

CENTRE VIEW

SOUTHERN EDITION



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"FOR ERIN" 25 CENTS NEWSSTAND PRICE

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Guilty Plea In Malicious Fire-Setting

Two others indicted
on same charge.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

Initially, the Fairfax County Fire Marshal's Office charged Brian Jesse Fletcher, Michael Daniel Mirch and Alexander Bruce each with three counts of arson and one count of setting a fire maliciously.

The arson charges were later dropped, but the fire-setting offenses moved forward in the legal system. And now, one man has pleaded guilty and the other two have just been indicted by the grand jury.

According to authorities, Bruce reportedly acted as a lookout while Fletcher and Mirch poured gasoline inside a convertible belonging to a Fair Oaks woman and set it on fire. Fletcher, 19, is of 15163 Stratton Major Court in Centreville; Mirch, 19, has no fixed address; and Bruce, 20, lives at 13807 Stonefield Drive in Little Rocky Run.

SEE FIRE-SETTING, PAGE 7

Wound Healing Center Opens

Inova Fair Oaks
holds ribbon-cutting.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

When Fairfax resident Edith Hamilton suffered a serious, leg injury that refused to heal, she had to travel back and forth to the Wound Healing Center at Inova Mount Vernon Hospital to get the treatment she needed.

She's all better now but, if she ever needs similar care in the future, she'll be able to get it closer to home, now that Inova Fair Oaks Hospital has opened a Wound Healing Center of its own.

"We're delighted that it's here," said Dr. G. Michael Lynch of Franklin Farm. A family physician here for 28 years — and team doctor for Chantilly High's football team — he's the new chief medical officer of Inova Fair Oaks Hospital and was one of many doctors and nurses present for the Jan. 22 ribbon-cutting and open house at the new Wound Healing Center.

"The facility at Mount Vernon is known



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

From left, Dr. G. Michael Lynch chats with Patty Popp, R.N., a hospital case-manager; Nazik Blackwell, an I.V. technician at Fair Oaks; and Tara Mills, a nurse at the Wound Healing Center.

as one of the finest, wound-care centers in the country," said Lynch. "And to have them partner with us at Fair Oaks allows them to bring their expertise and level of care to our patients here. The doctors work at both centers and our patients here now have more

convenient access to that care."

AT ANY GIVEN TIME, nearly 5 million Americans suffer from chronic, non-healing wounds. Healing them can be

SEE RIBBON CUTTING, PAGE 4

Game Raises Scholarship Money in Erin's Name

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

Centreville resident Erin Peterson may have lost her life during the tragedy at Virginia Tech, but she'll always live on in the hearts and minds of those who knew and loved her.

In a more tangible way, her memory is also kept alive via two college scholarships in her name — the Erin Peterson Leadership Award and the Erin Peterson Commit to Excel Award. And last Monday, Jan. 19, the University of Mary Washington's women's basketball team raised \$500 toward those scholarships during its game against Arlington's Marymount University.

"We won in overtime, 83-76," said UMW

point guard Kaitie Clarkin of Centreville. "It was a really exciting game."

At college, Erin was an International Studies major. She wanted to learn about other cultures, help those in need and, somehow, bring together people all over the world. She also realized that the way to achieve

her goals was by getting a good education.

Clarkin and Peterson played basketball together at Westfield High and, said Clarkin, "Erin was a great friend and meant a lot to everybody." She said the Erin Peterson Fund has awarded six scholarships — either \$1,000 or \$2,000 each — since its inception in May 2007.

"They've gone to Westfield graduating seniors involved in an athletic team and

SEE GAME RAISES FUNDS, PAGE 4

"...what better way to honor a basketball player than through a basketball game?"

— Kaitie Clarkin



From left: Shelley Hancock (family friend), Zach Canady (Erin's cousin), Roxie Alsrue (friend, neighbor of Erin and Kaitie), Grafton Peterson (dad), Celeste Peterson (mom), Kaitie Clarkin, Katy Larson (UMW teammate, friend), Jose Hancock (family friend), and Mary Canady (Erin's aunt).

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ROUNDUPS

Charge Goes to Grand Jury

The criminal case against a Chantilly man is moving forward in the legal system. He is Joshua Nowlin of 13292B Leafcrest Lane, No. 203, in the Shenandoah Crossing Apartments.

Nowlin, 21, is accused of trying to break into the MVC Late Night Video store on Route 50 in Chantilly. The incident occurred Sept. 24, 2008, at 14021 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway.

Fairfax County police responded to a burglar alarm around 3:30 a.m. and discovered damage to the front door. They reportedly found Nowlin nearby, and an investigation led to his arrest on a charge of attempted burglary. He appeared Jan. 12 in General District Court and, at that time, Judge Donald McDonough certified the charge against him to the grand jury for possible indictment.

Cases Head to Grand Jury

Although some of the charges against a 21-year-old Centreville man have been dropped, he's still in trouble with the law. The man is Jeffrey Tang of 6710 Scott Terrace and, in November, Fairfax County charged him in connection with the theft of merchandise from a Vienna retail store.

In a Nov. 20, 2008 affidavit, police PFC I.J. Marino wrote that, on Nov. 11, 2008, The Sports Authority at 8355 Leesburg Pike in Vienna reported an embezzlement. He stated that Tang's cousin, Justin Tham, 20, of Falls Church, worked the front register there and, between June 15-Oct. 15, 2008, allegedly allowed several co-conspirators to leave with merchandise without paying for it.

Marino wrote that Tham reportedly "confessed to the fraudulent transactions" and implicated Tang as one of the co-conspirators. On Nov. 24, police charged Tang with five counts of obtaining money by false pretenses. Then on Jan. 13 in General District Court, Judge Mark Simmons sent two of his charges to the grand jury for possible indictment; the other three were dropped.

Free Carseat Inspections

Certified technicians from the Sully District Police Station will perform free, child safety carseat inspections, Thursday, Jan. 29 and Feb. 5, from 5-8:30 p.m., at the station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. No appointment is necessary. But residents should install the child safety seats themselves so technicians may properly inspect and adjust them, as needed. Call 703-814-7000, ext. 5140 to confirm dates and times.

Caputo, Herring Are Holding Joint Town Hall Meeting

Del. Chuck Caputo (D-67th) and Sen. Mark Herring (D-33rd) will hold a joint town hall meeting, this Saturday, Jan. 31, at 10 a.m. in the Sully District Government Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. Local residents may tell them the issues on their minds and they'll update the residents on how things are progressing, so far, in the current General Assembly session.

Westfield Community Coalition

The Westfield Community Coalition will meet Monday, Feb. 2, at 3:30 p.m., in the Sully District Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. Contact Jennifer Cooper at 703-966-8304 or jalcooper@aol.com.

Springfield/Fairfax Land Use

The next meeting of the Springfield District/Fairfax Center Land-Use Committee is Monday, Feb. 2, at 7 p.m., in room 232 (the county executive's conference room) of the Fairfax County Government Center. The committee is slated to vote on a proposed, new office building near the Robertson Farms community and Lee Plaza, off Route 29, in Fairfax. Call Marlae Schnare at 703-451-8873.

NEWS



Jin Shin, Tara McKeown, Leigh Serroka, Katie Reilly, Meredith Freeman, Katie Malinowski, Rachel Hohman, Lani Fu, Casey Pietsch, and, World History teacher, Tom Sakole sit in Gaudi Park, Barcelona, Spain.

'The Experience of a Lifetime'

Westfield students reminisce about their adventures in Spain.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

It may be cold and wintry outside, but memories of their trip to Spain together are still keeping a group of Westfield High students and teachers warm. They gathered recently to discuss their adventure, sharing some highlights of their two-week sojourn taken just before the start of school.

English teacher Kimberly Watkins and her husband Greg, plus history teachers Phil Cox and Tom Sakole, chaperoned 40 students. It was their third educational trip to Europe, and they're already planning another one, this coming summer, to six countries.

"Our tour director, Chris Morrison, is an Irish man who founded Care Highway — a humanitarian aid organization," said Kimberly Watkins. "Thanks to his connections and knowledge of the world, our students were able to take advantage of a number of local activities."

For example, she said, they could "learn how to bullfight from a former matador and see a famous gypsy family dance the Flamenco in their cave where the dance originated, in Granada — while enjoying the stunning view of Alhambra at night. Chris entertained the kids with his vast knowledge of history and provided them with knowledge they would never get from a history text."

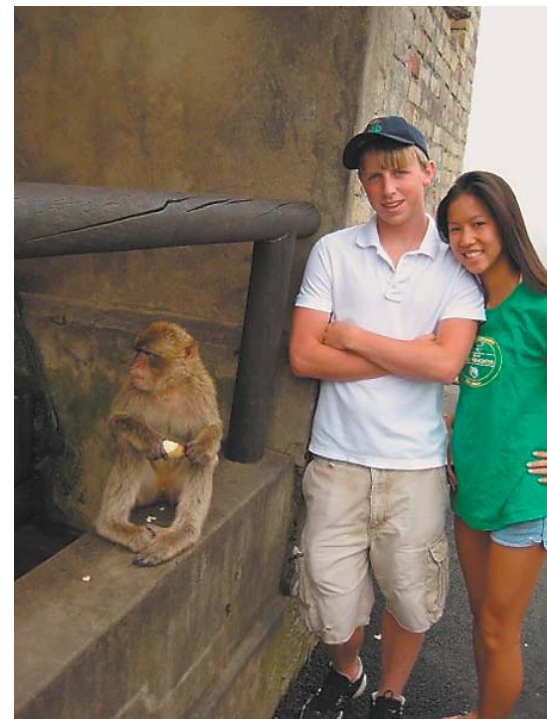
THE GROUP VISITED Madrid, Cordoba, Seville, Costa del Sol, Granada, Valencia, Barcelona and Costa Brava, with optional excursions including a boat trip on the Guadalquivir River in Seville, a visit to Gibraltar and a day trip to Morocco.

Junior Casey Pietsch had never been out of the U.S. before, but had a great time. "I'd had Mr. Cox and Mrs. Watkins for teachers and heard about their trip to Italy [in 2007] and talked to people who'd enjoyed it," said Pietsch. "I especially liked Barcelona because of the art all around the city, and the architecture is really pretty."

She said the people there were nice and she bought "a ton of T-shirts and jewelry. The culture was really interesting and the food was good. We had a lot of chicken, bread and potatoes, and the Fanta lemon soda was so good. It was really fun."

However, said junior Katie Reilly, some of the cui

SEE EXPERIENCE, PAGE 5



Tyler Koons and Nicole Nguyen hang out with an ape on the Rock of Gibraltar.

NEWS

Inova Center Holds Ribbon-cutting

FROM PAGE 1

frustrating and time-consuming, so the professional staff at the new Wound Healing Center is trained to provide a specialized, comprehensive course of outpatient therapy for problem wounds. Patients remain under their own doctors' care, while doctors at the center coordinate with them. Most patients are referred there, but people may also self-refer by calling 703-391-3784.

