

Springfield CONNECTION

Franconia ❖ Kingstowne ❖ Newington

Promoting Healthy Lifestyle

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Every
Tweet
Counts
NEWS, PAGE 3

A fifth grade runner looking up to the Chick-fil-a Cow. About forty-five fifth and sixth grade girls from Springfield Estates Elementary School participated in the Fall Girls Run Club 5K Race on Nov. 21.

WELLBEING

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Small Business Saturday: Different Turnouts

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Holiday
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& Gift Guide 2013

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PHOTO BY CINDY ARENDT

A Personal Journey

Where the past meets the present: Springfield resident returns to Vietnam, writes a book.

BY RUSS UGONE
THE CONNECTION

As Robert (Bob) L. Bob Tecklenberg got off the plane the familiar tropical heat and landscape triggered memories of long ago when he was just 19-years-old, and in Vietnam. He, like many other veterans, wanted to know what happened to the country and its people. Tecklenberg began his personal journey by going back to Vietnam twice, once in 2003 and then again in 2004. On both occasions, he spent a few weeks visiting two villages, Thua Luu and Nouc Ngot, where many years ago he had protected the villagers as a young Marine. Upon his return to the villages, Tecklenberg recollected "how little had changed in the intervening years." Many of the people that he had known were still residents and remembered him. They treated him with respect and seemed to recognize that his earlier efforts helped contribute to the continuity of the vil-

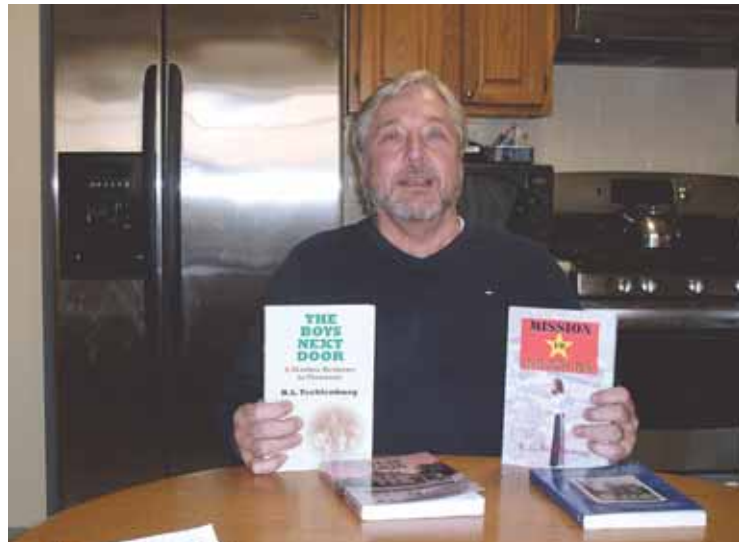


PHOTO BY RUSS UGONE/THE CONNECTION

Bob Tecklenberg with his books.

lages to this day.

His new book, "The Boys Next Door: A Marine Returns to Vietnam," is a combination of a memoir, travel story, and history. The story begins when Tecklenberg enlisted in the Marines in 1968, where part of his training was spent learning Vietnamese at Language School in Monterey, Calif.

In January 1969, Tecklenberg arrives in Vietnam, and soon after is wounded. After recovery, he is assigned to a Combined Action Team, whose mission is to defend the village's inhabitants and to conduct pacification and civic action projects while also living in the villages. By living with the villagers, he got to know the people

and their culture. Tecklenberg said that the local village residents referred to the Marines as the "Boys Next Door."

Battles occurred throughout the region surrounding the villages, and today the results of those battles can still be seen in the landscape. However, the two villages that Tecklenberg had lived in during that time period remained intact, with little changes from the time that he had spent living with them. He remarked that he "felt gratification that the villages and their way of life were still intact." He believes that the efforts of the Combined Action Team contributed to the villages' long-term survival, and views it as a positive outcome for his time spent in Vietnam.

Tecklenberg lives in Springfield. You can find out more about his journey in his new book "The Boys Next Door: A Marine Returns to Vietnam," Saint Johann Press at Amazon and bookstores. Also check out Tecklenberg's three other historical-based stories.

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.

THURSDAY/DEC.5-SUNDAY/DEC.15

Sheehy Toys for Tots Toy Drive Drop Off. Sheehy Volkswagon of Springfield, 6601 Backlick Road, Springfield; Sheehy Ford, Nissan, & Subaru of Springfield, 6727 Loisdale Road, Springfield; Collecting new, unwrapped toys to benefit the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program in which Christmas gifts are given to less fortunate children in the community.

SATURDAY/DEC. 7

Seminar on Scams. 9 a.m.- 1 p.m. West Springfield High School Auditorium, 6100 Rolling Road, Springfield. Learn how to protect against devastating financial scams and fraud.

Dog Adoption. 12-3 p.m. PETCO, 13053 Greenbriar Towncenter, Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, Fairfax.

SATURDAY/DEC. 14

Dog Adoption. 12-3 p.m. PETCO Greenbriar Towncenter, 13053 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, Fairfax. www.hart90.org



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Every Tweet Counts

How Republican Brian Schoeneman earned wrath of his party by making sure every vote counted in county.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

On the morning of Nov. 6, the day after the general election, it appeared that Republican Mark Obenshain had eked out a razor-thin victory over Democrat Mark Herring to become Virginia's next Attorney General.

Like most hotly-contested political battles, the close race generated even closer scrutiny.

National political analyst David Wasserman, with the Cook Political Report, thought there were anomalies in the absentee ballot totals for Fairfax County, which had been expected to vote strongly Democratic.

Wasserman took to Twitter with his evidence, pointing out there must be absentee ballots missing in Fairfax County, because the percentage of requested absentee ballots that had been returned and reported on election night was much lower than the percentage of other counties. Wasserman and others noticed that there were abnormally low totals in the 8th Congressional District, which includes Bailey's Crossroads.

"Are we supposed to buy that just 7 percent of voters in Bailey's Crossroads who requested an absentee ballot actually voted? Preposterous," Wasserman concluded in one tweet.

Meanwhile, Brian Schoeneman, the senior GOP appointee to Fairfax County's three-member Electoral Board, was in the midst of a post-election canvass, his first since being appointed to the board last spring. Essentially, a canvass is checking and double-checking Election Day votes, the purpose of which is to catch inevitable human errors.

Schoeneman, a well-known Fairfax attorney, Republican blogger and former Bush staffer, had been posting tweets and Facebook messages on Election Day to make the process as transparent as possible for voters.

He had also been reading the tweets from Wasserman and others. Finding no evidence of a discrepancy after an initial review, he tweeted a reply.

"To respond to rumors going around, there are zero - o - ZERO



Brian Schoeneman, Secretary of the Fairfax County Election Board, at his "day job" as an attorney in Fairfax County.



Brian Schoeneman, Secretary of the Fairfax County Election Board, took to Twitter throughout Election Day and in the days following the election, to communicate with political observers who questioned the discrepancy between requested absentee ballots and actual vote counts in the statewide elections. Schoeneman's now infamous "zero" tweet, posted on Wednesday, Nov. 6, went viral and sparked a fast and furious twitter sphere debate.

uncounted absentee ballots in Fairfax County. We completed our count last night," Schoeneman posted on Wednesday, Nov. 6, at 2:33 p.m.

The "zero" tweet instantly went viral.

Over the next 36 hours, the twitter sphere exploded as hundreds of followers jumped into the fray, providing numbers, offering theories, and, at times, hurling partisan insults.

Wasserman and Ben Tribbett, a Fairfax County Democratic operative who writes the political blog "Not Larry Sabato," kept pepper-

ing Schoeneman with numbers showing abnormally low totals for absentee ballots.

Schoeneman, in an effort to be "hyper-transparent," encouraged the crowd sourcing by engaging followers with real-time status reports.

At 7:40 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 7, Schoeneman tweeted:

"I'm working on figuring this out as we speak ... Nobody's being rude. Dave is keeping me honest, which is fine."

A half hour later, at 8:14 p.m., Schoeneman sent out a "Houston, we have a problem" tweet:



Brian Schoeneman in his Fairfax townhome with his cat, Howie. His favorite portrait of Revolutionary hero George Washington hanging above the fireplace.

