

What's Happening in 2016 in Herndon?

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**Jennifer Boysko begins her inaugural term
as Herndon's delegate to the General
Assembly, which begins Jan. 12.**

Debating All Things Metro

Northern Virginia Transportation Commission facilitates public forum with new Metro chief.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

When then Falls Church City Council member Dave Snyder was assigned to the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) in 1994 as part of his duties, he says he never suspected that his “luck” would lead him to a topic and to work that is as vital to and as challenging for the region today as it was when he entered that arena more than twenty years ago. Now the out-going Chairman of NVTC (a post he has held twice before), Snyder was a key speaker at the Commission’s public forum in Reston on Dec. 17, held in a still-unfinished building at the Wiehle-Reston East Metrorail Station.

Calling for a show of hands, Snyder asked how many in the room had spoken about Metro in the last week. “See,” said Snyder, looking at the upraised limbs indicating the clear majority, “other parts of the country talk about the weather. Around here, we talk about Metro.”

Snyder was followed at the podium by NVTC executive director Kelley Coyner, fellow NVTC Commissioners Cathy Hudgins (Fairfax County Board of Supervisors-Hunter Mill District) and Jim Corcoran (president/CEO Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce), Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) board member Mort Downey, and newly appointed WMATA chief Paul Wiedefeld. In addition to the panel of obvious transit experts, a number of elected officials and staff from NVTC and other transportation-related organization were scattered about the room.

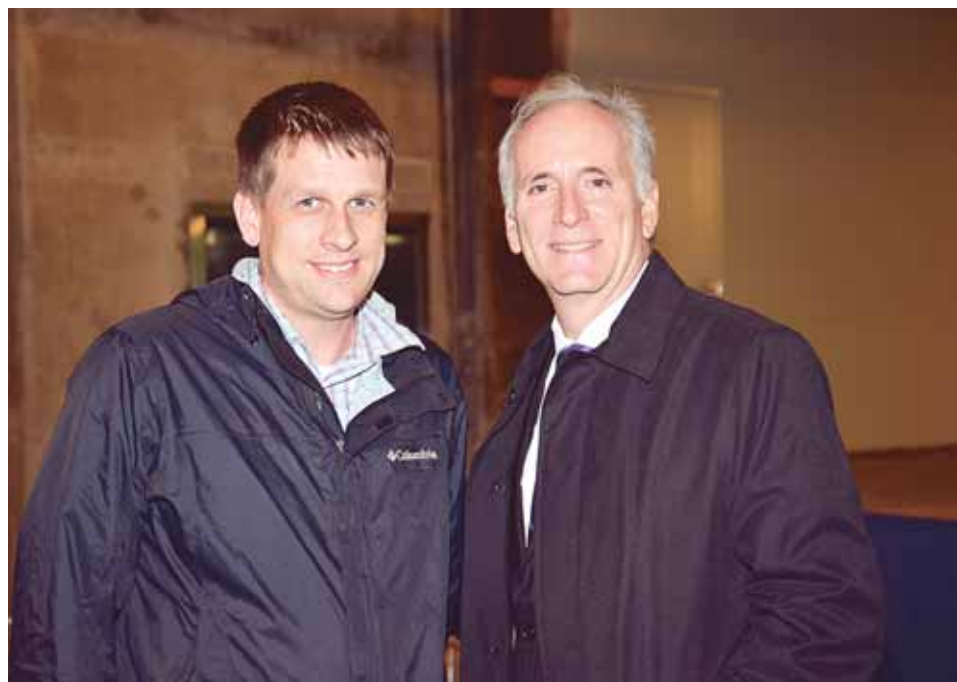
With all that transportation firepower, the audience probably expected a night of speeches and information overload, but the purpose of the forum, an outreach by NVTC “to invite the public to share priorities about Metro and to inform the new WMATA GM/CEO” was made clear from the start and admirably adhered to.

USING INTERACTIVE EXERCISES, handheld polling devices that captured real-time responses to questions about the public’s perceptions and priorities for Metro service, and a no-rush approach to individual comments and questions, the NVTC was able to engage the audience and get enough ideas and suggestions to keep those in charge of the flipcharts seriously scribbling to keep up.

The event was originally designed to end with roundtable discussions, but the public’s participation and the panel’s thoughtful re-



Hunter Mill District Supervisor Cathy Hudgins and newly-appointed WMATA Riders’ Advisory Council member John Nelson both urge that the public stay informed and involved. Hudgins is an acknowledged expert on regional transportation matters, serving as a Commissioner with NVTC and a Board Member of WMATA. Nelson is looking forward to learning, being a voice for the community, and encouraging the public “to take ownership of the Metro system. It’s our system and we should do what we can to support and improve it.”



From left — Metro bus and rail rider Brian Gannon attended the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission’s public forum and had the opportunity to meet and speak with Metro’s new GM/CEO Paul Wiedefeld. Complimentary of many of Metro’s staff, Gannon still had questions about service reliability, incorrect information about service disruptions and long waits, especially for night and weekend services.

sponses established a flow of dialogue that both organizers and participants were reluctant to disrupt.

NVTC and WMATA members alike stressed the need to better inform the community on all things Metro.

This forum, the one held in Arlington, an online survey and recent community “walkabouts” mentioned by Hudgins, are attempts to do just that. Even after only three weeks on the job, Wiedefeld’s observations lead him to believe “we can do a much bet-

ter job of communicating with our customers and with our own employees.”

One way for the general public to make their views known is through WMATA’s Riders’ Advisory Council, says Hudgins along with new Advisory Council member John Nelson. Nelson was in attendance at the forum and is “really excited” by his selection to this group.

A veteran Metro rider, Nelson thinks that his fellow riders “need to take more ownership of the system. Let’s think outside the



Dave Snyder, out-going chairman of NVTC, addresses the gathering. Snyder has been involved with the Commission since 1994 and has served as chairman on three occasions. He will be moving on to expand his role with the Emergency Preparedness Council where he assisted in coordinating the transportation and evacuation component of the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan.

box and offer suggestions and thoughts as those who are experiencing the metro, the buses and the access points on a daily basis.”

The Riders’ Advisory Council was established in 2005, but don’t feel bad if you didn’t know about its existence. A quick wander about the room showed that most of those not directly involved with the NVTC or WMATA share your lack of knowledge. “That’s something I hope to help change,” declared Nelson.

The council comprises 21 members, six from Virginia, six from Maryland, six from D.C., two at-large members, and a head of the Accessibility Advisory Committee. The group meets on the first Wednesday of the month from 6:30–8:30 p.m. at WMATA headquarters at 600 5th Street, NW. “It’s open to the public,” said Nelson, and he encourages everyone to attend or even apply when openings occur, whether they utilize the system or not.

“Transportation is so important to the economic life of our region. Everyone should be informed and everyone should have a say,” he added.

From the atmosphere at the public forum, it would appear that the NVTC and WMATA agree.

INFORMATION about the Riders’ Advisory Council is available on WMATA’s website at www.wmata.com. Comments and suggestions are welcomed at raccments@wmata.com. Specific concerns and question should still be directed directly to WMATA.