Dr. Eric Desman, medical director of both Wound Healing Centers, said everyone connected with the new Wound Healing Center is thrilled to be able to serve both residents and the medical community in western Fairfax County. Added Clinical Director Bill Bartow: "Our service was so popular in Mount Vernon that it was at capacity, and we either had to expand it again there or add it here."

Desman said doctors of all types — family practice, internal medicine, endocrinology, general surgeons, etc. — refer patients to the center. "The biggest population referred to us are diabetics and people with ulcers and wounds that develop because of poor blood circulation in their veins," he said. "At Mount Vernon, we had about 7,000 patient visits a year — it usually takes about 12 weeks to heal a wound — and we expect that many or more here."

Although the Fair Oaks center actually opened Dec. 8, its grand-opening ceremony wasn't until last week. "This is a larger office than at Mount Vernon," said hospital spokeswoman Susan Tulino. "Patients needing more aggressive procedures done can be sent to the hospital and, [conversely], people with wounds needing long-time healing can be referred from the hospital to this center."

IT'S LOCATED at 3700 Joseph Siewick Drive, Suite 303, in an existing, medical-office building formerly occupied by OB/GYN doctors, and the space was converted to meet the needs of the wound center. "There are five treatment rooms for outpatient treatment and outpatient surgical procedures," said Liane Boon, director of the Wound Healing Center.

"I love working here," said Tara Mills, a nurse at the new facility. "I've been a nurse for many years, and I love the patients and really feel like this is my niche. We develop a rapport with them. They come back, week after week, it's a comfortable setting and it's close to home."

Dr. Robert Hallivis, a podiatrist, works at the center treating complicated wounds of the lower ex-



Edith Hamilton

trémities, and he, too, is happy to fill a deficit for this kind of medical care in the western Fairfax/Loudoun County area. "It's a state-of-the-art facility with the latest technologies for wound healing, plus extensively trained nurses, physicians and physicians' assistants," he said. "We also have the availability of a plastic surgeon and hyperbaric-oxygen therapies."

ANOTHER PHYSICIAN at the new center is Dr. Alfred Kirkwood, a family doctor and specialist in wound healing. "It's great — I'm glad to be over here," he said. "There are a lot of technological advances in wound healing that the average doctor is not familiar with," he said. "We use new techniques, new dressings and different modalities [treatment methods]."

He also does hyperbaric medicine. "We put patients in a chamber with oxygen under pressure, and it drives oxygen to the wound to help certain wounds heal better," said Kirkwood. "We also do radiation necrosis. When good tissue is killed by radiation, [this type of treatment] helps stimulate new growth of capillaries."

Hallivis noted that the healing rates at the Inova Wound Healing Center are far above the national average. "It's 80 percent and we're a little over 90 percent," he said. "It's a result of having the appropriate clinicians, ancillary staff trained in wound care, and the latest technologies."

Hamilton knows about all these things firsthand, and she, too, came to last week's open house. She spoke about her injury and the care she received at the Mount Vernon Wound Healing Center. It was Dec. 10, 2007, and she was reaching for a box of Christmas decorations in her basement when a heavy suitcase "that was filled and weighed a ton" fell on her right leg, near the ankle.

Since her wound didn't bleed, she figured she was OK. But while driving, the next day, she said, "Every time I put on my brakes, it hurt so much, I screamed. And three days after the accident, I could not stand on that leg." Hamilton saw a doctor at Inova Fairfax Hospital until February 2008, but got steadily worse. Then her son-in-law and a nurse told her about the wound center at Mount Vernon, where she received care until late November, when her injury was finally healed.

"I'm a liver and kidney transplant patient — and a diabetic — and my medications interfered with my healing," she said. "But the wound clinic was the greatest thing because, not only did they save my leg, but they saved my life."

"The whole experience was excellent," said Hamilton at the Fair Oaks open house. "I come here now for a problem with my toe, and it's great — I live 10 minutes from here."

Game Raises Funds in Erin's Name

FROM PAGE 1

showing the same qualities that Erin had — doing random acts of kindness, showing leadership on and off the court and understanding the value of an education and how much that meant to Erin," said Clarkin.

To raise money last week, she said, "We had an announcement on our team's athletic Web page and had a collection box at the game, plus a poster board with pictures of Erin on it." The fund-raiser was also announced over the public-address system before the game.

"I love that I can help do this for her," said Clarkin, 21. "And it's really cool that I can do it through basketball because that's how we met. I figure, what better way to honor a basketball player than through

a basketball game?"

The Erin Peterson Fund completely depends on donations and people's generosity. And although Erin can no longer strive for her dreams, herself, through the memorial scholarships she can help others reach the same kinds of goals they've set for themselves.

For more information about the fund, see www.erinpetersonfund.org. Donations may also be mailed to the Erin Peterson Fund, 5309 Braddock Ridge Drive, Centreville, VA 20120.



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FROM PAGE 3

sine took a bit of getting used to. "One hotel made us a three-course meal of weird fish stuff in Seville and nobody liked it," she said. "It was tuna, tilapia and a fish-gelatin mixture for dessert; it was interesting. Lots of people said they were vegetarians so they could get pasta."

But Reilly was excited because "we got to fight 'baby' bulls — 9 months old and 300 pounds. An old man and his grandson — a professional bullfighter who was attending a school for bullfighters — told us you'd hold the cape shoulder-to-shoulder with another person. Then when the bull came toward you, it would go between the two of you. I was terrified, but was 'peer pressured' by my friends into doing it — but I liked it." And Greg Watkins noted that "the bulls we fought won't go into the ring now, since they've had contact with humans."

Reilly also had fun shopping in Madrid and Barcelona. In Madrid, she purchased clothes — especially "Aladdin" pants. Said Reilly: "They're baggy, although tight at the shins, but they were really big fashion there." In Barcelona, she bought a purse and seashell and metal jewelry.

She was surprised by how much certain parts of Spain, such as its fields, looked like the U.S. and by "how diverse everyone is. You think you'll stand out, but you don't." She also enjoyed sharing the experience with her twin sister Elizabeth, who went on the trip, too, but said the bullfighting is her favorite memory: "That'll stick with me for awhile."

ONLY HALF THE GROUP went to Morocco, including senior Jin Shin. "I take AP Spanish, and I believed that having direct contact with people fluent in Spanish would improve my skills," she said. "I've been to different places in the world, but Morocco is, by far, the most interesting."

She explored the narrow walkways in The Medina which, said Cox, is "a fortified city within castle walls. It's a marketplace and is all pedestrians." There, said Shin, "The cultural diversity was a shock, and people were selling live fish and chickens. There were different kinds of spices and plants I'd never seen before."

"The spices are in big bins and you scoop them up," said Cox. "Saffron is very popular," added Sakole. But Shin got to experience much more than the marketplace.

"We got to ride camels in Morocco," she said. "You pay 25 cents to ride one, but they like to spit and bite, so I had to be careful. You always feel like you're going to fall off because the camel tips back and forth. So you hold a rope in the front and in the back. They're cranky, little creatures."

Shin also had an exciting meal in Morocco. "While we were eating couscous, a guy performed with a huge, circular tray on his head, with fire and tea-cups on the tray," she explained. "He was spinning around, crawling on the floor and doing stunts — and that thing never fell off; it was amazing."

She said prices were high in Morocco, so they had to bargain a bit. "For my mom, I bought anti-stress oil, ginseng for memory loss — so she'll remember where she's put her stuff — and tea for leisure time," said Shin. "It smells really sweet, but tastes like green tea."

She also recommends that other students take such a trip. "You learn so much about other cultures," said Shin. "But the most important thing I learned is, when you're not with your parents, you're inde-



Kelsey McGarvey, Cameron Schupp, Savannah McMullen, Jin Shin, Sydney Morgan, Ayesha Khawaja, and Arianna Filipour in Morocco.

pendent and have to initiate contact with others if you want to learn about them. And my Spanish pronunciation improved."

Junior Leigh Serroka knew someone who went to Paris with the group, two years ago, studied French and liked it, so she "thought it would be fun to go to Spain to use some of my Spanish. I really liked Salamanca, a small city with a large university, outside Madrid. I liked the buildings — the architecture was really gorgeous."

She said the bullfighting was a big highlight of her experience. "I was scared at first, because it was new and different and you're not sure what the bull's going to do," said Serroka. "But once you got out there, the guy helping you made you feel really comfortable."

As for food, she enjoyed the ice cream, similar to Italian gelato, plus the churros. "They're fried dough that you dip into thick, hot chocolate," she said. "It's almost like melted chocolate." Added Kimberly Watkins: "We had it all over our faces."

WHEN THE STUDENTS visited Costa Brava, northeast of Barcelona, they took a boat ride to a more-secluded, less-crowded beach and swam in the Mediterranean. Serroka enjoyed that excursion, as well as buying postcards "to look at places we'd been." And in Alhambra, a Moorish castle in Granada, she purchased an inlaid-wood jewelry box for her mother.

"I'd recommend the trip," she said. "It's a new experience for everyone, and it's really fun to see new places, eat new foods and make a lot of memories with the people you go with."

Also having fun was junior Meredith Freeman. "I speak Spanish and Spain seemed like such an amazing country, so I wanted to go," she said. "I think I'm going to study abroad there." Freeman particularly enjoyed the Flamenco dancing in Granada. "The people there lived in modern-type caves and danced every day," she said. "I'm a dancer, myself, so I really appreciated it." Greg Watkins noted that Granada is the birthplace of Flamenco.

"I also loved Madrid," said Freeman. "We were able to walk around at night and get ice creams. And we had a wonderful, balcony view of the train station."

That's not all. Said Greg Watkins: "We stayed right next to the National Art Gallery of Madrid, Reina de

SEE STUDENTS, PAGE 19

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PEOPLE



Matthew Grubb and Diane Masone

Masone and Grubb Are Engaged

Mr. and Mrs. Roger J. Masone of Clifton are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter, Diane Marie, to Matthew W. Grubb, son of Mrs. Catherine Grubb of Frederick, Md., and Mr. William R. Grubb of Clarksburg, Md. Diane is a graduate of James Madison University and holds a master's degree in forensic psy-

chology from Marymount University. She is a Protective Intelligence Research Specialist with the U.S. Secret Service. Matthew is a graduate of Virginia Tech in electrical engineering and is a patent examiner with the U.S. Patent Office. The wedding is planned for Aug. 8, at St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church in Clifton.



PVI alumna Francesca Chilcote performs a routine from "Sergeant Cheerleader."