Brian Schoeneman — At a Glance

Hometown: Born in Baltimore and raised in Pennsylvania, Schoeneman came to the D.C. metropolitan area to attend The George Washington University, where he earned two degrees. He moved to Fairfax County in 2007.

Education: B.A. in political science, George Washington University, 2001. Master's degree in political management, George Washington University, 2004; Law degree, Catholic University School of Law, 2011

Family: Married to KayAnn, the communications director for the Fairfax Chamber. The couple live in Fairfax with their 3 1/2 year-old son Nick and cat, Howie.

Public Office: Schoeneman served in President George W. Bush's administration as special assistant and senior speechwriter to Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao from 2008 to 2009. In that capacity, he served as the Secretary's lead liaison to organized labor and as a member of her senior staff. In the 2011 election, he ran against state Del. David Bulova, a Democrat, but failed to capture the 37th house district seat.

Profession: Schoeneman earned his law degree at Catholic University.

He is the legislative director for the Seafarers International Union of North America, a maritime labor union. Schoeneman is co-owner and an active blogger for the right-leaning political blog Bearing Drift.

Membership & Affiliations: Member of the historic St. John's Episcopal Church on Lafayette Square; Catholic University Law Review, published The Scarlet "L" - Have Recent Developments in Lobbying Regulation Gone Too Far?; vice president of the Westcott Ridge Homeowners Association; an active freemason, he has served as an officer in John Blair Lodge #187; member of the International Propeller Club of the United States, where he serves on the Board of Governors of the D.C. Chapter; founding member of the GW Graduate School of Political Management Alumni Association, and served as its first president; communications director for the Fairfax County Republican Committee in 2010 and former general counsel for FCRC From 2012 to March 2013. He is a member of the American Bar Association, the Fairfax Bar Association and the Federalist Society.

"I've talked to the GR (general registrar) and we are working on this as we speak — I am convinced now too that there is an issue."

"It was my worst nightmare as an election official, the perfect storm of events," Schoeneman said last week. "During the canvass, we spent most of the day catching little errors, and we didn't realize we had a glaring error."

Votes were temporarily underreported when a voting machine in Bailey's Crossroads malfunctioned early on Election Day. Although the machine was later repaired, an election official grabbed the totals generated when the machine broke down, rather than the final tally — a much larger number for Herring.

Schoeneman's transparency and his willingness to explore what went wrong on election night thrust him into the epicenter of partisan politics.

While his actions earned him the respect of many Democrats, both locally and nationally, Schoeneman also earned the

wrath of some in his own party, who weren't happy that Fairfax County's revised count turned the tide in favor of Democrat Mark Herring.

"Anyone who knows Brian knows that he is honest to a fault, and will do everything in his power to make the (election) process as fair and transparent as possible," said Cameron Quinn, Fairfax County's general registrar.

Chris Sanders, a local Twitter follower, said he was impressed by Schoeneman's candid responses during the election. "He is a stand-up guy, even though we don't have the same politics," Sanders said.

On Nov. 25, the Virginia State Board of Elections certified election results with Herring defeating Obenshain by a mere 165 votes out of more than 2 million cast statewide. Obenshain has requested a recount, which is expected to be held in mid-December.

The "found" absentee ballots

SEE ELECTION, PAGE 5

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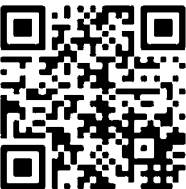
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FAIRFAX COUNTY REGION

The mission of Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington is to help boys and girls of all backgrounds, especially those who need us most, build confidence, develop character and acquire the skills needed to become productive, civic-minded, responsible adults.

BGCGW's Fairfax County region includes the Culmore Character Club and Murraygate Village Club, serving 582 members a year. On average, 120 youths come through the doors every day during the school year.

Meet Henry Lopez, 2013 National Boys & Girls Clubs Virginia Youth of the Year, who grew up with the BGCGW Culmore Character Club for 14 years. Henry now attends George Mason University on an Honor Scholarship studying computer engineering.

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Members of the Greenspring Resident Council and staff were recognized at the Board of Supervisors meeting on Nov. 19 in honor of the community's 15th anniversary.

Board of Supervisors Recognizes Greenspring for 15th Anniversary

On Tuesday, Nov. 19, Greenspring was recognized by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors for 15 successful years in Fairfax County. Greenspring celebrated the community's 15th anniversary on Nov. 17 and is now home to nearly 2000 residents and the workplace of nearly 1000 staff members.

Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay brought forth the matter to the Board on Tuesday to recognize the community. "I'm proud that Greenspring chose to locate in Lee District—we benefit tremendously from its presence," said McKay. "Greenspring residents take civic responsibility very seriously. They actively vol-

unteer and can always be counted on to support our local civic events. "We truly appreciate this special recognition and are thankful for the continued support from Fairfax County," said Robin Gliboff, Greenspring's Executive Director. "We've had a wonderful 15 years and look forward to continuing to provide an exceptional lifestyle for all who call Greenspring home." More than a dozen Greenspring staff members and members of the Resident Council were on hand for the recognition ceremony at the Fairfax County Government Center.

Additional information about Greenspring can be found at www.ericksonliving.com.

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Election Aftermath: 'Getting it Right in Fairfax'

FROM PAGE 3

and the approved provisional ballots resulted in a 975-vote new swing in favor of Democratic nominee Mark Herring. In fact, the additional votes from Fairfax County were the single biggest factor in Herring edging out Obenshain in the final certified tally.

The headline-making story spawned conspiracy theories by political activists on both sides of the aisle. While Schoeneman said he was just doing his job by making certain that every vote counted, others in his party saw it differently.

Jeanine Martin, on The Bull Elephant blog, asked "Why is Brian Schoeneman, who purports to be a Republican, helping Democrats by extending this deadline?"

Martin was referring to the Election Board's unanimous decision to extend the provisional ballot deadline through Tuesday, Nov. 12, a full week after the Nov. 5 election, while other Virginia counties were adhering to a deadline at 1 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 8.

That decision earned Schoeneman the scorn of Republican party officials throughout the state.

"What happened in Fairfax over the last week, culminating in tonight's announcement of a reversal in fortunes of the Virginia Attorney General candidates, was a travesty," wrote Steve Albertson, vice chairman of the Stafford County Electoral Board, in his blog. "... In doing so they raised a giant middle finger to the rest of us."

Schoeneman said it stung to have members of his own party question his integrity.

"These folks knew better. They've worked with me for years, and they know I'm honest and willing to address any complaints.

"One of the downsides to politics is that there are some folks — and they exist on both sides of the aisle — who want to turn everything into a 'good vs. evil' battle where everybody with one letter after their name is good and the other side is evil," Schoeneman said.

Schoeneman also said there were some Republicans who questioned his attempts at transparency and responsiveness through

social media such as Twitter and Facebook.

"When I made that 'zero' tweet, I was trying to tamp down the rumors that we had missing ballots or missing votes — and by missing I mean physically not present, like a box of ballots lying around somewhere that hadn't been counted. I had confirmed with the staff that this wasn't the case," Schoeneman said.

"And I was right," Schoeneman added, "we didn't have missing ballots. We did have a major tabulation error that inadvertently left 3,000 or so votes off the results sheet, which we caught and corrected. So both sides were right — there were votes that hadn't been reported, but my tweet was also accurate, because we didn't have any missing ballots that hadn't been counted in the 8th."

Looking back on election night, Schoeneman said he doesn't re-

8th District Central Absentee Precinct had that information, they could have figured out right away that their numbers were off," he said.

Ironically, it wasn't supposed to be Schoeneman sitting in that hot seat this highly partisan election.

Last February, Schoeneman was representing the Fairfax County Republican Committee in a lawsuit stemming from the 2012 election when the term of election board member Hans von Spakovsky, a Republican former member of the George W. Bush administration, was up.

Von Spakovsky, a political lightning rod for his controversial research on voter fraud, was the local Republican Party's first choice to remain on the board. Although it's almost unheard of for the panel of circuit court judges to refuse a party's first choice, the panel bypassed von Spakovsky.