More information about NVTC, the organization that seeks funding and promotes transit in the region, can be found at www.novatransit.org.

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PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION



Jennifer Boysko begins her inaugural term as Herndon's delegate to the General Assembly, which begins Jan. 12.



Herndon's new Fire Station is scheduled to be completed this summer.

What's Happening in 2016 in Herndon

By Ken Moore
The Connection

Historic Downtown: Next Steps

Following the purchase of the Ashwell property which created a contiguous 4.675 acres of Town-owned land in Herndon's downtown, the Town issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) on Nov. 2, 2015.

The town's vision for the redevelopment calls for four-story (mixed-use/residential) and three-story (mixed-use/commercial) structures, a jointly-funded public/private parking structure, and an 18,000-square-foot arts center, among other features.

Initial proposals are due in February 2016.

The process will be executed in two phases: an initial concept phase, open to all proposers, and a detailed phase, open to proposers upon invitation following review of initial concept phase proposals.

Additional information, including the complete RFP, is available on the town's website at www.herndon-va.gov. Interested proposers may contact Dennis Holste, economic development manager, at dennis.holste@herndon-va.gov.

According to the RFP, Herndon: "hereby solicits submission of proposals for the redevelopment of 4.675 acres of land in historic downtown Herndon into an attractive, mixed-use development, including a parking structure in which the Town has fee interest to a minimum of 220 spaces. The Town envisions a development of excellent design and quality providing the historic town core with additional vitality while respecting and reflecting the heritage of the downtown," according to Town documents. "The Town envisions these benefits to be utilized to develop a superb environment for outdoor pedestrian enhancements including outdoor dining and passive and

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The Town continues to prepare for the coming of the Silver Line, which will help make Herndon, "A Next Generation Small Town."

programmed activities. The site also benefits by being within 1.5 miles of the future Silver Line Herndon Metro Station. The Town will have circulator bus service from the downtown to the future Metro station."

The Town of Herndon gives residents the opportunity to track progress on the downtown projects on its website www.herndon.va.gov.

Herndon purchased 1.67 acres of land in Herndon's historic downtown from Ashwell, LLC for \$3.519 million.

The Town already owned the municipal parking lot and the parking lot parcel containing ArtSpace. But the Elden Street front property, that had been occupied by the Subaru dealership, affected the value of the Town's land as well as Herndon's plans for

all of the downtown.

"The Town of Herndon has been envisioning a comprehensive redevelopment in our downtown for decades," said Mayor Lisa Merkel. "Until this purchase, however, we have been limited in our ability to effectively position downtown Herndon for comprehensive redevelopment, as much of the necessary land was under private ownership."

Preparing for Silver Line

Herndon continues to prepare for the future Metrorail station in Herndon.

"Herndon is ready," said Mayor Lisa

Merkel, regarding Herndon's future Silver Line stop. Merkel dubbed Herndon, "A Next Generation Small Town."

"We are so fortunate," she said. "This is a huge project, one of the biggest infrastructure projects in the country. There aren't many towns that can get involved in projects like this."

The Washington Metropolitan Airports Authority recently projected cost of Phase I, the 11.7 mile segment of the Silver Line with five stops, to be \$2.982 billion.

Construction is hoped to begin on Herndon's future Silver Line Stop in 2016 with its opening by 2019-2020, according to a talk Merkel gave in May.

The entire Silver Line will be a 23-mile

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OAK HILL/HERNDON CONNECTION ♦ JANUARY 6-12, 2016 ♦ 3



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

From left, Jenny Phipps, Hollie Daniel, Renee Gorman, Ray Lonnett, Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville), Douglas Tyson, Leigh Allen-Hughes, Anna Bledsoe, Pat MacIntyre, Signe Friedrichs

Shoes, Gift Cards for Hutchison Students

The Council for the Arts of Herndon joins Dranesville Supervisor John Foust's office every holiday season to gather new shoes and gift cards for children at Hutchison Elementary School in Herndon. Together this year they collected \$570 in gift cards and 15 pairs of new shoes. Hutchison is a Title I school serving many students with challenging social and economic issues. Hutchison's new principal Ray Lonnett said he was thrilled to have the community involved with helping out the students in his school. He values this rela-

tionship built over the past several years.

Supervisor Foust has enjoyed working with Hutchison Elementary School on various projects including not only the shoe drive but also safety and beautification projects.

Hutchison Elementary School is a special favorite of the Council for the Arts of Herndon, which in addition to the holiday shoe drive, also provides arts enrichment programs including live, in-school theatrical productions for children with NextStop Theatre and A Faction of Fools.

WEEK IN HERNDON

Herndon Rotary Seeks Nominations for Citizen of the Year

The Herndon Rotary Club is seeking nominations for its annual Citizen of the Year recognition.

Any individual or organization can submit a nomination for consideration. To nominate someone, you need to submit the individual's name, address and phone number along with a letter detailing why you feel this individual is deserving of the award. Your letter should contain your name, address and a phone number. Multiple letters supporting a nomination are always appreciated.

Nominations should be sent to Herndon Rotary, P.O. Box 321, Herndon, VA 20172 and should be received no later than Jan. 16. Information can also be e-mailed to Pat Williams at Pat@GraceFulCare.com. Please contact Pat Williams at 703-582-9482 if you

have any questions.

This community-wide award was initiated in 1963 to recognize those individuals who have contributed to improving the Greater Herndon area. Special attention will be given to contributions beyond the nominee's regular employment.

Volunteers Needed for Food Packing Event

Assistance League of Northern Virginia invites community members to help pack food for the Weekend Food for Kids program which benefits 1500 schoolchildren who receive reduced-price meals during the week. The next food packing event is at 10 a.m. on Thursday, Jan. 21 at Dominion Virginia Power, 3072 Centreville Road, in Herndon. Arrive at 9:30 a.m. if you would like to help with setup. Event contact: karenamster@aol.com.

Herndon in 2016

FROM PAGE 3

extension of the existing Metrorail system from East Falls Church, with current stations in Tysons and Reston, and additional stops in Reston, Herndon and eventually to Washington Dulles International Airport west to Ashburn.

The Herndon Town Council approved 38 acres to be set aside for its future Metro stop in February 2012. "It's the right space, we could never consider that in any other part in town," said Merkel.

Merkel called the Silver Line the "economic engine for the next 50 to 100 years." Herndon has more than 1,100 businesses and four corporate headquarters in town. Herndon anticipates attracting additional businesses and perhaps a campus or satellite campus in the future.

"We want to make sure we capitalize on this opportunity," she said.

Jan. 12.

First Fall Election

Herndon's Council adopted an ordinance in March moving Herndon's next Town election to November 2016. Herndon's local elections had taken place in May since the Town was incorporated in 1879. At Herndon precincts, between 75-80 percent of registered voters turned out for the November 2012 presidential election year, and approximately 38-45 percent turned out during the midterm elections in November 2010, according to town records. In general, 20-25 percent of registered voters turn out for elections when they are in May.

For more information, visit http://www.herndon-va.gov/Content/Government/Town_Council/town_elections/default.aspx.

