

Fairfax Station ♦ Clifton ♦ Lorton CONNECTION

From left — Clifton residents, friends and mothers Kelly Layfield and Alyson Pollard followed their shared passion for fitness and opened WheelHouse Mind Body Studio in the town in October 2015.



Wheeling and Feeling

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How Nancy Reagan Put Clifton on the Map

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It Takes a Village (To End Homelessness)

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Commission Recognizes Outstanding Women in Fairfax County Government

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

Edwyna Wingo of the Chantilly area began her career with Fairfax County as a nurse in the Health Department on Sep. 1, 1965 and worked her last full day Oct. 1, 2011.

Wingo graduated from the University of Virginia nursing school in 1964 and decided she didn't much care for rotating and night shifts. Looking for a more regular schedule, she found work in "Home Health," providing health services for individuals outside the hospital.

"The bug of public health really stuck," she said. "And I was on the cutting edge of public health back then. Home visits, community clinics, I did it all. And I never gave up on my love of patient care."

Wingo now works as part-time on special projects for the Fairfax County Health Department, including a car seat program for families whose income is low enough to make them eligible. She started with the project four years ago and said to date thousands of car seats have been given out.

Wingo is the longest-tenured of 12 women honored by the Fairfax County Commission for Women on March 1, Super Tuesday, at the Government Center prior to the Board of Supervisors regular meeting.

"I was absolutely floored when I got the email," Wingo said. "Fairfax County has been very dear to me. I've had opportunities in Fairfax County with the Health Department."

Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova spoke to the group before moving into the Board's auditorium to begin the regular business meeting.

The Chairman opened with her response when people ask her what the obstacles were to her achieving her success in public elected office.

"I've benefitted from years of wonderful leadership of women in Fairfax County," Bulova said, referencing the late Jean Packard, the first woman to serve as Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Audrey Moore and Kate Hanley.

"They've paved the way for me," Bulova continued. Then transitioning and acknowledging the 12 women being recognized by the Commission, she thanked them each for "your knowledge, and the way you served Fairfax County."

Eleven women, each having spent 40 years or more with Fairfax County govern-



Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova addresses the Fairfax County Commission for Women recognition program.

"I've benefited from years of wonderful leadership of women in Fairfax County."

—Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova

Laura Sizemore, a junior at Lake Braddock Secondary School and in her second year as the student representative to the Fairfax County Commission for Women, was in the audience for the recognition ceremony.

"I bring the perspective of teenagers to the commission," Sizemore said, "I know the school side of issues like dress code and sexual harassment."



Lake Braddock Secondary School junior Laura Sizemore is the student representative to the Fairfax County Commission for Women.



Pat Harrison is Deputy County Executive for Human Services and spoke on behalf of the Commission for Women during the proclamation ceremony with the Board of Supervisors recognizing March as Women's History Month.



Donna Bird a business analyst for Special Projects with the Department of Public Safety Communications.



Pat Burton is a management analyst II with Department of Cable and Consumer Services.



Beth Imming is a public health nurse II with the Department of Public Health, Annandale office.



Linda O'Brien is an administrative assistant III with the Reston District Station of the Fairfax County Police Department.



Mary Rezzarday-White is currently library assistant II for youth services in the Fairfax City Regional Library.



Doris Robey is a manager in the Department of Tax Administration, Personal Property and Business License division.



Nancy Stallings is an investigator for the Departments of Planning and Zoning, and Code Compliance.



Deanna Velasco is an administrative assistant IV in the Department of Family Services, Self Sufficiency Division, Fraud and Investigation Unit.



Edwyna Wingo works as a public health Nurse II with the Department of Public Health.



Susan Woodruff retired Jan. 21, 2016, as Director of the Department of Human Resources.

ment, represented a collective 433 years of service.

The 12th, Deputy County Executive for Human Services Pat Harrison, was scheduled to speak on behalf of the Commission for Women during a proclamation ceremony with the Board of Supervisors recognizing March as Women's History Month.

To see the 12 women honored for their vast careers with Fairfax County, Sizemore said it inspires her to work hard and do what she wants with her life, "not what people want me to do," she said.

The junior said computer science is a big passion and she plans to pursue a career in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or government.

How Nancy Reagan Put Clifton on the Map

First Lady's visits to Heart in Hand restaurant still remembered.

BY MARTI MOORE

A quaint village in Western Fairfax County enjoyed anonymity until the day former first lady Nancy Reagan came to town. It was the mid-1980s and Clifton hasn't been the same since.

Northern Virginia native Donna Netschert, 65, remembers Reagan's first visit like it was yesterday.

She was an invited guest of the owner of the Heart in Hand restaurant and tearoom — where Mrs. Reagan and conservative opinion writer George F. Will had a lunch reservation one Monday in December 1985.

Netschert said it was the only day of the week the restaurant ordinarily was closed. Heart in Hand owner Suzi Worsham had little time to prepare for her honored guests and didn't want them to feel like they were dining in a ghost town.

So Worsham did what every good business woman would do in this situation.

"She packed the restaurant with locals," Netschert declared.

"Every seat was filled."

Netschert said Worsham instructed everyone to be on their best behavior.

"I missed the announcement about 'please no photos' and was reprimanded by the Secret Service for using my camera," Netschert admits.

"Remember this was back in the day before cell phones!"

NETSCHERT refreshed her memory by skimming through old newspaper clippings of the visits and confirmed her recollection that Reagan wore her signature red.

"It must have been a Christmas tradition," Donna realized, for Reagan and Will to eat at the Heart in Hand. A Dec. 22, 1988 story in local community newspaper the CentreView reports diners serenaded the highly esteemed guests with a cheerful carol "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" as Reagan and Will departed from their third and last visit to Clifton.

At the time, Will ate the Kentucky Hot Brown sandwich, "a chicken breast sautéed, and topped with a Mornay sauce and cheese over toast," as described by the restaurant menu.

Reagan ate a chef salad that wasn't offered to diners. They did not have dessert.

It wasn't unusual for the first lady to request something out of the ordinary. Fairfax Station resident Roland Mesnier, 71, was executive pastry chef in the White House from 1979 to 2010 and knew Reagan's penchant for perfection.

"I learned a lot from her how to navigate preparing desserts for the heads of state around the world."



An antique table near the restaurant entrance displays newspaper articles and pictures of the time Nancy Reagan visited the Heart in Hand.



A graphic image of the front of the restaurant used on the menu.



CentreView article, front page and jump.



PHOTOS BY DONNA NETSCHERT

Mesnier — a classically trained French chef and food chemist — went as far as learning the art of glassblowing during Reagan's reign so he could create dessert sculptures out of sugar for a special event.

He said Reagan had a very good eye for how tables should look. She knew food and how it should taste. She disliked the color gray in her food.

"It should be pretty and happy," Mesnier noted.

Although he strived to achieve his best work for every president, Mesnier believes Reagan's high standards definitely helped him maintain that premium level of quality for the next administration.

He understands the general public's devotion to Reagan's taste and style, and sees how Heart in Hand customers were drawn to Clifton because the first lady ate there a

few times.

The 1988 CentreView article also stated Will purchased four complete place settings of the Heart in Hand stoneware as a Christmas gift for Reagan.

Since then, visitors far and wide were drawn for nearly two more decades to the Heart in Hand restaurant at 7145 Main St.

The late actor Don DeFore — who played George Baxter in the popular 1960s television show "Hazel" — came all the way from Hollywood to eat there.

According to his son, Ron, the actor was a long-time friend of President Ronald Reagan and his wife. Both actors appeared together in the 1952 Warner Brothers movie "She's Working Her Way Through College." Ron said his father performed more work for the Republican Party than he did for Hollywood and "garnered more respect in

the political world that surpassed his acting career."

Ron, 65, said "My parents are the ones who suggested we eat at the Heart in Hand because Nancy really liked it."

Although his father had access to the finest restaurants in the world, the Heart in Hand appealed to the actor because he was a conservative country boy from Iowa.

The building itself — the Buckley Brothers Store built around 1900 — spoke volumes to the DeFore family, which owned a family restaurant in Frontierland.

"My dad was the only person in history to have his name on a restaurant in Disneyland," Ron claims. Don DeFore's Silver Banjo Barbeque fed visitors between 1957 and 1960 with a 19th-century Western theme, according to the fan website Ron

SEE FIRST LADY, PAGE 7

It Takes a Village

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

When speaking with Kathy Albarado, one might not guess that she'd experienced periods of homelessness as an adolescent. Her success, confidence and ability to inspire others are readily apparent. However, her childhood experiences have given her insight into the magnitude of the problem with homelessness in Fairfax County.

"I was in and out of transitional housing," said Albarado, who is now president and CEO of Helios HR, a Reston-based human capital management consulting and talent acquisition firm. "Transitional housing bridges the gap. It helps [homeless people] get back on their feet."

It is that first-hand knowledge that led Albarado and Helios HR to the Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness "Build a Village Campaign," a collaboration of local chambers of commerce, businesses, faith groups, non-profit organizations and individuals dedicated to raising awareness and funds to benefit the county's homeless community.