"I hope I was able to do that for a few people on the left — prove to them that there are Republicans out there who care about the rules, getting it right and being fair..."

**— Brian Schoeneman,
a Republican and Secretary of the Fairfax County Electoral Board**

gret his infamous tweet, or any other tweets that gave the public a chance to "see into the factory where the sausage is being made."

"When folks are that cynical, it's hard to crack through to convince them that their preconceived notions about politics are wrong. I hope I was able to do that for a few people on the left — prove to them that there are Republicans out there who care about the rules, getting it right and being fair ... I want the average voter to know that their vote counts."

Asked if he would do anything differently on election night, Schoeneman replied that he thought the process could be improved with enhanced communication to election chiefs.

"The one thing I know we need to do differently and would have done differently is to get our chiefs and coordinators the spreadsheet we had that included all of the mail-in absentees and absentee-in-person ballots cast by Congressional District. Had our folks in the

Instead, they picked the party's second choice: Brian Schoeneman.

"Did I ever think I'd be sitting here as an election officer? No, absolutely not. But I'm here, and I'm committed to transparency. Call it 'Getting it right in Fairfax.' That's kind of my new slogan," Schoeneman said, smiling.

An avid Orioles fan, Schoeneman compared the events of election night, and the subsequent fallout from the Attorney General's saga to the World Series.

"We had a good night on Tuesday night, and a couple of nights where I thought we were in real trouble, but we patched things together and got it done," Schoeneman said. "Given that we didn't completely wrap up the process until 10 minutes before the deadline on Tuesday the 12th, the whole process felt like coming down to the last pitch of the last inning of Game 7 of the series, and having your guy hit a walk off single to win the game. And it was that stressful the whole time, too."



This site is soon to become the latest addition to the series of car-title lending operations that have opened along the Route 1 corridor since legislators opened the door to the industry back in 2010.

Usury Explosion

Northern Virginia becomes hotbed for car-title lending industry.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

In the last three years, dozens of new car-title lending businesses have popped up in neighborhoods across Northern Virginia — the result of recent regulations opening the door to a business that charges as much as 264 percent a year on loans. Since 2010, when the Virginia General Assembly gave the green light to the industry, the total number of locations has more than doubled from 184 to 395. And locations are opening every week.

"It's a trap, and although it's presented as a loan it's really loan-sharking," said Jay Speech, executive director of the Virginia Poverty Law Center. "People who get into this end up much worse off than when they started."

Lenders have always charged a range of interest rates for loans, but what's happening now in neighborhoods across Northern Virginia is unprecedented. Back in 2010, after then-Attorney General Bob McDonnell went after the car-title lending industry for violating Virginia law restricting how soon collections could begin on loans, members of the Virginia General Assembly crafted legislation that set rules specific to car-title lenders. The legislation created some restrictions that prevented lenders from going after borrowers for additional money if they had already repossessed an automobile, prevented lenders from charging more than 50 percent of the value of a car and capped the interests rate at 264 percent a year.

"Under this law, Mister Speaker, the industry will not

grow," said Del. Terry Kilgore (R-1) when the bill was debated on the House floor. "It will shrink."

THAT PREDICTION ended up being wrong. When the 2010 legislation passed, Virginia had 125 car-title lending locations. By the end of the year, that number had spiked to 184 locations. By the end of 2011, according to a report from the State Corporation Commission, the industry had 378 locations across the commonwealth. And the industry was clamoring for more. In 2011, a year after the new rules were created, the General Assembly considered another piece of legislation that undercut one of the restrictions created by the previous bill — preventing lenders from accepting titles of out-of-state cars.

"If you want to see car-title lenders do more loans in the state of Virginia, then you want to vote yes," said Glenn Oder (R-94), who brought a plush shark to the House floor to help him make the point. "But if you agree with me that the law we passed last year was sufficient, then you want to vote no."

A number of Northern Virginia legislators disagreed with Oder and supported the legislation to expand the reach of car-title lenders outside the boundaries of the commonwealth. The Senate passed the legislation on a 32 to 3 vote, with every member of the Northern Virginia supporting legislation that was introduced by Senate Democratic leader Dick Saslaw (D-35). On the House side, the vote was much tighter — 51 in support and 47

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OPINION

Who Will Be Hurt?

Innovations, changes and cuts designed to help the budget should be subject to analysis of how they will affect those on the short end of the economic and digital divide.

As Fairfax County faces a tight budget year and Fairfax County Public Schools consider significant cuts, clearly some changes are going to affect services on the ground.

As various proposals emerge, there should be some specific analysis of how changes, innovations and cuts would affect the poorest one-third or so of the county's residents specifically.

The schools, along with certain county agencies, must take special note of their mission, including providing services to families who are on the short side of the economic and digital divide. Elimination of print notices and newsletters, conversion to digital textbooks, use of internet-based surveys are just examples of small innovations that can leave many resi-

dents behind.

In another example, it is disturbing that ongoing concerns about Fairfax County libraries do not include a clear statement of mission to serve families and individuals who lack access to broadband internet at home.

EDITORIAL

In Fairfax County, where nearly 20 percent of the households have annual income of under \$50,000, about 8 percent live below the poverty line and more than 47,000 public school students are poor enough to qualify for subsidized meals, the public libraries are indispensable. Access to library resources goes beyond books, and includes the very digital access that many people cite as a threat to libraries. Public access to information via computers and Internet for those who do not have other access is a

critical service, and should be clearly defined as a critical mission of the libraries.

According to a 2010 report, Opportunity for All: How the American Public Benefits from Internet Access at U.S. Libraries, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation: 44 percent of people in households living below the federal poverty line (\$22,000 a year for a family of four) used public library computers and Internet access; among young adults 14-24 in households below the poverty line, 61 percent used public library computers and Internet for educational purposes; among seniors 65 and older living in poverty, 54 percent used public library computers for health or wellness needs.

The report also notes: "This access has also proven to be critical in times of disaster, where libraries may be the only access point still operating that can provide a delivery point for government and social services to those displaced."

Budgeting and restructuring must take into consideration the disproportionate effect of cutting services on lower income households especially.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Being Grateful

To the Editor:

"I am grateful for..." There could not be a more American expression at this time of year. We will say it out loud at the Thanksgiving table as we prepare to tuck in to a delicious meal. We will murmur it softly to ourselves as we gaze at the loved ones gathered around us. My family is no exception, and every year, we go through our "I am grateful for" lists, my brother proclaiming loudest of all, that he is most grateful that we can finally eat.

As a Muslim American, each Thanksgiving I am reminded of the verse of the Holy Quran that states "If you are grateful, I will surely bestow more favors on you" (14:8). I live in a country that allows me to practice my religion in peace and with dignity. A country that allows me each year, to be thankful that 400 years ago, a group of pilgrims fleeing religious persecution came to America to found a safe haven for all. Indeed The Holy Prophet Muhammad, (peace and blessings be upon him) stated that "One who is not grateful to others is not grateful to God." I am grateful to be American and count myself blessed. Yet for many of us, Thanksgiving is also a time to reflect on those who are less fortunate. We remind our children that while we are eating, there are those elsewhere who will not. I remind myself that while I

am free to go to the mosque on Friday for my prayers, there are others who are not.

In Islam, there are three types of "shukr" or gratefulness. First, understanding and being grateful in one's heart. Second, gratitude that one expresses by verbal praise. Third, gratitude shown by one's actions, that is, spending one's time and wealth on those who are less fortunate. Without that last action, the first two become meaningless. As we sit at the Thanksgiving table this year, let us not forget that there is a last, crucial step. By discharging the dues of mankind, we are discharging the dues of God. By giving from what we have, we are granted a second reflection on our blessings. Gratefulness in our hearts, gratefulness expressed in our voices, and gratefulness shown towards our fellow men. Let that be our mantra this holiday season.