Rust Retires, Boysko Begins

Long-time Herndon resident Jennifer Boysko (D) will succeed Tom Rust (R), who announced his retirement as 86th District delegate last spring. Boysko won the 86th District with 54.46 percent of the votes over Danny Vargas, who received 42.01 percent of the vote.

Before serving in Virginia's House of Delegates, Rust was Herndon's mayor from 1976-1984 and again from 1990-2001. Before he was Herndon's mayor, he served on its Town Council from 1971-1976. "It's already been an incredible learning experience," said Boysko, in an interview election night after election results came in. "I've talked to literally thousands of people in my district, listening to what they need, what are their concerns," she said.

Boysko served as Supervisor John Foust's legislative aide, and worked on many Herndon issues. "She's an amazingly hard worker, she's smart, she cares about people and doing great things, and she's in public service for all the right reasons," said Foust. The Virginia General Assembly will meet for 60 days in Richmond beginning Jan. 12.

Talk to the General Assembly

The Fairfax County delegation to the Virginia General Assembly will hold a hearing for public comment on the upcoming 2016 session on Saturday, Jan. 9, beginning at 9 a.m. at the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax.

Residents who want to sign up in advance to speak at the hearing should contact the Office of the Clerk to the Board of Supervisors at 703-324-3151, TTY 711, by noon on Friday, Jan. 8.

The Virginia General Assembly will meet for 60 days in Richmond beginning

New Fire Station

Herndon's new 14,500-square-foot fire station at 680 Spring Street is estimated to be completed this summer, according to Town documents. The temporary fire station is housed at 791 Elden Street.

Congressional Race

U.S. Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-10) is serving her first term in Congress, elected following the retirement of long-time Congressman Frank Wolf.

Comstock is up for reelection in November, and will face Democrat LuAnn Bennett, who describes herself as a small business owner and working mother who has lived in Northern Virginia for more than 30 years. Virginia Congressional District 10 includes McLean, Great Falls, Herndon, Chantilly, Lorton and some other parts of Fairfax County.

Route 7 Widening

Throughout January, teams from the Virginia Department of Transportation will meet with Amberwoods, Bradley Oaks, Lockmeade, Locust Hill homeowners and Shouse Village homeowners association, as well as the Towlston Meadow Community Association, about plans to widen Route 7.

VDOT cancelled its two day Public Information and Open House Meeting scheduled for Jan. 8 and 9, but information meetings and hearings are tentatively planned for later in the winter and spring. The \$265 million project would widen 6.9 miles of Route 7 in 2021, increasing from four to six lanes between Reston Avenue and Jarrett Valley Drive.

VDOT hopes for approval of the design from the Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board in the summer of 2016. Safety accessing the road remains a major concern to neighborhoods along Route 7 corridor.

See www.ConnectRoute7.org.

The Absurd Beauty of Everyday Life

By DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

A quirky comic play with profoundly heartfelt themes is coming to Herndon. Written by award winning, contemporary playwright Will Eno, "Middletown" is a "modern companion to the beloved Thornton Wilder classic, 'Our Town,'" said Evan Hoffmann, NextStop artistic director. "The play is about the suburbs: community, values, and the way we interact with one another," added Hoffmann.

"Middletown" follows the lives of small town citizens as they interact. It unfolds in a series of scenes and encounters as the townsfolk crisscross from a local library to a park bench, from deep outer space to points right in the middle of the whole shebang. The glue to the play is the developing relationship between Middletown residents John Dodge and Mary Swanson who is new to town.

The audience also becomes an integral active part of the play during an unusual "intermission."



"The play is strange yet accessible. It is about how we live our lives, the struggles we have with ourselves and with others," said director Michael Chamberlin. "What keeps us going in our daily lives" is key to the play. The citizens of the fictional Middletown are played by a cast of 10.

Actor John Stange describes his character John Dodge, a part-time plumber and lots else as a "very intense eccentric loner; a likeable character trying to find his place. He is slightly neurotic, unstable, oddball, and fun." One of his lines gives a sense of the character as he discusses that he is between

two lousy jobs; "I just don't know what the second one is yet."

Tamieka Chavis plays Mary Swanson, another character struggling to find a place as new arrival to Middletown. "She has a soothing personality, but she needs a great deal of validation and reassurance about herself. She needs

Tamieka Chavis as Mary Swanson and John Stange as John Dodge in "Middletown" from NextStop Theatre.

PHOTO BY
TRACI J.
BROOKS STUDIOS
COURTESY OF
NEXTSTOP THEATRE

NextStop brings area premiere of 'Middletown.'

Where and When

NextStop Theatre presents "Middletown" performed at 269 Sunset Park Drive Herndon. Performances: Jan. 14-Feb. 7. Thursday at 7:30 p.m. (no Thursday performance on Jan. 21), Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 8 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. with performances at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 24, and at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 30 and Feb. 6. Tickets: \$35. Call OvationTix: 866-811-4111 or visit www.nextstoptheatre.org

desperately to connect with others and she is very lonely as her husband travels often. "

For the audience, "Middletown" will be more than glimpsing as characters John Dodge and Mary Swanson are drawn to one another. It is a look into a regular small town and the sweet mysteries of living. The audience even has an integral involvement during a unique "intermission" during the play. As one "Middletown" character says, "I think we are born with questions and the world is the answer." As another character suggests, "See the bright side. Try to look at the bright side." A beautiful and honest sentiment indeed.

SPECIAL CONNECTIONS CALENDAR

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday unless noted.

JANUARY

1/20/2016.....A+ Camps & Schools
1/27/2016.....Community Guide
1/27/2016.....Winter Fun, Food, Arts & Entertainment; Valentine's Preview

FEBRUARY

2/3/2016.....Valentine's Dining & Gifts I
2/3/2016.....Wellbeing - National Children's Dental Health Month
2/10/2016.....HomeLifeStyle
2/10/2016.....Valentine's Dining & Gifts II
2/17/2016.....A+ Camps & Schools
2/24/2016.....Pet Connection

MARCH

3/2/2016.....Wellbeing
3/9/2016.....HomeLifeStyle Real Estate Pullout
3/16/2016.....A+ Camps & Schools
3/23/2016.....Spring Fun, Food, Arts & Entertainment

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SPLIT-LEVEL REMODELED HOME TOUR

Saturday, January 9th, 12pm-4pm

(Snow Date: January 16th - please call to confirm!)

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BEFORE

OPINION

New Year's Goals A few wishes for the Virginia General Assembly, more coming ...

Expand Medicaid: Expanding Medicaid to cover as many as 400,000 uninsured people in Virginia

under the Affordable Care Act would come at virtually no cost to Virginia and would be a massive boost to Virginia's economy. The local and state economy is suffering from the loss of federal spending in other areas, and it's just plain crazy and mean-spirited to deny medical care for people who can't afford it otherwise, and at the same time, turn away an economic stimulus equal to 20,000 or more jobs and a direct infusion of nearly \$2 billion a year.

❖ Fund Education: Localities need more help from the Commonwealth to pay for schools.

❖ Fostering Futures: Help teens in foster care by extending services and support, including foster care maintenance payments, to qualifying individuals age 18 to 21 years. The money spent will be matched by Federal dollars, and every dollar spent helping former foster children become independent, self-supporting adults saves a bundle in other costs down the line.