"As my husband says, 'the fall is not that far.' Some people are one paycheck or one illness away from being homeless and we've got the resources in this county to change that," said Albarado. "Fairfax County is one of the most affluent counties in the country. Even if we have one homeless person, it's one too many."

One hundred percent of the funds raised for the Build a Village Campaign will be directed to help end veteran homelessness and house homeless individuals being served through the county's Hypothermia Prevention Program, which provides shelter during freezing temperatures. The hypothermia shelters operate from November through March and have a policy of not turning away anyone in need during freezing temperatures.

"We have been out trying to identify veterans as quickly as possible and house them within 90 days from when we identify them," said Dean Klein, director of the Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness. "The money we raise will provide case management, housing assistance and medical or dental resources."

The campaign was launched in December 2015 and Klein says they hope to reach their goal of \$100,000 by the end of March. "We're trying to reduce as quickly as possible the number of people who are homeless and prevent more people from becoming homeless," said Klein. "This campaign



PHOTOS COURTESY OF HELIOS HR

Employees of Helios HR volunteer for Cornerstones, Inc. in Reston which provides support for those in need. Such charitable efforts help create an awareness of the extent of homelessness in the community and breaks stereotypes about homeless people.

"We're trying to reduce as quickly as possible the number of people who are homeless and prevent more people from becoming homeless."

— Dean Klein, director, Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness.

will help us to reach our goals and engage as many people and companies as possible to make this happen."

The way the program works is that local chambers of commerce, businesses, faith groups, non-profit organizations and individuals from Fairfax-Falls Church build virtual houses one brick at a time. Giving levels range from \$25 for a single brick to \$500 for a virtual door to \$5,000 for a virtual house. The Build a Village campaign will run through March 2016.

"It is an issue that the business community feels offers an important opportunity to assist," said Jim Corcoran, president and

Campaign designed to end homelessness in Fairfax County.

Build a Village Campaign

- ❖ \$25 buys a Brick
- ❖ \$250 buys a Gate, Window or Chimney
- ❖ \$500 buys the Door
- ❖ \$1,000 buys the Roof
- ❖ \$5,000 builds each Virtual House

To donate or get more information, go to <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless/build-a-village/>

lunches to the shelter's residents.

Making a personal connection with those in need is a benefit that Albarado believes will resonate with her staff and one that she hopes other volunteers will experience. "It made us feel good to see and meet the people we were helping," she said. "It's important to build awareness, because when people are aware they are more likely to get engaged and get involved."

In addition to donating money, personal involvement with non-profit organizations like Cornerstones, Inc. in Reston which provides support for those in need of human services such as food, shelter and childcare, helps create an awareness of the extent of homelessness in the community and breaks stereotypes about homeless people.

Meeting people who were helped by the donations and volunteer efforts has had a profound effect on Natalie O'Laughlin, communications manager at Helios HR. "We've been able to meet the individuals who have benefited from the programs and hear their stories, which are heartwarming, and give you a better idea of who is affected," she said.

In addition to donating to the Build a Village Campaign, Albarado hopes that community members will give of their time, which in turn, she believes, will encourage others to make financial contributions. "Volunteering with these non-profits is more effective than reading stats because people don't connect with statistics," she said. "But when you meet the people who are impacted by your work, it's really powerful."



Kathy Albarado cleans an apartment as a volunteer for Cornerstones, Inc. Her company, Helios HR, has joined the Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness "Build a Village Campaign."

CEO of the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce.

The county is on a trajectory to reach the goal by the end of the month. "We've had very good response since our launch," said Glynda Mayo Hall, Partnership Development manager of the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness. "Our governing board has also stepped up to their leadership."

Albarado's staff at Helios HR in Reston has volunteered with nonprofits that offer support to the homeless like the Reston-based Embury Rucker Community Shelter, which provides emergency housing for families and single men and women. Among the volunteer efforts designed to help the homeless in Fairfax County, Helios employees assembled and delivered bagged

FAITH NOTES

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

An Easter Cantata, "Risen," will be presented at **Jubilee Christian Center** on Easter Sunday, March 27, 8:45 and 11 a.m. services. The center is located at 4650 Shirley Gate Road,

Fairfax. There is no Easter Sunday evening service. Call 703-383-1170, or see www.jccag.org.

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, lrenner@holyspiritchurch.us.

AREA ROUNDUPS

Time to Spring Forward

Daylight Saving Time begins this Sunday, March 13, at 2 a.m. So before going to bed Saturday night, make sure to turn all clocks, watches and the time on electronic devices forward one hour.

Real Food for Kids Expo at Robinson Secondary

Kate Sherwood, Executive Chef for Center for Science in the Public Interest, will be the emcee for the March 12 Real Food For Kids Culinary Challenge and Wellness Expo and a culinary competition judge. The event is free to the public and will be fun and informative for the entire family. The Expo will be held on Saturday, March 12, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Robinson Secondary School, 5035 Sideburn Rd, Fairfax. Register at <http://www.realfoodforkids.org/expo.html>.


You can learn about food writing, promotion and photography, family meal planning, school gardening and school food. And, everyone will enjoy watching a culinary competition among 11 student teams challenged to prepare a delicious and nutritious school breakfast, lunch or snack. Fairfax County Public Schools Food and Nutrition Services director Rodney Taylor, a pioneer in farm-to-school dining programs, and executive chef Paul Davis will present their new specialty salad and sandwich lines for students and teachers as well as sample creative new school lunch dishes. Free admission. Drawings for prizes from Williams-Sonoma and Earls Kitchen + Bar. Lunch available for nominal prices.

Paul VI High Redevelopment

The second community meeting on the future of the Paul VI High School site is set for Thursday, March 10, at 7 p.m., at American Legion Post 177, at 3939 Oak St. in Fairfax. At that time, the IDI Group Cos. will present its master plan for the property's redevelopment.



St. Patrick's Celebration

 Corned Beef and Cabbage
Guinness Pot Roast and a Pint
Thursday, March 17

Easter Brunch Buffet

Sunday, March 27th

Seatings: 10:00 am, 11:30 am,
1:00 pm, 2:30 pm

Now Accepting Reservations

\$14 Kids 4-10 year old; \$34 Adults

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OPINION

Bringing Back the Electric Chair

In a word: Barbaric.

No doubt Virginia and Texas will be the last two states to continue with the death penalty until, in evitably, evolving standards of decency lead the U.S. Supreme Court to declare that the death penalty is unconstitutional.

But fear of loss has motivated the Virginia General Assembly to amend a law that allows prisoners facing execution to choose between lethal injection and the electric chair so that the electric chair is used if drugs for lethal injection are not available.

It's barbaric, and execution debacles with electrocution and unproven drugs for lethal injection could speed overall rejection of the death penalty.

Most representatives from our area voted against, but in the House of Delegates, which voted 62-33 for the electric chair, Dave Albo, Jim LeMunyon and Vivian Watts voted in favor; Tim Hugo didn't vote but registered that he intended to vote yes. (Voting no were Jennifer Boysko, David Bulova, Eileen Filler-Corn, Charniele Herring, Patrick Hope, Mark Keam, Paul Krizek, Mark Levine, Alfonso Lopez, Bob

Marshall, Ken Plum, Mark Sickles, Marcus Simon and Rip Sullivan. Kathleen Murphy didn't vote but registered that she intended to vote no.)

The Virginia Senate voted for the electric chair 22-17. From our area, only Dick Saslaw voted in favor of the electric chair. Voting no were George Barker, Adam Ebbin, Barbara Favola, Janet Howell, Dave Marden, Chap Petersen, Scott Surovell and Jennifer Wexton.

EDITORIAL

Residents of the 35th Senate District could rightfully question whether they are getting the repre-

sentation they expect from Senator Saslaw (D), who without doubt will continue to be reelected until he chooses to retire. Saslaw voted for mandatory use of the electric chair if lethal injection drugs are not available, worked to kill legislation that would protect consumers from predatory lending and interest rates of more than 200 percent, and was chief patron of the notorious proffer bill, which, if signed by Gov. Terry McAuliffe as passed, will result in localities losing the ability to temper costs of development and likely property tax increases.

Making Good Choices On Saint Patrick's Day

Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), will offer the 2016 St. Patty's Day SoberRide program, providing free cab rides to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area next Thursday, March 17.

SoberRide will be available for 12 hours starting 4 p.m. on St. Patrick's Day and continuing until 4 a.m. on Friday, March 18 as a way to help keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk holiday.

Make your own plans to celebrate safely by having a designated driver, celebrating where you can take public transportation or spend the night. But if those plans go awry, area residents celebrating with alcohol may call the toll-free SoberRide phone number 1-800-200-TAXI (8294) for a no-cost (up to a \$30 fare), safe way home.

For more information, visit www.soberride.com.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

A Step Backwards for Virginia

Virginia New American leaders respond to the nomination of Ken Cuccinelli for the State Supreme Court.

Today (March 8), the Virginia Senate Republican Caucus nominated former attorney general and 2013 gubernatorial candidate Ken Cuccinelli for the Virginia Supreme Court.