Paul VI's Chilcote Stars in 'Cheerleader'

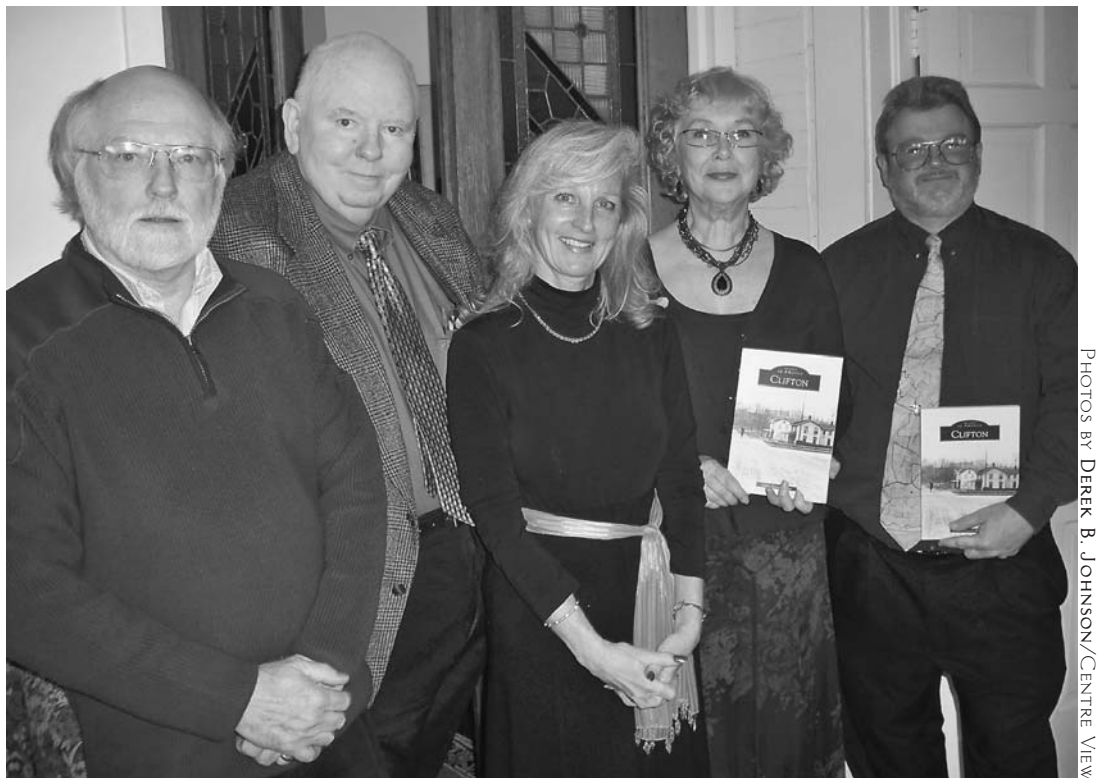
Francesca Chilcote, a 2007 graduate of Paul VI High School and aspiring actress, has landed the lead role in the feature length film "Sergeant Cheerleader." Francesca portrays the captain of the cheerleading squad and is the romantic interest of the movie. Filming was done on the campus of the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, where Francesca is a sophomore. Sergeant Cheerleader has become a sensation in Williamsburg, attracting extensive media attention and even features cameos from local celebrities including the mayor. The film is a romantic comedy about an ROTC cadet who joins a cheerleading squad, and is donating a portion of its proceeds to the Wounded War-

rior Project, a charity which supports soldiers who have been injured in the War on Terror.

Francesca was active in the drama department while at PVI, starring in "Guys and Dolls," "Arsenic and Old Lace," "Charlie's Aunt," "The Boyfriend," "But Why Bump Off Barnaby?," and "Anything Goes."

Paul VI Drama teacher Katherine Miller describes Francesca, saying, "She gave 100 percent to everything she did; from leads to bit parts, she had every bit of energy invested."

"Sergeant Cheerleader" premieres Feb. 25 in Williamsburg, and will be featured in film festivals across the country. The film's trailer can be viewed at: <http://www.vimeo.com/2808853>.



PHOTOS BY DEREK B. JOHNSON/CENTRE VIEW

Lynne Garvey-Hodge thanked a group of friends and historians for their help contributing to the book. (From left) historians Ron Beavers, Bill Etue, Lynne Garvey-Hodge, Marla Hembree and Patrick O'Neill.

Clifton in Black and White

Lynne Garvey-Hodge signs copies of book chronicling history of town through photographs.

BY DEREK B. JOHNSON
CENTRE VIEW

For Clifton resident and historian Lynne Garvey-Hodge, using mostly pictures to tell the story of Clifton's history was a tall order. She wrote over 100,000 words for her original manuscript. Arcadia Publishing, known for its "Images of America" series, limited her to 18,000, 350 for every chapter and just 70 per caption. She joked that it was an exercise in brevity.

On Sunday, Jan. 25 Garvey-Hodge hosted a book signing event for "Clifton" at The Canary Cottage bed and breakfast she operates on Main Street of town. From 1-4 p.m., a gathering of friends, colleagues and residents filled the main floor while Garvey-Hodge signed copies of her book at the rear of the home.

"Clifton" uses photographs from a multitude of different sources to paint a timeline of the town's history stretching back to its purchase by Englishmen in 1710 to the Civil War and subsequent change to the town's current name through the modern progressive era. Garvey-Hodge said in addition to the photos she was able to procure from her town neighbors, some of whom have lived in Clifton for generations, she also spent a good deal of time researching at The Virginia Room in Fairfax and the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Because the book was a pictorial essay, some aspects of the town's history without photographic evidence, like the string of reported UFO sightings in 1952, didn't make it into the book. Still, Garvey-Hodge said the format had its advantages.

"I knew it was something I could do without years and years of research," she said.

Garvey-Hodge said Clifton represented a very



Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield), who was having a fund-raiser down the street, stopped by to chat with Garvey-Hodge about her book and get a signed copy.

affluent cross-section of the country's history.

"I really think we are what America is all about these days," she said.

"Clifton" by Lynne Garvey-Hodge is available at major retail outlets including Borders, and Barnes and Noble for \$21.95. It is also available in local stores within Clifton such as The Clifton General Store on Main Street and The Cottage Arts on Chapel Road and from internet outlets such as Amazon.com.

Guilty Plea in Malicious Fire-Setting

FROM PAGE 1

“[The fire’s cause] was determined to be the result of three persons utilizing an ignitable liquid.”

— Lt. Joseph Vacchio, Fairfax County Fire Marshal’s Office

In court documents dated Oct. 21, 2008 and Oct. 28, 2008, respectively, Lt. Patricia Tomasello and Lt. Joseph Vacchio presented details of the incident, which Fire Department spokesman Raul Castillo said caused an estimated \$23,950 damage.

Calling it an “incendiary vehicle fire,” Vacchio wrote that a neighbor reported it to dispatchers on Oct. 3, around 5:54 a.m. The car was a blue, 2004 Honda CV-S2000. It had been parked on Runabout Lane in the Carriage Park community near the county Government Center and belonged to a woman who lived on a nearby street.

When fire and police units arrived, the car’s interior was fully involved with fire — with the flames extending to the vehicles parked on both sides of it, as well as to the surrounding trees. Vacchio stated that the fire’s cause “was determined to be the result of three per-

sons utilizing an ignitable liquid” to set the Honda ablaze.

The Fire Marshal’s Office spoke to witnesses who, wrote Vacchio, “stated they were present when Fletcher and Mirch [allegedly] stated their intentions of setting fire to the vehicle owned by [the victim] and primarily driven by her son.”

“After the fire, Brian and Mike [reportedly] contacted them [by cell phone] and admitted to pouring gasoline inside of the vehicle [and] then igniting it,” wrote Tomasello. She also stated that “Alex Bruce [allegedly] admitted driving Brian and Mike to the gas station to purchase gas. He then drove to [the victims’] house and acted as a lookout while Brian and Mike [allegedly] cut the convertible top open and set fire to the vehicle.”

Fletcher and Bruce were arrested Oct. 20, and Mirch, Oct. 22. On Dec. 10 in General District Court, the arson charges against all three men were dropped. But their charges of setting a fire maliciously were certified to the grand jury.

Last Tuesday, Jan. 20, the grand jury indicted both Bruce and Mirch. Bruce is now slated to enter a plea, Feb. 9, in Circuit Court, and Mirch is scheduled to enter a plea on March 5.

Fletcher pleaded guilty, Dec. 18, in Circuit Court before Judge David Schell, before his case went to the grand jury. After Schell ascertained that Fletcher was pleading guilty freely and voluntarily and because he was, in fact, guilty as charged, he ordered a pre-sentencing report and set Fletcher’s sentencing for March 6.

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A Time To Sleep?

Parents share some of the challenges of getting students up before dawn to go to school.

The Fairfax County School Board is considering changing school start and dismissal times, in part to streamline transportation schedules and costs, and in part to consider a later start time for high school students.

No decision has been made on changing the bell schedule, and no decision has been made on any programs that could be impacted such as after-school activities and athletics.

Before making a decision, the School Board will seek input from parents, staff and community members through six community dialogues in planning stages for the last week in February plus a survey that will be posted on the schools Web site the first week of February.

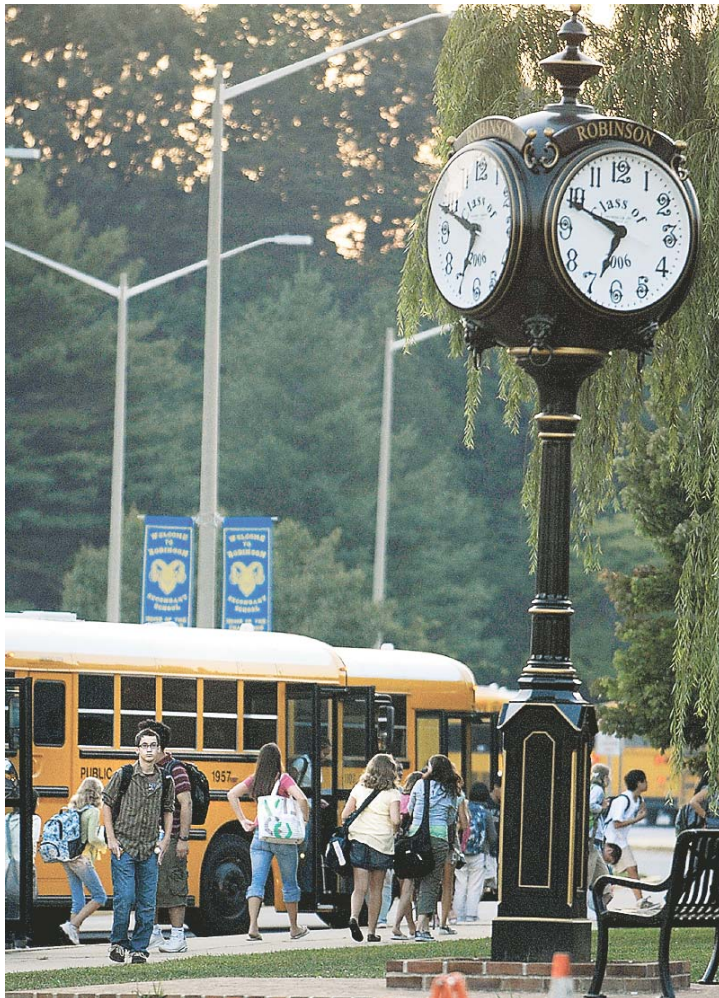
Members of a grass-roots parent organization, SLEEP (Start Later for Excellence in Education Proposal) have been advocating for a later high-school start time for years, arguing that scientific research shows that early start times are unhealthy for most teens. SLEEP organizers asked some of their supporters to share their experiences with the current high school start times; here are some excerpts.