Salma Haneef
Fairfax

A Case for Real Christmas Trees

To the Editor:

My son when he was younger used to get a little sad when we would put our Christmas trees outside to be picked up like garbage. I don't blame him - it's a bit anticlimactic to see the bare trees lying by the side of the road as

early as the day after Christmas. Few bother to wait until Epiphany when the Magi brings the gifts on Jan. 6 before they get rid of the tree. My poor neighbors, by Boxing Day they probably already have "Christmas hangovers" made worse by the loud, repetitive and often cheesy holiday music that has been blasting in the stores since Halloween. Or worse, maybe their trees have already died and left a trail of thousands of needles on the way to the curb.

Many people avoid such messiness - emotional and otherwise - associated with live trees altogether by displaying an artificial tree. In doing so, they save themselves some hassle and might even think they are doing their own part to save the planet by not cutting down trees. Well, as it turns out, not so much. According to the National Christmas Tree Association (www.realchristmastrees.org), Christmas tree growers in America (whose farms are often located on land not suited for other use) plant one to three new seedlings for every Christmas tree they harvest each year. Compare this biodegradable/renewable cycle that helps the planet breathe with the waste and pollution that is likely to be produced in artificial tree manufacturing, packaging and shipping. Adding it all up, it would seem that buying a fresh cut tree locally would be the most environmentally friendly option, if not the cheapest.

Environmental consciousness and cost concerns aside, artificial pine-smelling room sprays can't replace the fresh scent of a live tree in your home. And you won't have to vacuum up as many needles if you by the freshest tree you can find and water it properly. If you can't splurge for a tree cut right at the farm, ask the Christmas tree lot attendant when and where the trees were cut and have the attendant make a fresh cut on the trunk for you. We place our tree in its stand in the garage for a day to let the branches fall into place, shed loose needles, and acclimatize. Once inside, check the water level daily and close any heating vents nearby. Fresh cut trees are more expensive, but the whole process of driving out of town and finding your own tree for cutting makes for a fun holiday outing. We usually get pre-cut trees from a local stand, but once we enjoyed splurging for a fresh one we had cut outside the town of Clifton, where you can also taste local wine or visit little shops and eateries in the little town all within few miles "over the river and through the woods." For a list of Northern Virginia Tree farms and stands, visit <http://www.pickyournchristmastree.org/VAXmasnorthern.php>, but be sure to call ahead to make sure the listings are still in business and have a crop to sell this year.

Ann Soraghan
Fairfax Station

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VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The Little River Glen Senior Center in Fairfax needs volunteers to help with front desk coverage and special events. It also needs volunteer instructors for fitness, art, computer, and ESL classes. Call 703-324-5406, TTY 711, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and link to Volunteer Solutions or email VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov

The Kingstowne Senior Center in Alexandria needs volunteers to assist at the front desk on Fridays and instructors for classes in art, Spanish, and Tai Chi or QiGong/Khi Cong. Call 703-324-5406, TTY 711. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and link to Volunteer Solutions or email VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov

The Lewinsville Adult Day Health Care Center of McLean needs a volunteer musician to perform once or twice a month and a certified Zumba instructor to teach a class on Friday afternoons. Call 703-324-5406, TTY 711, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and link to Volunteer Solutions or email VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov

The Mount Vernon Adult Day Health Care Center in Alexandria needs social companions to help participants. Call 703-324-5406, TTY 711. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and link to Volunteer Solutions or email VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov

Meals on Wheels needs drivers in Reston, McLean and Falls Church. Call 703-324-5406, TTY 711, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and link to Volunteer Solutions or email VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov

Respite Care volunteers give family caregivers of a frail older adult a well-deserved break so they can go shopping, attend a doctor's appointment or just have coffee with a friend. Volunteers visit and oversee the safety of the older adult for a few hours each month.

Support and training are provided. Contact Kristin Martin at 703-324-7577, TTY 711, or Kristin.Martin@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Fairfax County needs volunteers to drive older adults to medical appointments and wellness programs. Call 703-324-5406, TTY 711, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and link to Volunteer Solutions or email VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov

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PHOTOS BY CINDY ARENDT

Springfield Estates Girls Run Club runners pose with Chick-fil-a Cow post-race.

Promoting Healthy Lifestyle

Springfield Estates Girls Run Club participates in 5K Race.

About forty-five fifth and sixth grade girls from Springfield Estates Elementary School participated in the Fall Girls Run Club 5K Race on Thursday, Nov. 21. The girls and coaches trained every Tuesday and Thursday during the months of October and November for this event. During the Girls Run Club season

the girls learned lessons about positive self-concept, encouraging others, and benefits of living a healthy life. They also built their running stamina as they started the season running about a half a mile, and they ended with their 5K race, which is about 3.1 miles.

A special thank you to Metro Run/Walk in Springfield for providing race bibs, pins, and a race clock; Silver Diner in Springfield for providing each runner with a race certificate and coupon; and Chick-fil-a in Springfield for providing sandwiches as a post-race snack, balloons, and a special guest cow to cheer on the girls.



Parent runner and student runners take time to take a picture with the Chick-fil-a Cow.

A New Year's Eve Gala in Springfield

Metropolitan School of the Arts (MSA) of Alexandria and Lorton, Va. will host A New Year's Eve State of Mind Benefit Gala on Tues., Dec. 31 from 8 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. at the Waterford at Springfield at 6715 Commerce Street, Springfield. The family-fun gala will provide entertainment for the whole family. Tickets are \$120 per adult for ages 21 years old and older; \$79 for youths, 13 years old to 20 years old; \$49 for children, 6 years old to 12 years old; and 5 years old and younger are free. Cost includes cabaret performances, live band, pre-dinner reception, holiday buffet, silent auction, dessert buffet, New Year's Eve toast, party

favours and all beverages. Tickets can be purchased online at www.metropolitanarts.org or call 703-339-0444. All children and teens must be accompanied by an adult. Attire is semi-formal. All proceeds go toward the Metropolitan School of the Arts Scholarship Fund. Corporate and event sponsorships are available for purchase. "Our New Year's Eve Gala will not only entertain with a festive cabaret, but the event is a great support for those talented performing arts students in need of scholarships," said Melissa Dobbs, founder and president of Metropolitan School of the Arts Alexandria and Lorton.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Biscuit with his rescuer, Fairfax County Animal Control Officer Enna Lugo.

The Latest on Biscuit

The little Shih Tzu finds a loving home in Oakton.

Biscuit, the little Shih Tzu who survived on his own for more than two years in the Franconia Community and was rescued by Fairfax County Animal Control Officer Enna Lugo, staff and volunteers of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, has been adopted and is adjusting well to life in his new home.

After being rescued last April, he spent several months in foster care with Officer Lugo and was adopted in August by Faisal and Rashid of Oakton, and their two school-age children, Julia and Sam.

According to Mary Ann

Rashid, Biscuit has become comfortable and even protective of his family over the past several months. "He and I walk the kids to the bus every morning and he waits for them to come home."

She reports that his favorite activity is cuddling with the family during TV time and that he sleeps under the parent's bed, much like he slept underneath a porch during his two years roaming free. Officer Lugo is thrilled with the match. "I can't believe how much he's bonded with his new family! He's found the loving home we always wanted for him."



Biscuit was adopted in August by Faisal and Mary Ann Rashid of Oakton, and their two school-age children, Julia and Sam.



PHOTO BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

Jen Cortesi, general manager of the Springfield location of The Bike Lane, was surprised at the lack of turnout for Small Business Saturday.

Small Business Saturday: Different Turnouts

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

Following the controversial additional shopping hours on Thanksgiving, the typical fray on Black Friday, and the online melee of Cyber Monday, Small Business Saturday is positioned in a highly competitive shopping storm.

American Express started the event, posturing it as a nationwide "movement" to get consumers energized about supporting their

locally owned and operated restaurants and retail stores. They claim to offer partner businesses promotional materials and guides to run their own PR campaign, and entice AmEx card-holders to dive in with \$10 rebates on purchases (with a prior registration).

Ten dollars may not make the difference in deciding on a large purchase, but presumably American Express figures if it's enough to help bring more foot traffic in

SEE SHOPPING, PAGE 13

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WELLBEING

Staying Fit During the Holidays

Staving off extra pounds during the season of sweets.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Patty McAndrews works out with a trainer twice a week at TRUE Health and Wholeness in Arlington. She found that restarting

"You have to ask yourself, 'Is it worth the calories?' Since there is such a variety, being picky is important. Go after the food you really enjoy."