After the Senate failed to secure the votes necessary to put Appeals Court Judge Rossie D. Alston Jr. onto the State Supreme Court, the Senate Courts of Justice Committee promptly certified Cuccinelli by a party line vote for the position. He will be voted on by the full Senate tomorrow and it appears that the Republicans have the votes to secure his placement on the Court.

Despite the fact that Governor McAuliffe's pick, Justice Jane Marum Roush, is an eminently qualified and highly regarded jurist who has presided over many high-profile cases, including the trial of D.C.-area sniper Lee Boyd Malvo, Republicans have refused to give her a full 12-year appointment.

From immigration to contraception to climate change denial to LGBT rights, Ken Cuccinelli has built a career on extreme conservative positions that are out of step with Virginia today. He also has a long and sordid history of antipa-

thy towards New Americans, immigrants, and Latinos in particular:

- ❖ In 2013, gubernatorial candidate Ken Cuccinelli went so far as to compare immigration to pest control and immigrants to RATS.

- ❖ He drafted a bill that would deny unemployment benefits to employees who do not speak English.

- ❖ He derided the 2013 Congressional Immigration Reform Plan as legalization and "amnesty."

- ❖ He threw his full support behind Arizona's anti-immigration SB1070 law.

- ❖ As a state senator, he sponsored legislation aimed at stripping U.S.-born children of undocumented immigrants of their right to citizenship.

- ❖ As attorney general he embraced policies that would authorize police to check the immigration status of anyone they stop or arrest.

- ❖ He has been a strong opponent of in-state tuition for undocumented immigrants brought to the country at no fault of their own and at a young age by their parents.

J. Walter Tejada, Community Leader and former Elected Official, stated, "From Donald Trump

inciting his supporters by calling Latino immigrants 'thieves' and 'rapists' or candidates calling for a divisive southern wall or hateful rhetoric being used against New Americans, it seems all we've heard is anti-immigrant nonsense spewing from Republican politicians. The proposed placement of Ken Cuccinelli on the Virginia State Supreme Court would represent a very significant step backwards for Virginia."

Alfonso Lopez, Democratic Member of the Virginia House of Delegates, stated, "As the son of a Latin American immigrant and the first Latino Democrat elected to the Virginia House of Delegates, it's incredibly difficult to hear the vitriol that Republicans use against immigrants day in and day out. Today, by proposing Cuccinelli for the State Supreme Court, Republicans are endorsing a person with a long history of doctrinaire, 'Trumpesque' positions that are out of step with a modern Virginia."

Tram Nguyen, Executive Director of New Virginia Majority, stated, "On International Women's Day, the Republican Party could not have nominated a more divisive anti-immigrant, anti-choice individual to serve on Virginia's

highest court. Cuccinelli's extreme views have no place on the Supreme Court. Virginia's judicial system should not be the victim of political maneuvers."

Marvin Figueroa, President of the Democratic Latino Organization of Virginia, stated, "I am extremely disappointed that Republicans in the General Assembly would nominate an individual to Virginia's Supreme Court with such an extensive track record of radical opposition to immigrants and New Americans. Someone who has so ardently campaigned to amend the U.S. Constitution to end birthright citizenship should not be allowed to serve on our Supreme Court and trusted with defending Virginia's Constitution."

The Honorable J. Walter Tejada, former Member of the Arlington County Board

The Honorable Alfonso Lopez, Virginia State Delegate, 49th District

Leni Gonzalez, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)

Marvin Figueroa, President of the Democratic Latino Organization of Virginia

Tram Nguyen, Executive Director of New Virginia Majority

Edgar Aranda-Yanoc, Chair of the Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations

Fairfax Station,
Lorton & Clifton
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An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

**Published by
Local Media Connection LLC**

**1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314**

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First Lady Remembered

FROM PAGE 3

maintains in memory of his father at www.defore.net and on Facebook.

The restaurant's common denominator with Heart in Hand is both dining establishments had "the ambiance of America in an earlier time," DeFore recalls.

WORSHAM, a conservative country girl from Tennessee, is well-regarded for her interior design taste in antiques and rustic charm. She and her husband, Travis, restored at least five historic homes in Clifton that were featured in various lifestyle magazines throughout the years.

Suzi added her personal touch to the Heart in Hand and filled it with antique furniture, old pottery and vintage quilts. Decorating for Christmas was a production on the first Monday of December, when the restaurant was closed. She garnered help from close friends by rewarding them with a home-cooked meal.

Part of the Heart in Hand allure that drew the DeFore family to Clifton is the huge red landmark bore a strong resemblance to Ron's beloved childhood home in California, where his father built a red and white house with a barn and silo.

"It was like going back to the old Mandeville House," in the heart of Brentwood. Ron said his parents looked forward to their dining experience in Clifton.

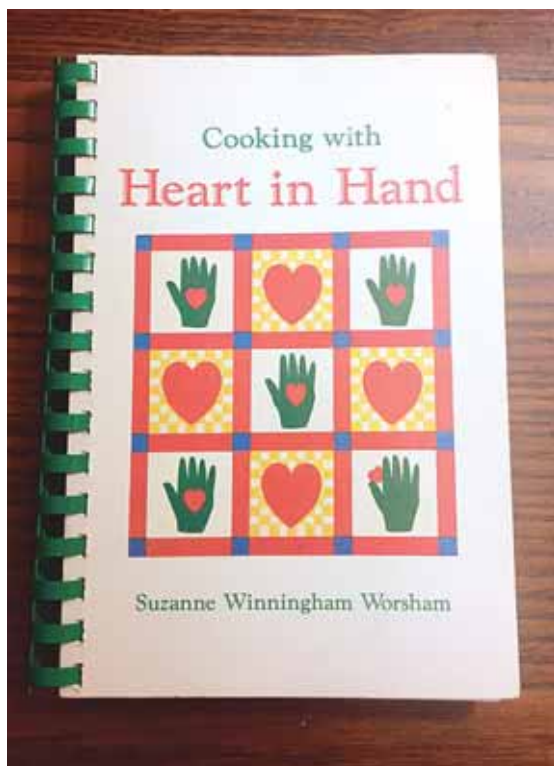
Ron said he came to Washington, D.C., in 1982 to work as a Reagan appointee to the Peace Corps., for which he was the officer and acting director of public affairs until 1984. He stayed in the area and continued visiting the Heart in Hand with his wife, Laurie, when they lived in Fairfax Station. Of course, their favorite spot was the same as most restaurant patrons — the best table in the house:

In the Quilt Room.
By the fireplace.
Especially in winter.

Ron's favorite dish was the roast breast of duck served with gingered brown sauce. Laurie loved the Chicken Suzanne, a sautéed boneless breast of chicken served with a dollop of herb butter.

At their home in Haymarket, Laurie refers to a recipe in "Cooking with the Heart in Hand" by Suzanne Winningham Worsham as she makes the restaurant's bleu cheese salad — but substitutes pecans with walnuts.

Although locals would state Clifton's success stands on nearly



"Cooking with the Heart in Hand" by Suzanne Winningham Worsham, Published in 1987, Clifton.

PHOTO BY
DONNA NETSCHERT

40 years worth of hard work from public servants on the Town Council, business owners, employees and residents, they must agree the Nancy Reagan visits add value to its cachet as a historic destination.

Years ago, when Netschert considered putting her Chestnut Street residence up for sale, her real estate agent advised her to showcase all artifacts of the first lady's visits because they may help sell the house sooner at a higher price.

THESE DAYS, thousands of visitors are drawn to Clifton each year through annual homes tours in the spring and winter, a summer wine festival, a Labor Day antique car show, Haunted Trail and several local businesses plus a recently-formed arts guild.

The town is vintage yet quirky with nearly five watering holes licensed to sell alcoholic beverages and four churches within walking distance on Main Street.

Although the Heart in Hand closed its doors in 2011, the memories of Reagan's visits are alive and well.

People still can savor the flavor of the eponymous Chicken Suzanne but must go to Leesburg to the Worshams 80-acre farm on the Potomac River, where Suzi continues to put the love in her heart through the work of her hands at her new venture: Riverside on the Potomac, a scenic venue for weddings and other events. Call 703-669-3961 or visit their website at riversideotp@aol.com.

— Marti Moore is a freelance writer

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Wheeling and Feeling

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

Michele Achterberg is a winner. When the Clifton resident was diagnosed with stage II breast cancer in 2015 despite having no family history with it, she underwent 20 weeks of chemotherapy and won. She went through a double mastectomy in June 2015, and won. With clean pathology after the surgery, she returned to work in September. Winning.

Another win Achterberg notched in her belt was being the first person to take 16 classes at WheelHouse Mind Body Studio, which opened on Chapel Road between the U.S. Post Office and (also female-owned) Cupcaked Bakery. She'd been a runner, but that all but disappeared from her life during chemo and then the surgery.

"I was really sick for that whole time," Achterberg said. "Yoga was just a way to get me back on track, into something that wasn't as hard on your body." WheelHouse specializes in yoga, pilates, barre and classes that blend elements from various workouts.

"I had done it in the past and enjoyed it," she continued. "As more of a mind-body thing, I thought it could help me not just with the physical, but recover mentally as well."