For many more submissions from parents, see www.ConnectionNewspapers.com. For more on start times, see www.sleepinfairfax.org and www.fcps.edu.

FAIRFAX HIGH SCHOOL

My family has found it extremely difficult adjusting to the early start times of high school in Fairfax County. It was a shock to our systems when my twin daughters started their freshman year at Fairfax High School. We live at the western edge of the school boundary for FHS. The bus comes to our neighborhood at 6:15. In their freshman year and for part of their sophomore year, before they could drive, we were out of bed by 5:30 so they could make that 6:15 bus. My girls would arrive at school by 6:50 for a start time of 7:20. I was told stories of fellow students who would find a quiet hall to lie down in and catch a few more minutes of sleep during the 30 minutes they had to wait for school to start. ... I can think of no reason that serves our children for them to start their day so early.

My girls are now 16-year-old juniors. I insisted that we get them a car so they could drive themselves to school. Now we get up at 6. They leave the house at 6:40 and get to school at least 10 minutes before school starts. Of course, I start my day with them. So at 6:45, I often try to get started on some household business. But, I usually can't. No



Robinson students on the school bus before 7 a.m. in this undated file photo.

one is available so early in the morning. Only our children and the teachers and administrators who serve them. ... As numerous studies have shown everyone who has paid any attention to this issue, these teenagers cannot get themselves to go to sleep at an early enough time to get the eight-nine hours of sleep they need.

— **Denise A. Groppe**, Fairfax

KIDS SUFFER

My son who is in seventh grade must get up at 5:50 in the morning to get on his bus by 6:30. I am a physician, and am well aware of the hormonal changes young adults go through, and one of these is the nocturnal shift of their sleep/wake cycle. I am already noticing that my son is more depressed and irritable during the week; he needs to sleep many hours on the weekend to make it up. There is only one reason later times are not changed — money. Should our kids suffer for it?

— **Robert Hally, M.D.**, Fairfax Station/Robinson

Our daughter definitely has trouble functioning early in the morning. Despite the fact that she goes to bed by 9:30 or 10, she is frequently in a nearly comatose state at 6 a.m. She has absolutely never been capable of eating breakfast in the morning. At times, she is so incapable of functioning that she misses large parts of her first pe-

riod. Frequently, when she is on time, she is terribly tired in class. By the time she gets home she has no energy left for what used to be her normal activities. She has given up soccer and dance. ...

We truly believe the general population would be greatly served by having later start times for the middle and high schools.

— **Stacey L. Huffman**, Robinson/Burke

My son is a sophomore at Lake Braddock High School. Nick has to be up by 6 a.m. He is one of the lucky ones, the bus picks him up in front of our house at 6:50 a.m. I sit by the window watching for the bus while he eats breakfast, otherwise he eats in an anxious rush worrying he'll miss the bus. ... Nick is definitely not alert in the early morning. He participates in music programs at school, takes guitar lessons and works one night a week. ... He needs to be to bed by 10 p.m. in order to get up in time and many times he has not finished his homework. He often falls asleep while reading. A later start time makes so much more sense.

— **Shelley Jennings**, Burke

I have a son in high school who is borderline inattentive ADD. He strongly dislikes the medications we have tried and does not like the way they make him feel. Occasionally, I let him sleep in when I feel that he can miss his first class and really needs more sleep. On those days, he finds it possible to pay attention in class without medication.

— **Julia Margulies**, Woodson/Fairfax

My son, who is now in college, struggled with the early start times all through high school. I can simply illustrate this by the following story.

In ninth grade, he was very excited about taking Latin. He did very well and was excited about the prospects of learning Latin as a basis for a future in anthropology. In 10th grade he took Latin II and ended up with it first period. Unfortunately, I was soon forced to ask his Latin teacher why his interim grade was an "F." He explained, "because he sleeps in class." He suggested that we insist that my son get to bed earlier. He was already going to bed by 10:30, which for a child at that age was relatively early. I can tell you he was not sleeping in class because he was staying up too late and not because of a lack of interest in Latin.

— **Karen Matthews**, Fairfax Station/Lake Braddock

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS. EMAIL MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

I am the father of three kids, 19, 14, 12, and have seen the impact of the early bell schedule on my 19-year-old son while he went through seventh-12th grade at Lake Braddock. He routinely slept through first period and correspondingly struggled with grades in those classes all six years. He was also so tired that one or two times a week he would come home from school and promptly fall asleep for two-three hours. He ... is now a sophomore at George Mason where his first class doesn't start until 9:30.

My 14-year-old daughter is in eighth grade at Frost Middle School and is also struggling with the early bell schedule. She too has to take a nap one or two times a week after getting home from school. Recently, she came home exhausted and went to bed at 3:30 and didn't wake up until 5:30 the next morning. I don't believe this is healthy for her and detracts from family time. ...

I am also a stepfather for three boys and the youngest is 7 and in first grade at Oak View. He is up on his own and then waits at least 45 minutes for the bus to take him to school at 7:50. My other two stepsons are 15 and 11 and attend private school with start times of 8:10 and 8, respectively and both have much more energy when they get home from school.

I have no doubt that cognitive abilities [of high school students] are better suited to a later start time.

— **Tim McCurdy**, Fairfax

My daughter just started seventh grade at Robinson Secondary School this past autumn. I have always been in favor of SLEEP's agenda for a variety of reasons. After the first few months on the current schedule, it is now glaringly apparent how important it is to change the current bus schedules.

My daughter is now 13-years-old. This year, she is picked up by the bus for Robinson at 6:40. She usually has to set her alarm for 5:45 a.m. There have been many nights where she has had to go to bed of her own volition since she is so tired. How many 13-year-olds would do that except under strained circumstances? She has often complained of being overly tired in the afternoons and evenings and this does affect her mood and interpersonal interactions. Most weekends we try to let her just sleep until she naturally wakes up to make up for lost sleep during the week. She now sleeps until 10-11a.m. regularly on the weekends.

I thank you for your on-going efforts to make these changes happen as soon as bureaucratically possible. I hope ... we live to see the changes take place before my daughter graduates in 2014.

— **Larry M. Meinstein**, Fairfax/Robinson

Major Party Candidates Plea Their Cases

Why Vote for Bulova?

BY SHARON BULOVA
DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE FOR
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF
SUPERVISORS



Bulova

In my years as a member of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, I have had the opportunity to meet and work with many people from all parts of Fairfax. I am gratified that people tell me that they have chosen to live here because they enjoy the excellent schools, exceptional public safety, and first rate business climate. They tell me that realize that is a good place to live, work, raise a family and grow old.

In the upcoming Feb. 3 election for the Chairman of the Board, the most important message that I hear from voters is that they realize the good things about Fairfax County haven't happened by accident. Voters know that we are one of the best managed jurisdictions of our size in the country because we have had public leaders who have paid attention, set priorities, made the tough decisions, and demanded quality in all that we do.

In the 21 years, I have served on the Board, I have chaired the budget committee for 17 of those years. I know that our budget is our most important statement of our values. We can say we are for something, but it we aren't willing to put resources there, we are misleading. I know that building the annual budget is a constant quest for the best balance between revenue and expenses. We have a AAA bond rating, and we also have schools that rank among the very best in the United States. We have welcomed diversity as a great asset, even though that same diversity has challenged us and sometime cost us more to provide the services people here need and de-

IN HER
OWN
WORDS

mand. We have worked hard to find the right balance.

Voters know that our Board works best when we work together. I have a long record of reaching "across the aisle" and working with people from all parts of the county to build consensus about priorities. Voters know that I have been a leader in developing new ways to get public input, connect public and private resources, and improve the quality of life for everybody.

Voters know that in the past I was one of the most consistent advocates for mass transit to help relieve our traffic mess. I was one of the early sponsors of the Virginia Railway Express (the VRE) and have spent the last ten years as an advocate for rail to Dulles.

Voters know that as Chairman of the Board, I will continue that civil consensus-building open and honest approach. I won't walk away from a problem because it is hard or because I didn't get my way. I will be the leader of the Board and will set the agenda, but I will always respect those who disagree.

Respectfully, I ask the citizens of Fairfax County for your vote on Feb. 3. I pledge that I will always work to keep Fairfax the place where people will want to choose to live, work, and play.

Vote Feb. 3

All Fairfax County polling places will be open on Tuesday Feb. 3 for the special election for Chairman of the Board of Supervisors to replace Gerry Connolly.

Why Vote for Herrity?

BY PAT HERRITY
REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE FOR
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF
SUPERVISORS



Herrity

Campaigns are about highlighting differences, but I am confident we can agree on one thing: Fairfax County is a great place to live. For decades we have had the best schools and beautiful parks. We've had a Triple-A bond rating since 1975, and we have been the economic engine for the state.

Yet our future success is not preordained. We currently face significant challenges. Most pressing is our \$650 million shortfall, the largest in our history and larger than all of our surrounding jurisdictions combined. We face this shortfall despite the fact that taxes on homeowners have doubled in the past seven years. County spending has exploded, growing the budget by a billion dollars beyond inflation and population growth, squandering the good times on misplaced priorities.

We've spent \$200 million in the past two years to buy government housing and have built a large housing bureaucracy that makes us among the largest landlords in the County. We're subsidizing housing for those making \$99,000 a year.

At the same time, our schools are in dire need of renovations and class sizes continue to increase. Teacher pay has dropped from highest in the region to sixth highest. Despite this, the School Board, with my opponent's support, wants to spend \$130 million on a fancy administration building.

Fairfax County needs a leader with tested financial skills, who knows how to read a balance sheet, how to say "no," and who will focus spending on priorities. I am a chief financial officer with an award-winning financial track record of turning around troubled companies. I am the only candidate for Chairman with the financial experience necessary to lead us out of this financial train wreck.

I am also a recognized leader in transportation. I sit on the operations board for VRE, and was leading the effort for telecommuting with the Northern Virginia Technology Council before telecommuting was an accepted concept. On the Board, I have led

IN HIS
OWN
WORDS

the efforts for both short-term and long-term improvements to the I-66 corridor.

Contrary to my opponent's accusations, I did not attempt to block the Dulles Rail project. In 2002, I filed suit against the project in order to ensure it was competitively bid, in an effort to save taxpayer money. To date, the project has never been competitively bid. I believe if it had, we would have been able to build a tunnel, the best option for Tyson's Corner, and still have met federal cost standards.

We can't afford to wait for Richmond to solve our problems. Thirty years ago when my father, Jack Herrity, was chairman of the Board, private-sector funding for transportation outweighed federal, state and local funding combined. Developers were held accountable for infrastructure improvements. We need to return to this kind of responsible leadership and creative solutions.

We also need to make our commercial tax base a priority. The commercial tax base was 27 percent but has now fallen to 17 percent, shifting the tax burden onto homeowners. It is important now more than ever for government to be responsive to the need for tax relief for residents. That is why last year I proposed a balanced budget that included an actual tax cut for homeowners. My budget also included an increase in education spending and more money for public safety programs than the budget passed by the Board.

