

# Burke CONNECTION

# Holiday Party

COMMUNITY, PAGE 12

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CALENDAR, PAGE 8 ♦ SPORTS, PAGE 13 ♦ CLASSIFIED, PAGE 16

**Kaylyn Lambert, 5, visits with Santa Claus while attending an annual Christmas Party at the Heatherwood Retirement Community with her family. Kaylyn and her parents were visiting her great-grandmother who is a resident at Heatherwood.**

## Santa Express Stops in Burke

NEWS, PAGE 3

## Birthday Church Day

NEWS, PAGE 3

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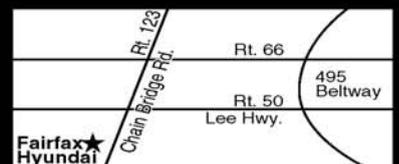
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PHOTOS BY ROBBIE HAMMER/THE CONNECTION

**Santa Claus greets children on the Santa Train as part of the 12th Annual Operation Lifesaver Santa Train Cupid Express on Dec. 13 at the Burke VRE station.**

## All Aboard



**Santa and Mrs. Claus greet fans as they exit the Santa Train on Saturday.**



**South County choral students Lesley Admana and Chelsea Coffman sing holiday songs.**



**Santa Train riders disembark after enjoying a train ride from Burke to downtown Manassas with a visit from Santa and Mrs. The annual Santa Train helps to raise funds for Operation Lifesaver, a safety railroad program sponsored by the VRE and the U.S. Marines Toys for Tots program.**

# Her 95th Birthday Is Just Like a Sunday

## Oldest member of Burke Presbyterian celebrates 95th birthday at church

BY DEREK B. JOHNSON  
THE CONNECTION

**B**urke resident Vergys McCharen has lived a long life by almost anyone's standards. Still, she will have to blow out birthday candles at least six more times to catch up to her mother, who lived to 101.

On Thursday, Dec. 11 the oldest member of Burke Presbyterian Church on Oak Leather Drive celebrated her 95th birthday party at the one place where she had spent countless Sunday mornings over the last century: church.

"I love my church and I love my congregation," said McCharen who has attended Burke Presbyterian for the last six years.

McCharen's daughter, Kay Bailey, organized the party with church officials who were also interested in honoring the 31-year Burke resident. She recalled the emphasis her mother put on attending services while raising three children in Houston, Texas.

"I grew up that way. On Sunday morning, you went to church. If the doors were open at any other time during the rest of

the week you [went] too," said Bailey.

McCharen enjoys the small size of Burke Presbyterian, which she said encourages stronger, closer relationships among members.

"I like a rather small congregation like we have at Burke. [where] everybody gets to know everybody else," she said.

Elizabeth Braxton, pastor and head of staff at Burke Presbyterian Church called McCharen a "wisdom figure" within the congregation.

"She's always here every Sunday," said Braxton. "She feels like the week doesn't start off right if she's not at church."

McCharen was born Dec. 11, 1913 in Atkins, Ark., where she lived until moving to Texas at the age of 14. She married her husband and

raised three children there. As part of a military family, Bailey said her mother had traveled through Europe, seeing "places that a little Arkansas girl never thought she would."

In 1977, McCharen moved to Burke, where she helped raise Bailey's children. At 95, she still works two hours every Wednesday at the Burke Centre McDonald's, call-

**"Yes our pastor tap danced. She's good, believe me. She's got the rhythm, yes indeed."**

— Vergys McCharen



PHOTO BY ROBBIE HAMMER/THE CONNECTION

**Vergys McCharen, right, is helped with blowing out the candles on her birthday cake by her daughter Kay Bailey and her great-granddaughter Madeline Bailey.**

ing Bingo for senior citizens. This fact of ten prompts one of McCharen's favorite lines.

"She loves saying she's the only one in the family bringing home a paycheck," said Bailey, who is retired along with her husband.

The party was punctuated with a tap dancing performance by Braxton.

"I learned to tap dance when I was a youngster and still love to put on those cliky shoes now and then," said Braxton.

McCharen gave the performance her seal

of approval. "Yes our pastor tap danced. She's good, believe me," she said. "She's got the rhythm, yes indeed."

Bailey said her mother has lived her faith. During good times and bad, McCharen was a regular at weekly services.

"She'll say 'I don't know why I go to church. I can't hear and can't remember what they said, but I'm still going to go,'" said Bailey.

Braxton echoed that description.

"She feels like the week doesn't start off right if she's not at church," she said.

# She Bakes Cakes Big and Small

Home bakery business dishes out cupcakes, turkeys and airplanes.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

**B**aking and sculpting a 3-foot turkey cake is not a feat for Betty Crocker or the Easy Bake Oven of childhood fame. However, it is categorized as “strange and unusual,” on Kathy Mingledorff’s Web site for her home-bakery business, Lily Lane Cakes.

The turkey cake, nicknamed “Franklin” after Ben Franklin, was made with several layers of cake fused together with dove-tail joints and frosting.

“It took me three days to make,” said Mingledorff, a Springfield resident who baked Franklin on order for the Metropolitan Cooking and Entertaining Show. “One day it was displayed and the next they ate it,” she said, “We made an event out of it,” at the show.

Mingledorff’s love for baking goes back to her mother’s kitchen where they made their own pasta and experimented with recipes. “She really encouraged me,” Mingledorff said. Her plans were to go to the Corcoran College of Art and Design, but those were side tracked when she had her son Alex, who is now 6. He needed to put on some weight as a child, and the “cookies and cakes were something I could always get him to eat,” she said. She also has a daugh-

ter Lily, 5, who is the namesake of the business.

**ALTHOUGH MINGLEDORFF** is known for the specialty cakes that come in shapes of airplanes, Superman and race cars, she also specializes in cupcakes, which have taken a trendy path in today’s bakery world. Cupcakes are flexible enough to go with coffee in the morning, or stacked in a multi-tier design as a wedding cake.

“There’s a lot to be desired from a cupcake, they are very portable,” she said. Stacked as a wedding cake, guests can just grab them and go without waiting for the slicing ritual, but the bride and groom can still have something to shove in each others faces with a round part called a “topper” that still can be sliced.

With the economy on shaky grounds these days, a cupcake wedding cake is gaining popularity because they cost about half of what a normal wedding cake costs. “The bakeries and coffee shops I work with are really slow this year,” she said.

Stacy’s Coffee Parlor in Falls Church is one of her customers that can’t keep her “red velvet cupcakes,” in stock because of their popularity. Mingledorff delivers cupcakes to Stacy’s a few times a week so they are fresh, and the clientele likes that they are from a local baker.

“All those things make a big difference,” said Sam Kamili, owner of Stacy’s. “They go fast, people call in to find out whether we have them or not.”

“One day it was displayed and the next they ate it.”

— Kathy Mingledorff



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

**Kathy Mingledorff shows off some cupcakes that are destined for a local coffee shop.**

SEE AT HOME BAKERY. PAGE 16

## County’s Deficit Climbs to \$650M

Elected officials confirmed that the county’s projected deficit is likely to be around \$650 million, \$220 million more than they had initially predicted last summer.

The increased projection is likely to mean significantly deeper cuts than the county has already discussed with the community. It also reflects the extent to which the county’s home values have declined.

Real estate taxes make up the bulk of the county’s revenue and officials had not accounted for the degree of deterioration that has taken place in the county’s residential and commercial real estate markets.

“We have also seen a decrease in commercial property values. We had thought the commercial property values were going to stay flat but there was actually a bit of a decline,” said Supervisor Sharon Bulova (D-Braddock), who is head of the county budget committee. She added that the county’s other

large sources of revenue like the sales tax and business and professional licensing fees have also dropped.