❖ Stop Predatory Lending: The local impacts

EDITORIAL

of predatory lending, including some car title loans, can be devastating to struggling families and individuals who get into the cycle of high interest debt. This is not an issue of just allowing more choice as some have claimed. And when someone loses the vehicle he or she needs to get to work, the costs can extend.

Early Voting for Presidential Primary Starts Next Week

Every year is an election year in Virginia.

Just two months ago, Virginia voters faced ballots for almost every state and local elected officials. While candidates spent millions of dollars and not very much changed, some critical races in Virginia have been decided by a fraction of one percent of votes cast.

Elections have had significant consequences here, and the coming election is likely to be in that category.

Early voting (absentee voting in person) for

U.S. Presidential Primaries starts Jan. 15, really, starting in just a little more than a week. The official primary date is March 1, but there is no reason to wait until then to vote.

Voters in Virginia don't register by party, but can only vote in either the Democratic or Republican primary. To vote in the Republican primary, each voter will need to sign a form asserting that he or she is in fact a Republican.

Democrats will choose between Hillary Clinton, Martin O'Malley and Bernie Sanders (in that order).

Republicans will choose among 13 candidates who will be listed in the following order: Marco Rubio, Lindsey Graham, Ben Carson, Rand Paul, Mike Huckabee, Ted Cruz, Donald Trump, Jim Gilmore, Chris Christie, Jeb Bush, Rick Santorum, John Kasich and Carly Fiorina.

For details on absentee voting in Fairfax County, see www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/absentee.htm.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

A Workable Solution for I-66

BY DAVE MARSDEN
STATE SENATOR (D-37)

There was a great deal of concern about "\$17 tolls" inside the beltway on I-66 during the recent election. I shared those concerns as I did not want to set a precedent of tolling a road that we were not adding infrastructure to. As you know solo drivers cannot use I-66 during rush hour and must wait until 9 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. to access the road depending on the direction of travel. While I still have concerns over the tolls, the agreement between the Commonwealth and the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission provides new insight on how this project will work.

I feel better about the tolling as the average toll will cost \$6 and part of the revenue collected will be spent on multimodal (transit) options to improve thru-put on this extraordinary congested highway and will in the future be used to widen the road eastbound. At its December meeting the Commonwealth Trans-

portation Board received a presentation on the congestion benefits of this proposal using the Northern Virginia congestion rating process I helped put in place with Del. Jim LeMunyon (HB 599 and SB 531). The rating process shows that the Governor's proposal will eliminate 26,000 person hours of delay a day in the future. Of all the proposals considered, including a plan that only adds lanes to I-66 inside the beltway, the Governor's plan to improve multimodal options by far reduces the most congestion. If we can reduce the need for up to a lane of traffic through transit enhancements that will include carpooling, buses, improved van pools, and areas for riders to negotiate shared vehicles (slugging) then the Governor's idea appears to have merit. The same congestion analysis showed that simply widening I-66 eastbound without the transit improvements and conversion to dynamic tolling would only reduce 6,000 person hour of delay a day — about 20 percent of the benefits compared to the current plan.

Due to growth in the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor and the Coleman decision, a 1977 Federal Department of Transportation decision that gave Arlington County more control over options on I-66, I-66 will never be an easy journey. Arlington has now made concessions for the I-66 project and for the expansion of express lanes from Edsall Road in Springfield/Alexandria to Washington D.C. on I-395. This is welcome progress though not a panacea or these congested roadways. While perfect solutions may not exist, progress is essential and making progress on multi-modal/transit options as well as Express lane extensions and additional lanes are welcome news that will keep us moving forward.

In an ideal world we would have a different solution to I-66. However, the decisions in the past like HOV requirements and taxing gasoline on a wholesale basis limit the choices we have today. Given the current constraints faced in this corridor the Administration's plan offers the best opportunity to improve travel for commuters.

FAITH NOTES

Faith Notes are for announcements and events in the faith community, including special holiday services. Send to reston@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Thursday.

Have **Coffee with Pastors** on Tuesday, Jan. 12 at 7 p.m. at Floris United Methodist Church, 13600 Frying Pan Road, Herndon. 703-793-0026.

Trinity Presbyterian Church, 651 Dranesville Road, Herndon, has Sunday worship services at 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Nursery and childcare are provided and youth and adult Sunday school classes are held prior, from

9:40-10:45 a.m. 703-437-5500 or www.trinityherndon.org.

Vajrayogini Buddhist Center, Unitarian Universalist Church, 1625 Wiehle Ave., Reston, holds weekly classes starting Sept. 12, Thursdays 7-8:30 p.m., for the general public which use Buddhist teachings to practice meditation. \$12. 202-986-2257 or www.meditation-dc.org.

St. Anne's Episcopal Church, 1700 Wainwright Drive in Reston, holds Sunday services at 7:45 a.m., 9 a.m., 11:15 a.m. and contemporary service at 5 p.m.

Nursery, Sunday school and adult education available. Morning prayer on

Monday at 9:30, Holy Eucharist Wednesday at 8:15 a.m. 703-437-6530 or www.stannes-reston.org.

Adult Sunday school will be held 9:30 a.m. Sundays at the Washington Plaza Baptist Church at Lake Anne Village Center. The group is studying the Gospel of Mark. Services follow at 11 a.m.

HAVEN of Northern Virginia offers a variety of free bereavement support groups, meeting on a weekly basis. Contact 703-941-7000 or www.havenofnova.org for schedules and registration information.

The Jewish Federation of

Greater Washington and the Jewish Outreach Institute offer the Mothers/Parents Circle, an umbrella of free educational events and resources. Jewish rituals, ethics and the creation of a Jewish home, regular meetings and group Shabbats and holidays. Participants include Sha'are Shalom, Congregation Beth Emeth, Temple Rodef Shalom and the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia. ShalomDC.org.

Epiphany United Methodist Preschool, 1014 Country Club Drive, N.E. in Vienna, is now enrolling 3- to 4-year-old students. 703-938-2391 or www.epiphanypreschool.com.

Oak Hill & Herndon CONNECTION

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CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

Little Hands Preschool Art Class. 10-11 a.m. Tuesdays from Jan. 12 to Feb. 2. Greater Reston Arts Center, 12000 Market St. #103, Reston. Introducing young children to art by having them explore new artwork, materials, and skills each week. Limited to 10 participants. Ages 3-5 years old. restonarts.org. 703-471-9242.

"Middletown" by Will Eno. Jan. 14-Feb. 7. NextStop Theatre Company, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. In this quirky, modern companion to "Our Town," residents of Middletown seek the meaning of suburban life. Encounter thought-provoking universal themes and a few personalities you may recognize from your own neighbors and friends. www.NextStopTheatre.org. 703-481-5930.

2016 ArtSpace Herndon Fine Art Photography Competition. Submission by 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 16. ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. ArtSpace Herndon invites photographers from Virginia, DC, Maryland, and West Virginia to participate in the competition. It is open to fine art photographers aged 18 or older working in any medium (digital or analog, color or monochrome), and using any printing technique. Fine Art Photography of any subject is welcome; there is no required theme for entries. For more information, visit <http://www.artspaceherndon.com/calls-for-art/> or call 703-956-6590.