I want my children to raise their children in a Fairfax County that is the best place to live, work, and play. I ask for your vote on Feb. 3.

Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue.

Letters to the Editor
Centre View
7913 Westpark Drive
McLean, Va. 22102
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By fax: 703-917-0991.
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To discuss ideas and concerns,
Call: 703-917-6444
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Steve Hibbard
Editor, 703-917-6434
shibbard@connectionnewspapers.com

Bonnie Hobbs
Community Reporter, 703-917-6430
bhobbs@connectionnewspapers.com

Julia O'Donoghue
Education & Politics, 703-917-6433
jodonoghue@connectionnewspapers.com

Ken Moore
Projects, 703-917-6417
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Editor & Publisher
Mary Kimm
703-917-6416
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor in Chief
Steven Mauren

Managing Editors
Steve Hibbard, Michael O'Connell,
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Photography:
Robbie Hammer, Louise Krafft,
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Zohra Aslami, Geovani Flores,
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Production Manager:
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CIRCULATION: 703-917-6480
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**CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS,
L.L.C.**
Peter Labovitz
President/CEO

Mary Kimm
Publisher/Chief Operating Officer
703-917-6416
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com

Jerry Vernon
Executive Vice President
703-917-6404
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8133 KIDD ST	\$250,000	Feb. 1st, 1:30-4pm	Long & Foster	Barbara West	703-969-4405	
8727 CAMDEN ST	\$495,000	Feb. 1st, 1-4pm	Weichert	Joni Koons	703-209-7277	
5639 GOVERNORS POND CIR	\$599,900	Feb. 1st, 1-4pm	Weichert	James Bazzle	703-599-8964	
7032 CLIFTON KNOLL CT	\$829,000	Feb. 1st, 1-4pm	Long & Foster	Kim Muffer	703.282.7739	
6385 LEVTOV LNDG	\$479,900	Feb. 1st, 1-4pm	Long & Foster	Rebecca Owen	703-328-4129	
6038 FORT HUNT RD	\$738,500	Feb. 1st, 1-4pm	McEneaney	Janet Price	703-960-5858	

Springfield						
5235 MONROE DR	\$1,500,000	Feb. 1st, 1-3pm	Long & Foster	Jane Applegate	703-452-3909	
7315 CHARLOTTE ST	\$359,900	Feb. 1st, 1-3pm	Long & Foster	Constance Williams	703-989-7846	

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6624 SHALESTONE CT	\$669,000	Feb. 8th, 1-4pm	RE/MAX Gateway	Deborah Dicks	703-801-2725	
13910 Stonefield Dr.	\$579,900	Feb. 1st, 1-4pm	Samson Realty	Ed Duggan	703-989-7735	
14920 JASLOW ST	\$379,900	Feb. 15th 12-3pm	Long & Foster	Linda Blakemore	703-368-1146	

Chantilly/Oak Hill						
13878 REMBRANDT WAY	\$625,000	Feb. 1st, 1-4pm	Weichert	Rosemary Graham	703 934-0400	

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5121 BROOKRIDGE PL	\$1,440,000	Feb. 1st, 1-4pm	Weichert	Robin Waugh	703-917-0515	
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10325 Commonwealth Blvd	\$499,950	Feb. 1st, 1-4pm	Weichert	Kathleen Quintarelli	703-862-8808	
3800 LYNN REGIS CT	\$899,900	Feb. 1st, 1-4pm	RE/MAX	Judy Wonus	703 280-1010	
5574 Glasgow Woods Ct.	\$279,900	Feb. 8th, 12-4pm	Weichert	Ron Fowler	703-598-0511	
10706 Orchard St	\$499,000	Feb. 8th, 12-4pm	Weichert	Ron Fowler	703-598-0511	

Burke						
6536 RAFTELIS RD	\$490,000	Feb. 1st, 1-4pm	New Star Realty	Sang Lee	703 642-1028	
9262 Sprucewood Road	\$274,950	Feb. 1st, 1-4pm	Weichert	Kathleen Quintarelli	703-862-8808	

Vienna/Oakton						
1320 Schuman Ct	\$795,000	Feb. 1st, 1-4pm	Samson Realty	Casey Samson	703-508-2535	

Historic Fredericksburg						
1211 Winchester St	\$719,849	Feb. 1st, 1-4pm	Samson Realty	Neil Sullivan	540-287-1920	

To add your **FREE** Realtor Open House listing, call:

Chantilly/Oak Hill, Centreville/Clifton, Fairfax
Contact: Karen Washburn
kwashburn@connectionnewspapers.com

All listings due by Mon. at 3pm.

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Bull Run Regional Park is a 1,600-acre park in Centreville. Picnic tables, picnic shelters (by reservation) and grills are available for cooking out with family or friends. In addition to the day-time accommodations, there are 143 campsites, 90 of them with electricity. Bull Run also offers an 18-hole disc-golf course, a playground, and a gigantic swimming pool equipped with a slide, palm trees, aquatic monsters and shipwrecks. There is a shooting center that offers five stand, skeet, trap, sporting clays and wobble trap shooting, as well as an indoor archery range. Gun rental and private lessons as well as learn-to-shoot classes are available.

Live Music and Fresh Air

Special Events Center: 7700 Bull Run Drive
Centreville
703-631-0550, Ext. 102

A great feature of the Bull Run Regional Park area is the Bull Run Special Events Center. The center hosts great outdoor concerts that include the Capital Jazz Fest, along with other events such as craft shows, concerts, wine and beer festivals. Entrance is free for member residents, which is defined as living in either Alexandria, Arlington, the city of Fairfax, Fairfax County, Falls Church or Loudoun County. For everyone else it is \$7 per vehicle per day (starting in April), \$14 per vehicle (over 14 people) per day, or \$30 for the annual pass.

Explore Hemlock Overlook Park

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Hemlock Overlook Park provides one of the most exhilarating and rewarding experiences. It is a gigantic, 5,000-acre park, full of mini-quests and physical challenges, not to mention a zip wire across a small valley. The idea is to promote team work by relying on your team members to complete the tasks. It is ideal for office groups, friends or schools. Offers school programs, community programs, University teams and the Center for Professional Development. For more information, including directions, log on to www.hemlockoverlook.org.

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SCHOOLS

St. Timothy School Open House. Jan. 29 from 7-8 p.m. Adult Open House for parents interested in touring the Preschool, Elementary and Junior High in Chantilly. More information is available at www.sainttimothyschool.org or by calling Kim Kovac at 703-378-6932. Address: 13809 Poplar Tree Rd., Chantilly.

The Fairfax High School Theatre Department — The F/X Players will present "Singing in the Rain" Jan. 30 and 31 at Fairfax High School, 3501 Rebel Run, Fairfax. Showtimes for the Friday and Saturday evening performances are 7:30 p.m. Advanced ticket purchase is recommended. Tickets may be purchased online at www.fxplayers.org.

Centreville Preschool, Inc (CPI) will be holding its annual Open House on Saturday, Jan. 31 from 9 a.m. to noon. Stop by to meet the teachers and take a tour of CPI, which has been serving the Centreville area for 40 years with learning through play. Enrollment for the 2009-2010 begins the following Monday. CPI is located on Braddock Road near the intersection of Routes 29 and 28. Visit the Web site for more information www.centrevillepreschool.com

Bull Run Elementary School invites family and friends to a Community Town Hall Meeting at Bull Run Elementary, on the topic of Structuring Your Home for School Success, Wednesday, Feb. 4, from 7-8:30 p.m. Free babysitting for elementary age children is provided. Translation services available during the event for Spanish and Korean speakers. Call the school at 703-227-1400. Make sure to ask how to take part in the Chili Cook-off held during this event!

The Fairfax High School Chorus Department will present Cabaret Night Feb. 9 at Fairfax High School, 3501 Rebel Run, Fairfax. The show begins at 6:30 p.m. and will feature chorus students performing individually and in small groups. Tickets are \$7 in advance (\$8 at the door) and cover admission, sandwich, chips, dessert and drinks. For ticket details and information on other Fairfax High School chorus events, check out the Performances page at www.fhschorus.net.

St. Timothy School Open House. Feb. 12 from 7-8 p.m. Family Open House for families interested in touring the Preschool, Elementary and Junior High. An art show and science fair projects will be on display. More information is available at www.sainttimothyschool.org or by calling Kim Kovac at 703-378-6932. Address: 13809 Poplar Tree Rd., Chantilly.

Westfield High School International Night will be held on Friday, Feb. 13 from 7-9 p.m. in the auditorium. Intermission offers international food and henna designs as well as exposure to other clubs here at Westfield High.

St. Timothy School Registration. Feb. 23 at 8 a.m. New family registration for students in Preschool through Junior High. Applications and detailed information on necessary documentation is available at www.sainttimothyschool.org or by calling Kim Kovac at 703-378-6932. Address: 13809 Poplar Tree Rd., Chantilly.

Virginia Run Elementary School will hold kindergarten registration on Monday, March 23 from 4:30 p.m. to 6



Virginia Run Discovers Indians of the Plains

The Virginia Run Elementary School second grade enjoyed a presentation by Barbara Reese on Jan. 15. She met with each class individually and talked about the Indians of the plains, woodlands and southwest. The students made a medicine bracelet.

p.m. and Wednesday, March 25 from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m., forms will be available on-site. Children are eligible for the 2009-2010 kindergarten school year if they were born on or before Sept. 30, 2004. Call the school office at 703-988-8900.

St. Andrew the Apostle School is also accepting new student registrations to fill student vacancies for the 2009-2010 school year. A non-refundable application fee of \$100 will be required at the time of application. Submit all applications and fees to St. Andrew the Apostle School, 6720B Union Mill Road, Clifton, or drop off applications at the school office. All registration forms and additional information about St. Andrew the Apostle School may be found on the school's Web site, www.standrew-clifton.org.

The Fresh Air Fund committee is currently preparing for summer 2009 and awaiting the arrival of their New York City visitors. To ensure that this summer is special for Fresh Air children, The Fund is seeking volunteer members and host families to sign up now. Each summer, close to 5,000 New York City

children, ages six to 18, enjoy two week vacations with volunteer host families in suburban and rural communities across 13 Northeastern states and Canada. Local Fresh Air Fund volunteers recruit and interview host families, arrange travel and coordinate fun activities in their communities.

For more information on how you can join your local Fresh Air volunteer team, call Lisa Feller at 202-244-8994, or The Fresh Air Fund at 800-367-0003. You can also learn more about the Friendly Town program by visiting The Fund's Web site at www.freshair.org.

The Centreville High Wildcat Music Department presents the following concerts:

- ◆ Band /Jazz — Feb. 19, May 7, May 14;
- ◆ Choir — March 18, June 4, June 5;
- ◆ Orchestra — March 12, May 21;
- ◆ Guitar - Jan. 30, May 8;

To help keep the music playing, keep an eye out this fall for CVHS Wildcat Band Scrip cards, car washes and fruit sales. Be sure and join us for the Wildcats' home football games and the halftime entertainment your generous support provides.