“It is everything you are hearing about on the national scene,” said Bulova, who is also running to replace Gerry Connolly as the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors chairman. She will face Supervisor Patrick Herrity (R-Springfield) in a special election Feb. 3.

Even though the county faces an uphill battle financially, Fairfax is in a better situation than other localities because of preventative measures the supervisors took, said Bulova.

In spite of Connolly’s request, the supervisors did not tap a reserve fund of approximately \$100 million to help close their budget gap in this fiscal year and will have some of that money available to deal with the upcoming shortfall.

The county has also taken some actions to address the foreclosure problem and to provide assistance, financial and otherwise, to help people stay in their homes, she added.

Bulova also said the supervisors reached out to residents and county employees earlier in the budget cycle than they have ever

done in the recent past.

“There was an unprecedented early engagement of the community,” she said.

But Herrity said more could have been done to mitigate the county’s current financial crisis.

The Springfield supervisor said the county board should have been willing to make cuts to this year’s budget earlier, in anticipation of next year’s shortfall. The supervisors only recently agreed to make current year fiscal cuts and rejected Herrity’s call to do so in October.

“It is a no brainer if you have any kind of sense in my book. Times are bad. To me, this isn’t a change. It is expected,” he said.

Last spring, Herrity had proposed the county eliminate some of its major programs. For example, he asked the supervisors to roll back an affordable housing preservation program, which cost approximately \$22 million.

Herrity said it also did not make sense for the board last year to adopt “across the board” cuts – where every department was asked to cut an equal percentage of its budget. Instead, the supervisors should have been looking for county programs to reduce or eliminate.

“There is no way the county could have

prevented this other than being more fiscally prudent,” said Herrity.

If elected chairman, Herrity would try to help the county distinguish between the “needs to have” and “nice to have” aspects of the county budget, he said.

— JULIA O’DONOGHUE

## Conservancy Hires Dredging Firm

The Board of Trustees for the Burke Centre Conservancy voted at a meeting Thursday, Dec. 11 to hire GKY & Associates, a Chantilly-based consulting firm. The firm, which specializes in “water resources and environmental sciences” according to its Web site, will provide [ ] to the conservancy as it works with Fairfax County and other organizations to dredge Meadow, Bass, Burke and Spring ponds.

The motion approving the hire was passed unanimously with an amendment added capping the total cost of the con-

SEE WEEK IN BURKE. PAGE 16

WEEK IN BURKE



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# New Vicar at St. Peter's in the Woods

DeDe Duncan-Probe to head Fairfax Station church.

BY STEVE HIBBARD  
THE CONNECTION

Following a yearlong search by a committee of eight, the Rev. DeDe Duncan-Probe was named the new vicar at St. Peter's in the Woods Episcopal Church in Fairfax Station.

"She's bubbly and engaging," said Marvin Lawley, senior warden at St. Peter's, who added that he's "terribly excited about her coming and anxiously waiting" for her arrival on Feb. 2.

Duncan-Probe was formerly the associate rector at Church of the Holy Comforter in Vienna, and associate rector at St. John's in McLean. She'll be moving here from Stoneham, Mass., where she was the Priest-in-Charge at All Saints Episcopal Church. She will be replacing the Rev. Robert Koth, who retired due to medical reasons. An average of 60-80 people attend Sunday services at the church at Burke Centre Parkway and Route 123.

Chairman of the search committee Cindy Larkin said what stood out about Duncan-Probe was her charisma and people skills. "One of the reasons we had selected her was her energy level," said Larkin, "She was just this little fireball."

Larkin noticed that Duncan-Probe could deliver meaningful sermons without using notes — and with a wicked sense of humor. "She knows how to use humor well," she said.

"The way she builds her sermon is she looks at the passage in the Greek and then builds from there; what that passage meant at the time of Jesus; and what that applica-



DeDe Duncan-Probe is the new Vicar of St. Peter's in the Woods Episcopal Church.

tion means in our life, and something that connects you with the Gospel, something to sustain you throughout the week," said Larkin.

**ORDAINED FOR** only five years, Duncan-Probe took an unconventional path to the priesthood. She used to sing classical and jazz music as a professional. She also taught first grade and fifth grade, then taught at-risk special needs students and gang members in Los Angeles for two years.

Since St. Peter's was looking for a leader who was organized and could help the small church grow, Duncan-Probe seemed like the perfect fit to the search committee.

"She had outlined the fact that she's a builder and was very good at organization,"

said Larkin. "She was able to lay out some basic steps for us to rebuild our congregation, and one of her quotes was: 'If you're not growing, you're not moving forward' ... And, we liked here."

Lawley agreed, adding that some applicants would be excellent at pastoral care, but not so good at administration. "But she seemed to be good at all of them," he said, adding that Duncan-Probe was also a skilled communicator. "She's not one of these people who stands behind the lectern and reads, but one who walks around with the congregation and speaks from her heart."

Larkin said she liked Duncan-Probe's attitude toward encouraging people to volunteer. "She is a big believer in having people do the things they like to do. .... We kind of like the idea of somebody who

"One of the reasons we had selected her was her energy level. ... She was just this little fireball."

— Cindy Larkin, chairman of the search committee

knows how to encourage and motivate people," she said.

**DESCRIBING HER** leadership style as "collaborative," Duncan-Probe said, "I'm also able to make decisions and define a vision for the church and create manageable steps to make that vision come into being."

Originally from outside of Fort Worth, Texas, Duncan-Probe graduated from the Stephen F. Austin State University in Texas in 1985, and Pepperdine University in Malibu in 1993, where she earned a master's degree in psychology. She earned her master's of divinity from the General Theological Seminary in New York City in 2003.

She is married for 15 years to Chris Probe, a consulting engineer, with whom she founded a data communications consulting firm. The couple has three children: Chasen, 10; Ryan, 6; and Grace, 3, who is adopted from Guatemala.

Duncan-Probe is thrilled to be moving back to Northern Virginia and working at St. Peter's. "They're a real dedicated group of Christians who want to act out their faith through action, and I'm excited to be part of that," she said. "I am real excited to be joining them in their ministry."

"St. Peter's has a lot of potential for being a real hub of the community," said Duncan-Probe. "And I want to grow that up."

## Chemis-Tree 5K Returns

Run supports scholarship fund in honor of late McLean teacher and Burke resident Terry Moore.

This Saturday, Dec. 20 at 10 a.m., the second annual Chemis-Tree 5K will be at McLean High School. The run, hosted by graduates of the high school, raises money for the Terry Moore Scholarship Fund, named for the McLean High School chemistry teacher and active member of the Burke community who died of brain cancer in October 2007.

### Sign Up

To register for the Chemis-Tree 5K or for more information, visit [www.chemistree5k.org](http://www.chemistree5k.org).

This will actually be the second Chemis-Tree 5K this year, as the initial run took place in June. From now onward, the race will take place on the first day of the school system's winter break.

The goals of the fund are to award scholarships in Moore's honor, establish college funds for his three children and promote scientific curiosity. The organization bases its endeavors on Moore's values of compassion, dedication and love of education.

The name of the race comes from a tradition Moore established during his seven years teaching at McLean High. Each December, students decorated a small, non-denominational plastic tree in his classroom with chemistry-related ornaments.

About 300 people participated in last year's race.

### VIEWPOINTS

What's on your holiday wish list?



"Pull out of this funk this country's in. I hope everyone in my family gets through it safely, and I hope we have a good safe holiday."  
**Greg Golden,**  
Fairfax



"Getting a laptop. It's going to be a boring Christmas this year. I hope all the homeless kids get something good."  
**Shelby Gabriel,**  
Potomac



"A nice new flatpanel T.V. for the transition, even though the old one will still work, and world peace."  
**Karl Schaefer,**  
Fairfax

— CANNON COOK

# FAITH

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❖ **A Community of Contagious Joy.** Sunday Worship 8:15 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Interactive praise and worship service, Sundays at 7 p.m.

