

# Herndon High Celebrates Art

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**Hailey O'Brian,  
Haseeb Sarabi  
and Richard  
Costigan, all  
Herndon High  
School seniors,  
participated in  
this year's stu-  
dent-art exhibit.**

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PHOTO BY DANIELLE LANDAU/THE CONNECTION



PHOTOS BY ROBBIE HAMMER/THE CONNECTION NEWSPAPER



Local artist Vicki Blum gives some pointers to a student in the art class she teaches at the Lorton Arts Center on Feb. 8.

Artist Vicki Blum of Clifton helps Meg Baber of Lorton in a class at the Lorton Arts Center on Feb. 8.

## Once a law student, Vicki Blum is now at the head of the art class.

BY AMBER HEALY  
THE CONNECTION

Whether in her Clifton home or a classroom in Herndon or Lorton, Vicki Blum is making the world a brighter place. Using a contrasting palette of warm and cool oil paints, she finds a dab here and a swish there can make a world of difference.

A painting teacher for only a short time, Blum divides her time between two of Fairfax County's newest haven for artists: ArtSpace in Herndon and the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton.

"What a bonanza for this area," she said of her classrooms and the gallery space they provide for herself and her students. "It's all really fantastic."

The whole Northern Virginia area has an abundance of artistic talent, Blum said, from the artist groups in Great Falls where she got her start, to the Torpedo Factory where she took some early classes. Even in her Clifton backyard, Blum has helped the talent in her own community, helping to coordinate last year's art show and in the planning of the town's barn dances each fall for the past several years.

**BLUM** started painting about 12 years ago, when she finished college classes and decided to re-engage in a favorite hobby.

"I've loved to paint and draw since I was a kid, and I took a few classes in college, but after graduating law school, I realized I wasn't happy," Blum said. She decided to do something just for her, and shortly thereafter she enrolled in a class at the Art League in Alexandria, better known as the Torpedo Factory. That was the end of her unhappiness.

"I started taking one class and never looked back," she said.

Soon, Blum was taking masters level courses, traveling for shows and classes and learning how to work through creative dry spells and difficult pieces.



Vicki Blum, teaches painting classes at the Lorton Arts Center.

## Portrait of an Artist

"I started taking one class and never looked back."

— Vicki Blum

**IN THE MEANTIME**, Blum will continue teaching at both facilities and enjoy living in Clifton with her husband, Dave, a life-long Clifton resident, and their son, David, 7, a student at St. Leo the Great Catholic School in Fairfax.

Blum muses that becoming a painter full time is a nice idea, but one of her former classmates and teachers, Kurt Schwarz, is convinced she could make the switch from part-time painter to full-time artist.

"She's a very hard worker, very dedicated," said Schwarz, whom Blum met at the Torpedo Factory more than a decade ago. "She's very talented with her color and her brush work. She's developed a technique of teaching where she starts a painting in a bit of an earth tone background and makes it work. It's a very individual style and I'm very proud of her."

Schwarz said Blum could very well make a full-time living as an artist if she wanted to, a vote of confidence not many artists will ever hear.

While Blum's students would no doubt support her if she chose to paint full time, they would undoubtedly miss her optimism and sunny disposition.

"She is the definition of vitality," said Tricia Ratliff, a student in Blum's Herndon class. "I really think for her, the world is a happy place."

Ratliff likes the personal attention she gets from Blum's classes and the help she's received on her own projects.

"I haven't been able to find a class like this anywhere," she said. "If you're working on a project for a gallery exhibit, she coaches you to make the outcome more successful."

Blum has become a fixture in the Northern Virginia art scene; she is the Maryland and Virginia ambassador to the Portrait Society of America and is currently working on their annual conference in Reston later this spring. She's already hoping to be invited back to teach at both the ArtSpace in Herndon and the Workhouse in Lorton for the spring sessions.

"Teaching isn't something I set out to do, but I really enjoy it," she said.

"We had to do things over and over again and wipe it away and try it again," Blum said. "I became a much faster painter, I got comfortable using bolder strokes."

She hopes her students are enjoying her classes as much as she is enjoying teaching them.