PHOTO COURTESY OF TAMARA EDEN

Kelly Layfield (left) is the more practical of the business partners and balance to Alyson Pollard (right) the dreamer.

Achterberg signed up with WheelHouse owners and Clifton residents Alyson Pollard and Kelly Layfield within two weeks of their Oct. 2, 2015 grand opening.

With post-surgery sensitivity in her chest, Achterberg said she especially appreciated how Pollard and Layfield helped modify the

practice for her, and helped her become much stronger.

WHEELHOUSE sits as a boutique studio serving the greater Clifton and Fairfax Station communities. It's the brain-love-passion-child of friends Pollard and Layfield,

Boutique fitness studio WheelHouse Clifton caters to mind and body, men, women and children.

who decided to plunge forward with their own small business.

Pollard is certified as a personal trainer and has worked with special needs students in Fairfax County Public Schools. Layfield is a trainer as well, having taught in small pilates studios and Golds Gyms alike. She incorporated elements of pilates, yoga and barre (flexibility exercises incorporating a stationary bar) into her own class called INFIT.

The two women said it was difficult considering the drastic change starting a new business would have on their lives.

"I never thought I could do this," Layfield said. "I made excuses. It was too big. But when you're passionate about something, you love it, talk about it all the time, you're going to figure it out."

In the first five months, they've done a lot of figuring it out: tweaking their class lineup and schedule, adding three new instructors and making plans for out-of-studio classes at Clifton's Paradise Springs winery.

"Going from nothing, to this and finding balance, we found what works as business partners," said Pollard, who describes herself as the "dreamer" yin to Layfield's "more practical" yang.

"Every day we live and breathe our business," Pollard said.

Clifton resident and recent George Mason

University graduate Morgan Flournoy began teaching a yoga class with weights this past weekend at WheelHouse. She also teaches at Spark Yoga in Fairfax's Mosaic District. Her class incorporates squats, lunges and other moves to raise the heart rate and add variety to a week-long yoga schedule.

"Their studio is a great addition to the Clifton community," Flournoy said, "and I like that I'm part of the beginning stages as they expand."

In addition to the January contest, the ladies have been constantly looking for new ways to engage their community and offer different opportunities for fitness and wellness.

One program still in the planning stages is a series of classes targeted at teenage girls (Pollard and Layfield each have one, plus a pair of younger sons apiece). There would be yoga practice, but also a little life coaching.

"We want to bring positive energy for that age group," Layfield said. "We all tell our kids to go, go, go, they're so stressed out."

"They need permission to slow down and breathe for a moment," Pollard said.

They've also declared this month "Meditation March" and are leading "guided meditation" classes for as many as 25 people at a time.

"It's so important," Layfield said of medi-

tating and making time for quiet reflection and controlled breathing, "especially in this area. To be more present, to breathe — it seems so simple, but it really helps the rest of the day."

CLIFTON RESIDENT Bill Ference is one of the rare men (along with Layfield's husband Rick) who frequent a number of Wheelhouse's classes, including yoga and a hybrid called "Functional Flexibility."

Ference stays active at 65 years old with running, basketball and mountain biking, but he said he's finally starting to get stiff. "I'm not as flexible as I used to be," he said. "My wife has taken yoga for years. She knew the owners, so I thought I'd give it a try and go once a week."

Ference said he's enjoyed seeing Pollard, who he's known since she was a child in Clifton, pursue her passion in their community. But from a purely physical standpoint, he's already noticed a difference with his balance.

"Once I got down there, I've been sort of concentrating on that a little bit," he said. "One thing that goes is the balance."

Also beginning in January, Pollard and Layfield began a campaign to donate one dollar for each client, each class (including

SEE WHEELING, PAGE 15

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From left, Burtons Grill & Bar chef Dylun Coolidge and his daughter Sofia, of Del Ray, and Burtons general manager John Moszocki, of Lorton, work in February to prepare the restaurant for its March opening.



PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

Burtons features a spacious floor plan laid out around a large central bar.

Beating the Big 8 Burton's allergy-friendly Grill & Bar opens at Hilltop Village Center.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

The Big 8: milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat and soybeans. These represent the vast majority of all food allergies in the United States. Restaurants are becoming more sensitive to how these restrict the diets of their patrons. For Boston-based Burtons Grill & Bar, making their menu as accommodating as possible for multiple food allergies has become a major part of the business.

"It's not just tolerated, but embraced," said chef Dylun Coolidge, a Del Ray resident who's been working in restaurants in the Washington, D.C. area for the last decade.

Coolidge explained that the core menu for all Burtons restaurants can accommodate all eight allergies as well as patrons who require gluten-free options. Every dish on the menu has an "escape route," meaning there's a pre-planned alternate preparation for specific allergies.

"Thirty-five to 50 percent of our menu is available to anyone," Coolidge said. Though he admits having the recipe and preparing and serving it safely are two different things.

"No one in the chain, from A to Z," he said "doesn't understand the importance of it."

To ensure everything comes out safely, Coolidge said all staff are trained in the kitchen and undergo online food allergy education to fully understand how the food is being prepared and what the risks of a mistaken order can be.

IN THE KITCHEN, separate colored tongs, aprons and even fryers are used for preparing dishes unique to a certain food allergy. For a finishing touch of confidence, regular dishes are served on circular plates, while food allergy-specific meals come on square



The dining area of Burtons is divided into several different layouts with slightly different feels and ambiance.

plates, placed by a manager who then confirms which food allergy the dish is tailored to.

Burtons founder and CEO Kevin Harron wanted to make providing options to others with dietary restrictions a priority as he and his partners developed the Burtons concept. After growing up with casual dining restaurants including Bennigan's and Legal Sea Food, they witnessed a segment evolving.

"We saw the Baby Boomers starting to move away from casual dining," said Harron, a Boston resident.

"There were different concerns, people wanted food customized a certain way. Allergies have become a big part of doing business."

Harron and company thought they could improve the dining experience, while attending to food allergies, without immedi-

ately becoming a high-end steakhouse. "We felt there was fertile ground in between," he said.

Chef Coolidge is depending on actual fertile ground to power his menu, which he's proud will be filled with largely local produce and meat ("things you should be eating now, like root vegetable cassoulet, a little duck"), change seasonally and be even a little "hip," following current food trends.

For younger diners, there is a special a la carte menu that pulls no punches in terms of cuts of meat or full entree-level preparation. Coolidge's fifth-grade daughter Sofia's line-up of choice (\$8) includes steak fillet, cucumber, pasta, apples and frozen yogurt for dessert.

The chef's menu will change regularly and feature twists on typically more expensive dishes that help keep them in the more modest price point Burtons is striving for.

Think stuffed avocado with crab coming in at \$8. By using a little less crab, Coolidge moderates the price but beefs up the flavor and structure by adding red quinoa and scallions.

ATTENTION TO DETAIL and creativity, rather than simple cost-cutting, are part of the model. Sauces and salad dressings are prepared from scratch, in-house, rather than purchased from vendors, and they'll roast their own meat for pulled pork.

"It's knowing cuts, knowing the season, that lets you be more local," Coolidge said, and also thrifty.

Before Burtons had their soft opening on Feb. 29, general manager John Moszocki was making friends as a new member at the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce.

"The thing that most impresses me about Burtons Grill is their accommodation of food allergies," Chamber Executive Director Holly Dougherty said in an email. "My husband has a severe nut allergy and sometimes restaurants don't take that into account even after telling the server."

Dougherty said she was also impressed with the way Burtons has already reached out to its community in Alexandria, Fort Belvoir and Springfield. Coolidge said they've been in touch with the athletic boosters at nearby Hayfield Secondary School about hosting teams after sports events, as well as doing joint activities with the Metropolitan School of the Arts.

"This business isn't just food and service," said Moszocki, "we're building relationships."

"We're excited to be there," Harron said, "and hopefully we'll be relevant and embraced by the community, we're going to do our very best."

Burtons Grill & Bar is located at 6452A Old Beulah Street in Alexandria. For more information, visit www.burtonsgill.com.

CALENDAR



PHOTO BY GREGOR EISENHUTH

Singers, Irish dancers and actors tell the story of the spirit of Ireland on Sunday, March 20 at George Mason University's Center for the Arts.

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.

ONGOING

Scholarship. Deadline April 1. The Bull Run Civil War Round Table in Centreville is offering a \$1,500 scholarship to a high school senior who resides in Fairfax or Prince William counties and will attend college or community college in fall 2016. Information and application instructions can be found at <http://bullrunwrt.org>.

Cell Phones for Soldiers. March 1-April 18. Liberty Tax, 5622-G Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Donate unwanted cell phones to help active duty military and vets call loved ones. 703-323-5580.

Carolina Shag. Wednesdays. 6:30-10 p.m. Arlington/Fairfax Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. Free lessons at 7:30 p.m. No partners needed. Dinner menu. \$8. Under 21 free. nvshag.org.

"Shrek the Musical JR." April 22, 23, 29, and 30. Burke Community Church, 9900 Old Keene Mill Road, Burke. Come see this talented group of young actors ages 8-18 as they travel Far Far Away with everyone's favorite ogre, a wise-cracking donkey, and a cast of fairy tale misfits. \$14. [www.nvplayers.com](http://nvplayers.com).