❖ **Christmas Comfort Service**, Sunday, December 21 at 7:30 p.m. Music, scripture, silence, reflection and prayer.

❖ **Christmas Eve at Messiah**, 5 p.m. children's service, 7 p.m. service of lessons and carols, 9 p.m. and 11 p.m. worship with Holy Communion.

A casual worship service with a praise band is at 9:45 a.m. at Sydenstricker United Methodist Church,

8508 Hoes Road in Springfield. Visit [www.sumcdisciples.org](http://www.sumcdisciples.org) or call 703-451-8223.

**International Calvary Church** is a Christ, Bible and Spirit-centered church. Sunday English services at 9:45 a.m., Korean services at 11:30 a.m. and youth services at 11:30 a.m. Sunday School English classes at 11:30 a.m. and children's classes at 11:30 a.m. Call 703-569-1918. International Calvary Church is at 5700 Hanover Ave., Springfield.

**St. Leo the Great** in Fairfax hosts "Night of Praise" the first Saturday of each month, featuring praise music and Eucharist adoration at 7 p.m. Located at 3704 Old Lee Highway in Fairfax.

**Congregation Adat Reyim** offers services Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 9:30 a.m. and Wednesday at 7:40 p.m. Hebrew school is available on Sunday at 9 a.m. and Sunday and Mondays at 5:30 p.m. Preschool is Monday-Friday at 9:30 a.m. Located at 6500 Westbury Oaks Court in Springfield. Call 703-569-7577 or visit [www.adatreyim.org](http://www.adatreyim.org).

**First Baptist Church of Springfield** has Sunday services at 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m., Sunday school at 9:15 a.m., Hispanic worship service at 9 a.m., Korean worship service at 2 p.m., and an Ethiopian service at 12:15 p.m. The pastor is Jim Weaver. Church is located at 7300 Gary St., Springfield. 703-451-1500 or [www.fbcspringfield.org](http://www.fbcspringfield.org).

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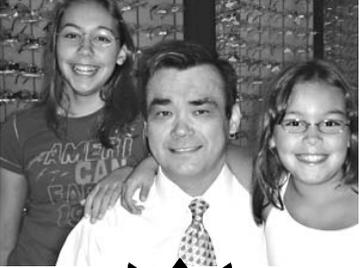
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# CALENDAR

BURKE CONNECTION ASSISTANT EDITOR PAULA FRIEDRICH  
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To have community events listed, email southcalendar@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-917-6459 with questions. Deadline for calendar listings is two weeks prior to event.

## THURSDAY/DEC. 18

**3 Doors Down featuring Switchfoot.** 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$29.50-\$55, available online at www.ticketmaster.com or at 703-573-SEAT. The George Mason University Patriot Center, 4500 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. Visit www.3doorsdown.com.

**Rude Buddha and Cerca Trova.** Rock. 8 p.m. \$10. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. N.E., Vienna. 703-255-1566 or www.jamminjava.com.

## FRIDAY/DEC. 19

**Bill Kirchen and Too Much Fun Holiday Show.** Rock/country/rockabilly. 8 p.m. \$20. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. N.E., Vienna. 703-255-1566 or www.jamminjava.com.

**Holiday Cookie Party for Teens,** from 5:30-7 p.m. at The Net Teen Center, 8100 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. An evening of fun, music, and a cookie baking party. All supplies are provided by the Fairfax County Department of Community and Recreation Services' Teen Services. 703-912-4687, TTY 711 or www.fairfaxcounty.gov/rec.

## SATURDAY/DEC. 20

**Oasis Dig Out Your Soul World Tour, featuring Ryan Adams.** 7 p.m. at the George Mason University Patriot Center, 4500 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. Tickets are \$49.50-\$69.50, through www.ticketmaster.com or at 703-573-SEAT. 703-993-3000 or www.patriotcenter.com.

**Rocknokers Holiday Show and Sing-a-long.** 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. \$10. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. N.E., Vienna. 703-255-1566 or www.jamminjava.com.

**A My Favorite Highway Christmas and Chelsea Lee.** Pop/rock. 7 p.m. \$15. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. N.E., Vienna. 703-255-1566 or www.jamminjava.com.

**"Over the North Pole,"** 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. at the Harris Theatre, George Mason University, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. \$17 adults, \$15 students and seniors 703-222-5511 or www.ensemble-tap.org.

**A Classical Christmas with Jubilant Sykes and Christopher Parkening.** 8 p.m. at George Mason Center for the Arts, on the Fairfax campus of George Mason University at the intersection of Braddock Road and Route 123. Holiday classics, sacred songs and hymns. Tickets are \$22-\$44. Charge at 888-945-2468 or www.tickets.com. Visit www.gmu.edu/cfa.

**Kitten and Cat Adoption Extravaganza,** 11 a.m.-5 p.m. at the City of Fairfax Regional Library, 3915 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax. All cats and kittens are fully socialized, vaccinated and de-wormed, and can be selected on the adoption site. Many may be taken home the same day. Commonwealth Cat Rescue, Inc. 703-568-3600.

## SUNDAY/DEC. 21

**A My Favorite Highway Christmas and Chelsea Lee.** Pop/rock. 7 p.m. \$15. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. N.E., Vienna. 703-255-1566 or www.jamminjava.com.

**"Over the North Pole,"** 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. at the Harris Theatre, George Mason University, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. \$17 adults, \$15



Fairfax Station Violist Kaleigh Elizabeth Acord will perform with Russian pianist Irina Kats on Sunday, Dec. 21 at The Lyceum, Alexandria's History Museum.

students and seniors 703-222-5511 or www.ensemble-tap.org.

## TUESDAY/DEC. 23

**Todd Wright's Sixth Annual Christmas Spectacular.** 8 p.m. \$15. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. N.E., Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.  
**Mothers First of Burke/Fairfax,** 10 a.m. at Kings Park Library, 9000

Burke Lake Rd., Burke. 703-827-5922

## WEDNESDAY/DEC. 24

**Jewmongous.** 7 p.m. \$17 in advance, \$20 at the door. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. N.E., Vienna. 703-255-1566 or www.jamminjava.com.

## FRIDAY/DEC. 26

**The Bigger Lights, The Friday**

**Night Boys and Mercy Mercedes.** 5 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. \$15. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. N.E., Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

## SATURDAY/DEC. 27

**Virginia Ballet Company's 59th "Nutcracker,"** 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. at

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 9

## Springfield Mall

# 25 Days of Giving



Springfield Mall is giving away \$1000 a day November 28 through December 22. Two lucky winners each day will receive \$500. One FREE entry per person per day.

Additional entries available for each \$25 presented in same day mall receipts.

To enter visit the Customer Service Desk Lower Level next to the Carousel.

Drawings each day at 5pm. Winners will be notified by phone.

\*On December 22 with the help of the Koinonia Foundation and Echo Inc.,

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# CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 8

the Northern Virginia Community College, Ernst Cultural Center Theater, Annandale Campus. Tickets \$30 adults, \$20 children, students and seniors. 703 249-8227 or [www.virginiaballetcompany.org](http://www.virginiaballetcompany.org).

**Polar Science.** 2:30 p.m. Explore polar animals with simple science experiments. Age 6-12. Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. 703-644-7333.

## SUNDAY/DEC. 28

**Tom O'Connor and Brent Shuttleworth. Pop/rock.** 2 p.m. \$8. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. N.E., Vienna. 703-255-1566 or [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

**Jonasay Reunion Show and Trustfall.** Pop/rock. 7:30 p.m. \$12. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. N.E., Vienna. 703-255-1566 or [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

**Virginia Ballet Company's 59th "Nutcracker,"** 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. at the Northern Virginia Community College, Ernst Cultural Center Theater, Annandale Campus. Tickets \$30 adults, \$20 children, students and seniors. 703 249-8227 or [www.virginiaballetcompany.org](http://www.virginiaballetcompany.org).