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Public Budget Hearings Offer Platform

Fairfax County athletic community voices opposition to proposed cuts.

BY JASON MACKEY
THE CONNECTION

In both gymnastics and track and field, three minutes can represent a variety of things. On the uneven bars, three minutes could cause excruciating pain in even the most accomplished gymnast's arms, and those 180 seconds would surely turn every head in America if displayed next to the 1,600-meter run.

But last Wednesday night at Luther Jackson Middle School in Falls Church, three minutes represented something completely new for the two embattled sports in Fairfax County: a platform.

With supporters of both sports finally given a chance to voice their opinions over the proposed elimination of gymnastics and indoor track and field from the fiscal year 2009-10 budget, five people spoke in favor of keeping gymnastics and indoor track and field, with one supporting the former and four lobbying for the latter.

Another set of hearings was set for Tuesday night, which were canceled that morning because of a snowstorm. The second round of hearings, during which many more gymnastics and indoor track and field supporters were expected to voice their displeasure

with the budget, ended too late for this edition.

"The elimination of indoor track and field would be penny-wise and pound-foolish," said McLean High School parent William Shapiro, whose three children graduated from the school. "If savings must be found, surely there are better ways of doing so. Wouldn't it make sense for modest reductions in all team sports?"

A BUDGET PROPOSAL comprised of three scenarios was unveiled at a Fairfax County Board of Supervisors meeting back in November, with gymnastics listed on all three levels and indoor track and field only on the most severe.

The budget alterations were brought forth to close what was expected to be around a \$170 million-\$180 million shortfall for the school district. Cutting gymnastics would save \$221,000 and cutting indoor track and field would save \$250,000.

But the expected deficit has since ballooned to around \$215 million, depending on whether or not the Board of Supervisors accepts schools superintendent Jack D. Dale's latest budget, which requires a 3.5 percent funding increase.

"It is entirely dependent on what the Board of Supervisors gives us,"



PHOTO BY JASON MACKEY/CENTRE VIEW

Chantilly cross-country and track and field coach Matt Gilchrist voiced support for his sport during a public budget hearing last Wednesday night at Luther Jackson Middle School in Falls Church.

Dale said. "If there is no additional money, we will face a \$215 million shortfall."

School Board member Phillip A. Niedzielski-Eichner (Providence) started the hearing Wednesday night by re-affirming that none of the decisions were final. Dale recommended his \$2.2 million budget on Jan. 8, and the School Board would listen to these public hearings, formulate its own budget and submit that to the Board of Supervisors for final approval.

THAT DIDN'T HELP quell the fears of parents and coaches who spoke out against the proposed measures. Matt Gilchrist, Chantilly's cross-country and track and field coach, kicked off the community's reaction by acknowledging the difficult task ahead. But, he continued to express a desire that no sport be eliminated.

"It is our hope as athletic supporters that no sports are cut, and that if economic needs dictate that athletics be affected, such cuts would include small, incremental cuts across the board, rather than targeting individual programs," Gilchrist said.

Janelyn Price, a Lake Braddock parent and a former collegiate gymnast and coach, was the gymnastics community's lone representative Wednesday. Price argued that Lake Braddock conducted tryouts for the first time in a long time this season, while also pointing out that club gymnastics might not be a viable option.

"Many gymnasts were never club gymnasts to begin with and would not even make a club team," Price said. "Club gymnastics is also a very time consuming sport and is very, very expensive."

Wearing his jacket from the 1992 Barcelona Games, former Olympic decathlete Rob Muzzio, a Robinson and George Mason University graduate and now a

Notable and Quotable

"I'm hopeful that such a program [indoor track and field] will still be in existence when my children reach high school."

— Mike Mangan, Lake Braddock cross-country and track and field coach

"The elimination of indoor track and field would be penny-wise and pound-foolish. If savings must be found, surely there are better ways of doing so."

— William Shapiro, McLean parent

"Indoor track and field is not just a key part of the general athletic program, but also of the physical, social and emotional development of thousands of young athletes each year."

— Matt Gilchrist, Chantilly cross-country and track and field coach

"I understand that everyone must sacrifice, but to eliminate the most cost-effective athletic program in all of Fairfax County doesn't make sense."

— Rob Muzzio, Robinson graduate and parent

"Many gymnasts were never club gymnasts to begin with and would not even make a club team. Club gymnastics is also a very time consuming sport and is very, very expensive."

— Janelyn Price, Lake Braddock parent

Robinson parent, stated that indoor track and field involved nearly 2,800 high school athletes last season at a relatively low cost.

"In these times of budget crisis, I understand that everyone must sacrifice. All programs should be under scrutiny and subject to reductions across the board. But to eliminate the most cost-effective athletic program in all of Fairfax County doesn't make sense."

WEEK IN SPORTS

Naber Takes Two

James Madison University junior P.J. Naber, a 2006 graduate of Chantilly High School, scored a pair of wins during a dual-meet split with Loyola (218-91 win) and Towson (188-112 loss) last Saturday, Jan. 24. Naber won the 50-yard freestyle event with a time of 24.39 seconds. She also claimed first place in the 200 free with a time of 1:54.93. At Chantilly, Naber set a school record in the 200 freestyle and then broke that mark during her senior year. She was recognized as an All-American from 2004-06 and helped the Chargers win the Concorde District title during her senior year. James Madison, now at 7-3 overall, 3-3 in the Colonial Athletic Association, takes on Richmond this Saturday at noon.

Scanlon Steady at Stonehill

One of two senior captains, Centreville native and Flint Hill graduate Colin Scanlon has led the Stonehill College Skyhawks both in title and with his steady play on the court. Scanlon, a 6-foot-5 senior, averages 5.1 points and 4.6 rebounds per game. His 62 assists rank second on the team, and he has made 41.3 percent (31 of 75) of his shots from the field. As of Wednesday morning, the Skyhawks were 16-2 overall, 11-2 in the Northeast-10 Conference. At Flint Hill, Scanlon helped lead the Huskies to the second most wins (23) in school history during his senior year, while winning Mid-Atlantic Athletic Conference championships during his final two years at the school. Peter Scanlon, Colin's younger brother, is a senior at Westfield.

SPORTS

SLEEP Makes Splash

Program pushing later start times causes stir when it comes to pool availability.

BY JULIE O'DONOGHUE
AND JASON MACKEY
THE CONNECTION



FILE PHOTO

Robinson's Geoff Bobsin Jr. would be one of many affected if swim and dive was eliminated. "I'm absolutely stunned that it's being considered," Geoff Bobsin Sr. said of the raging debate as to whether SLEEP can co-exist with the sport.

A proposal to move school start times back for older students in Fairfax County Public Schools has the high school swim and dive community up in arms. Several associated with the sport worry that later start times for high school students could eliminate the school system's highly competitive swim and dive programs.

Some high school teams currently practice in the early afternoon, on a schedule that they could not meet if they started and got out of school later. If the school bell schedule changed, many in the swim and dive community worry that the county pools in which high school athletes practice would not be able to handle the scheduling change.

And, as rumors continue to circulate about the proposed bell schedule changes, some have speculated that Fairfax County wouldn't continue to support a swim and dive program if the Fairfax County Park Authority didn't adjust its schedule to reflect those later start times.

"With school ending later and practice starting at 4 or 4:15 p.m., that makes people very nervous that swim and dive will get eliminated," said Robinson parent Geoff Bobsin Sr., whose son, Geoff Bobsin Jr., recently earned a swimming scholarship to Division I East Carolina University.

"The idea that Fairfax County would eliminate swimming is shocking," Bobsin added. "I'm absolutely stunned that it's even being considered."

BUT COUNTY officials said the swim and dive community may be unnecessarily concerned about the impact that later start times for older students would have on its programs. The Fairfax County School Board has not made a decision to change the bell schedule and will not vote on the proposal until March. Several School Board members said they hoped Fairfax

County would be able to adjust the pool schedules to accommodate the swim and dive programs if the bell schedule changes.

"The concern, while legitimate, is at a level that is not in proportion to what is going on, said School Board member Brad Center (Lee). "I don't have to make a decision between flipping the bell schedule and swim teams right now. And I may never have to make that decision." °

The Park Authority released a statement saying they would try to work with the school system should the bell schedule change.

"The Park Authority will work with the School Board to achieve the best possible outcomes for students and the community," read the statement.

"The Park Authority was pretty clear that they want us to accommodate the teams," added Judy Peterson, public information officer for the Park Authority. "We will do our best to accommodate whatever situation arises."

THE FAIRFAX BOARD of Supervisors has also directed county staff to examine how a new bell schedule — with high school students attending school later — would affect all county facilities and programs. Where conflicts arise, Supervisor Penny Gross (D-Mason) expects the county to try and come up with a resolution.

"I want to be open minded and look at whatever is possible," said Gross, who expects staff to

report back on the impact of a bell schedule change at the Board of Supervisors' Feb. 9 meeting. °

School Board member Stu Gibson (Hunter Mill), who has frequently stated his concerns about the negative impacts of a new bell schedule, said the swim and dive program is just the tip of a much larger iceberg. According to Gibson, teachers, bus drivers, day care providers, parents and employers could all see significant changes in their lives if the School Board adopts later times for high school students.

"People in the community who are impacted are now beginning to realize that this a serious discussion," Gibson said. "There are all sorts of impacts on people other

than high school students. I would like to know the quantity and quality of those impacts and whether they are something people can live with."

BUT ADVOCATES for later high school start times said there are not many reasons the county would not be able to accommodate a program like swimming if the bell schedule switched.

"There is no reason to believe later start times and swim can't go hand in hand. My daughter is on the swim team," said Sandy Evans, who is founder of SLEEP, an organization that has pushed for later high school start times over several years.

"It is not necessarily simple but none of the school board members or supervisors are talking about eliminating a sport," Evans said. "We don't see this as a downside for sports."

She added that other school systems which have adopted later high school start times such as Arlington County have had either the same or higher participation in sports after their bell schedules were adjusted.

Parent-led support groups in support of swimming have also been formed. The primary group, Save our Sport (SOS), was started by Lisa Leake — a Centreville swim parent and a teacher in the Fairfax County Public Schools system, who does not want to see swim and dive eliminated because of the SLEEP program.

SEE SLEEP, PAGE 16

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WORTH NOTING

ONGOING

Centreville Regional Library will be offering AARP Tax-Aide to walk-in clients on Tuesdays from 1-8 p.m.; Thursdays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. starting Feb. 1 through April 15. The library is at 14200 St. Germaine Dr., Centreville. This year, all tax returns will be electronically filed. All taxpayers MUST bring a government issued picture ID and Social Security cards for all persons included on the tax return. For more information, call 1-888-227-7669 (AARP NOW) or visit the Web site at www.aarp.org/taxaide.

FRIDAY, JAN. 30

Swing Dances are held every Friday night at the Dulles Hilton in the Red Fox Room with Sue and Gary Caley. Drop-in beginner lesson included in price of admission from 8:30-9 p.m. Live music from 9 p.m. to midnight. Cost is \$15. All ages welcome, large dance floors, air conditioned. Hilton Washington Dulles Hotel, 13869 Park Center Road, Herndon. Go to www.gottaswing.com for details etc.