FUN-Exercise. Thursdays, noon-12:50 p.m. Grace Presbyterian Church Family Room, 7434 Bath St., Springfield. Inova certified exercise instructor leads a moderate level exercise class with music and current events conversation. Muscle, Balance, Strength Training using stretch bands and weights both standing and seated exercises. Instructor donation is \$5. Contact Chris Moore at moorefitt@yahoo.com or 703-499-6133.

Adventures in Learning. Mondays, 8:30 a.m.-2:45 p.m. April 4-May 9. Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 5114 Twinbrook Road, Fairfax. community, personal development, finance, and more. Afternoon breakouts are book club, bridge, and canasta. Bring a brown bag lunch. \$30. www.scfbva.org. 703-426-2824.

Lake Accotink Park Campfire Saturdays. March 26, April 16, May 14. Starts between 6:30-7 p.m. Lake Accotink Park, 7500 Accotink Park Road, Springfield. Adventure awaits as you explore the woodlands and Lake Accotink spots where wildlife hides and resides, guided by a naturalist. Bring whatever you like to roast. S'mores provided. \$8-\$10. <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/lake-accotink/>.

Royal Lake Campfire Saturdays. March 12, April 30. Starts between 6:30-7 p.m. Royal Lake Park, 5344 Gainsborough Drive, Fairfax. Join us for an evening campfire at Royal

Lake. Adventure awaits as you explore the woodlands and lake-front spots where wildlife hides and resides, guided by a naturalist. Program ends with a cozy campfire, bring whatever you like to roast, s'mores provided. Different topics. \$8-\$10. <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/press/html/psa067-15.htm>.

Spring Backyard Burn Trail Running Series. March 13, April 17. Laurel Hill, Lorton; Pohick Bay, Lorton; Hemlock Overlook, Clifton. series of 5 and 10 mile trail running races held on some of the best trail networks in the Northern Virginia. <http://www.ex2adventures.com/byb-spring.php>.

Foon Sham: Culture House. Through April 3. W-16 Vulcan Gallery, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Foon Sham was born in Hong Kong and received a BFA from the California College of Arts and Crafts, and a MFA from Virginia Commonwealth University. He is professor of Art at the University of Maryland, College Park. www.workhousearts.org. 703-585-2900.

Annual Mulch Sale. Through March 29. Supports the Robinson Secondary School Class of 2016 All Night Grad Party. Bagged, high-quality hardwood and pine nugget mulch. <http://www.robinsonangp.com/mulch.html>.

After the Holocaust. April 5-May 19. The Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. The Bodzin Art Gallery presents an art exhibit observing the 70th anniversary of the conclusion of the Nuremberg Trials. Watercolors by Alexandra Rozenman, a political refugee from Moscow, and sculptures by Paula Stern. Free. www.jccnv.org. 703-537-3000.

Celebrating our Children's Creativity. May 19-June 20. The Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. The J's Early Childhood Learning Center presents "A Reggio Exhibit," under the guidance of Sarah Vejvoda. Free. www.jccnv.org. 703-537-3000.

Spotlight on the Arts Festival. April 15-May 9. Various locations. Celebrates three decades of arts in the City of Fairfax. fairfaxspotlight.org.

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,

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 15

Be a part of our **Wellbeing** pages, the first week of every month.

Delight in our **HomeLifeStyle** sections, the second week of every month. Peek at the top real estate sales, glimpse over-the-top remodeling projects, get practical suggestions for your home.

Celebrate students, camps, schools, enrichment programs, colleges and more in our **A-plus: Education, Learning, Fun** pages, the third week of every month.

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Fairfax senior Noe'll Taylor dribbles the ball up the floor against Cosby in the 6A state quarterfinals on March 4 at Robinson Secondary School.



Junior guard Karah Murphree will be one of Fairfax's top returning players next season.

PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Fairfax Ends Historic Season in State Quarterfinals

Rebels finish 27-3,
including undefeated
regular season.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

The Fairfax girls' basketball team made history and got a taste of the big stage during the 2015-16 season. Head coach Pat Deegan said the Rebels laid the foundation for a successful future.

Fairfax's season came to an end on March 4 when the Rebels lost to two-time defending state champion Cosby 53-44 in the 6A state quarterfinals at Robinson Secondary School. Facing a pair of Division I recruits in 6-foot-3 center Tyra Whitehead (Wake Forest) and guard Jocelyn Jones (North Carolina), Fairfax trailed by three in the fourth quarter but wasn't able to come all the way back.

The Rebels were down 34-31 late in the third quarter when guard Karah Murphree drove to the basket, made a shot and an official called a foul. However, rather than having a chance for a three-point play and to tie the score, the official called Murphree for an offensive foul and the bucket was waived off.

"I definitely thought," Murphree said, "I had the and-1..."

Cosby followed with a 3-pointer at the other end, extending its lead to six.

"It certainly blunted our charge at that time, but that's basketball," Deegan said.



Fairfax senior Jalita Montgomery was a primary contributor for a team that finished the season with a 27-3 record.

Fairfax head coach Pat Deegan led the Rebels to an undefeated regular season and trips to the Conference 6 and 6A North region championship games.

"I think we accomplished so much," said Taylor, Co-Conference 6 Player of the Year. "We made history at our school and I couldn't ask for better teammates."

Fairfax will graduate a trio of starters — Taylor, Montgomery and Alexandra Wendling.

"What these kids did was pretty awesome," Deegan said. "If I go back and look at the preseason predictions, a lot of people didn't even have us in the top four in our conference to start the year off. When you look at what we put out in the floor — [5 feet 3], 5-4, 5-5, 5-8, 5-8 — we're pretty small, but they didn't realize that. They like to play the game of basketball, they're great teammates, they bought into the whole thing ...

"What they did was I think they built a foundation for the kids to have even more success next year."

Murphree and junior Dominique Webster figure to be two of the Rebels' top returners next season.

"Hopefully [the seniors'] greatest legacy will be kids like Emma [Heslep] will sit there, and Dom will sit there and say, 'I'm going to be next year's Jalita and Noe'll,' and if they do that, their legacy will continue on."

Deegan, who has also coached at Westfield, Madison and Bishop O'Connell, said he has enjoyed his time with the Rebels.

"I've coached for 34 years," Deegan said. "I probably haven't had as much fun as I did with this group in the last 20 — maybe never. They were just a really special group to work with."

SPORTS ROUNDTUPS

Spartans Lose in State Quarterfinals

The West Springfield boys' basketball team, the No. 3 seed from the 6A North region, lost to 6A South runner-up Oscar Smith 48-41 in the state quarterfinals on March 4 at Old Dominion University.

The Spartans ended the season with a 23-6 record. West Springfield finished atop the Conference 7 regular-season standings, finished runner-up in the conference tournament and took third place at the region tournament.

The Spartans will lose forwards Lewis Djonkam and Brock Vaughn, and guards Andrew Storr and Spencer Askew, among

others, to graduation.

Robinson Lax Teams to Open Regular Seasons

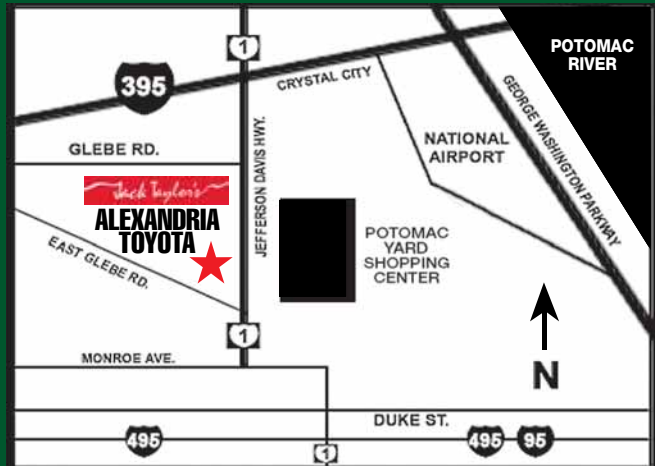
The defending state champion Robinson

lacrosse teams will open their respective regular seasons next week.

The boys' team, which has won the last two state titles, will host Broad Run at 7:15 p.m. on Tuesday, March 15. The Rams are led by head coach Matt Curran. The girls' team, led by head coach Liz Case, will travel to face Broad Run at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday.

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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 11

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SATURDAY/MARCH 12

Real Food for Kids-Culinary Challenge and Wellness Expo. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Robinson Secondary School, 5035 Sideburn Road, Fairfax. Culinary Challenge and Wellness Expo: Learn about food writing and photography, family meal planning, school gardening and school food. <http://realfoodforkids.org/expo.html>.

Richmond Ballet II. 7:30 p.m. The Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. A performance of classical and contemporary dance, including "The Friar's Tale," "Excerpts from Stolen Moments," and "Rachmaninoff Rhapsody." \$20-\$34. www.jccnv.org. 703-537-3000.