Gingerbread Village at Hyatt Regency Reston. Saturday, Dec. 5 through Thursday, Dec. 31. The Hyatt Gingerbread Village is a holiday tradition presented annually since the hotel's opening in 1990. The sweet, whimsical, classic holiday village scene is on display in the main lobby. reston.hyatt.com.

Korean Pop Art in America Exhibit. Tuesday, Dec. 8-Sunday, Jan. 10. ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Featuring selected works of

modern art trends in Korean Pop Art from the Han-Mee Artists Association of Greater Washington (HMAA). The exhibit features the art of invited guest artists Kyungjoo Park, Robert Yi, Chris Mona, and Franc Rosario along with participant artists of Han-mee. <http://www.artspaceherndon.com/korean-pop-art-in-america/>. 703-956-9560.

Dress Drive for Prom. Jan. 2-March 26. Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. RCC is collecting formal dresses, shoes, handbags, scarves and shawls, jewelry and accessories for Diva Central. All donations are appreciated, however, we ask that donations are in good condition, no older than 5 years old (circa 2011), and dry cleaned before they are donated. 703-390-6158.

Charlene Fuhrman-Schulz Exhibit. Through January 2016. Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. PenFed Realty, 1886 Metro Center Drive, Reston. Fuhrman-Schulz displays her passion for traditional Oriental watercolor and ink painting in this solo show, arranged by the League of Reston Artists. Free. www.leagueofrestonartists.org.

Threaded with Green Quilt Show. Jan. 12-Feb. 14. ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Display of talent, dedication and attention to detail from nineteen invited fiber artists. Every quilt in the show has an element of green. The exhibit features the challenge "There is a Season" from 12 fiber artists creating a quilt for each season. www.artspaceherndon.com.

Regina Petrecca's Paintings. February-March. Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. PenFed Realty, 1886 Metro Center Drive, Reston. Energetic brushstrokes are the hallmark of Regina Petrecca's paintings. Free. www.leagueofrestonartists.org.

All-comers' Group Fun Run at Potomac River Running. Tuesdays and Thursdays. Reston Town Center, 11900 Market Street, Reston. For beginners or competitive runners, come out for a fun, low-key run that is safe and social. For more information, call 703-689-0999 or visit <https://potomacriverrunning.com>.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 9



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PHOTOS BY JON FLEMING

South Lake HS Jessica Lister and Sophie Hackett in the 4x400.

South Lakes Indoor Track Adds Qualifiers

Golden Kumi-Darfour took full advantage of the winter break, using the time to qualify for the state indoor track meet in both the 500 and 1000 meter runs.

The South Lakes High School senior ran a 3:03.9 for fifth place in the 1,000 meters at the Friends of Indoor Track meet Saturday, Dec. 26 at Prince George's County Sportsplex in Landover, Md. She followed that up with a second-place finish in the 500 meters (1:17.20) at the UMES Coach O High School Invitational meet Saturday, Jan. 2 at the University of Maryland-Eastern Shore in Princess Anne, Md. Between those two meets and the South County High School Pole Vault Summit Dec. 30, SLHS continued to build its postseason roster.

SLHS track members who met region qualifying standards during the winter break include: senior Skander Ballard (triple jump, 42-11.00, FIT, 3rd place); 500 meters, 1:07.30 (FIT, 3rd place); pole vault, 11-06.00 (SCHS Pole Vault Summit, 10th place); senior Alex Rudison (pole vault, 12-00.00 (SCHS Pole Vault Summit, 9th place); and junior Devyn Jones (55 meter hurdles, 8.78 prelims, 8.82 finals (FIT 4th place); long jump, 16-05.00 (UMES, 6th-place).

Conference qualifying standards were achieved during the winter break meets by: senior Anas Fain in the long jump (19-10.50, FIT, 7th) and 55 meters (6.88, FIT, 15th); senior Eric Kirlaw in the long jump (19-01.50, FIT 11th) and 55 meters (6.77, FIT, 8th); senior Madison Carrens in the pole vault (7-06.00, FIT, 11th; 8-00.00, SCHS Pole Vault Summit, 12th);



South Lake HS senior Golden Kumi-Darfour.

Rudison in the pole vault (11-00.00, FIT, 6th); senior Isaac Mensah in the shot (42-06.00, FIT, 6th; 41-11.25, UMES, 2nd); senior Nikolai Waithe in the 300 meters (37.65, UMES, 10th); Jones in the 500 meters (1:22.48, UMES, 7th); junior Timiebi Ogobri in the 55 meters (6.88, FIT, 15th) and 300 meters (38.52, UMES, 17th); junior Nikayla Hoyte in the 300

meters (42.64, UMES, 5th); junior Morgan LaRow in the 3200 meters (12:19.89, FIT 11th); sophomore Megan Allison in the shot (27-04.00, UMES, 11th); and freshman Sophie Halkett in the 300 meters (43.51, FIT, 13th).

South Lakes will travel to Staten Island, N.Y., this Saturday, Jan. 9 to compete in the Ocean Breeze Freedom Games.



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Head coach Andrew Duggan, seen during the 2013-14 season, and the South Lakes boys' basketball team concluded 2015 with a 4-5 record.

Seahawks Split Games at Governor's Challenge

South Lakes finishes 2015 with 4-5 record.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

The South Lakes boys' basketball team's trip to Salisbury, Md., for the Governor's Challenge started on a losing note Dec. 29, when the Seahawks fell to Linganore (Md.) in overtime, 66-62.

South Lakes responded with a victory the following day, however, beating Baltimore's Edmondson-Westside 54-50 to close 2015 with a 4-5 record.

"It was a little disappointing to start the tournament ... with the way we played," South Lakes head coach Andrew Duggan said. "I felt like we had the game won in regulation and it just didn't work in our favor.

... I think our reaction after the overtime loss was positive. ... I think it's something we can build on."

Sophomore forward Emmanuel Aghayere led South Lakes in scoring in each of the Seahawks' two holiday tournament games, putting up 17 points against Linganore and 14 against Edmondson-Westside.

"Emmanuel kind of got out of his rut," Duggan said, "and played well."

Duggan also praised the performances of senior guard Marty Gryski and junior guard Marcus Cherry.

The Seahawks entered the 2016 portion of their schedule with a 1-1 record against Conference 6 competition. South Lakes faced McLean on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline.

The Seahawks will host Yorktown at 7:15 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 8.

Herndon-Reston Youth Softball Looking for Players

Herndon-Reston Youth Softball is looking for girls of all skill levels to participate in the team. Practice and games are typically held at the local elementary and middle schools in Herndon and Reston. Sometimes players even get to play under the lights. Currently, registration is open for new and old player as teams will be formed in March to start game play in April 2016. Sign up at <http://hrysfastpitch.com/>.

HRYs also has open winter softball clinics for children at the

South Lakes High School gym in Reston.

It is managed by the SLHS Booster club. The clinics run every Sunday starting Jan. 3 and go through Feb 21. Basic softball skills start at 4 p.m. for 5-10 year olds, 5-6 p.m. for the 8-17-year-old pitchers and then another softball skills for the 11-17-year-olds from 6-7 p.m.