## MONDAY/DEC. 29

**Open Mic Hosted by David Cotton.** 7 p.m. Free. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. N.E., Vienna. 703-255-1566 or [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

**Virginia Ballet Company's 59th "Nutcracker,"** 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. at the Northern Virginia Community College, Ernst Cultural Center Theater, Annandale Campus. Tickets \$30 adults, \$20 children, students

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 10

## Home for the Holidays

**First Fairfax ...A Night to Remember!**  
December 31st, 2008

Concerts each weekend in Old Town Hall  
1930's "Hard Times" New Years' Eve Party  
Wed, Dec. 31, 8:30 pm  
Old Town Hall  
Contact Tina Foley at 703-224-1745 or visit the web site: [www.beadoverbeelsdance.com](http://www.beadoverbeelsdance.com)

Beat the crowds! Enjoy high-class shopping, an eclectic mix of restaurants, and free parking.

Fairfax Art League Gallery open every weekend 4-9PM  
Don't forget to join the local artists at their New Years Eve Celebration in Old Town Plaza, Dec 31st

Music and Entertainment every weekend in Old Town Fairfax  
Date for your holiday calendar: Dec 31st 'First Fairfax—a Night to Remember!'

And ample FREE parking  
For details on these events and more go to [www.visitfairfax.com](http://www.visitfairfax.com)

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# CALENDAR

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and seniors. 703 249-8227 or [www.virginiaballetcompany.org](http://www.virginiaballetcompany.org).

**INOVA Blood Drive.** 1 p.m. Photo ID required. Appointments preferred, call 1-866-256-6372. City of Fairfax Regional Library, 10360 North St., Fairfax. 703-293-6227.

**Monday Movies.** 3:30 p.m. See a movie based on a book, discuss which was better. Age 6-18. Kings Park Library, 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke. 703-978-5600.

**Fairfax High School Theatre Department Winter Break Drama Camp** for grades 1-8, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at Fairfax High School, 3501 Rebel Run, Fairfax. \$75 for three half-day sessions or \$165 for the full three-day camp. Activities include musical theatre and puppetry. 703/818-0926 or [www.fxplayers.org](http://www.fxplayers.org).

## TUESDAY/DEC. 30

**INOVA Blood Drive.** 1 p.m. Photo ID required. Appointments preferred, call 1-866-256-6372. Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. 703-644-7333.

## WEDNESDAY/DEC. 31

**First Night Fairfax**, in Old Town Fairfax. 703-352-ARTS or [www.fairfaxva.gov](http://www.fairfaxva.gov).

- ❖ Bonfire at the Kitty Pozer Garden, 6 p.m.
- ❖ Magic, Music and Mayhem children's entertainment at the Old Town Hall, 6-8 p.m.
- ❖ Irish Festival at Old Town Village Plaza Marketplace, 6-9 p.m.
- ❖ Carriage Rides on North Street, 6-11 p.m.
- ❖ Live performances at the Kitty Pozer Garden, Old Town Village Plaza

Marketplace, Wind House Terrace Theater, Potbelly Sandwich Works and the Fairfax Railway Museum, 6 p.m.-12 a.m.

- ❖ Fairfax Four-Miler, 7 p.m.
- ❖ Head Over Heels Swing Dance and Fairfax Swing Band at the Old Town Hall, 8-11:30 p.m.

**"Robbie-noceros"** New Years Eve Party for Kids: Robbie Schaefer and Rocknoceros ring in the New Year . 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. \$12. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. N.E., Vienna. 703-255-1566 or [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

**Virginia Coalition New Years Eve Celebration.** 8 p.m. \$75 plus \$25 optional bar package. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. N.E., Vienna. 703-255-1566 or [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

## FRIDAY/JAN. 2

**Jeff Dunham 'Spark of Insanity' tour.** 8 p.m. Ventriloquism with his featured character puppets. Tickets \$49.50, at [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com) or 703-573-SEAT. Visit [www.jeffdunham.com](http://www.jeffdunham.com). George Mason University Patriot Center, 4500 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. 703-993-3000 or [www.patriotcenter.com](http://www.patriotcenter.com).

**Melodime and Louis Fabrizi.**

**Rock/blues/country.** 7:30 p.m. \$10 advance, \$12 at the door. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. N.E., Vienna. 703-255-1566 or [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

**PJtheVIKING, Young Enough, The Grenade and more.** 10 p.m. \$5. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. N.E., Vienna. 703-255-1566 or [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

## SATURDAY/JAN. 3

**Ammar Malik, The OK Corral and Pretzleoat. Pop/acoustic.** 7:30 p.m. \$8 advance, \$10 at the door.

Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. N.E., Vienna. 703-255-1566 or [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

## SUNDAY/JAN. 4

**Ghosts of Pluto, Priceless Enuendo, McTwist, Merredith and Orange Marmalade.** Rock. 6 p.m. \$10 advance, \$12 at the door. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. N.E., Vienna. 703-255-1566 or [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

## MONDAY/JAN. 5

**Old Town Hall Children's Series: 'Mad for the Road' music and laughter.** 10:30 a.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Free. 703-352-ARTS or [www.fairfaxarts.org](http://www.fairfaxarts.org).

**Calling All Guys,** 7 p.m. Book discussion group for boys. The Dark Hills Divide: The Land of Elyon, Book 1, by Patrick Carman. Age 9-12 with adult. Kings Park Library, 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke. 703-978-5600.

**Open Mic Night with Ron Goad.** 7-10 p.m. \$2. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. N.E., Vienna. 703-255-1566 or [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

## TUESDAY/JAN. 6

**Computer Tutoring,** 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. 703-249-1520.

**Teen Book Club,** 7 p.m. Join us for fun, food and great book discussions! Age 12-18. Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. 703-249-1520.

**Let's Go Sledding,** 10:15 a.m. Stories, fingerplays and activities. Age 3-5 with adult. Pohick Regional Library,

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11



Virginia Ballet Company will present their 59<sup>th</sup> annual 'Nutcracker' from Dec. 27-29 at the Northern Virginia Community College, Ernst Cultural Center Theater, Annandale Campus.

 Presented by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority



## BULL RUN Festival of Lights

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# CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. 703-644-7333.

**Bibliomaniacs Book Discussion Group**, 7 p.m. Family book discussion of "A Wrinkle in Time" by Madeleine L'Engle. Age 8-12 with adult. Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. 703-644-7333.

## WEDNESDAY/JAN. 7

**Edwin McCain**, 8 p.m. Soulful acoustics at The Barns. Tickets \$25. Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. 1-877-WOLFTRAP.

**Your Health**, 11 a.m. Learn how to manage your medications and prepare for doctor's visits. Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. 703-644-7333.

## THURSDAY/JAN. 8

**JP McDermott**, 8 p.m. at The Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Free swing lesson at 7:30 p.m. Admission \$10. 703-424-1745 or www.headoverheelsdance.com.

**Puppy Tales**, 10:30 a.m. Stories, songs and activities about puppies. Age 13-23 months with parent. Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. 703-249-1520.

**Teen Book Chat**, 7:30 p.m. Mother-daughter book discussion group. Pride and Prejudice (DK Illustrated Classics edition) by Jane Austin. Call branch to register. Age 12-16 with adult. Kings Park Library, 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke. 703-978-5600.

**Independent Living Exercise Class**, 12 p.m. Build strength, improve balance and reduce falls. Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. 703-644-

7333.