Concerts from Kirkwood-Beau Soir

Ensemble. 3 p.m. Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, 8336, Carrleigh Parkway, Springfield. Celtic-themed spring concert with harp, viola and flute. Free. www.kirkwoodpres.com. 703-451-5320.

St. Patrick's Day Dinner. 6-8 p.m. Pohick Church, 9301 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Fundraising event to support the many Christian outreach programs sponsored by the Brotherhood of St. Andrew Men's Group of Pohick Episcopal Church. \$15.00 per person or \$30.00 per family, with children under 12 free. pohick.org. 703-339-6572.

SUNDAY/MARCH 13

Jewish Plays Project Contest. 6:45 p.m. The Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. Readings of three plays selected from the top 10 Jewish Plays Projects plays of 2016. The audience will vote on the winning play. \$10-\$18. www.jccnv.org. 703-537-3000.

Wheeling and Feeling

FROM PAGE 9

repeats) throughout the month to charity.

In January, they raised \$311 for the group Band of Parents that funds new therapies for children with the childhood cancer neuroblastoma. Last month, \$375 went to the Myocarditis Foundation. March's charity is the Hawn Foundation.

"We've been fortunate and blessed with how the community has embraced our passion," said Pollard. "It could've flopped."

"It's a very yoga thing to do," said Layfield. "One of the limbs of practice is to give to others."

Whether it's charity, fitness or stress-relief, the purpose of the studio comes back to simply being mindful of one's self and surroundings, getting permission to stop, breathe and reflect.

"In there, you're really practicing focusing on doing what you're doing," Achterberg said, "not all the other things life has going on. Especially as a working mom, with teenagers who are difficult by nature. It's good practice for while you're there, but also the rest of your life."

WheelHouse Clifton Mind Body Studio is located at 12644 Chapel Road, Suite C and D. For more information, visit www.wheelhousemindbodystudio.com or call 703-401-2627. More information about the WheelHouse March charity the Hawn Foundation is available online at <http://thehawnfoundation.org>.

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Burke/Longwood Knolls \$549,950
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Burke \$689,950
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Immac colonial w/ amazing 1200 Sq Ft deck & screened porch overlooking trees & stream, remodeled eat-in kit w/ Silestone cntrs, fin walkout bsmt, remodeled baths, spacious MBR w/ sitting rm, 3600+ sq ft, new dual zone HVAC, lovely hrdwd flrs, 4BR + den, 3.5BA & more.



Springfield/Orange Hunt \$374,950
Multiple Offers Received

Immaculate TH w/ remodeled eat-in kit w/ hrdwd flrs, tall cabinets & tile splash, 3.5 updated baths, new carpet & fresh paint, fin bsmt w/ storage, fenced yard w/ patio, new roof 2016, remodeled MBA w/ double sinks, newer windows, heat pump & more. Walk to school!

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THE CONNECTION
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HomeLifeStyle

Buying or Selling?

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

Here we are, once again right on the heels of the Spring/Summer real estate season when it seems like “For Sale” signs become the most common lawn ornament or condo window decoration. Selling, and certainly buying a new home should be an occasion for celebration, but you might not be doing too much of that unless you understand the basics of either process and have them well under control.

With help from some knowledgeable sources like the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors (NVAR), the National Association of Realtors (NAR) and some respected local experts, here’s a bit of a primer on buying or selling a property. We’re going for the basics here with a few comments about our local market.

Let’s start with sellers, since for the most part, they have the most work to do to get the job done. First question. Use an agent or go it alone? You may think only saving the real estate agent fees is the basis for the answer, but if you decide to be your own agent, be sure you have done the homework on legal and regulatory requirements, and be prepared for the paperwork. Sadly, one misstep here could be pretty costly and there goes those potential savings. And are you ready to be your own marketer and be available night and day and weekends to show your property? Another thought ... many potential buyers are not comfortable dealing directly, especially during negotiations, with the homeowner and would prefer the buffer of a trustworthy agent that they can really share their thoughts with. Statistics have also shown that properties for sale by owner more often receive lower initial offers.

Let’s assume that you are working with an agent. Hopefully, you asked all the right questions before signing an agreement to sell. Don’t be shy. It’s okay to “interview” several agents and ask for references. Ask to make contact with their last two or three clients – not just the ones that they offer up as testimonials. What’s their typical “Days on Market” and how do their times compare to others. And a biggie – what’s the average variation between the initial listing price and the final sales price? The answer here may spare you some disappointments and provide some indication about your real estate agent’s skills at pricing your property and negotiation the best price.

Now what? Put on your thickest skin, open your wallet just a tad, listen to that agent, and before you even have that first showing:

Be realistic about your asking price. “Don’t be too aggressive,” cautioned real estate agent Jennifer Boyce of Long and Foster in Burke. Anita Lasansky, CRB, managing broker-vice president Long and Fos-



PHOTO BY ANDREA WORKER

What’s wrong with this picture? It’s a gorgeous kitchen, but real estate agents will tell you that the green plastic cup, the dishwashing soap and the drainboard should all vanish from the selling photos of your house, and certainly during any showings.

ter Reston North Hills-Herndon, agrees with that advice, and adds that sellers around the Wiehle Metro station in Reston shouldn’t expect a big bump in sales price just because of Metro’s arrival. Lasansky has seen sellers factor in 5-10 percent increases on that basis, but “it just hasn’t had that effect,” she said. Getting a pre-appraisal or advice from a lender can help in setting the best realistic sales price, since most buyers will need a mortgage.

Think about getting a pre-sale home inspection. This could cost a bit. Think at least \$500, depending on the size and age of the property. The buyer will have an inspection done, but being proactive could help locate potential problems that might stall, or even end a sale. Even if you don’t go for the professional inspection, take a look around and get on with those repairs or more affordable upgrades you’ve been meaning to tackle. While you’re at it, locate those warranties and manuals - something that really impresses those buyers, while last-minute searches could pose a problem at closing.

Clean and get organized. Here’s where you need that thick skin. Your agent isn’t casting aspersions on your personal taste or “dissing” your kids, pets, hobbies, etc. when she tells you to neutralize as much as possible, put away the toys and pet paraphernalia, and all the other stuff that is part of our comfortable living. Your agent is merely looking out for you, and making your home appealing to the widest pool of potential buyers. Pay special attention to closets and bathrooms. If there isn’t space inside the house, consider the smallest space at a storage facility for the the extra boxes,

furniture, gadgets and whatnots while your property is on the market.

First impressions. That means check out curb appeal, from the condition of lawn and landscape to the front entryway. Trim those bushes. Edge that grass. Put down some new mulch, and clean up those oil spots on the driveway.

Photos. Unless you are one gifted photographer, let the professionals handle this one. Most buyers today do their scouting online. Lots of quality photos attract the most visitors. Equally, photos that don’t show off each room to advantage, or contain pets wandering by, the piled-high laundry basket, or a reflection of the photographer can put your property on the “don’t want to see that one” list.

YOUR REAL ESTATE AGENT can give you a more comprehensive checklist and do a walk-through before an Open House or to prepare for showings, but here are some of the “musts” as advised by some of our area experts:

❖ Double check for clutter, and clean, clean, clean. A thorough cleaning by a professional service is much recommended. Don’t forget the windows and the carpets.

❖ Do the “**Sniff Test.**” This one is critical for homes with pets or smokers. Again, put on your thick skin armour. Refrigerators, garbage disposals, trash cans and carpets can be odoriferous stumbling blocks to a good showing. Give your home a thorough airing out before show time, especially in the kitchen.

❖ **Stage it** – Consider a professional “stager” or at least give each space a neutral, de-cluttered living “story” that helps

A primer for doing either
and avoiding pitfalls.

buyers visualize themselves right at home. To highlight upgrades or bring attention to items/features in a room, you might add an attractive picture frame with a few well written and formatted sentences on classy writing paper. Of course, a little light music and a plate of yummy cookies make everyone feel welcome.

❖ Put away small valuables, jewelry and medications.

❖ **Don’t hang around** – and take Fido or Fifi with you if possible. If not, confine pets to crates or one room and be sure to warn agents in advance. Be sure you have left contact information in case of questions or issues.

❖ **Make your property accessible** – If potential buyers can only see your property from 10 a.m. until noon on Tuesdays and Thursdays, prepare for a long wait before a successful closing. Selling a home is often a numbers game. As disruptive as it can be, the more people who look, the better chance of a sale.

FOR BUYERS. Just as with the sellers, buyers should shop around for a trusted real estate partner. Again, ask those questions, get those referrals and be sure that your agent understands your needs and expectations and that you understand the process as they describe it. The best starting place is making sure that you know what you are looking for.

Some of the basics as advised by the NVAR and NAR and some of their area experts:

❖ **Get pre-qualified.** Better yet, get pre-approved by a lender before you start looking. Megan Bailey of Bailey Fine Properties says “Buyers must be pre-approved before going out to look at homes with me. It’s important to know that they feel comfortable ... by having the lender provide them with a “Good Faith Estimate” to break down the costs and to make sure the lender can finance the home. Taking someone to look at homes out of their price range ... sets the client up for disappointment.”