The Herndon-Reston Youth Softball (HRYs) organization is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 volunteer-run fastpitch softball league for girls ages 5 to 18.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

WELLBEING

Inova CEO J. Knox Singleton (from left), Gov. Terry McAuliffe, and George Mason University president Ángel Cabrera at a news conference announcing a strategic partnership between Inova and George Mason University.



PHOTO BY LEVI MAGYAR

Mason, Inova to Collaborate on Personalized Medicine Research

Partnership expected to develop treatments, grow economy.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Researchers and doctors from George Mason University and Inova Health System will collaborate on a series of personalized medicine research projects under a new partnership between the two institutions. The effort will include joint research on heart disease, cancer and metabolic diseases.

In announcing the agreement late last month, Gov. Terry McAuliffe said that the joint research effort, "will spur opportunities for entrepreneurship, create new companies and generate jobs that will grow our economy and help us prosper."

Under the agreement, the institutions will share facilities at both the Inova Center for Personalized Health in Merrifield and at Mason's Science and Technology Campus in Manassas. The partnership calls for the establishment of Inova-Mason Proteomics Center at the Inova Center for Personalized Health campus and Mason-Inova Institute for Personalized Medicine Public Policy and Ethics, which will address public policy and ethical issues related to personalized medicine.

The partnership gives Inova researchers access to Mason's animal facility where they will be able to test new drugs. Inova CEO J. Knox Singleton, calls

the partnership an investment in "research and development to help keep healthy people healthy and provide precise, effective and personalized treatment to patients we are privileged to serve."

Inova will contribute \$2.5 million in funding and will work with Mason to raise additional money for the project over the next five years.

A joint steering board made up of key administrators from both Mason and Inova will run the venture. The partnership will establish a joint fellowship board to recruit researchers from around the world.

Mason will also begin offering a graduate certificate program in personalized medicine, which Mason president Ángel Cabrera, says underscores the university's commitment to "delivering research of consequence that improves lives, drives economic growth and helps solve the most complex problems of our time."

Gerald L. Gordon, Ph.D., president and CEO of the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority, said, "It is important that two of Fairfax County's major institutions and economic development assets are formalizing a collaborative relationship today around personalized medicine. Separately Inova and George Mason have strong research capabilities for personalized health but, working together, they will multiply the research and discovery capacities at both which will, in turn, only improve the economic development potential for this burgeoning industry and increase the possibility of spinning out companies and creating high-paying jobs that will improve the general health and well-being. The job creation aspect is important as well because it will further diversify Fairfax County's economic base."

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 7

Rebecca Kamen: Continuum. Dec. 1-Feb. 13. Greater Reston Arts Center, 12001 Market St., Suite 103, Reston. Kamen. Informed by research into cosmology, neuroscience, history of science, and philosophy, Kamen's abstract sculptures and paintings connect common threads across various scientific fields to capture and re-imagine what scientists see. restonarts.org. 703-471-9242.

Patrick Dougherty Public Art Installation. Through 2017. Reston Town Square Park, 11900 Market Street, Reston. See and explore "A Bird in the Hand," a monumental public art sculpture made from tree saplings. The event is presented by GRACE in collaboration with IPAR. For more information, call 703-471-9242 or visit <http://restontowncenter.com/index.php>.

Reston Town Center Ice Skating Pavilion - 2015-2016 Season. November through March. Open daily. 11900 Market Street, Reston. For more information on rates, rentals and schedules, call 703-709-6300 or visit skating@restontowncenter.com.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 6
Election Information Session. 7-8:30 p.m. Reston Association Conference Center, 12001 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston. Information session for members interested in running for a position on the RA Board of Directors. Three seats on the board open in April of 2016: Lake Anne/Tall Oaks District Representative, North Point District Representative, and At-Large Member. www.reston.org.

FRIDAY/JAN. 8
Senior Tea. 1-2 p.m. ArtSpace, 750 Center St., Herndon. Seniors are invited to visit the gallery to view the current exhibit and enjoy a cup of tea on the second Friday of the month. Free. <http://www.artspaceherndon.com/>. 703-956-9560.

TGIF-Free Fridays at Greater Reston Arts Center. 5-7 p.m. Greater Reston Arts Center, 12000 Market St. #103, Reston. An after-hours evening of family, art-making and storytelling. Free. restonarts.org. 703-471-9242.

SATURDAY/JAN. 9
Kids Flicks "Frozen." 11 a.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Are you a fan of Elsa and her friends? Then join us for our January Kids Flicks showing of Walt Disney's "Frozen". All ages. 703-689-2700.

SUNDAY/JAN. 10

Sunday Afternoon Dance. 2:30-4:30 p.m. Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Dancers of all skill levels are welcome to foxtrot, swing, cha-cha, and waltz during these fun afternoon dances. Music selection ranges from golden oldies to today's more modern dance selections. Door prizes and light refreshments add to the fun; partners are not required. 18 and older. \$5/\$10 per session. 703-476-4500.

TUESDAY/JAN. 12

Design and Wine. 7-9 p.m. ArtSpace, 750 Center St., Herndon. Bohemian Bracelets with Karen Mullarkey. Limited to 25 participant. \$30. Registration required. www.artspaceherndon.com. 703-956-9560.

THURSDAY/JAN. 14

Artist's Critique Group. 7-9:30 p.m. Greater Reston Arts Center, 12000 Market St. #103, Reston. Call to artists. Bring 1-2 recent artworks to the gallery for a group discussion and critique. Limited space. restonarts.org. 703-471-9242.

FRIDAY/JAN. 15-SATURDAY/JAN. 30

"Master Class." Check for times. CenterStage, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Reston Community Players production of Terrence McNally's play about soprano Maria Callas. www.restonplayers.org. 703-476-4500.

SATURDAY/JAN. 16

"Remembering the Dream." 4 p.m. Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Reston Community Orchestra celebrates the life and vision of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at its next concert "Remembering the Dream" with symphonic works, spirituals, and songs inspired by his legacy. Featuring baritone Bryan Jackson and Reston's own Beverly Cosham. Free. www.restoncommunityorchestra.org.
Only Light Can Do That! 4-5 p.m. Floris United Methodist Church, 13600 Frying Pan Road, Herndon. Living history musical celebrating the genius, the greatness, the legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Starring actor, dancer, singer Hasani Allen (Next Stop Theatre's Kiss Me Kate) as Dr. King. Free-\$20. <http://www.artspaceherndon.com/only-light-can-do-that/>. 703-956-6590.

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Upon Further Reflection

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



I'm not a look-in-the-mirror kind of person. Other than in the morning when I wash up, brush my teeth, shave and get ready for the day, I spend very little time reflecting on my appearance. In fact, during the early days of my cancer treatment when I was infused with a chemotherapy cocktail for six non-stop hours every three weeks – I lost all my hair, as forewarned; I have no recollection of what I looked like without any hair on my head. Presumably, every morning when I prepped for the day, I would have seen what I was doing and watched how it was done; yet there is no image, still or otherwise, in my mind of how I appeared to others.