## FRIDAY/JAN. 9

**Lavay Smith & Her Red Hot Skillet Lickers**, 8 p.m. Swing dance of the 1940s and '50s at The Barns. Tickets \$22. Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. 1-877-WOLFTRAP.

**U. S. Navy Sea Chanters classical chorus**, 8 p.m. at the Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Free. 703-352-ARTS.

**USN Sea Chanters**, 9 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Free. 703-352-ARTS or www.fairfaxarts.org.

**Lunch Bunnies**, 12 p.m. Bring lunch and listen to stories. Birth-5 with adult. Kings Park Library, 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke. 703-978-5600.

**Eric Scott, The Method and Marie Miller**, Pop/funk. 9:30 p.m. \$12. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. N.E., Vienna. 703-255-1566 or www.jamminjava.com.

## SUNDAY/JAN. 10

**Cathy and Marcy's Family Jamboree with Special Guests: music for families**, 5-7 p.m. \$10. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. N.E., Vienna. 703-255-1566 or www.jamminjava.com.

**John Eddie**, Rock. 9:30 p.m. \$15. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. N.E., Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

## SUNDAY/JAN. 11

**Dr. Laurant Lee, curator of African American History**, at Virginia Historical Society, followed by a gallery tour of the exhibition: "Sites and Stories: African American History in Virginia," 2 p.m., Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, 10209 Main Street, Fairfax. Free. 703-385-8414.

# Paws and Claus

## Santa Loves Pets!

Tis the time of year to bring your furry four legged friend in to have their picture taken with Santa!

\*Please have all pets on a leash or in a carrier, dogs and cats only.

Sundays, December 7, 14 & 21

6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

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**Holiday Hoopla!!**

November 30 - December 23, 2008

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FREE!</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">20 oz. Soda with purchase of Large Popcorn*</p> <p style="text-align: center;">With this Coupon. Good 11/30-12/23/08</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FREE!</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 Admission with purchase of 1 Adult Admission*</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NOT VALID ON TUESDAY With this Coupon. Good 11/30-12/23/08</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>WOW!</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">The famous combo for only <b>\$13.00*</b> (save \$6.50)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2 Admissions, Large Popcorn, 2 Med. Sodas!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">With this Coupon. Good 11/30-12/23/08</p>
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\* With coupon, not valid with any other offer, one per person per visit.

## Old Town Plaza

SHOPS & DINING

**First Fairfax...A Night to Remember**  
4 Mile Run  
Irish Festival in the Marketplace  
Theater of the First Amendment  
*Old Town Theater on University Drive*

**Holiday Arts & Crafts Marketplace**  
Weekends from now until January 1  
Shop for unique gifts, and fun 'stuff'!

**Entertainment & Music**  
Every weekend 3:30-6pm

**Fairfax Art League Gallery**  
Open every weekend  
Friday & Saturday 12-9pm  
Sunday 12-5pm

Don't forget to join the local artists at their New Year's Eve Celebration in Old Town Plaza, Dec 31<sup>st</sup>  
Music and Entertainment throughout the Plaza

Holiday Gift Cards available from your Old Town Plaza Merchants

All Eyes Optometrists	Metro Silver Diner	Foster's Grille
HSBC Premier Bank	Austin Grill Express	Pacers Running Store
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COMMUNITY

# Deck the Halls

Burke retirement community welcomes families for annual Christmas party.



Roger and Jeann Clegg, on the left, visit with Jeanns' mother, Ruth Catalfamo, and her friend, Millie Engel at the annual Christmas party.



While working during the Heatherwood Retirement Community's annual Christmas Party, Chris Church serves up some food to visitors and residents.

PHOTOS BY ROBBIE HAMMER/THE CONNECTION



A barbershop quartet performs holiday music for a Christmas party at the Heatherwood Retirement Community on Dec. 9.




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# Mason Grad Has Rams Ready

Local product Tom Koucheravy takes over Robinson swim and dive program.

BY JASON MACKEY  
THE CONNECTION

**H**is silver-studded belt, which was trying desperately to hold up a pair of tight, faded jeans, gave Tom Koucheravy away. As the new Robinson swim and dive coach waved his arms, mimicked strokes and shouted words of encouragement from the coach's platform at Oak Marr RECenter Friday night, Koucheravy's shirt continually lifted away from his jeans to reveal his youthfulness.

It was a fashion statement not exactly befitting a 40-year-old man, which, conveniently, Koucheravy is not. After graduating from George Mason in 2007, Koucheravy has taken over for longtime coach Rich Gordon, who stepped down this off-season for personal reasons but not before he molded Robinson's swim and dive program into one of the area's best.

"You should get the kids excited when they start racing," said Koucheravy, 23, of his rambunctious coaching style. "I don't feel like the kids are getting any input when you just stand there. I don't care what kind of silly dance I have to do to get these kids to move fast. ... I'll do it."

With a program such as the one his predecessor built, Koucheravy might want to cue the music. The Robinson boys team has won the past six Virginia AAA state titles, and last season the girls squad won its first Northern Region title since 1994. The girls split the region crown with Fairfax and finished second to the Rebels at February's state championship meet.

At Mason, Koucheravy was a three-time Colonial Athletic Association Swimmer of the Year and competed in the 2008 Olympic Trials in the 1,500-meter freestyle, finishing sixth. He still holds several school records, most notably in the 500- and 1,650-yard freestyle events and as a member of the 800-meter freestyle relay team.

"I went to Robinson, so I'm used to the tradition," said Koucheravy, sporting an oversized state championship ring from his



PHOTOS BY ROBBIE HAMMER/THE CONNECTION



**Tom Koucheravy, a 23-year-old graduate of both Robinson and George Mason University, will take control of his old high school swim and dive program this season.**

**The Rams will count on senior Robbie Munch to make up for a significant amount of lost point production from 2008 graduates Tim Wingert and Derek Bui.**

**"I don't feel like the kids are getting any input when you stand there."**

— Tom Koucheravy

senior year when the Rams won the first of the sixth consecutive state titles. "For the more elite swimmers, I feel like

I can get their respect, and for the kids who aren't year-round swimmers I'm very good at giving them the basics just to get them to swim well."

**DESPITE THE** losses of Derek Bui, Tim Wingert and Matt Krebs, Robinson should have more than enough talent to keep the tradition alive. Koucheravy will look to seniors Geoff Bobsin, Robbie Munch and Joe Zanellato, all of whom delivered strong

showings Friday night during the boys team's 182-133 win over Fairfax.

"Gordon had very competitive practices, but [Koucheravy's] practices are considerably harder," said Munch, who finished first in the 50 freestyle and swam both anchor legs on the first-place 200 freestyle and 200 medley relay teams. "I was upset at first that coach Gordon was leaving, but Tom is a very good choice. And I'm really glad he pushes us."

The Robinson girls team will look offset the losses of Hailey Hewitt, Allison Baker and Lauren Kranz with seniors Amanda Kendall and Madison Rupp and juniors Christine Canty and Hannah Walden. Rupp had two individual wins during the team's 167.5-147.5 victory on Friday. She also swam the anchor leg on the first-place 200 freestyle relay team along with Walden, Christine Canty and her younger sister Rachel. Kendall missed the dual meet with a club team commitment.

## Bruins Win Bobcat Classic

Lake Braddock's girls gymnastics team earned a first-place finish at the Bobcat Classic Invitational on Saturday, Dec. 13. The Bruins held off host Battlefield, 105.75-105.125. Senior Emily Parillo took first in the all-around division with score of 37.00, while freshman Caitlin Liberatore placed third (35.20). Earlier this season, Lake Braddock placed second in a six-team meet on Dec. 8. The Bruins trailed Langley, 129.20-126.80, and they were led by Liberatore's third-place finish (33.20) and a fourth-place effort from sophomore Mary Gnozzio (32.25).

