "Fantasia 2000" was released in 1999 that continued the magic for new generation.

At Mason's Center for the Arts, patrons will be able to experience some of the preeminent parts of both "Fantasia" movies not only projected on a large screen but with a live orchestra accompaniment. Czech National Symphony Orchestra with Ted Sperling conducting will provide all the sounds and colors that live music can offer. Sperling has won both Tony and Drama Desk Awards for his work on Broadway and Off-Broadway. The Czech National Symphony Orchestra is known for its broad range of work.

"Disney Fantasia: Live in Concert," featuring the Czech National Symphony Orchestra with Ted Sperling conducting at the George Mason University Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Performance: Feb. 27, 2016 at 8:00 pm. Tickets: \$36, \$51, \$60. Call 888-945-2468 or visit www.cfa.gmu.edu. Note: There will be a pre-performance discussion. George Mason University has designated "Disney Fantasia: Live in Concert" as a family friendly event. All children, regardless of age, must have a ticket.

Audience members can expect to see many scenes while actively listening to powerful music such as Beethoven's "Symphony No. 5," Stravinsky's "The Firebird Suite," Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker Suite," and Dukas' "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," as well as the sweet beauty of Debussy's "Claire de Lune," Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker Suite," and Saint-Saens' "The Carnival of the Animals" to name a few.

The music will propel the animated action of adorable dancing hippos in tutus, cute alligators, scary uncontrollable broom sticks and lovable pixie mushrooms along with, of course Mickey Mouse himself. A cornucopia of flying swooping firebirds, slow moving trampling prehistoric animals, dainty spirited fairies as well as colorful graphic abstractions melded together on the screen. There is hectic comedy, roaring battles, soft reverie and chills.

Whether you have fond childhood memories or will be seeing excerpts from Disney's "Fantasia" or "Fantasia 2000" for the first time, this is an opportunity to experience "Disney Fantasia: Live in Concert." Such a captivating encounter awaits for audiences of any age.

CALENDAR

Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416. The deadline is the Friday prior to the next paper's publication. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

THURSDAY/FEB. 18

Fairfax Antique Arts Association.

10 a.m. Green Acres Senior, 4401 Sideburn Road, Fairfax. Pat Meder will lead an entertaining discussion on her book, "The Inside Story of Catch-22," based on her research of her father's Army Air Force group in Italy whose members inspired the characters in Joseph Heller's hilarious novel. Non-members welcome. Free. 703-273-6090.

FRIDAY/FEB. 19

Palingenesis Exhibit Reception.

8 p.m. Epicure Cafe, 11104 Lee Highway, Fairfax. Brings together an eclectic group of local and D.C. artists working in a variety of media. Free. 571-212-7227. epicurecafe.cart@gmail.com.

SATURDAY/FEB. 20

Roy Assaf Trio and Tamar Barzel.

7 p.m. Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. Israeli jazz pianist Roy Assaf and author of "New York Noise, Radical Jewish Music and the Downtown Scene" Tamar Barzel. Author talk at 7 p.m. is free. Performance at 8 p.m. \$20-\$34. www.jcnavarts.org. 703-537-3000.

Open Mic Coffee House.

6:30-9 p.m. Calvary Baptist Church, 9301 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. The public is invited for good food, good music, good company. Everyone's welcome. Free. 703-955-2039.

SUNDAY/FEB. 21

Winter Concert-Northern Virginia Youth Winds.

3 p.m. WT Woodson High School, 9525 Main St., Fairfax. Free. <http://www.fairfaxband.org>.

Bazaar/Fun Fair.

2-5 p.m. Living Savior Lutheran Church, 5500 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Benefits Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Features Pampered Chef, baked treats, face painting, Star Wars impersonators. alicetedclark@hotmail.com. 703-293-1617.

Model N Gauge Train Display.

1-4 p.m. Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax. The Northern Virginia NTRAK group will have running N Gauge model trains. Free-\$4. www.fairfax-station.org. jhill5712@aol.com.

MONDAY/FEB. 22

"Kandahar Journals" and Louie Palu.

7:30 p.m. Johnson Center Cinema, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. A photojournalist's firsthand reflections while covering war. Louie Palu's experiences with several Canadian and American regiments in Afghanistan for five years. <http://fams.gmu.edu/events/5705>.

TUESDAY/FEB. 23

Robinson Orchestra Concert.