JAN. 30-FEB. 1

Sugarloaf Crafts Festival kicks off the 2009 season with its annual craft show highlighting 300 artisans on Friday, Jan. 30 through Sunday, Feb. 1 at the Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly. Shoppers will find unique creations in

functional and decorative pottery, sculpture, glass, jewelry, fashion, furniture and home accessories, items for the garden, and photography. Hours are Friday, Jan. 30 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 31 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 1 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$7/adults online, \$8/adults at door, free for children under 12. The Dulles Expo Center is located at 4320 Chantilly Place Center in Chantilly. Visit www.SugarloafCrafts.com or call 800-210-9900.

SATURDAY/JAN. 31

Del. Chuck Caputo will host a Town Hall Meeting on Saturday, Jan. 31 from 10 a.m. to noon at the Sully District Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd., Chantilly.

SUNDAY/FEB. 1

Will Punxsutawney Phil see his shadow when he ventures out of his burrow on Gobbler's Hill on Groundhog Day? People have relied on this famous groundhog's uncanny weather-forecasting abilities since 1886. This year, attend a festive program at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park in Chantilly to meet Phil's distant cousin, the larger-than-life Walney groundhog.

Bring your family and celebrate Groundhog Day early while learning interesting facts, visiting the groundhog's home, and playing

groundhog games on Sunday, Feb. 1 from 1 to 2 p.m. Reservations are required for this free program. To register, call 703-631-0013.

Cold weather invites indoor activities.

Why not add a bit of history to the mix for a delightful family adventure at Sully? Checkers, nine pins, a bean bag toss and other old fashioned games will be set up for play at Sully Historic Site from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 1, and again on Sunday, Feb. 15, 2009. These games were popular in the 18th and 19th centuries and are a fun way for visitors to experience the lighter side of life on the former farm.

Play games for \$2 and make an historic toy for an additional \$2. Tours of the main house are available at a separate cost of \$6 per adult and \$4 per senior and child. To make a reservation, please call 703-437-1794.

Tuesday/Feb. 3

The Northern Virginia Holistic Moms

will hold its February meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 3 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. This month's topic is: "Osteopathic Manipulation" Learn about a holistic treatment option with guest speaker Michael Porvaznik.

THURSDAY/FEB. 5

Book author Anthony Pitch will hold a discussion and signing for "They

Have Killed Papa Dead!" The Road to Ford's Theatre, Abraham Lincoln's Murder, and The Rage for Vengeance, on Thursday, Feb. 5 at 7 p.m. at the Borders in Fairfax, 11054 Lee Hwy., Fairfax. Call 703-359-8420.

SATURDAY/FEB. 7

The Lane's Mill Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution will hold its monthly meeting on Saturday, Feb. 7 at 1 p.m. at the Sully Government Center. Those interested in the DAR and attending are welcome and should contact jsmithtot@aol.com.

The Nighthawks band will perform on Saturday, Feb. 7 at Sully's in Chantilly.

MONDAY, FEB. 9

Special story time with Susan Crites, children's author of "I Love You More Than Rainbows," on Monday, Feb. 9 at 10:15 and 11:15 a.m. at the Chantilly Regional Library. All ages welcome. Go to www.susancrites.com.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 11

Pre-Schoolers Plus, chapter of Mothers First, a support group for women who have chosen to alter their careers to raise their children. 7:30 p.m., Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Pl, Oakton. Contact 703-827-5922 or www.mothersfirst.org.

FEB. 12-15

Valentines, Singing Valentines! For that "very special someone" in your life, send an elegantly dressed traditional Barbershop quartet from the Fairfax Jubil-Aires Barbershop Harmony Chorus to serenade your loved one with a Valentine gift that will be cherished and remembered in the years to come. Your very special Valentine will include two romantic love songs sung in the Barbershop style, a red rose, a box of chocolates, and a personalized Valentines card from you. Quartets are available on Feb 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th at a location of your choosing. All this for only \$70 on Feb 14th. Special Pricing of only \$50 on Feb 12, 13, and 15. Call Ron at 703-978-7691.

FEB. 13-14

The Alliance Theatre will present "Plaza Suite" on Feb. 13-14, 20-21 at 7:30 p.m. with Sunday matinees on Feb. 14 and 22 at 2 p.m. Performances will be held at Mountain View High School, 5775 Spindle Court, Centreville. Tickets are \$10 with group discount pricing available and \$8 for seniors and children under 12. For tickets, order online at TheAllianceTheatre.org. Visit TheAllianceTheatre.org or call Elaine Wilson at 703-830-1078.

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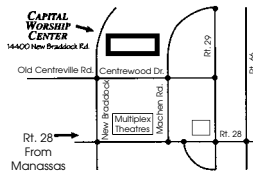
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Pastor James & First Lady Ada Vanison, Founders

Worship Services:
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Wednesday Service 8 PM

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Christ the Redeemer...703-502-1732
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Centreville Assembly of God...703-830-1841
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Baha'i Faith...1-800-22-UNITE
BAPTIST
Centreville Baptist Church...703-830-3333
Chantilly Baptist Church...703-378-6880
Clifton Baptist Church...703-263-1161
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www.mountolive-church.org

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Sunday Children's Church 8:00 am and 11:00 am
Sunday Communion Services
Third Sundays 7:30am and 10:45 am
Sunday School 9:45am - 10:45 am
Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 pm- 9:00 pm



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St. Clare of Assisi Catholic Church...703-266-1310
St. Paul Chung Catholic Church...703-968-3010
St. Timothy Catholic Church...703-378-7461
St. Veronica Catholic Church...703-773-2000

FAITH

Wellspring Church celebrates communion this Sunday, and welcomes all to join in this special service of prayer and fellowship. Pastor Al Fierres will preach. Sunday worship is at 11 a.m., at the chapel on Route 29, 13510 Lee Highway, Centreville. The chapel is on the north side of Route 29, just west of the Lee Highway-Union Mill Rd. intersection.

Sunday School for children meets during the worship hour. Following worship there will be a fellowship hour with fair-trade coffee and treats.

A "Living the Questions" evening Bible study meets on Thursday, Feb. 5 in Manassas, and a special meeting with immigrant workers will be Feb. 5 at the library. A dream interpretation workshop will be Feb. 28 in Fairfax. Check the Web site, wellspringucc.org, or call Sara Little at 703-257-4111 for information on these and other special events.

Wellspring United Church of Christ is thoughtful, prayerful, justice-seeking, and Open and Affirming to seekers of all backgrounds and orientations. Worship is informal.

The public is invited to a southern gospel concert by Brenda Braswell from Smithville, Tenn., at Oakton Baptist Church of Chantilly on Sunday, Feb. 8 at 6 p.m. The church is located at 14001 Sullyfield Circle, Chantilly, on Route 50

across from the Bob Evans Restaurant, call 703 631-1799. There is no admission fee; however, a free-will offering will be received.

St. Timothy Catholic School in Chantilly is having an Open House on Thursday, Jan. 29 at 7 p.m. and a registration for preschool, elementary and middle school on Feb. 23 at 8 a.m. Go to www.sainttimothyschool.org.

Lord of Life Lutheran Church is offering ESL classes. Registration is Tuesday, Feb. 3 from 7-9 p.m. Cost of the textbook is \$35. Three levels of ESL: basic, intermediate and advanced. Class schedule is Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7-9 p.m. Starts Feb. 10 and ends April 23. School-Age Childcare is provided. Lord of Life Lutheran Church is located at 5114 Twinbrook Road, Fairfax. Call 703-323-9500 or visit www.lordoflifelutheran.com.

Is your teen angry? Hurt? Struggling? Get Real Youth Outreach partnering with New Life Christian Church. Will be offering Life Hurts God Heals for Middle School (6th-8th) or High School (9th-12th). This 13-week support group addresses the challenges teens face in fighting their hurts through peer support, adult mentoring, and a certified curriculum. Groups will meet

at Westfield High in Chantilly, Sunday's from 9:30-11 a.m. Contact Lucy Martinez for sign up information at 703-220-5022. Application Process Required.

Congregation Yad Shalom of Centreville provides a variety of programs in a traditional format with a modern flair. It openly invites inquiries about participation in these activities by the community. There are a number of activities for the family for the new year:

- ❖ Enjoy the Super Bowl with the congregation on Sunday, Feb. 1, 2009. See the Yad Shalom Web site for details.

- ❖ Celebrate the change of seasons with the congregation with a special Tu B-Shevat Seder on Saturday, Feb. 7, 2009 at 10 a.m. at Little Rocky Run Community Center # 3.

"Fireproof" Movie at Jubilee Christian Center on Feb. 22. Jubilee Christian Center will be showing the feature movie, "Fireproof," on Sunday, Feb. 22 at 6 p.m. The PG movie stars Kirk Cameron in a story about a firefighter fighting to save lives and his marriage. The movie is free, and refreshments will be served afterwards. Nursery and separate Youth and Children's activities are available at the same time. Located at 4650 Shirley Gate Rd., Fairfax. Call 703-383-1170, or see www.jccag.org.

Curves of Chantilly is rolling out the red carpet to members of the Healthways SilverSneakers Fitness Program designed for older adults. Beginning Jan. 1, SilverSneakers members are eligible to join Curves of Chantilly at no cost. There are 6,500 Curves locations and more than 2.5 million women in the U.S. who are eligible for the SilverSneakers program. Call 703-961-1700.

The Chantilly-Centreville Chamber of Commerce, in affiliation with the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce, will debut its Dulles Leadshare South, which joins the Dulles North and Dulles Central groups already in operation. The meetings will be held on the first and third Thursdays of each month, 8 a.m. - 9 a.m.

Leadshare is meeting comprised of business people — one representative per industry — who meet regularly to exchange leads and develop business relationships. You must be a member of the Dulles Regional Chamber to join this group. There is no charge. The Dulles Leadshare South currently has openings for the following industries: Business Lawyer; CPA; Mortgage Broker; Office Equipment; Physical Therapist; Home Inspection; Construction; Flooring.

For more information, contact Kirk Forman at mdkforman@aol.com.

Chantilly-based Frank Stitely, Partner, Stitely & Karstetter, CPAs, announced the launch of their interactive online Client Center in conjunction with their new Web site: www.skcpas.com. This is the first interactive online client management service of its kind to be offered by a CPA firm for individuals and businesses throughout the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area. The Client Center is secure, easy to use and provides access to clients' tax preparation and return information seven days a week, 24 hours a day. It also offers clients and the firm the opportunity to be more environmentally friendly, eliminating much of the paper usually associated with CPA firms. Additional information is available on the Stitely & Karstetter web site: www.skcpas.com or you may contact Frank Stitely at 703-802-2309.

The Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce will stage its premiere celebration with an Anniversary Gala titled Hour Story: Eat, Drink and Dance Your Way Through Five Decades. This will include silent and live auction, a scrolling visual history of the Chamber events and leaders interspersed with major events of those decades. The event is being held on Saturday, Feb. 21 from 7 p.m. to midnight, at Westfields Marriott in Chantilly.