— Lisa Pawloski, Ph.D., George Mason University

her fitness regimen about two months ago has strengthened her abdominal muscles and toned her

body. A threat to her fitness looms, however: the holidays and the food and festivities that come with them. McAndrews plans to continue her workout schedule to combat the traditional holiday weight gain.

"I am excited about the working out during the holidays because it gives me the freedom to indulge," she said.

From eggnog and chocolate truffles to Yule logs and Linzer cookies, the holidays bring an onslaught of sugar-filled delicacies.

Those who find it hard to resist multiple servings of Italian trifle at an office party or chocolate-covered gingerbread men at a cookie exchange might be kicking themselves for overindulging come January, however.

To keep that from happening, local nutrition and fitness experts share their tricks for staying in shape and helping their clients do the same during the sweetest time of the year.

"It is a very hard time of the year, even for me," said Lisa Pawloski, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Nutrition and Food Studies at George Mason University in Fairfax. "Everyone has challenges. There is food everywhere. Office parties are filled with fatty food. There are dishes filled with candy all around the office this time of year."

Pawloski believes bringing calm to the holiday bustle can aid in fitness. "It is important to reduce your stress so that you don't over consume," she said. "Many people react to stress by overeating."

Planning ahead is one strategy to avoid gluttony during holiday gatherings. "Think about nibbling on small amounts of healthy food throughout the day to fill you up a bit instead waiting on a big meal to fill you up," said Michael Nordvall, Ed.D., professor of health and human performance at Marymount University in Arlington. "Take your time while you're eating, chew slowly, eat slowly. The slower you eat, the less food you end up eating because you will feel fuller sooner."

Loading up on nutritious nibbles in advance of a big event might make platters of pound-packing fare appear less appealing. "When it comes to holiday parties or buffets, eat something healthy before you go so you're not feeling overly hungry," said Pawloski. "Think about eating protein and whole grains because high-fiber food will allow you to feel fuller for a longer period of time."

"My personal philosophy is for people to enjoy themselves at a party," said Nina Elliot of TRUE Health and Wholeness in Arlington. "Have some of everything, but don't go back for seconds. Don't be obsessed with the food, move through the crowd, focus on enjoying the people who are there."

When faced with a large spread of tantalizing eats, be selective. "You have to ask yourself, 'Is it worth the calories?' Since there is such a variety, being picky is important," said Pawloski. "Go after the food you really enjoy. There is research that shows that when you eat food you enjoy, you secrete more of the digestive enzymes and you absorb more nutrients of those particular foods."

Resist the urge to clean your plate. "Most people will pile on as much food as they can and feel the requirement to finish everything," said Nordvall. "Start with smaller portions."

While libations can add merriment to a holiday party, they can



PHOTO COURTESY NINA ELLIOT

Arlington fitness trainer Christian Elliot guides Patty McAndrews through strength training exercises. Experts suggest exercising before a holiday event where rich foods will be abundant.

ment to a holiday party, they can also add pounds. "For the adults, things like alcoholic beverages and eggnog can slow you down, make you drowsy," said Nordvall. "One of the worst things that can happen after a big meal is to fall asleep because your metabolism slows down."

When it comes to sit-down dinners with family and friends, both Pawloski and Nordvall suggest loading up on low-calorie liquids and moving around. "Have water or some broth before you eat a meal," said Pawloski. "That will actually make you feel a little full."

"Going on a walk with your family after a big meal will increase metabolism and help with digestion," said Nordvall.

Elliot even recommends that those concerned about maintain-

ing fitness consider hiring a trainer for the holidays. "Maybe four sessions during the month of December, once a week, for weight training specifically," she said. "Have a session right before a big party where you know there is going to be rich food."

Elliot says that weight training is important to maintaining muscle mass and reducing stress. "Most people can go for a run, but what is often lacking is proper utilization of weights," she said. "People with more muscle mass have a higher metabolism because muscles are energy demanding."

Her husband, Christian Elliot, fellow trainer and co-owner of TRUE Health and Wholeness, said, "One of the great benefits about strength training is how it boosts the client's self confidence."

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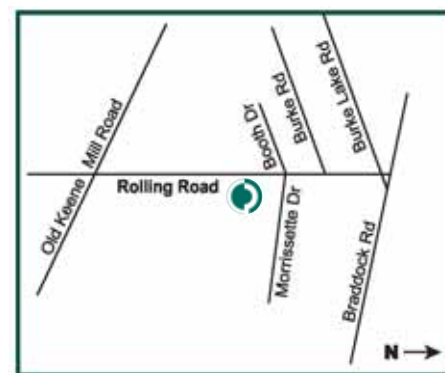
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HOLIDAY CALENDAR

THURSDAY/DEC. 5

Annual Holiday Tunes for the Young at Heart. 7 p.m. W.T. Woodson High School Gymnasium, 9525 Main Street, Fairfax. Tickets: \$3 per person. Questions: 703-764-5820

FRIDAY/DEC. 6

Virginia Opera Presents: The Magic Flute. 8 p.m. GMU Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Tickets: \$44-\$86. <http://cfa.gmu.edu/>

Women of Faith Christmas Simulcast. 8-10:30 p.m. Messiah United Methodist Church, 6215 Rolling Road, Springfield. Featured inspiring speakers include Max Lucado, Sheila Walsh, Rick Warren, Lisa Harper and the guest spiritual singer is Francesca Battistelli. Tickets \$5. Contact: Jo-Ann Scichilone at giggles.foryou@verizon.net or 703-569-8230.

SATURDAY/DEC. 7

Plantation Christmas. 2-7 p.m. Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton. Ride in a horse-drawn carriage, sip warm cider by the fire, and sample period food prepared in the hearth kitchen. \$15 adults; \$5 children. 703-550-9220.

City of Fairfax of Lights & Carols.

11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Old Town Fairfax, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Enjoy live holiday music, hot cider, smores by the Yule log, caroling and lighting of the Christmas tree in the winter wonderland. <http://www.fairfaxva.gov>

Historic Clifton Candlelight Home

Tour. 4-7 p.m. Historic District, Clifton. Five homes trimmed for the holidays, two churches and community hall will be open for touring in the historic district.

Tickets: \$20. <http://clifton-va.com/>

Art Guild of Clifton Holiday Art

Exhibit and Sale. 4-9 p.m. Clifton Town Hall Meeting, 12641 Chapel Road, Clifton. Enjoy original art, jewelry, fiber arts, pottery, and photography made entirely by Clifton artists. www.artguildofclifton.org

Cabaret Series: Home for the Holidays. 8 p.m. Workhouse Arts, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Tickets: \$25, includes planche campagnarde.

Clifton Candlelight Homes Tour. 4-7 p.m. 12641 Chapel Road, Clifton. Five homes will be trimmed and open for touring, and two churches will have choirs singing. cliftonva.org.

Annual Tree Lighting.

7:30 p.m. Ayre Square, main square town in Clifton. Caroling, treats and hot chocolate.

Lunch with Santa. 11 a.m., 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. The Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. \$6 per child. Tickets required. 703-385-7858.

Festival of Lights and Carols. 11 a.m., 12 p.m. or 1 p.m. Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. \$6 per child for ages 10 and under. 703-385-7858 or visit www.fairfaxva.gov

Jackie Hoffman's A Chanukah Charol. 8 p.m. Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax.

Hoffman is forced to examine her life when she is visited by the Ghosts of Chanukah Past, Present and Future, and even Molly Picon. Tickets \$19-\$29. www.jccnvarts.org.

Britten and the Brits. 7:30 p.m. St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 5800 Backlick Road, Springfield. Holiday concert that will include Christmas carols as well as audience sing-along. Tickets: \$15 in advance; \$20 at the door. www.northernvirginiachorale.org

Shop the Shepherd Christmas Showcase. 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Church of the Good Shepherd, 9350 Braddock Road, Burke. Over 30

Standing: Ethan Phillips as Peter, seated, from left: Stephanie Marinova as Li'l, Amanda Ranowsky as Mrs. Cratchit, and Ariana Colligan as Martha in rehearsal for the Providence Players family holiday production of "A Christmas Carol."