7 p.m. Russell Theater, Robinson Secondary School, 5035 Sideburn Road, Fairfax. Middle School students will perform "Farandole" from Bizet's L'Arlesienne Suite No. 2, "Danny Boy," "When Johnny Comes Marching Home" and "The Speckled Hen" Overture. Free. 703-426-2143.

THURSDAY/FEB. 25

Cloud 9.

8-10:30 p.m. George Mason

www.connectionnewspapers.com



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

The Roy Assaf Trio will perform at the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia on Saturday, Feb. 20.

University-TheatreSpace, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. The time-shifting gender-bending comedy both parodies and spoofs the Victorian Empire and its rigid attitudes as it shifts seamlessly between 1880s British Africa and 1980s London. \$10-\$15. <http://theater.gmu.edu>. 703-993-1120.

FRIDAY/FEB. 26

Seth Kibel Quartet.

8 p.m. Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Woodwind specialists, working with some of the best bands in jazz, swing, and more. Wowing audiences on saxophone, clarinet, and flute, Seth has made a name for himself in the Washington/Baltimore region, and beyond. Part of Bonita Lestina Performance Series. www.fairfaxva.gov.

SATURDAY/FEB. 27

Art and Lunch.

Noon-3 p.m. The Village Gallery, 3950 University Drive, Fairfax. Bring lunch and enjoy the company of other artists and learn something new. New members welcome. Free. www.fairfaxartleague.net. 703 587-9481.

Dessert on Broadway.

1:30, 7 p.m. Lake Braddock High School Cafeteria, 9200 Burke Lake Road, Burke. Sweeten up your Saturday watching performances from popular Broadway musicals while you delve into delectable desserts. \$20. www.brownpapertickets.com, search Lake Braddock.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/FEB. 27-28

46th Annual Springpex Stamp Show.

Saturday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday, 11 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Robert E. Lee High School, 6540 Franconia Road, Springfield. Sales bourse of 26 stamp dealers from throughout the Eastern U.S., and the Washington metropolitan area. In addition to the exhibits and sales bourse, special commemorative cachet covers and postal cancellations created by the show sponsors will be available. A US Postal Service sales booth will be available both days of the show. Free. www.springfieldstampclub.org.

SUNDAY/FEB. 28

2016 NoVa Simcha Expo.

Noon-4 p.m. Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. Party-planning expo is the place to be if you are planning a bar/bat mitzvah, wedding, baby naming, bris, or any other kind of celebration in the DMV. Plan to attend this one-stop shopping

expo to meet with party vendors. jcnv.org. 703-323-0880.

SATURDAY/MARCH 5

Grow Your Health.

10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Fairfax High School, 3501 Rebel Run Fairfax. Celebrate home gardening, sourcing organic and local food, and nutrition and wellness. This is a family focused event that includes education and entertainment for children of all ages. <http://www.growyourhealthnova.com/>.

Walking Washington D.C.

11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. City of Fairfax Regional Library (Meeting Room A/B), 10360 North St., Fairfax. Author Barbara J. Saffir shares hidden gems of Washington D.C. neighborhoods highlighting history, architecture, eateries, art and fun. Copies of her book will be available for sale. All ages. Free. 703-293-6227 ext. 4.

SUNDAY/MARCH 6

Capitol Steps.

7 p.m. Russell Theatre, Robinson Secondary School, 5035 Sideburn Road, Fairfax. The Rambunctious Theatre Company — in affiliation with Robinson Drama — is hosting the Capital Steps for a one night only political comedy fundraiser. \$35. www.robinsondrama.org.

TUESDAY/MARCH 8

Robinson Orchestra Concert.

7 p.m. Russell Theater, Robinson Secondary School, 5035 Sideburn Road, Fairfax. High school students will be featured in five ensembles, including our full symphony orchestra. Free. 703-426-2143.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 9

Springfield Christian Women's Connection.

11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Springfield Golf and Country Club, 8301 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Program on "Serendipity of Occoquan." Also, Ernie Parker-Wood, a retired teacher and world traveler, will share Weaving a Tapestry, the Dark Threads Enhance the Silver and Gold. \$20. Reserve by March 4. 703-922-6438. SpringWmConn@yahoo.com.

FRIDAY/MARCH 11

Woodbridge Flute Choir "A Touch of Irish."

8 p.m. Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Twenty-five members who play flute, piccolo, alto flute, bass flute and contrabass flute. Part of Bonita Lestina Performance Series. www.fairfaxva.gov.