❖ **Think about resale.** This may sound counter intuitive at this point, but especially for first-time buyers with an average of 10 years in the home, it’s good to think ahead and consider what the area and the home might be like when it’s time to move on.

❖ **Keep repair, maintenance and running costs in mind.** Even a brand-new home may require some work or customizing to suit your lifestyle, so consider those costs. You may have the approval for that attractive “McMansion” but are you prepared for the electric bills, mowing that acre, and the property taxes on top of the monthly mortgage?

❖ **Don’t go “house-blind,”** when you are so taken with the house that you might ignore factors that could make for a poor buying decision. Visit the property several times, inside and out, at various times of the day and on different days of the week to get a real feel for the neighborhood.

Nanny Suites Add Value

High-end live-in quarters attract au pairs and can increase property values.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

When Peggy Delinois Hamilton relocated to the Washington, D.C. area and began working full-time after spending eight years as an at-home mother of two children, childcare was one of her top concerns. She decided that a live-in au pair was the best choice for her family.

"I like the live-in because I don't have to worry about issues with transportation on the caretaker's part," said Hamilton. "I don't have to worry about them having competing obligations."

Finding and keeping a live-in nanny in a competitive childcare market can be a high stakes game. To lure and retain experienced, nurturing caregivers, many families shell out as much as \$100,000 to create stylishly appointed living space for their au pairs. From kitchens with marble countertops and stainless steel appliances to bathrooms with luxury showerheads and rich wood cabinetry, local designers create living quarters so enchanting and thoughtfully designed that a nanny wouldn't dream of leaving.

"If you're a live-in nanny, you want your own space. In fact, nannies won't take a job from a family that won't provide it," said Jackie Wood-Gobuluk, owner of Metropolitan Nannies in Herndon, Virginia.

The spaces most often used for nanny suites are the lower level or attic, says Christopher Dietz of Dietz Development. "We try to create a close mimic of the main house and the primary kitchen and bathrooms of the main house," he said. "We don't do Formica or IKEA cabinets. We generally use ... granite, marble or Silestone. You don't want people to say, 'Wow, we can tell you really cut corners on this space.'"

Maintaining a continuity in quality while being budget conscious requires judicious planning. "We may splurge on custom window treatments and a bedskirt and save on things like furniture using retail pieces," said Marika Meyer, principal of Marika Meyer Interiors in Bethesda.

When an Arlington, Va. family enlisted architect J.P. Ward of Anthony Wilder Design/Build, Inc. to design an au pair suite for their home, they wanted him to maintain continuity in both color and materials. A cathedral ceiling, granite countertops, and under cabinet lighting were key as he blended the rich aesthetic quality of the original home with the new space. "We used a higher end tile and materials that blended with the rest of the house," said Ward. "It turned out to be like a high-end studio apartment that you could get high rent for."

The au pair's space has a separate entrance, something that offers privacy to both



PHOTO COURTESY OF TRUPLACE

The space serves as a nanny suite in an Alexandria home. Additional living areas can increase a property's value, say real estate agents.

the nanny and the family. "We made it so that the au pair has an independent way of coming in and so they're not working 24 hours a day," said Ward.

Contractors say the cost of adding a nanny suite can range from \$5,000 on a property where there is an existing bathroom and space for a bedroom to more than \$100,000 on properties where plumbing must be installed or an small addition is required. "[A] bathroom is the biggest expense because of the plumbing," said Ward.

Because such an addition requires a significant investment, Kai Tong of Hopkins and Porter Construction in Potomac, Md. encourages clients to think long term. "One of the most important and useful realizations when considering nanny suites is that, unlike your kitchen or bath or bedroom, the nanny suite will only be a nanny suite for a finite amount of time in your lives," he said. "As your children grow, the nanny will move on, and the nanny suite is destined to become something else."

In the Washington, D.C. area, adding an au pair suite to one's home can make a property more appealing. "Particularly in neighborhoods with lots of young, affluent families, nanny suites are a popular, although not essential, amenity," said David DeSantis, Partner and Managing Broker of TTR Sotheby's International Realty. "Ideally these suites are somewhat separated from the family sleeping quarters and have their own entrance so the nanny can come and go freely."

A nanny suite can offer a good return on investment. "The fact that it could be used as a nanny suite is a plus, but it's the same sort of thing as an in-law suite [so] it offers the ability for multigenerational living with some level of privacy," said David Howell,

may make a difference in price from 5 to 10 percent as they ... would count as an additional bedroom," said real estate agent Nancy Itteilag, of Long and Foster Christie's International Real Estate.

"We try to create a close mimic of the main house and the primary kitchen and bathrooms of the main house."

— Christopher Dietz,
Dietz Development

Ann Dozier Michael, an Alexandria-based associate broker with McEneaney Associates, has a current listing that includes a nanny suite. "When you have a property listed that can serve the various needs of buyers, then that will add value because you have a larger buying pool," she said.

SEE NANNY SUITE, PAGE XX



PHOTO BY MORGAN HOWARTH

Families create spa-like living quarters to attract and retain live-in

Good Advice:

"I let sellers know that they need to expect that some of their privacy will be compromised ... their home needs to be in showing condition every day before they leave, clean kitchen, beds made, everything put away, pets secured and comfortable, and that the home smells clean and fresh. I always suggest they visit model homes to see examples of what buyers fall in love with and why."

— **Megan Bailey, Bailey Fine Properties**

"For buyers, please be careful what you say. There could be a recording device in the house. Not unusual anymore with today's security technology. For example, don't look at pictures and say that their children look creepy. ... Sellers, put away medications and jewelry. It's rare, but prescription drugs are the number one item that 'goes missing' during open houses or showings."

— **Smita Lal, Long and Foster Reston North Hills-Herndon**

"Recently had a listing that needed a bit of updating. The seller was fine with spending some money, but balked at my suggestion to replace the fluorescent lighting in the kitchen. Four months later, the seller finally agreed to spend the \$1000 to replace the light. We ratified a contract 5 days after the work was done. Moral of the story: If you are hiring a pro to help you buy or sell a home, listen to their advice."

— **Andy Krumholz, Keller Williams Realty, Utopian Homes**

"I always tell my sellers, 'To be clear, I will give you a list of customized items to prepare your home. It will be in order of importance. I assure you, the more you complete, the fewer days on the market, and of course at the right price.' So far I haven't missed."

— **Lisa Carlisle, Long and Foster Reston North Hills-Herndon**



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Remodeled Home Tour Set for March 12

Home evolves from center hall colonial to open plan with boldly original finishes.

BY JOHN BYRD
THE CONNECTION

A dramatic “kitchen-centric” first floor interior design solution in a 30-year-old Colonial-style production house will be featured on a “Remodeled Home Tour” sponsored by Sun Design Remodeling on Saturday, March 12.

The house at 7990 Oak Bridge Lane in Fairfax Station is owned by Andrew Smith and Madelynn McCarthy. The residence will be opened to the public from noon-4 p.m.

Purchased by Smith and McCarthy in 2002, the original house was a traditional center hall Colonial with four bedrooms. The couple, now in their late 50s, have occupied the home for 14 years.

While the 4,000-square-foot house (the couple’s second) has been satisfactory to the owners in many respects, the first floor’s comparatively small rooms, narrow doorways and builder-grade finishes had come to seem dated and cramped as the couple looked ahead to retirement years.

“We wanted our house to be more of personal residence that reflects our tastes,” Andy Smith said. “A place we can really enjoy for another 10 years, or more.”

As longer occupancy became a consideration, the production house limitations seemed glaring.

“The kitchen was space-constricted and pretty drab,” Smith said. “There was a small island with a cooktop that didn’t provide a useful working surface. Doors to the hall closet and powder room frequently obstructed traffic at the kitchen archway,



PHOTOS BY GREG HADLEY

Fairfax Station homeowners Andy Smith and Madelynn McCarthy relocated an adjacent dining room in order to gain 78 feet for a gourmet kitchen that accommodates a large food prep island and a three-stool wine bar a few steps from the back deck. The island surface is “blue flower” granite.

which was too narrow. The kitchen clean-up area was too exposed from the family room. Overall, we wanted a more balanced, aesthetically-pleasing interior.”

An addition off the back of house was an earlier space-enhancement consideration.

“We had plans to remove the rear wall and add 800 square feet,” Smith said, “but when we looked more closely at our real requirements this approach didn’t make economic sense. Fundamentally, we just wanted a larger kitchen and pantry, and a

warmer interior that would work well for entertaining; we weren’t sure how to accomplish this.”

A seminar by Sun Design Remodeling last year unveiled to a new way of assessing priorities.

“The program prompted us to explore ideas of re-purposing space within the home’s existing footprint,” Smith said. “I suddenly recognized we were getting almost no use from our 200-square-foot formal living room. It was just wasted space.”

Details

Sun Design Remodeling will be sponsoring tour of a recently remodeled Fairfax Station home on March 12, 2016. Headquartered in Burke, the firm has a second office in McLean. Call 703-425-5588 or visit www.SunDesignInc.com.

Soon after the seminar, the couple contacted Craig Duroske at Sun Design Remodeling for an on-premise meeting.