PHOTO BY CHIP CERTZOG/PROVIDENCE PLAYERS

Providence Players to Present 'A Christmas Carol'

The Providence Players and The Young Hearts present "A Christmas Carol" at James Lee Community Center Theater, 2855 Annandale Road, Falls Church. Performances: Dec. 6-15, 2013. Tickets: \$17. Call 703-425-6782 or visit www.providenceplayers.org. Note: Half of all net proceeds will benefit The Young Hearts Foundation, dedicated to improving the lives of young people affected by long-term illness.

vendors will be offering a wonderful selection of jewelry, toys, handbags and purses, home decor, kitchen ware, skin care, Christmas decorations and much more.

Loisdale Court, Springfield. Annual banquet of the Lee District Association of Civic Organizations (LDACO). \$55 per person.

SATURDAY/DEC. 14

4th Annual Santa's Secret

Workshop. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Burke United Methodist Church, 6200 Burke Centre Parkway, Burke. This event is designed to allow survivor's children and local families in need to shop for the perfect gifts for their families, extended families, and even pets at no cost to them.

SUNDAY/DEC. 15

Youth Christmas Pageant Service. 11 a.m. Cranford United Methodist Church, 9912 Old Colchester Road, Lorton.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 18

Travelers' Christmas Eve. 7:30 p.m. Messiah United Methodist Church, 6215 Rolling Road, Springfield. A Christmas Eve service for those persons, especially first responders, doctors and nurses who may have to work on Dec. 24. www.messiahumc.org

SATURDAY/DEC. 21

An Irish Christmas - An Nollaig. 8 p.m. GMU Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Irish-American fiddler Eileen Ivers brings the joy of the holiday season to Fairfax with her celebration for the whole family, a heartwarming concert filled with tales of Irish Christmas traditions and favorite Celtic holiday tunes. Tickets: \$25-\$50.

SUNDAY/DEC. 22

Christmas Cantata. 11 a.m. Cranford United Methodist Church, 9912 Old Colchester Road, Lorton. Join the 25 member strong Cranford Chancel Choir, led by music director Gayle Lennon, as they sing to the glories of the coming Emmanuel with song.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 11

58th Annual Holiday Banquet. 6:30 p.m. Springfield Hilton, 6550



"Now Showing...1942," by Gloria Benedetto, graphite, 8x10. See Benedetto's work alongside Traci Oberle's at the Lorton Workhouse Arts Center.

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. For more entertainment events in the county, go to: <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2013/sep/26/fairfax-county-calendar/>.

WEDNESDAY/SUNDAY/DEC. 4-DEC. 8

"Shades and Tones Spiced with Color" 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Mondays through Saturdays, noon to 5 p.m. Sundays, at the Workhouse Arts Center, Building W-5, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Gloria Benedetto and Traci Oberle are the featured artists in the building; see their work featuring rich color in subtle workings. www.workhousearts.org.

FRIDAY/DEC. 6-JAN. 5, 2014

100 under 200. Daily, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Black Friday Sale, at the Workhouse Arts Center, Building W-16 McGuireWoods Gallery, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. One hundred artists exhibiting work priced less than \$200 in an unrestrained gallery exhibit by each one of the artists at the Workhouse. <http://workhousearts.org/events/visual-arts/black-friday-workhouse>.

"From the Fire." Workhouse Arts, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Five diverse ceramic artists challenge themselves to create personal work for a joint firing in "From the Fire", an educational exhibit of 30 works and concomitant photographs and text.

TUESDAY/DEC. 10

Laura Black Murphy Book Signing Event. 4-8 p.m. Barnes & Noble, 12193 Fair Lakes, Promenade Drive, Fairfax. Murphy, a resident of Fairfax Station, Va., will be available to sign copies of her book, "My Little Messenger."

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 11

Chic Holiday Fashions Just For You. Springfield Garden and Country Club, 8301 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Browse through an assortment of clothing perfect for any event.

THURSDAY/DEC. 12

"Survivor." 7 p.m. Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce Street.

Novelist Louis Bayard will read his comic Christmas essay "Survivor." Hear the author relate a true holiday misadventure that took place at nearby Springfield Mall.

FRIDAY/DEC. 13

One Night Stands. 8 p.m. Workhouse Arts, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. In concert, one night only, featuring solo cabaret performers from the DC area. Two performers each night, each performing a solo 45 minute set. Tickets: \$15-25.

SATURDAY/DEC. 14

2nd Saturday Art Walk. 6-9 p.m. Workhouse Arts, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. The 2nd Saturday Art Walk at the Workhouse showcases the diverse work of more than 100 visual artists in a unique historic venue, creating an atmosphere that encourages visitors to immerse themselves in the richness of this creative community.

Cecil Ray Comedy Club 7p.m. Workhouse Arts, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Host Cecil Ray leads the proceedings in a night of laughter with guest comedians from the mid-Atlantic region. Tickets: \$20-30.

SATURDAY/DEC. 21

An Irish Christmas - An Nollaig. 8 p.m. GMU Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Irish-American fiddler Eileen Ivers brings the joy of the holiday season to Fairfax with her celebration for the whole family, a heartwarming concert filled with tales of Irish Christmas traditions and favorite Celtic holiday tunes. Tickets: \$25-\$50.

ONGOING

Workhouse Farmers Market. 3-6 p.m., at the Workhouse, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Every Thursday on the quad is a producer-only market for discerning shoppers featuring locally grown fruits and vegetables, locally raised meats and poultry and local foods from breads to salsas and sausages. www.smartmarkets.org.

Ballroom Social Dance. Saturdays; mini-lesson, 7:30-8 p.m., \$5; social dance, 8-10:30 p.m., \$10. Each month focuses on a new style of ballroom dance. Complimentary refreshments and a cash bar will be available. Casual dress code, all skill levels welcome.

Shopping Locally

FROM PAGE 9
independently owned doors, the shop keepers can do the rest.

In Burke and Springfield, two stores experienced two different versions of Small Business Saturday this year.

"It wasn't terrible, but it wasn't better than an average day," said Jen Cortesi, general manager of the Springfield location of The Bike Lane. Based on other years, Cortesi was expecting more foot traffic on Small Business Saturday, but this year there was surprisingly little by comparison. And of the customers who did make it out, only one family mentioned the American Express promotion, she said.

HUSBAND AND WIFE TEAM

Todd and Anne Mader opened the community- and customer service-focused bike shop in 2001 after pursuing careers as an accountant and social worker, respectively. Eight years later the couple opened a second shop in Reston. The shops are known for their healthy mix of price points for road, mountain and hybrid bikes and accessories, as well as their involvement with local races, safety initiatives and bike service seminars. The store manager observed there may have been less hype surrounding the day than previously, less information communicated to the public through various media. But, as she said, "It's always hard to say what changes" from year to year — "it's a question of expectations."

"It hasn't been a stellar year for retail, with Sequestration, the shutdown," Cortesi continued. "People spend differently when they're missing a month's salary." The extra free time on the sales floor also gave the Bike Lane team time to speculate about the trickle-down effects of the modified shopping calendar this year.

With more stores open on Thanksgiving to get the jump on Black Friday, and extended hours on Black Friday itself, perhaps more shoppers were in need of a financial and physical break come Saturday — at least more so than in previous years.

Members of The Bike Lane team did come out to support their shop. "It was a nice gesture," said Cortesi. But it wasn't the kind of new business American Express seems to want to promote. "The day has potential," Cortesi continued. "It seems like it has more."

OVER IN BURKE, Billie Thomas, owner of the diverse home decor and gift shop The Picket Fence,

SEE PICKET FENCE, PAGE 14

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We ask that all submissions be digital so they can be sent through e-mail or delivered on CD or flash drive. Writing should be submitted in rich text format (.rtf). Artwork should be provided in .jpg format. Identify each piece of writing or art, including the student's full name, age, grade and town of residence, plus the name of the school, name of teacher and town of school location. Please provide the submissions by Friday, Dec. 6 for publication the week of Dec. 26.