CENTREVILLE

Centreville Baptist Church

Worship Services
8:00 & 9:30 am Celebration Service
11:00 am Contemporary Service

Bible Study
9:30 am & 11:00 am

Ministries Include:
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703-830-3333 www.bcbva.org

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Congregation Yad Shalom...703-802-8901
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St. Andrew Lutheran Church...703-830-2768
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Centreville United Methodist...703-830-2684
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Capital Worship Center...703-530-8100
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- UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**
Wellspring United Church of Christ...703-257-4111

SPORTS

FAS Elects New Officers

Fairfax Adult Softball (FAS) held its annual officer election meeting on Monday, Nov. 17. Incumbent Scott Semmler, long-time resident of Chantilly, was re-elected by acclamation to the position of 2nd Vice President. Joe Morice, from Centreville, was elected by acclamation as Secretary. They begin their new term of office on Jan. 1, 2009.

SCOTT SEMMLER is excited about entering his second term as 2nd Vice President on Fairfax Adult Softball's Executive Committee. He truly believes the FAS program is important to the community and is dedicated to bringing the enjoyment back to softball.

With regard to disciplinary issues, efforts are underway to curtail the some times competitive nature of FAS players. "The league has really operated well over the past four years in regards to inappropriate language and poor attitudes being prohibited." Scott is determined to implement fresh ideas for continued success in this area. Furthermore, he will work diligently to get the Standard Operating Procedures manual documented.

Joe Morice expressed a desire to serve the league at the executive level again having last served in an elected office in 2004-2005 as the organization's First Vice President.

Morice comes to the position looking to steer one effort in addition to the position's everyday tasks. He will be taking responsibility for the effort to open the league to individual registrations in an attempt to expand the team base. The expectation is that individual registration will put FAS on even footing with other recreational sports leagues in the county.

FAS depends heavily on volunteers and needs new personalities



Newly elected Joe Morice (left) and Incumbent Scott Semmler.

to share brand new ideas. Each year at the FAS annual organization meeting held in March, team managers elect members to the Board of Directors.

THESE DIRECTORS meet monthly throughout the year to review and establish policies and rules for the operation of the program, to provide direction concerning financial and administrative operations, and, in November, elect the officers of the corporation. These officers comprise the Executive committee which meets monthly to direct the FAS pro-

gram. The Executive Committee includes the President, 1st Vice President (Umpires), 2nd Vice President (Rules), Secretary, and Treasurer. They serve staggered two-year terms to provide for corporate stability.

Fairfax Adult Softball is a non-profit corporation registered in the state of Virginia which administers the largest adult softball program in the state with nearly 10,000 participants. Additionally, FAS is the largest organization in the nation registered with the Amateur Softball Association, the national governing body of softball.

SLEEP Proposal

FROM PAGE 13

Leake argues that a set-in-stone guarantee has not yet been issued, and her fears will not be put at ease until that happens.

"Our sole mission is to save the swim and dive programs at all of Fairfax County's public high schools," Leake said. "If somehow the SLEEP proposal can have a guarantee in the passage of this initiative that no after-school activities will be lost because of it, then we have no is-

sue. We're just looking for a guarantee."

Miriam Lynch, the swim and dive coach at Lake Braddock, supports the later bell schedule. Just not at the expense of those on her team.

"I have sixth and seventh graders who are looking forward to high school swimming," Lynch said, "and it would be such a heartbreaker to afford them one luxury but then take away another one."

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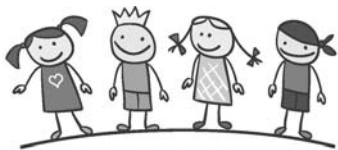
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SYA LACROSSE

Southwestern Youth Association (SYA) is extending the registration for Lacrosse. Age groups which still have openings are U-9 and U-11 boys and girls and U-13 girls. Groups are determined by age of player as of December 31, 2008 and players must reside in the Westfields High School and Centreville High School pyramids. All other age groups are full. Come try a new spring sport! All skill levels welcome; no playing experience is required. Please see information and register online at www.syasports.org

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EMPLOYMENT

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ZONE 4 AD DEADLINE:
WEDNESDAY 1 P.M.

Buy Low, Drive High



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I did something with my wife, Dina, the other day that I haven't done in a very long time. I filled up her car with gasoline for under \$25, and that's with the reserve fuel light on!. Meaning her car wasn't merely low on gas, it was be-low, with very few miles to spare before low was empty and the side of the road was in our sites. A sight that, due to the reduction in the price of a gallon of gasoline (regular was \$1.79 at my local service station this morning), I won't be seeing anytime soon since I can afford to buy before the fuel light illuminates.

However, if I am to stop — and then write — outside my own selfish joy, I suppose I must be concerned about why the price of gasoline is so low; concerned that business is so challenged, shall we say, nation and worldwide; worried that unemployment is increasing, nation and worldwide; and understanding that the declining consumption of fossil fuels are all less than encouraging signs. Signs that the economic bottom has still not been reached and that consumers can't even tolerate the current price (presuming of course, that if the oil companies could charge more and still sell more, they would). I guess, if I understand correctly, if I was paying more, it would be because consumers/businesses are consuming more (and presumably can afford to pay more) and consuming more means the economy is growing and the price would likely increase to reflect the increasing demand (Capitalism at work). And increased demand is a good thing, right?

The cumulative effect for me though, at this moment in time, seems to be new-found money. Money that is now available after gassing and heating up that only a few short months ago was not available. This change gives me more money to spend, but not money to spend on necessities, rather money to spend on "discretionaries." And the more money consumers have to spend on "discretionaries," the more money is spread around and it's that spreading around that makes the world go 'round (at least in my house).

Still, I can't hide my glee at the notion of cheap — relatively and comparatively — gasoline even though intellectually I have come to understand that if "things" weren't so bad economically-speaking, gasoline and to a lesser financial degree, home heating oil, wouldn't have to be so low in order to find buyers for the oil from which these products are refined.

Nevertheless, as bad as those "things" are, I can't imagine how much worse it would be for consumers if the price of gasoline and/or home heating oil were to return anywhere near their '08 peak. But I suppose that couldn't happen unless there were actual buyers increasing their demand which, with a slowing, maybe even contracting world economy, there simply doesn't appear to be. As such, since many consumers/businesses can't afford the price of gasoline/home heating oil at its present level, it seems unlikely to rise appreciably so I suppose I can keep smiling, especially so if I still have a job.

However, if something dramatic were to happen to the supply, then that would be another story, literally, and probably another column or two as well.

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

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Counselor (Position FA292)
Student Services, Woodbridge Campus. Full-time, 12 month faculty position; Starting salary range: \$60,161-\$64,069 + benefits

Position will provide general academic and career counseling to current and prospective students, including program and course selection, transfer planning, new student orientation, high school outreach and career planning. Master's degree in counseling or related with a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in counseling required. Experience counseling at college/university level and with program development desired. Fluency in Spanish a plus. Some evening and weekend hours required.

For more information about Northern Virginia Community College and to apply, visit our website at www.nvcc.edu and choose the link for "Jobs at NOVA." Positions will remain open until filled.

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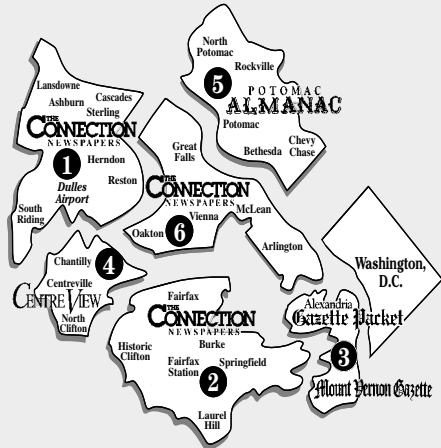
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Tom Sakole and Phil Cox learn how to fight bulls.

Students Journey Abroad

FROM PAGE 5

Sofia, and saw the largest collection of Picasso's works, including his historical painting, 'Guernica,' which is 12 feet tall by 30 feet wide."

Freeman also liked seeing the monkeys at Gibraltar. "They were all around you and really close," she said. "And it was high up so we could see the city, the side of the mountain and the Mediterranean — and it was spectacular. And in La Mancha, the morning sun was so pretty."

She raved about the "really good breads and sandwiches," as well, and called the shopping "awesome." Said Freeman: "I got a lot of cool jewelry — especially some bracelets in Salamanca. And I got some ceramics for my mom."

Freeman even learned about King Charles III and IV and said the whole thing was a fun experience. "You learn to be on your own," she said. "You're responsible for all your belongings and take care of yourself while being in a big group. And it helped to speak Spanish with native speakers. People seemed friendlier and open, and their culture was so incredible. The entire trip was the experience of a lifetime."

JUNIOR TONY PORTS went with the group to Italy, Greece and Turkey, his freshman year, and enjoyed it so much that he was thrilled to travel overseas, once more. Besides that, he said, "Our tour guide, Chris Morrison, is an incredible person so I wanted to see him again."

Ports's favorite part was Gibraltar. "It was beautiful," he said. "You can walk on an airport runway, go up the Rock of Gibraltar and see apes. And in Madrid, we saw the Royal Palace and it was breathtaking — the architecture and the interior — everything was precise and ornate."

He also liked Costa Brava and "being so close to the beach and the nightlife. You could chill out, go eat and go virtual bowling." He said the paella was delicious and, as a souvenir, he bought an inlaid-wood coaster for his family.

And although Ports had a close call with a bull when his leg "got caught between a wall and the bull," it didn't dampen his enthusiasm for the country. "It would be cool to go to the University in Seville," he said. "Living in a different country would be a change of culture and a change of everything."

"Spain is a monarchy and, until 1975, it was under a dictatorship," said Greg Watkins. "In Cordoba, we saw a cathedral with a mosque built on top of it and another cathedral on top of that." Said Kimberly Watkins: "It showed the different ruling governments."

"Spain was ruled by both Christians and Muslims — which is why the excursion to Spain was so important," said Greg Watkins. "Morocco is a Muslim kingdom, but it also had a synagogue and a Catholic church there, next to the mosques."

"I think it's important that students get to experience the world, and I have teachers with them who can explain the educational sites they're seeing," added Kimberly Watkins. "And traveling is education, in itself."

"We were busy, 16-18 hours a day," said Greg Watkins. "We saw and did everything we could."

"I really enjoyed Barcelona," said Kimberly Watkins. "The Gothic quarter there reminds me a little of Paris. And I loved [the architect] Antoni Gaudi's 'La Sagrada de Familia.' It's an unfinished cathedral that's still being built, so it has both modern and old-style architecture."

The trip to Spain was arranged by EF Tours, and Kimberly Watkins said the students behaved well, respected the culture and loved the traveling. "It's nice to see such interest in another country," she said. "Next summer, we'll visit six countries — England, France, Germany, the Czech Republic, Austria and Hungary — for two weeks."

High-school students interested in going need not attend Westfield. They should e-mail thomas.sakole@fcps.edu for more information.



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