## Jefferson Roundup

Jefferson's girls gymnastics team took first place at a meet on Wednesday, Dec. 10, besting second-place Edison, 132-117.65. Burke native Chrissy Franzel placed second on the vault (8.95), third on the beam (9.1)

### WEEK IN SPORTS

and first on the bars (8.3). ... Both the boys and girls Jefferson swim and dive teams scored wins at a dual meet against Stone Bridge. The boys team earned a 226-60 win, while the girls held off the Bulldogs, 193-93. Brianna Kim of Fairfax posted a top three finish in the 100-yard butterfly, while Jon Spitz (Fairfax) was top three in the 50 freestyle and Sam Surette (Fairfax) finished top three in the butterfly.

## Renners Lead Squad In Hawaii

In the first-ever Hawaii/Polynesia-Mainland Bowl, which took place Friday, Dec. 12 in front of 4,497 fans at Aloha Stadium, West Springfield senior quarterback Bryn Renner led the Mainland squad to a 22-8 win. The game featured 42 players who have verbally committed to Division I programs.

Renner, playing for his father, former West Springfield coach Bill Renner, completed seven of his 16 passes for 124 yards and two touchdowns.

"The intensity was turned up a notch compared to high school, and you just had to think quicker and react quicker to what you saw," said Bryn Renner, who has verbally committed to play football and baseball

SEE WEEK IN SPORTS, PAGE 14

## SPORTS

# Ashley Danner Starts Fast at Mason

Lake Braddock grad continues her assault on GMU record book.

BY JASON MACKEY  
THE CONNECTION

Before the 2008 Virginia AAA state swim and dive championships, which took place at George Mason's Aquatics and Fitness Center this past February, Lake Braddock graduate and Springfield native Ashley Danner was fairly confident that someday her name would adorn the wall space reserved for the school's record holders.

As one of the top swimmers in the ultra-tough Northern Region and as someone who was recruited to spend her next four years in that same water, Danner had a feeling that her own pool record at Mason would come. She just didn't think it would happen before the end of the evening.

"Before states I would go to the pool and look up at the record board and think that I wanted to try and get that," said Danner, who's now a freshman on the swim and dive team at Mason. That night, she set a pool record in the 200-yard individual medley with a time of 2 minutes, 1.19 seconds — a mark she'd later break, twice.

**THE RECORD-SETTING** performance not only delivered one of three (two individual, one relay) state titles for Danner the high-schooler, but it also served as a foreshadowing of her current career on the Mason swim and dive team.

"When I looked up and saw it I was so happy that all my hard work had paid off,"



Lake Braddock graduate and Springfield native Ashley Danner set a pool record at George Mason University before she took her first class at the school.

Danner said. "Coming here at the beginning of this school year, I thought it was really cool to go and see my name and to have some of my new friends saying, 'Oh look, you're name is already up there.'"

Perhaps the perfect testimony to her success thus far on University Drive, Danner's February mark no longer stands as a pool record. She smashed it. Danner is not even halfway through her first collegiate season and already has a stranglehold on the Mason swimming record books.

Danner has set or tied five school records (100 freestyle, 100 and 200 breaststrokes, 200 IM, 400 medley relay), broken four CAA records (100 and 200 breaststrokes, 200 IM, 400 medley relay) and has made the NCAA "B" Cut in the 400 IM.

For the 2008 U.S. Short Course National Championships at the beginning of the month, Danner set records in three events, most notably the 100 breaststroke where she obtained school and conference records and was declared the 18-and-under national champion. She also set school and CAA marks in the 200 breaststroke (2:10.06) and 200 IM (2:00.26).

"Her swimming was on such a level that she outgrew high school," said Miriam Lynch, who coached Danner during her junior and senior seasons at Lake Braddock. "To see her do so well at college, I wasn't surprised because it was a bigger forum. She just needed that forum, that level and those people to push her."

Danner arrived at Mason having done

"Her swimming was on such a level that she outgrew high school."

— Miriam Lynch

very little work outside of the pool. She didn't despise weight training, though she rarely did much of it, and slinging around a medicine ball wasn't one of her favorite ways to fill an afternoon when class was cancelled.

But as the competition around her increased, so did Danner's conditioning requirements. Every other week, she was handed full-body workout sheets that listed heavy loads of dumbbell work, bench press variations and abdominal workouts.

"I think she's gotten stronger and it's been largely from the weights," said George Mason swim and dive coach Peter Ward. "As she's gotten stronger, she's more powerful in the water, and I think that's made a big difference in all of her strokes."

**THE HARDER** the out-of-the-pool work got, the more difficult regular practices became. The extra work motivated Danner and pushed her to a point where she had never been pushed. In her three months living on campus, Danner loves everything about George Mason, save for a lengthy trip across campus when her legs feel like cement.

"It's a lot different for me because I never did weight training or dry-land stuff before, and I think that has helped me a lot to become a better swimmer," Danner said. "There are more people here that are at my level and I like that because it makes me push myself harder to see how far I can go."

## WEEK IN SPORTS

FROM PAGE 13

at North Carolina. "It took a little time, but I think we did pretty well."

The Mainland team arrived on Monday and practiced for the first time Tuesday morning. After two solid practices, Hawaii was hit with a batch of rain and Thursday's practice was cancelled.

With a brief walk-through on Friday morning, coupled with the news that two wide receivers from California wouldn't be available because of high school commitments, the Mainland squad found itself on tough sledding for the game that night.

But Bill Renner used three running backs, a backup quarterback and his two remaining receiving options, as the team piled up 282 yards of offense.

"We hadn't practiced with any of those kids at any of those positions, and all of a sudden in the middle of the game we had to re-teach the whole thing, so that was a little bit of a challenge," Bill Renner said. "But with good kids who are good

athletes, they made it happen."

## Kuter Signs with George Mason

From the beginning of the recruiting process, Robinson senior Brandon Kuter knew that he wanted to stay close to home. But in the end, the school just a long toss away from home won out.

Kuter, a 6-foot-6 right-handed pitcher, recently signed a national letter of intent to play baseball at George Mason University. Kuter will join a Patriot squad that already boasts one Robinson graduate in senior outfielder Spencer Wiggins.

"I got a good offer from Mason, and I decided to run with it," said Kuter, who also plays basketball at Robinson and averaged 14.4 points and six rebounds per game last winter. "I didn't want to go too far; I wanted to stay in Virginia. It just felt like the right thing."

This past spring, Kuter amassed a 3-3

record on the mound with a 3.11 ERA and 28 strikeouts. The Rams finished 14-10 and lost to West Springfield, 1-0, in the Northern Region quarterfinals.

Kuter's fastball has been clocked between 89 and 92 miles per hour. In addition to switching between two- and four-seam fastballs, he also relies on a curveball and changeup to keep hitters off balance.

"Widely considered to possess unlimited potential, he will be ready to assume a big role for us as a freshman," said Mason coach Bill Brown, whose team finished 30-25 overall, 18-10 in the Colonial Athletic Association this past spring.

## Fastpitch Softball Team Seeks Players

The Leesburg Revolution, a U-10 girls fastpitch softball team, is recruiting girls from all over Northern Virginia who are interested in playing travel softball. The Revolution has two open roster spots. Girls

interested in trying may contact Dave Carver at 10Urevolution@leesburggirlsoftball.org. The Revolution will conduct an open tryout in early March. For more, including dates and a location for the tryout, visit the team's Web site at www.revolutionfastpitch.org/.

## Volunteer Sport Officials Wanted

The Fairfax County Department of Community and Recreation Services' Teen Services Division needs volunteer sports officials to work the annual Friday Night Lights event and intramural sports programs (flag football, basketball and soccer). Volunteers must be 21 or older; know the rules of the selected sports and have past experience participating in the sport he or she chooses to officiate. Contact Paulette Armstrong at 703-324-5679.