E-mail submissions to:
ChildrensSouth@connectionnewspapers.com

To send CDs or flash drives containing artwork and typed, electronic submissions, mark them clearly by school and hometown and mail the CD to Children's Connection, 1606 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.



Picket Fence Owner 'Pleased'

FROM PAGE 13
 experienced a much different turnout. "We were pleased," she said. "We were very happy with the response to it and everything."

Thomas's shop has been around for five years, and stocks everything from baby and bath items to decorative home decor, tea and potpourri. With a wide variety of merchandise, Thomas endeavors to sell as much American-made product as possible, like a collection of hammered silver candleholders and plates from Pennsylvania designer Wendell August.

"We try just to find unique things you're not going to see any place else," said Thomas.

Despite not being able to process American Express cards, The Picket Fence still drew a crowd on Saturday, according to Thomas. "It is hard to say

this time of year because of the holidays," she said, but "the majority of the people that came in did mention they were here because of Small Business Saturday."

We have great loyal customers anyway, but it just brings them out even more."

Thomas and The Picket Fence are also running a book drive for INOVA Children's Hospital, and scheduled a drawing for a \$50 store gift certificate to coincide with Small Business Saturday.

Regardless of the single-day turnout — whether above or below expectations — both businesses are hopeful for increased awareness and community involvement going forward to the next Small Business Saturday. "It's nice to be recognized as a small business," said Thomas.

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A Riotous Farce

The Lady from Maxim's at West Springfield's stage.

BY ISABEL ZAPATA
MCLEAN HIGH SCHOOL

After waking up from a night of drunken debauchery, Dr. Petypon spins a web of lies to keep his unsuspecting wife and uncle from discovering the notorious dancer found in his bed the next morning. A delightful romp, *The Lady from Maxim's* showcases a slew of talented performers and pokes fun at everything from provincial life to the medical profession on the West Springfield High School stage.

Born in France to a well-known Parisian writer, Georges Feydeau wrote *La Dame de chez Maxim* in 1899. His first significant international success, the play was translated by Gene Feist and retitled *The Lady from Maxim's*. Mr. Feydeau is known for his immaculate theatrical structure and a form of writing Richard Hayes calls the "mathematics of theater." A whimsical farce, the plot follows the events following a doctor who wakes up to a hang-over and a lady he brought home from Maxim's the previous night. The climax unfolds when everyone is invited to the uncle's castle and a wedding reveals false identities and unexpected coincidences.

Leading the show through fluid physicality and flirtatious charisma, Catherine Ariale as the Shrimp accentuates her gestures and movements to bring out her character's personality. As the flustered doctor trapped in a fake marriage, Forrest Browne as Dr. Lucien Petypon also magnifies his physicality through amplified facial expressions and voice inflections to pull of his character's role in the farce. As Gabrielle Petypon, a warmhearted wife unsettled by the voices of ghosts and spirits, Ellen Abood provides a standout comedic performance through grandiose gestures, striking energy, and complete commitment to character. Joshua Elliott as the General Petypon du Grelé grasps the delivery of his lines with ease and successfully showcases his competence with comedic timing, keeping the audience chuckling throughout his scenes.

Despite a limited amount of stage time, Mallory Astrow as

Madame Sauvarel, a guest at the General's wedding, fantastically takes advantage of her lines to reinforce the cast's skill with comedic timing. Astrow takes on exaggerated physicality and facial expressions to fully deliver her lines with a farcical approach. Just as proficient with timing and twice as sassy, Nyc Nguyen as Émile masters the art of the scowl as he sends the audience chortling at his insolent glares toward the General's guests. The Madames at the wedding party work well as an ensemble, feeding off of each other's energy and showing complete dedication to their roles.

In terms of technicality, the crew paid particularly meticulous attention to detail in their sets and lighting. A typical Feydeau farce is usually set in an elegant belle époque Paris residence, with bedrooms and salons

and doors as the essential parts of the tightly choreographed action. For this production, the crew chooses an excellent color palette to create beautiful visual tableaux of the living room and the lounge in the castle. The lighting crew rapidly responds to cues and sound crew provides subtle yet effective sound effects that add to the show's atmosphere. The costumes are period appropriate and individualized for each character, a difficult feat to accomplish with a large cast. Although the make-up and hair could be executed a little more cleanly, the designs are well researched and consistently period appropriate.

The overall high energy of the production at West Springfield High School excellently keeps the slapstick on point and the audience in stitches. Through grandiose physicality, visually pleasing technological aspects, and fantastic comedic timing, the cast and crew deliver an excellent rendition of Feydeau's riotous farce.

Car-title Lending Spreads in the Area

FROM PAGE 5

in opposition. The coalition in support of the bill was bipartisan, including Del. Bob Brink (D-48), Del. Barbara Comstock (R-34), Del. Kaye Kory (D-38), Del. Tim Hugo (R-40) and Del. Mark Sickles (D-43).

"All these laws do is let people get a car-title loan," said Del. Dave Albo (R-42), who also voted in favor of the bill. "People can determine if this is a good choice for them or if it's a bad choice for them."

INDUSTRY LEADERS contributed generously to members of the General Assembly and lobbied heavily to get their way. Since 2009, LoanMax contributed more than \$500,000 and Fast Auto Loans contributed more than \$200,000. Saslaw received the largest individual contributions, receiving \$22,000 from Fast Auto Loans and almost \$20,000 from LoanMax. Many of the other legislators voting in support of the industry also received financial support from car-title lenders.


When asked about his support of the 2011 bill, Del. Bob Brink (D-48) had little to say.

"No comment," said Brink, who received \$1,500 from LoanMax and \$500 from Fast Auto Loans.

A map of car-title lending operations in Northern Virginia shows they are clustered in areas with high poverty and low salaries. Manassas has 11 locations. Annandale has four. South Arlington has two. The Route 1 corridor in southeast Fairfax County has seven, and another one is about to open at the intersection with Huntington Avenue. Some say they are concerned Northern Virginia is becoming a place where unscrupulous lenders can take advantage of people in need who come from the District of Columbia or Maryland — a fear that will become more pronounced when a new casino opens in Prince George's County.

"Route 1 has become the car-title lending capital of Northern Virginia," said Del. Scott Surovell (D-44). "And that's the last kind of economic development we need on the corridor."

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SPORTS

Alcorta Wins South Regionals

Lake Braddock's Christen, Kunc advance to nationals.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

Caroline Alcorta spent most of the VHSL cross country season running on her own, forced to find motivation within as she pulled away from the pack. The West Springfield senior won the 6A girls' state championship on Nov. 15 at Great Meadow with a meet-record time of 17:13, finishing 39 seconds faster than her nearest competitor.

Two weeks later, Alcorta took her act on the road to Charlotte, N.C., for the Foot Locker Cross Country South Regionals. While an increased level of competition closed the gap, Alcorta found herself in a familiar position when she crossed the finish line.

Alcorta won the Foot Locker south regional with a time of 16:55 at McAlpine Creek Park on Nov. 30. Alcorta's top-10 finish earned her a trip to nationals on Dec. 14 in San Diego, Calif.

Alcorta was the only runner to break 17 minutes. Amelia Paladino of Morgantown, W.Va., (University High School) placed second with a time of 17:04. Natalie Rathjen of Dallas (Highland Park High School) finished third with a time of 17:06.

Alcorta improved her time at regionals by 24 seconds. Last year, she qualified for nationals by placing eighth at McAlpine Creek Park with a time of 17:19.

"Last year it was more about ... kind of just hanging on with the lead pack as long as possible until I feel off," Alcorta said. "This year ... I knew I had to do a lot of the work myself instead of hanging on. ... It really helps not worrying about what other people are going to do."

Lake Braddock seniors Hannah Christen and Katy Kunc qualified for nationals by finishing fifth and sixth, respectively. Christen finished in 17:15, with



PHOTO BY Ed Lull

West Springfield senior Caroline Alcorta, seen during the VHSL state meet on Nov. 15, finished first at Foot Locker Cross Country South Regionals on Nov. 30, earning a trip to nationals.

Kunc close behind at 17:16. Christen and Kunc placed second and third, respectively, at the state meet.