Seven years of continuous treatment later, when I look in the mirror now (I have a full head of hair and a growing stubble, like most men), I can't evaluate what I see. Do I look sick? Or do I look as I should for a middle-aged man aging gracefully? Not that I need to look good to feel good ("and you know who you are"), any more than I need to "look mah-velous," but the cumulative effects of chemotherapy and the inevitable signs of aging have blurred (no pun intended; I can see perfectly well) my objectivity. So much so that on any given day, what I see is what I get and I'm happy to have gotten it, subjectively speaking. Ergo, looking in the mirror more often than not serves no appreciable benefit – to me, since I know what I see, or rather, don't know how to evaluate what it is I do see.

Then along comes the holidays, when many social gatherings are planned where in addition to food and drink, face-to-face interactions occur with many people you see regularly and some you know but rarely see. It is the observations and comments from these rarely-seen persons, persons with whom you are familiar – and who are familiar with you and your "underlying diagnosis," as I call my cancer, that are the genesis of this column.

I am happy and amazed, and incredibly flattered even to say that the feedback I received was uniformly positive and extremely encouraging; and if I had to bet a nickel, I'd say their comments were all sincere and honest. And since I don't want to look for trouble (since trouble has already found me), I am going to take their words at face value (again, no pun intended). And in thanking them graciously, reconsider yet again how fortunate I am to be receiving such compliments, nearly seven years in and nearly five years past, the end date (pun intended) of my original "13 month to two year" prognosis, words which I first heard from my oncologist at the initial Team Lourie meeting held on February 27, 2009 (Oh, yeah, you remember that date, forever).

Unfortunately, there is a bit of a cynic in me, so I still question the validity of words people sometimes say not necessarily to the wise. Moreover, I still am not convinced that looking good is more important than feeling good (with apologies to a Billy Crystal sketch mimicking Fernando Lamas back in the day on Saturday Night Live). Nor am I at all sure that looking good is an accurate description of what effect my stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer is having on me and my mediastinum.

As much as I'd like to believe that form follows function and that looking good is a clear indicator of one who is not only feeling good, but doing well (cancer-wise), I'm still wondering what it is that sets me apart from many other similarly diagnosed patients who have succumbed to this terrible – and mostly terminal – disease. I never thought it was, or would be, my looks. And given that there hasn't been that much with which to work, maybe not focusing on my appearance all the time has helped? Apparently, it hasn't hurt.

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

Not Your Average Joe's Opens at Reston Spectrum

New restaurant at Fountain Drive in Reston opens in January.

By RYAN DUNN
THE CONNECTION

The Reston Spectrum at 1845 Fountain Drive now hosts Not Your Average Joe's, a Massachusetts-based restaurant chain, known for stone-hearth pizzas, salads, unique burger combos and other casual fare.

"I think this will be a place where couples and families can get together without impeding on each other's fun," said Reston resident and athletic coach Chip Hulbert. Hulbert was impressed by the restaurant's bar, which welcomes sports junkies and families. Reston is establishing a reputation as a dining location, as Reston Town Center has over 15 restaurants and cafes. "Coming to Reston, that was a good move," said Tom Boone, who has dined at the Not Your Average Joe's in Leesburg. The Reston Spectrum is about one-quarter of a mile from the future Silver Line Reston Parkway Metro Station.

Not Your Average Joe's first opened in 1994. Owner and founder Steve Silverstein has spent the past several months reviewing and inspecting progress of what he refers to as his newest baby. "This place hires good people, they got a good formula," said Megan Ortolan, who attended a soft opening event at Reston with her husband. The restaurant will employ 102 staff, including part time and full time employees.

"We know there is competition, and we welcome it," said Joe Becker, general manager for the Reston NYA Joe's. Becker ran the NYA Joe's restaurant at Leesburg for five years. The expansive 7,300 square-foot restaurant in Reston will seat 218, with a full bar and two seasonal outdoor patios offering an additional 100 seats. A private dining space accommodates 22 seated guests. From the menu, Becker enjoys the Vietnamese Salmon, as well as the Spaghetti Squash Bolognese. The Bolognese sauce gets its full-bodied flavor from mushrooms instead of meat, and uses spaghetti squash in place of



Not Your Average Joe's opened in Reston in early January. It will be the Massachusetts-based restaurant chain's third restaurant in Northern Virginia and fifth in the metro region.

conventional spaghetti. "It is such a great dish and has less than 500 calories," said Becker. Executive chef Jeff Tenner joined Silverstein in the development of the new Reston location. "We are a globally inspired restaurant," said Tenner, noting that the menu changes with the season. The Reston location will open with a winter menu, which includes entrees such as Romesco Rockfish and Turkey Meatball Strozzapreti. The meatballs are served with mint-parsley pesto, roasted tomatoes and artichoke hearts. Tenner highlights the restaurant's Molasses Braised Pork Shank. "It is a great example of winter comfort food," said Tenner.

Desserts at the restaurant include carrot cake, key lime pie, and peanut butter thing - peanut butter and chocolate chunks folded into vanilla ice cream, rolled in cookie crumbs. Staff and visitors have been impressed with the redesign work at the new Reston restaurant. "This place has a fine finish to it," said bar manager Michael Reyes. The Reston location features an open-kitchen with a wood-burning oven in a bright and polished atmosphere.

Diners can expect an extensive wine list,



Not Your Average Joe's chef Jeff Rodger with executive chef Jeff Tenner at the new Reston location. Not Your Average Joe's is known for stone-hearth pizzas, salads, unique burger combos and other casual fare.

with cocktails and a variety of beers.

In keeping with the brand's commitment to the communities in which it serves, Not Your Average Joe's will partner with local nonprofit Cornerstones during its Grand Opening. Proceeds raised during the two-day preview celebrations will be donated to Cornerstones, which is dedicated to providing support and advocacy for people in need of food, shelter, affordable housing and other human services. Not Your Average Joe's will continue to support Cornerstones through January 2016 with its ongoing "Not Your Average Cause" program, which provides 15 percent of proceeds to a selected cause every Tuesday.

"The food was fantastic," said Joshua Gravis, an employee at the Davelle Clothiers at Reston Town Center. Gravis spent some of his New Year's Eve dining at Not Your Average Joe's. "Joe's really focuses on creating an experience for our guests," said bartender Courtney Ashby. When the restaurant closed for the night, some of the staff walked to Reston Town Center to welcome in the new year. More information on Not Your Average Joe's is available at www.notyouraveragejoes.com.

BULLETIN BOARD

To have community events listed in the Connection, send to north@connectionnewspapers.com by the Friday prior to the following week's paper.

FRIDAY/JAN. 8

VIP Reston. 2 p.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Support group for visually impaired persons. Adults. 703-689-2700.

MONDAY/JAN. 11-FRIDAY/JAN. 22

Coat Drive to Benefit Cornerstones.

Collection in building lobbies at Reston Town Center. Help those in need in the community stay warm this winter. New or gently used coats (in good condition or cleaned), new hats, gloves and scarves will be collected. restontowncenter.com.