# OPINION

## When To Chase?

How to judge when benefits outweigh risks to police, public?

In the past week, there were two instances of police chasing perpetrators through multiple jurisdictions that raise some questions.

In one case, a tractor trailer driven by a man fleeing police in Montgomery County crossed the American Legion Bridge on the Capital Beltway into Fairfax County and then exited in Tysons Corner before crashing down the block from this newspaper's offices on Westpark Drive. Dozens of police cars from Maryland and Virginia participated in the chase, broadcast live on some channels via helicopter.

The chase ended with a few fender benders and the suspect being tasered. No one else was hurt.

But we wonder what kind of damage could have occurred.

When does it make sense to chase a suspect driving a vehicle with contents unknown into the center of one of the largest shopping districts in the United States during the holiday shopping season? With helicopters in pursuit perhaps this is a case where tracking the truck until it ran out of gas was a possibility.

Last week, a 19-year-old bank robbery sus-

pect from McLean was shot dead by police within sight of a middle school after a foot chase led them to an Arlington neighborhood.

Last February, a Fairfax County Police Officer drove her police cruiser through a red traffic signal on Richmond Highway on the way to answer a call, striking the car of 33 year-old Ashley McIntosh and killing her. The officer was cleared of charges of reckless driving.

We don't pretend to understand all of the factors that come into play in making such decisions in general or these decisions in particular. We do know that we would like police to be open with the public about their policies.

### More on Poor Students

Several thoughtful e-mails were sent responding to our editorial, "Don't Lump Poor Students Together." [Dec. 3, 2008, [www.connectionnewspapers.com/article.asp?article=322904&paper=65&cat=110](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/article.asp?article=322904&paper=65&cat=110)]

Some writers pointed to many factors besides concentration of student poverty that affect the

quality of a school.

For example, Graham Road Elementary, with a high percent poverty rate, performs comparably to many schools with wealthy student populations. Graham Road, at least one writer said, is a good school because of great principal, great resources and parents who care.

The way the editorial was written does present too simplistic a picture.

While concentration of poverty in schools creates significant and often unnecessary challenges, and decreasing the concentration has benefits, this is far from the only factor involved in creating a successful school and student achievement.

Absolutely a great principal can inspire staff and parents; teachers and parents who care can make an incredible difference. And it is also quite possible for a school populated by affluent families to be mediocre.

Any yet, as the school system draws new boundaries, it is a mistake to create this additional challenge of concentrating poor students in one school.

But there is much more work than that involved in creating great schools.

— MARY KIMM

# Here Today Gone Tomorrow

Business bankruptcies are on the rise.

BY EDWARD JOHNSON  
BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU

It is not pretty. We all know what "it" is — the economy. Businesses are cutting prices to attract customers; however, how will you know if the business is in trouble and may not deliver on its promises? As a result of the declining economy, the number of retailers closing their doors has increased substantially, leaving confused shoppers wondering what will happen to undelivered goods, gift cards and outstanding warranties. Your Better Business Bureau (BBB) offers this general advice for consumers on what to do if a retailer closes up shop.

The current freeze on credit is having a serious impact on businesses. Bankruptcy filings by U.S. businesses rose 67 percent in September over the previous year, according to data compiled by Automated Access to Court Electronic Records. Some of the bigger names filing for bankruptcy in 2008 include A Sharper Image, Linens n' Things, Lillian Vernon, Levitz Furniture and Mervyn's.

Retailers commonly file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, which means the company intends to reorganize and continue to do business, or Chapter 7, which means the company will close up for good and liquidate any assets in order to pay creditors. If a business intends to continue operations under Chapter 11, it will often continue to redeem gift cards, fulfill services and deliver on goods. Some Chapter 11 bankruptcies, however, quickly turn into Chap-

ter 7 cases and then the chances for the consumer to receive any compensation are greatly diminished.

In order to prevent problems, consumers are urged to deal with businesses they trust. Before making a purchase, check the BBB report on the company. If the report is adverse and there are many consumer complaints, particularly in the past 12 months, your red flag should go up. In addition, the more expensive the purchase, the more you have to risk. So, proceed with caution and perform your due diligence. However, despite your best efforts to identify companies in financially troubled waters, there is no crystal ball and you may end up having to deal with a bankrupt firm. The following is advice from the BBB on steps you can take if a retailer files for Chapter 7:

### COMMENTARY

#### ❖ Goods or Services Due

Bankruptcy law is specific regarding who will benefit first in the case of a retailer's liquidation. Unfortunately, customers are at the back of the line. Typically, the money gained from the selling of the company's assets goes to paying back secured creditors, as well as any employee wages, before whatever is left over is divided among customers who didn't receive the promised services or goods.

Customers who paid with credit cards, though, may be able to dispute the charge with the credit card company and get their money

back — for this reason, among others, the BBB highly recommends consumers pay with a credit card. For those who paid by debit card, check or cash, they must file a claim with the bankruptcy court administering the process — the deadline is typically 90 days after the filing date. More information on filing a claim, including downloadable forms, is available online at [www.uscourts.gov](http://www.uscourts.gov).

#### ❖ Warranties

The validity of any outstanding warranties varies for each bankruptcy. If a retailer goes out of business, the consumer may be able to rely on the manufacturer's warranty. If a manufacturer goes out of business, the consumer may be able to rely on any warranties provided by the retailer. Many extended warranties and service plans are provided and administered by third parties and are typically not affected by a retailer or manufacturer going bust.

#### ❖ Gift Cards

In cases of Chapter 11 bankruptcy, courts will decide if the business must honor gift cards or certificates. If the business has filed Chapter 7 bankruptcy, the holder must file a claim. In some cases, consumers might actually get at least part of the value of the card back. Some retailers have tried wooing new customers by accepting a bankrupt competitor's gift card but this is generally a rare circumstance. The BBB advises that consumers redeem gift cards as soon as possible in order to avoid any headaches with bankruptcy files and court actions.

Edward Johnson is president and CEO of the Better Business Bureau serving the greater metro Washington, D.C. region.

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# At Home Bakery

FROM PAGE 8

Although high fat butter is used in most of the cakes because it bakes so well, Mingledorff is trying to lean towards a lower calorie cake with organic ingredients. Her Cranberry Ginger Cake is yogurt based and has half the butter, so it is the healthiest one she has on the menu. She doesn't use artificial sweeteners either and is keeping an eye on the Food and Drug Administration's ruling on a new sweetener called "Stevia" that is used in Europe but not in baked goods in the U.S. yet. She also composts all her unused ingredients instead of throwing them away. "I'm really focused on the environment," she said.

Mingledorff met her husband Adam while they were both in the Marine Corps in Camp Pendleton, Calif., marrying shortly after that. Now they both have jobs at computer help desks in the area. Kathy works the night shift and fits the baking in when she can. She has an assistant, Kerrie Fisher, to help out a few days a week.

**IN ADDITION** to Stacy's, Mingledorff's baked goods are featured at Bernie's Delicatessen in the City of Fairfax, and more recently at the Conscious Bean coffee shop in Great Falls. She plans on taking out an ad in the Bridal magazine soon. "I'm pushing up my marketing," she said.

## WEEK IN BURKE

FROM PAGE 4

tract at \$22,500. Patrick Gloyd, executive director for the Burke Conservancy, described the hire as a necessary first step in order to get the project started and completed in 2009.

"That should get you what you need to get permits and get working on the job," said Gloyd to the board during his report and recommendation to approve the motion.