In the boys' Foot Locker south regional race, Edison senior and 5A boys' state champion Louis Colson placed fourth with a time of 14:50, earning a trip to nationals. Marshall senior Mackenzie Haight also punched his ticket to nationals with a fifth-place finish (14:51).

Aaron Templeton of Knoxville, Tenn., (Hardin Valley Academy) won the event with a time of 14:36.

Nationals will be held Saturday, Dec. 14 at Morley Field at Balboa Park in San Diego, Calif. Last year, Alcorta finished 16th at nationals, one place shy of All-American status. She finished with a time of 17:56.3. Megan Curham of Villa Walsh Academy (Morristown, N.J.) grabbed the final All-American spot with a time of 17:56.

"It would have been worse," Alcorta said, "if I had been a senior and I didn't have another shot at it."

Alcorta has her sights set on a top-15 finish this weekend.

"That," Alcorta said, "would be really nifty."



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT/THE CONNECTION

Lake Braddock quarterback Caleb Henderson is wrapped up by Westfield defensive lineman Timothy Curry.

Heartbreaking Playoff Loss

Lake Braddock loses 13-point lead in final six minutes.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

Westfield head coach Kyle Simmons stood on the football field at Lake Braddock Secondary School and revealed one of his assistants had spotted on film a flaw in the opponent's kicking game, creating an opportunity for a block.

Later, Lake Braddock head coach Jim Poythress stood outside the Bruins' locker room and said he made the right decision to attempt a field goal, though he had considered another option.

One play didn't win or lose Saturday's 6A North semifinal contest between the Westfield Bulldogs and Lake Braddock Bruins, but it's safe to say the Bulldogs are still alive because of a single tide-turning special-teams touchdown.

Lake Braddock led by 13 points and lined up to attempt a 30-yard field goal with less than six minutes remaining in the fourth quarter. The run-heavy Westfield offense had managed just three points and was without its top threat, running back Tyler Thrasher-Walker, who left the game in the second quarter with a leg injury. The Bulldogs had little reason to believe they could come back and win.

And then junior safety James Gibson returned a blocked field goal 92 yards for a touchdown.

Gibson's return sparked an improbable Westfield comeback. Down by six, the Bulldogs got a defensive stop, scored the tying touchdown, kicked the go-ahead extra point — thanks in part to a Lake Braddock penalty — and sacked Bruins quarterback Caleb Henderson for a safety on the game's final play to pull out a 19-16 victory on Nov. 30.

Westfield will face Centerville for the 6A North title on Saturday, Dec. 7. The winner advances to the state championship game.

"It's like the football gods were against us," Poythress said. "The best team doesn't always win. I think that we were the best team, I felt like — I still feel that way. But they stuck with their game plan



Lake Braddock running back Trevor O'Brien carries the ball against Westfield in the 6A North region semifinals on Nov. 30.

and played hard and never gave up and I think that's a tribute to them."

Thrasher-Walker rushed for 107 yards before leaving the game with a leg injury in the second quarter. Gray finished with 164 yards on the ground and a touchdown.

Lake Braddock quarterback Caleb Henderson completed 12 of 17 passes for 140 yards. He also rushed for 41 yards and a touchdown.

"[H]igh school football is over," Henderson said. "I'm going to miss it terribly."

Lake Braddock running back Trevor O'Brien carried 17 times for 74 yards and a touchdown. Vince Sica caught five passes for 103 yards.

Lake Braddock finished the season 12-1 and won its fifth consecutive district championship.

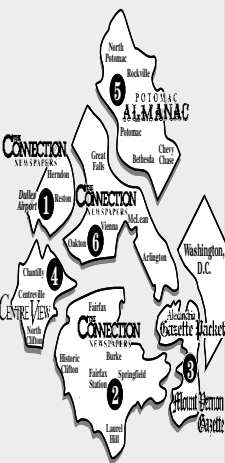
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ABC LICENSE
SMA Food, LLC trading as MoMos Nepalese Food, 6304 Springfield Plaza, Springfield, VA 22150. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine & Beer on Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Moti Neupane, Managing member
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Dept of Rail & Public Transportation Presents Super NoVa Transit/TDM Action Plan at public meetings Dec. 11 at Courtyard Marriott Alexandria Pentagon South & Dec. 17 at Holiday Inn Manassas Battlefield from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Public input needed to prioritize policies to enhance transportation choices and improve connectivity in region. Meetings are ADA and transit accessible. *DRPT strives to provide reasonable accommodations and services for persons who require special assistance to participate. Contact the Title VI Compliance Officer, 804-786-4440 or TDD 711 for information. Comment deadline December 31, 2013.*
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The Fairfax High band's Wind Ensemble performed at the Virginia Music Educators Association convention.

Fairfax High's Musicians Perform at VMEA Event

For the first time in Fairfax High's history, the school band's Wind Ensemble was chosen to perform at the Virginia Music Educators Association (VMEA) convention. This year's event was held Friday, Nov. 22, at The Omni Homestead Resort in Hot Springs, Va.

To be considered for selection, the band had to submit a recording in May and was then evaluated against all other entries. The top three or four high schools and middle schools from around Virginia were then chosen to perform.

At the recent convention, Fairfax High's Wind Ensemble gave a 45-minute performance in front of most of the state's music

teachers. "It's a wonderful opportunity for the exposure of our program," said Assistant Principal Maureen Keck. "The rigor of putting that much music together so early in the year – and during marching band season – has truly helped push our musicianship and talents to the next level."

"The music our wind ensemble prepared for the VMEA focused mainly on newer music, with varying difficulties, so they could share a variety of great music with the directors in attendance," she continued. "Our Wind Ensemble students have definitely risen to the challenge and presented a musically rewarding experience for all."

— BONNIE HOBBS

Jean Landreville Named New Executive Director at Greenspring

Jean Landreville has been named the new Executive Director at Greenspring, an Erickson Living retirement community in Springfield. She joined Erickson Living in 2005 and has 18 years of experience in the senior housing and health care industries.

"Jean's proven leadership, expertise in aging services, as well as diverse health care experience will help Erickson Living further serve the senior marketplace in Northern Virginia," said Kerry Jones, Vice President of Regional Operations for Erickson Living. "Her wealth of senior housing experience and unwavering commitment to delivering quality resident services are a few of the many qualities that make Jean a perfect fit for this new leadership role."



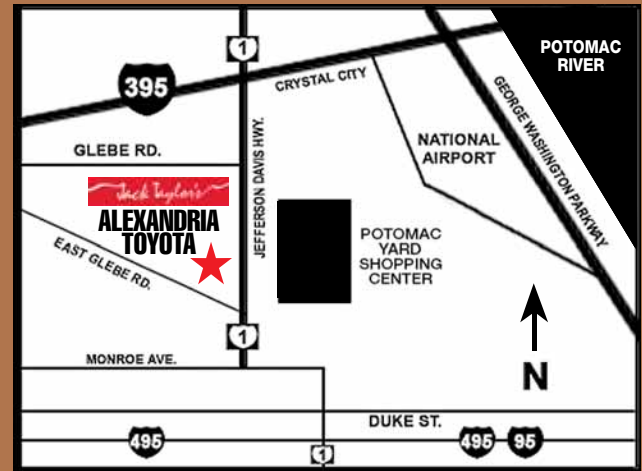
Jean Landreville, Greenspring's new executive director.

Landreville most recently served as the Associate Executive Director at Fox Run, an Erickson Living community in Novi, Mich. Prior to that position, she was the Associate Executive Director at Riderwood, Erickson Living's largest community in Silver Spring, Md. Landreville is a licensed nursing home administrator and received a bachelor's degree in general dietetics from Madonna College.

She also received a master's degree in management of aging services from the Erickson School at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. As the Executive Director at Greenspring, Landreville will lead the community of nearly 2000 residents and 1000 staff members.

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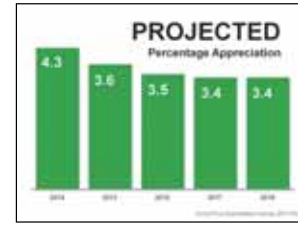
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