“A center hall Colonial has long been one of the most popular floor plans in northern Virginia” said Craig Duroske, Sun Design’s founder and chairman. “The way people now use their homes, however, has changed dramatically in the past few decades. There’s a movement towards open, well-defined, interactive spaces, and departure from interior walls that may not be strictly necessary.”

Duroske sees his role as one of helping owners develop a plan tailored to how they want to use their home in the foreseeable future — one that will also present an appropriate interior design solution.

Once Smith and McCarthy established that the front-facing living room could be incorporated into a broader floor plan reconfiguration, Sun Design’s team began re-assigning “use zones” within the existing first floor template.

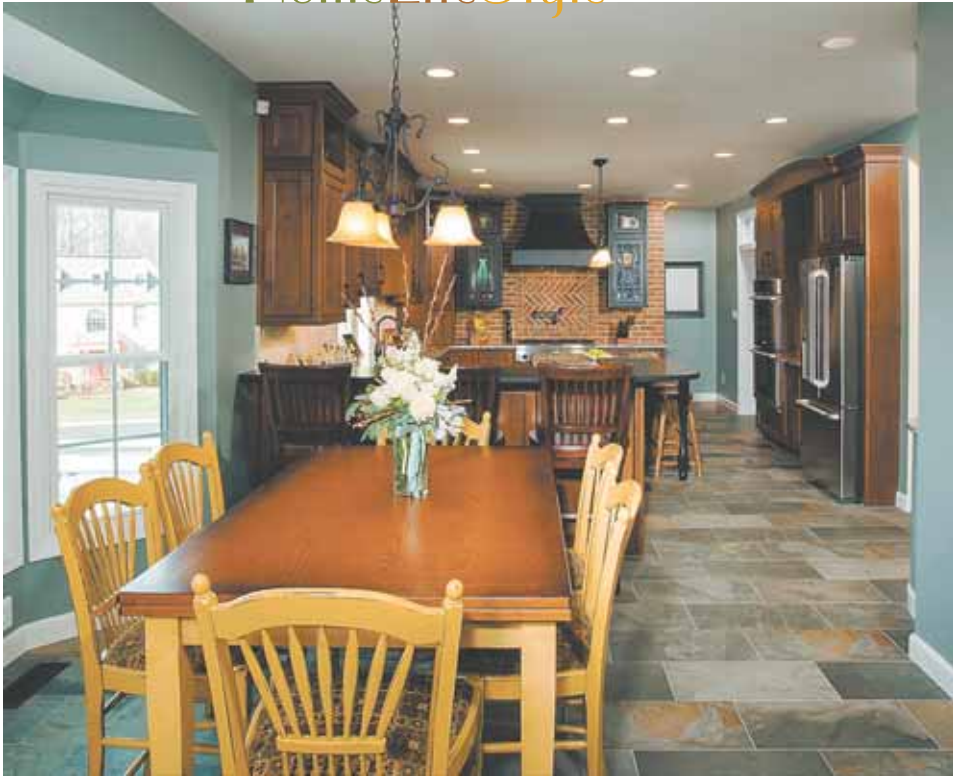
Several critical decisions followed in rapid



The bow front farm sink, six-burner stove and food prep island form the three sides of a work triangle that facilitates cooking and clean-up tasks. The custom-designed barn door (right) leads into the new formal dining room.



With its coffered ceiling and Wedgwood interior treatment, the dining room explores 18th century (Colonial-era) themes. The circa-1890’s glass-and-wood barn door mounted on rollers was created by Sun Design. The innovation provides privacy, yet allows light from the home’s west-facing rear elevation.



The exposed brick, tile floor and raised square panel cabinet facings create a softly textured, elegant-but-casual interior. The floors conceal a radiant heating system which keeps the room comfortable in cooler temperatures.

Remodeled Home Tour Set for March 12

FROM PAGE XX

succession:

- ❖ The wall between the kitchen and the dining room would be removed, extending the kitchen by 78 square feet while allowing generous square footage for a walk-in pantry and a new powder room;
- ❖ The hall powder room would give way to an enlarged and upgraded laundry room/mudroom linked to the garage and only accessible from inside the kitchen;
- ❖ All 200 square feet of the old living room would be re-purposed as a distinctively finished formal dining room accessed directly from the new kitchen;
- ❖ With the cluster of doors between the foyer and the kitchen relocated or replaced with pocket doors, front-to-back access from the foyer is now unencumbered and free

flowing, an effect aided by improved sightlines.

Simultaneously, a series of interior design conferences evolved into an inspired collaboration.

“In a finish work elaboration, the details are everything,” Smith said, noting that his enthusiasm for design extends from a life-long interest in architecture. “Maddie and I had done a lot of research into the kinds of materials, colors and textures we wanted, but Katie Coram at Sun Design really helped us narrow and refine our choices, assembling the pieces into a coherent whole.”

Some highlights of the makeover’s interior design solution include:

- ❖ **A custom-designed barn door between the kitchen and the new**

dining room. While the interior makeover generally explores rustic, early American sensibilities, a glass-and-wood barn door created to specification by Sun Design carpenters is an iconic stand-out that keeps the dining room private as needed while allowing light from the west-facing rear windows;

❖ **A dining counter/wine bar situated at the back door accessing the deck.** Equipped with a wine rack and wine refrigerator for easy access to the rear deck, the wine bar also obstructs sightlines from the family room to the kitchen sink, making the fireside space a visually-independent entertainment zone.

❖ **A food prep island and dining counter.** Topped with blue flower granite and equipped with an under-cabinet microwave and a warming drawer, the built-in is positioned for easy access to a circumscrib-

ing U-shaped counter completing useful work triangles in several directions.

❖ **Six burner gas stove with hood.** Designed in black mocha glazed wood, the distressed facing picks up several of the kitchen’s rustic themes, including the exposed brick, and flagstone-accented tile flooring which conceals a radiant heating system.

❖ **Dining room with coffered ceiling; Wedgwood interior design.** In a nod to the 18th-century (Colonial era) sensibilities, the new formal dining room’s elegant wall elevations include raised panels, crown molding and wainscoting.

“From room to room, the new first floor explores a lot of style elements in well-balanced combinations,” Andy Smith said, “It’s a much warmer, more inviting interior. People will enjoy seeing what we’ve done.”

John Byrd (byrdmatx@gmail.com; www.HomeFrontsNews.com) has been writing about home improvement topics for 30 years.



A wine rack and wine refrigerator are convenient to a serving counter convenient to the family room and back deck.



Exposed brick, a cooktop hood and glass-facing cabinets in distressed black mocha glaze are elements in the kitchen’s distinctively rustic interior design.



Relocating the hall powder room added square footage needed for a laundry and mudroom that links to the garage.



The home’s new rear footprint accommodates walk-in pantry with pull-out storage racks — as well as a larger powder room

Fairfax County REAL ESTATE

2016 Assessments by Area

Also home values for members of
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

Hunter Mill Supervisor **Cathy Hudgins (D)**
2015 — \$638,100
2016 — \$674,430
5.69%



Dranesville Supervisor **John Foust (D)**
2015 — \$2,939,290
2016 — \$2,788,330
- 5.14%



Mason Supervisor **Penelope Gross (D)**
2015 — \$462,630
2016 — \$478,490
3.43%



Lee Supervisor **Jeff McKay (D)**
2015 — \$774,620
2016 — \$728,080
- 6.01%



Braddock Supervisor **John Cook (R)**
2015 — \$664,480
2016 — \$677,950
2.03%



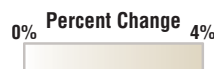
Mount Vernon Supervisor **Daniel Storck (D)**
2015 — \$579,700
2016 — \$585,460
0.99%



Fairfax County Chairman **Sharon Bulova (D)**
2015 — \$645,830
2016 — \$665,090
2.98%



Springfield Supervisor **Patrick Herry (R)**
2015 — \$599,600
2016 — \$587,370
- 2.05%



2016 Countywide average for all homes — \$527,648

Single family-detached homes — \$632,507, up 1.69 percent

Townhouse/duplex properties — \$392,951, up 2.05 percent

Condominiums — \$261,792, up 0.73 percent

ZIP CODE AREA	2015 MEAN	2016 MEAN	PERCENT CHANGE
Alexandria/Mount Vernon	419,966	428,621	2.06
Annandale	436,194	444,426	1.89
Burke	438,919	447,099	1.86
Centreville	381,645	385,089	0.90
Chantilly	450,015	462,509	2.78
Clifton	648,374	659,408	1.70
Fairfax	476,037	482,115	1.28
Fairfax Station	643,207	647,290	0.63
Falls Church	434,062	447,822	3.17
Great Falls	1,047,755	1,055,259	0.72
Herndon	472,236	475,057	0.60
Lorton	381,572	390,687	2.39
McLean	885,556	894,285	0.99
Oakton	685,967	694,101	1.19
Reston	424,021	428,378	1.03
Springfield	416,853	428,503	2.79
Vienna	686,293	698,974	1.85

for single family, townhouses and condominiums

The average assessed value of a
single family home in Fairfax County
for 2016 is \$632,507, up 1.69 percent

SOURCE: FAIRFAX COUNTY