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SPORTS

West Springfield sophomore Abbie Levine qualified for states in all-around with a third-place finish at the 6A North region gymnastics meet on Feb. 13. Freshman teammate Hannah Dotson tied for sixth.



PHOTO BY
JON ROETMAN/
THE CONNECTION

West Springfield Gymnastics Earns State Berth

Spartans finish runner-up at regional meet.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

West Springfield head coach Diana Edgell came to a pair of conclusions while observing during the 6A North region gymnastics meet.

1: The Spartans probably weren't going to win.

2: The Spartans performed well enough to compete with the best of the rest.

If Edgell was correct on both accounts, it would leave just one scenario in which West Springfield's season would continue beyond Saturday's regional meet: a second-place finish, which comes with a state berth.

A talented and deep Yorktown team would be announced as region champion. The Patriots produced a score of 146.05, nearly 2.5 points better than their closest competitor.

Moments before the winner was announced, however, Edgell's observations proved to be right on the money.

Members of the West Springfield gymnastics team celebrated on the gym floor at Patriot High School after it was announced the Spartans had finished second at regionals on Feb. 13. Nine days after winning the Conference 7 title — the program's first conference/district championship since 2007 — West Springfield produced a score of 143.575 at regionals and earned a spot at the state meet on Friday, Feb. 19 at Kellam High School in Virginia Beach.

"We didn't know. We had no idea where we would be," said Edgell, a 2003 West Springfield graduate and former cheerleader. "I was pretty sure we weren't going to win. After that, it was anyone's game. We really had no idea, so it was pretty exciting that we pulled it out. ... I thought we were doing well, and so I knew that if we did well, that we could have a chance. If we scored a little better, if we cleaned up some things on some different events that we did have a shot. I was pleased to see the improvements that we made."

Defending state champion McLean finished third with a score of 142.625, followed by Battlefield (141.25), Lake Braddock (139.625), Osbourn Park (139.625), Chantilly (133.525) and Oakton (130.225).

West Springfield sophomore Abbie Levine produced an all-around score of 37 and qualified for states with a third-place finish.

"She actually didn't have that great of a meet for her, so I was thrilled that she was able to qualify and will hopefully have a better meet at states, redeem some of the mishaps she had today," Edgell said. "She's just great. She's fearless and determined and always positive. She never gets down on herself. She always believes in herself and that's what I expect from her and she delivers."

Levine finished second on floor (9.525), placed fourth on vault (9.45), tied for sixth on bars (8.875) and finished ninth on beam (9.15).

"I feel very proud of myself," Levine wrote in an email, "and it makes me excited to know that there was room for improvement because I fell on two events."

Spartan freshman Hannah Dotson tied for sixth in all-around with a score of 36.55. She qualified for states as an individual on bars, placing second with a score of 9.5.

"Hannah Dotson was awesome," Edgell said. "She's a freshman and has no high school competitive experience. The fact that she can come in and can qualify individually on [bars] is just awesome. I'm super proud of her."

West Springfield freshman Alex Marsden qualified for states on beam, tying for sixth with a score of 9.35.

Abby Stout also competed for West Springfield.

"I'm so proud of them," Edgell said. "They lived up to every potential that they had and I couldn't be more thrilled for the girls because they've really worked so hard to get it."

After Friday's team competition, the individual state meet will be held Saturday, Feb. 20 at Kellam High School.

"I was on the team last year as well as this year and I can definitely see huge improvements," Levine wrote. "Not only because we added more people but because our team is more bonded and we're working together better. Personally, I've noticed that I am more motivated to do well this year. I'm having more fun with this sport that I previously did not have."

What are Edgell's expectations for states?

"I want to go and have fun," she said. "Other than that, I don't know. I know there's going to be a lot of really amazing gymnastics, a lot of really talented gymnasts there, so I just want to go and have fun because it's incredible that we've made it this far."



PHOTO BY JON ROETMAN/THE CONNECTION

Hayfield senior gymnast Molly Overstreet won the 6A North region bars championship on Feb. 13 at Patriot High School.

Hayfield's Overstreet Wins Region Bars Title

Molly Overstreet's decorated high school gymnastics career will conclude with a fourth trip to the state meet.

The Hayfield senior and two-time state champion qualified for states in two events during the 6A North region gymnastics meet on Feb. 13 at Patriot High School. Overstreet repeated as region bars champion and tied for third on floor.

The top eight finishers in each event qualify for states.

Overstreet received a score of 9.8 bars and 9.5 on floor.