In an interview, Gloyd described the role GKY & Associates would play in a process that could involve Fairfax County and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The firm would develop base mapping of the ponds, develop a dredging plan and attend and coordinate meetings among the necessary local and federal agencies.

citing the privacy that they provide to homes located along the Burke Centre Parkway. The agreement, according to Patrick Gloyd, executive director for the conservancy, would limit the clearing of trees to the easements and embankments resting over the dam.

"The net result is on the school house side ... only about a third of it now that will be cleared. On the Marshall Pond side, I'm guessing about three quarters of the original will still have to be cleared," said Gloyd.

A public meeting took place on Monday, Dec. 15 to inform residents of the impending clearing and educate them about the state regulations that mandate the removal. At a Dec. 11 Board of Trustees meeting at the Woods Community Center on Wards Grove Circle, Gloyd said the clearing could start as early as January or February.

## Conservancy Reaches Tree Compromise

In response to concerns by Burke Centre Conservancy homeowners regarding to the elimination of trees near Terra Centre Elementary School on Burke Centre Parkway, Conservancy officials have come to a preliminary agreement with county and state officials to limit the number of trees that would need to be cleared.

After county inspections in 2005 found that the woods and vegetation along the parkway rested on an empty stormwater dam, the conservancy was informed that state regulations would necessitate their removal. According to the Fairfax County Stormwater Planning Division, during heavy storms the toppling of trees along the embankment could threaten the dam's integrity to water infiltration. The vegetation had been growing there for at least 20-25 years, according to Chris Carinci, director for the division.

As a result, homeowners within the Conservancy asked county and state officials to preserve as many of the trees as possible,

## Memorial Service for Cameron Schlifke

William Cameron Schlifke, a Fairfax native and a graduate of Robinson Secondary School, died Monday, Nov. 24, from injuries he sustained in a Nov. 22 automobile crash in Newport News, Va.

A memorial service for Schlifke will take place Sunday, Dec. 21, 4 p.m., at Fairfax Country Club Ballroom, 5110 Ox Road, Fairfax. In lieu of flowers, the family has asked that contributions be made in Schlifke's name to Bright Futures — Cameron Schlifke Fund or the Pi Lambda Phi Educational.

Make checks payable to: Fairfax County Park Foundation, 12055 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, VA 22032. Write "Bright Futures — Cameron Schlifke Fund" in the memo section of the check. Make checks payable to The Pi Lambda Phi Educational Foundation, 36 Mill Plain Road, Danbury, CT 06811. Write "Memory of Cameron Schlifke" in the memo section of the check. For more information about the foundation, visit [www.PiLambdaPhi.org](http://www.PiLambdaPhi.org).

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**Public Notice – Environmental Permit**

PURPOSE OF NOTICE: To seek public comment on a draft permit from the Department of Environmental Quality to limit air pollution emitted by a facility in Fairfax County, Virginia.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: December 18, 2008 to January 20, 2009

PERMIT NAME: State Operating Permit to Operate Issued by DEQ, under the authority of the State Air Pollution Control Board

NAME, ADDRESS AND REGISTRATION NUMBER OF PROPOSED PERMIT HOLDER: Impressions Marketing, Inc. 7951 Angleton Court, Lorton, VA 22079; Registration Number: 73714

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Impressions Marketing, Inc. has applied for a State Operating for their Lorton, Virginia facility. The facility manufactures store and office displays and is comprised of four spray booths, three printing presses, and wood cutting and milling machines. The facility is classified as a minor source of air pollution. The proposed permit would allow the facility to operate this equipment. The pollutant of concern is Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC). The facility has a permitted limit of 30.88 tons per year of VOC.

HOW TO COMMENT: DEQ accepts comments by e-mail, fax or postal mail. All comments must include the name, address and telephone number of the person commenting and be received by the DEQ within the comment period. The public may request a public hearing. The public may review the draft permit and application at the DEQ office named below. The draft permit is also available on the DEQ web site at [www.deq.virginia.gov](http://www.deq.virginia.gov). To request a public hearing, written comments must include: 1) the names, mailing addresses and telephone numbers of the requester and of all people represented by the requester. 2) The reason a hearing is requested, including associated air quality concerns. 3) A brief, informational statement regarding the extent of the interest of the requester, including how the operation of the facility affects the requester.

CONTACT FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS, DOCUMENTS, REQUESTS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Thomas M. Valentour, Environmental Engineer, Sr. Northern Regional Office, Department of Environmental Quality, 13901 Crown Court, Woodbridge, VA 22193, phone: 703-583-3800, email: [tmvalentour@deq.virginia.gov](mailto:tmvalentour@deq.virginia.gov)

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In execution of a Deed of Trust from Linda R. Clary, dated May 3, 2007, and recorded August 14, 2007, in Deed Book 19511 at page 365 among the Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia, the undersigned substitute trustee will offer for sale at public auction at the front entrance of the Judicial Center for Fairfax County, at 4110 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax, Virginia, on

Thursday, December 18, 2008 at 11:00 a.m.

the following property being the property contained in said Deed of Trust, described as follows:

Tax Map No. 095 3 01 0015

Commonly known as 12101 Henderson Road, Clifton, Virginia 20124.

**TERMS OF SALE:** A deposit of \$10,000.00 or ten percent (10%) of the sale price, whichever amount is less, in the form of cash or its equivalent will be required of the purchaser at the time and place of sale; the balance of the purchase money being due and payable within fifteen (15) days after sale, time expressly being of the essence, with interest at the rate of 7.0 percent per annum from date of sale to date of settlement. Provided, however, that if the holder of the secured promissory note is the successful bidder at the sale, no cash deposit shall be required, and part of or the entire indebtedness, including interest and costs, secured by the Deed of Trust, may be set off against the purchase price.

Any defaulting purchaser shall forfeit the deposit and stand the risk and cost of resale.

Sale shall be made subject to all existing easements and restrictive covenants as the same may lawfully affect the real estate. Sale is further subject to mechanic's and/or materialman's liens of record and not of record. The property will be sold subject to all conditions, covenants, restrictions, rights of redemption of federal lienholders or encumbrances, and agreements of record affecting the same, if any.

In the event the undersigned trustee is unable to convey to the purchaser good title, then purchaser's sole and exclusive remedy shall be in the refund of the deposit paid at the time of sale.

This sale is being made subject to a superior trust.

The subject property and all improvements thereon will be sold in "as is" condition without warranty of any kind. Purchaser shall be responsible for any and all building and/or zoning code violations whether of record or not of record, as well as for all unpaid and enforceable homeowners' or condominium owners' association dues and assessments, if any. Purchaser also shall be responsible for obtaining possession of the property at his/her expense. Purchaser shall assume the risk of loss and shall be responsible for any damage, vandalism, theft, destruction, or the like, of or to the property occurring after the time of sale. Conveyance will be by special warranty deed. Conveyancing, recording, transfer taxes, notary fees, examination of title, state stamps, and all other costs of conveyance are to be at the expense of purchaser. State and local taxes, public charges, and special or regular assessments, if any, shall be adjusted to the date of sale and thereafter shall be assumed by the purchaser.

The undersigned trustee unconditionally reserves the right: (i) to waive the deposit requirement; (ii) to approve or disapprove the creditworthiness of any bidder and/or purchaser; (iii) to withdraw the property from sale at any time prior to termination of the bidding; (iv) to extend the time for bidding; (v) to reject any or all bids; (vi) to postpone or set over the date or time of sale; and (vii) to extend the period of time for settlement hereunder.

Additional terms and conditions of sale may be announced at the time of sale.

DAVID N. PRENSKY  
Substitute Trustee

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:  
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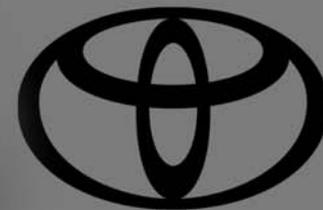
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