TUESDAY/JAN. 19

Volunteer to Serve Dinner. 4:30 p.m. St. John Neumann Catholic Church, 11900 Lawyers

Road, Reston. Provide and serve dinner, breakfast foods and organize evening entertainment for the week-long hypothermia center, as well as providing clothing and gift card donations. Under the auspices of FACETS (facetscares.org), in partnership with Fairfax County Hypothermia Prevention Program. Sponsored by Congregation Beth Emeth. www.bethemeth.org.

School Board Sued over Nondiscrimination Policy Changes

Liberty Counsel challenges board's authority to add sexual orientation and gender identity.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

When the members of the Fairfax County School Board added sexual orientation and gender identity to the school system's nondiscrimination policy in November 2014 and May 2015, did they have the authority? A lawsuit filed Dec. 21, 2015 in Fairfax Circuit Court by the Liberty Counsel contends they did not.

"We believe that Virginia state law is crystal clear on this subject, that it deprives local government bodies, such as the Fairfax County School Board, of the authority to expand or contract protected classes under the state nondiscrimination law," said Horatio Mihet, chief litigation counsel with Liberty Counsel.

Mihet is representing Andrea Lafferty, president of the pro-family advocacy group Traditional Values Coalition and opponent of the policy changes, and the plaintiff, a Fairfax County high school student and a minor, whose parents and friends are also named as plaintiffs all under the name "Doe."

The Liberty Counsel complaint contends that the student is finding school an unsafe place to learn in part because "gender identity" isn't clearly defined in the new policy or the student code of conduct. He has expressed fear of punishment for breaking the new nondiscrimination rules regarding transgender students in his bathroom or locker room space, because he does not fully understand what those rules are, according to the suit.

The student plaintiff, Mihet said, "has clear statutory and constitutional rights which are being infringed. In its desire to please one component of its constituency, the School Board has managed to run roughshod over the privacy rights of its students and their parents."

In addition to the suit, Liberty Counsel has also filed a motion for a preliminary injunction that would force the School Board to reverse the policy change immediately, prior to further litigation.

After Liberty Counsel's announcement the suit had been filed, School Board Chairman



Citizens were actively engaged in the discussion leading up to the Fairfax County School Board's 10-1 vote in favor of adding "gender identity" to the district's nondiscrimination policy.



Citizens on both sides of the debate lingered outside Luther Jackson Middle School following the School Board's vote.

Pat Hynes released the statement that once the board was served with it, "our attorneys will review it and file the appropriate response with the court."

"Every child in our school system needs to know they are respected and will not face discrimination," Hynes' statement continued, "and the same thing goes for employees when they walk through our doors."

Springfield District School Board mem-

ber Elizabeth Schultz said she sees the lawsuit as "unfortunate" but thinks that it was "foreseeable."

"I think the current board lunged ahead with what was largely a political agenda," Schultz said. "Now unfortunately we're going to pay the price of a lawsuit. Of course there are better things to spend money on, but now have to be in a defensive position."

Schultz was applauded by many before

the vote on May 7, in an uncommonly crowded auditorium at Luther Jackson Middle School, when she encouraged the board to postpone its vote, engage more with the community on the issue, and ultimately voted against the policy change.

Despite a boisterous crowd that night that was largely opposed to the change, School Board member Megan McLaughlin (Braddock District) said, "This policy update was not as controversial as alluded to and in fact was the right thing to do."

McLaughlin pointed to the results of November's election, saying, "I think the larger community demonstrated that in their decision to return virtually all the incumbents back to this board."

Robert Rigby, teacher at West Potomac High School and president of the Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender-friendly employees' group FCPS Pride, is promoting mediation on the issue, outside of litigation. Rigby released a statement following the lawsuit that he and his organization are working to set up meetings between opponents of the policy change and members of the LGBT community in Fairfax County Public Schools. "The idea is to put real people out there," Rigby said, "invite some transgender kids and parents to meet. We're hoping to change hearts and minds — that's the ultimate hope. We want to start conversations." Rigby believes the move by Lafferty and the Liberty Counsel is a "hail Mary, a last-ditch effort" to affect the board's position, after previous attempts to "drive the ball down the field" at board meetings were unsuccessful.

Regarding the student plaintiff's experience, Rigby said he shouldn't feel afraid. "Transgender teens are not scary, and very aware of the fact that people may feel uncomfortable around them," he said. "They're not out to confront anybody, to scare."

Rigby is continuing to work on facilitating meetings with opponents of the policy, including former School Board members Michelle Brickner and Steve Hunt. "I think we have the right on our side," he said.

Mihet with Liberty Counsel said he believes the preliminary injunction will be heard in the next 60 days. Andrea Lafferty was unavailable for an interview.

SCHOOL NOTES

Send school notes to north@connectionnewspapers.com by Friday.

Two Herndon High School AP Physics 1 students, **Ian Boll** and **Cyril Antoney**, created a team named Herndon Space Voyagers and submitted a research proposal to the Association of Space Explorers (ASE), an organization composed of astronauts from 35 countries and have orbited earth. The team's research proposal was one of the top 15 proposals in the nation that got selected for the 2015 ASE AstroSat Challenge. In the proposal, the team hopes to explore the relationship between pollution, sunlight and global temperatures and create a

mathematical relationship between the amounts of visible light received and the measured temperatures and be able to predict where global temperatures are heading. The students are taught by Herndon High School Physics teacher, Shella Condino.

Darcie Cecilia Badger, of Reston, graduated from Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kan. in the summer of 2015 with a Masters of Science in Education, English for Speakers of Other Languages.

Five Herndon High School students are now a part of the 2015 Virginia State Honors Choir, a very prestigious honor that is earned after a competitive audition process that took place earlier this

month. The students will perform at the Virginia Music Educators Conference in November in Norfolk, Virginia, alongside representatives from around the state.

The students are seniors **Caitlyn Homet**, **Gabrielle Kubi**, **Jacob Reeves**, **Victoria Schrag** and **Rebecca Wichman**. Their coach and instructor is Ms. Dana Vanslyke, the choral director at Herndon High School.

Herndon High School Senior, **Charlie Shen**, earned four perfect scores consecutively on the National Latin Exam.

He is one of 10 students in the entire country to have done so. Sophomore Kyle Nielsen will represent Virginia as the History specialist on the Novice level

Certamen team at National Junior Classical League Convention this summer. Sophomore Dora Drezga, who earned this honor last year, earned a spot as an alternate on the Intermediate level Certamen Team. The Certamen team is sponsored by Latin Teachers, Emily Lewis and Bethany Abelseth

Momentum Realty and Holly Weatherwax are extremely proud to announce the recipient of the 2015 Momentum Realty Book Scholarship at Herndon High School. This year's recipient, **Ester De La Cruz** of Herndon, will attend Northern Virginia Community College where she plans to study nursing.

The award was presented on June 11 at the Herndon High School Senior

Awards Ceremony.

Emily George, of Herndon, has been placed on the Dean's List in recognition of academic excellence during the spring 2015 semester at New River Community College.

Kendall Crouther, of Herndon, Master of Urban Education, graduated from Union University May 16 during spring commencement services of the 190th graduating class at Oman Arena.

Jacob Kassim, of Reston, has accepted membership in the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. Kassim is a student at Northern Virginia Community College.