"I feel like my routine on bars was good and I'm very happy to have finished first," Overstreet wrote in an email. "... I was very happy with my floor. It was the first time I competed my one-and-a-half twist this season, so I was a little nervous about it."

Overstreet tied for sixth in the all-around (36.55). She tied for

20th on beam (8.7) and tied for 29th on vault (8.55).

Overstreet's performance at regionals came eight days after she won the Conference 6 all-around championship with a score of 37.875 — her first conference all-around title.

As a sophomore, Overstreet won the state bars championship with a VHSL record score of 9.925. As a freshman, she won a share of the state vault title with a 9.8.

The individual state championship meet is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 20 at Kellam High School in Virginia Beach.

"For states I'm just trying to clean up my bar routine, mostly just my form throughout," Overstreet wrote. "... My goals for states are to just hit my routines and make them clean."

— JON ROETMAN

SPORTS ROUNDUPS

Loudoun Freedom Tryouts

The Loudoun Freedom is a competitive basketball organization for girls only. It provides players the opportunity to develop advanced basketball skills and knowledge, and to play in a very competitive environment. The Freedom emphasizes player development starting in third grade and continuing through high school. Open tryouts will be held for grades 3-8 on Sunday, Feb. 21 at Harmony Middle School.

Teams are formed at all playing levels to include an ELITE team at the eighth-grade level. Please visit www.LoudounFreedom.com for specific tryout times/locations. Pre-registration is highly encouraged.

Potomac Field Hockey Registration

Registration is now open for Potomac Field Hockey's spring FUNdamental program for Pre-K through second grade and Youth Rec league program for grades 3-8. No experience necessary. Once-weekly team practices with games on Saturdays. Technical skills sessions included. Season begins March 28 and runs through June 4. For more information or to register, visit www.potomacfieldhockey.org or email info@potomacfieldhockey.org.

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Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416. The deadline for submissions is the Friday prior to publication. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

THURSDAYS/THROUGH MARCH 3

Job Seekers Seminar. 7-8:30 p.m. Immanuel Bible Church, 6991 Braddock Road, Springfield. Looking for a job? Are you confident on how to search for one? IBC's Job Seeker Seminar will equip attendees with the knowledge necessary. \$15. 703-220-5165. <http://immanuelbible.net/stewardship/job-seekers>.

THURSDAY/FEB. 18

The Affordable Care Act and its Consequences for Business in 2016 and Cash Flow Budgeting and its Impact on Financial Statements. Springfield Town Center, 6500 Springfield Mall, Suite 6831, Springfield. The seminar will be led by Andy Powell, CPA of Halt Buzas & Powell, LTD. Free. <https://www.andrewsfcu.org/promo/703-647-6430>.

SATURDAY/FEB. 20

From Overwhelm to Order: The Simple Toolkit Every Caregive Needs. 9:30 a.m. Insight Memory Care Center, 3953 Pender Drive, Suite 100, Fairfax. In this workshop, you will learn about the documents, accounts, and assets that should be organized as a caregiver and will leave with a step-by-step guide to get it done. RSVP 703-204-4664, InsightMCC.org.

Cultural Diversity Panel. 4-6 p.m. Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Culture House is the first commission by the Workhouse Arts Center. Observing the changing demographics of the community, Workhouse Arts responded by diversifying its programs to be more reflective of the people we serve. www.workhousearts.org. 703-585-2900.

SUNDAY/FEB. 21

Tax Considerations for School and Government Employees. 2-3 p.m. Liberty Tax Service, 5622-G Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Liberty Tax Preparers provide tax-saving tips and answer questions from government and school employees, public. Free. Pre-register by Feb. 20: 703-323-5580 or fairfaxstn@libertytax.com.

TUESDAY/FEB. 23

Budgeting Basic. 7 p.m. Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce St., Springfield. Budgeting Basics provides you with all the tools you need for financial success. Snacks provided. christine.peterson@hotmail.com.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 24

Public Safety in Fairfax County. 7:30 p.m. at the Helen Wilson community room in the Franconia Government Center: Lee District Association of Civic Organizations, with speaker Chief of Police Ed Roessler. The focus of

discussion will be the county's ad-hoc police practices review commission. The commission's final document can be found at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/chairman/pdf/adhoc-final-10.8.15.pdf>.

Tax Considerations for School and Government Employees. Noon-1 p.m. Liberty Tax Service, 5622-G Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Liberty Tax Preparers provide tax-saving tips and answer questions from government and school employees, public. Free. Pre-register by Feb. 23: 703-323-5580 or fairfaxstn@libertytax.com.

WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY/FEB. 24-25

Christ Presbyterian Preschool Open House. 10-11 a.m. Christ Presbyterian Preschool, 12410 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, Fairfax. Open house tours for the current school year and 2016-17. www.christpresbyterianpreschool.com. 703-691-9120.

THURSDAY/MARCH 3

"Planning 101: Diary of a Growing Business." 8:30 a.m. Spring Hill Suites, 6065 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Karen Urcia of Renner CPAs will show you how to avoid the pitfalls of starting and growing your business, and how good planning can help to make your business a success. RSVP info@sfdc.org. www.sfdc.org.

SATURDAY/APRIL 2

Breathe Out. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Fairfax United Methodist Church, 10300 Stratford Ave., Fairfax. Breathe Out has been developed to address teen stress. Registration required. breatheoutnow.wix.com/goldaward.

ONGOING

Lenten Soup Supper. Fridays from Feb. 26-March 18. 5:30-7 p.m. Holy Spirit School Cafeteria, 8800 Braddock Road, Annandale. Meat-less soup suppers on Fridays during Lent, followed by the Stations of the Cross in the Church at 7 p.m. Free. Lambie Renner, lrenner@holyspiritchurch.us.

Burke Rotary Club Meeting. Tuesdays from 7:15-8:30 a.m. Anita's Restaurant, 9278 Old Keene Mill Road, Burke. Meetings with breakfast and program. www.burkerotary.org.

Burke Lake Seniors Golf League seeks members. Interested golfers are invited to join the Burke Lake Seniors Golf League. Must be 55 and older, enjoy playing golf, meeting new people and having an all-around good time. Reserved tee times on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at the Par 3 Burke Lake Golf Course on Ox Road. Annual dues for the season - April 1 through October 31 - are \$20 plus green fees. For more information, call Charlie Ryan 703-690-4227.

Community: 'Invest in Kids'

FROM PAGE 4

Bulova, whose introduction was met with lively cheering, attempted to reassure the audience that the budget process is just beginning, and requires public input and communication.

"We're hearing that communication here tonight," Bulova said. "Education is our number one priority, but we have to look at the budget holistically."

Bulova echoed the earlier remarks from Ginwright that "education from the top makes us sure to have an educated community" and added that this is just "the beginning of the budget process, we have to strike the right balance and make sure our children have what they need to succeed."

McLean High School senior Emily Robinson, who took credit for creating the viral hashtag #SaveFCPS, agreed that "fully funding public schools shouldn't just be a requirement of governing bodies, it should

be the foremost priority.

"I fear for the students who will be in Fairfax County after me," she said.

Sarah Mattingly was School Board member Sandy Evans' (Mason District) appointee to the superintendent's budget task force that met to run the numbers for possible cuts prior to the formation of the school system's next budget.

She explained to the audience that despite the fact she and her husband don't even have children in Fairfax County Public Schools, "nothing is more important for us to do as taxpayers, property owners, or residents, than help children.

"I'm not here for my property values," Mattingly continued, "they'll be just fine on their own. Today was disappointing, but it's not over."

For more information from Fairfax County Public Schools on its FY 2017 budget, visit www.fcps.edu/news/fy2017.shtml.

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ABC LICENSE

Mungkorn Thong, Inc trading as Sisters Thai, 4004 University Dr, Fairfax, VA 22030. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer On & Off Premises, license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Jaturon Srirote, owner
NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date for the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

21 Announcements

ABC LICENSE

Sunshine Food LLC, trading as Sakura Grill, 6411 Shiplett Blvd, Burke, VA 22015. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer On Premises; license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Wei Chen, Owner
NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 dates from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200

21 Announcements

ABC LICENSE

Food3group LLC trading as The Spice Route, 11750 Fair Oaks Mall, Unit J-141, Fairfax, VA 22033. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer on premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Gopal Kapoor, member
NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 dates from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200

21 Announcements

ABC LICENSE

Salia, LLC trading as Holiday Inn Express, 6401 Brandon Ave, Springfield, VA 22150. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) FOR a Wine and Beer on Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Anisur Khan, member
NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date for the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

21 Announcements

ABC LICENSE

DL United, LLC trading as Jacalito Grill, 8081 Alban Rd, Suite A, Springfield, VA 22150. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Beer and Wine on and off premises on Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Dioniris De Leon
NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

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