"When I decided to start, it was because folks asked me what they should do to fix their projects," she said. "It was so much fun. I loved looking at a project and saying, 'OK, this is what you need to do,' and seeing how the painting came together. I enjoyed the ability to show how not difficult it can be."

**THE CLASSES IN HERNDON**, on Thursday evenings, are for beginning and intermediate painters and center on a particular topic. Blum brings in various objects for her students to paint and helps them when they ask for her advice.

Some day, when Blum has free time between teaching classes and her full-time job as a mortgage banking lobbyist — she admits it's been a "complex" job as of late — Blum would like to take a dance class at the Workhouse or branch out to paint landscapes.

"Every time I drive by the creek in Clifton, I'd like to jump out of my car, set up an easel and paint it," she said. "There's one area in particular, where the creek bends with fallen trees, but I know people love to paint the General Store."

She'd also like to do more portraits, where the strokes aren't as daring and the real challenge is making the final product resemble the subject.

"Portraits are very intense and you have to take a concentrated approach," she said. "With a still life, there's paint flying around. When you do a portrait, you can really enjoy the concept of putting colors down."



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Crossfield student Coleman Jenkins plays the Fraction Game with his mother and sister at Mathapalooza.

# Mathapalooza Returns to Crossfield

Crossfield Elementary invites families to third annual Math Night.

Crossfield Elementary School held its third annual Mathapalooza, also known as Math Night, Thursday, Feb. 5. Families came to the school to participate in games and activities centered around math and involving esti-

mation, graphing, multiplication, division, addition, subtraction, fractions and more. At a CSPN Zone set up in the gym, children played sports that involved math and the children enjoyed sharing their number sense with their parents.

# Boundary Changes Close to Approval

## Board Receptive to Recommended Boundaries

After a few minor adjustments are made, the Fairfax County School Board is likely to approve the new western Fairfax County elementary-school boundaries proposed by staff earlier this year.

"I think it's pretty close. It is really the only possible way to address the overcrowding at Oak Hill [Elementary School]," said School Board member Stuart Gibson (Hunter Mill), who represents part of the area affected by the school redistricting.

Fairfax County Public Schools must adjust attendance areas to accommodate the opening of the new Coppermine Elementary School in the Herndon area next year.

Gibson and other School Board members discussed the school boundary changes during a work session Feb. 9. They will vote on the final elementary-school boundary changes Feb. 19.

If the School Board adopts the staff's boundary proposal, attendance areas at Herndon, McNair, Hutchinson, Oak Hill and Floris elementary schools would change. As part of the proposal, school officials have also recommended opening a new gifted and talented center at McNair and some students currently attending the center at Oak Hill would be likely to move.

Gibson said he is in favor of many parts of the recommendations, particularly the

### Elementary School Demographics Before and After Boundary Change:

The following chart shows how demographics at each of the elementary schools would change as a result of Fairfax County Public Schools staff recommendation. The percentages reflect the portion of the student body that would fall into each category both before and after the staff boundary was adopted. Poor students are defined as those who qualify for free or reduced-price lunches. ESOL students are those who qualify for English-as-a-second-language services.

	Before Boundary Change	After Boundary Change
<b>Floris</b>		
Poor	3.5%	3.4%
ESOL	5.7%	4.6%
<b>Oak Hill</b>		
Poor	4.4%	4.1%
ESOL	4.6%	3.9%
<b>McNair</b>		
Poor	47.3%	36.0%
ESOL	28.9%	20.2%
<b>Coppermine</b>		
Poor	-	43.9%
SOL	-	27.9%
<b>Hutchinson</b>		
Poor	36.5%	37.8%
ESOL	54.9%	56.4%
<b>Herndon</b>		
Poor	23.8%	25.9%
ESOL	34.2%	36.7%

new McNair gifted and talented center, which he said may attract some families living in the attendance area back to the school that currently attend elsewhere. But he did worry that the recommendation may continue to leave Floris overcrowded.

School Board member Kathy Smith, who also represents the area, said she did not support parts of the staff recommendation that moved particular neighborhoods from Floris to Oak Hill.

If the staff recommendations were adopted, Coppermine Elementary would open as a "Title I" school, an institution that receives extra money from the federal government because more than 40 percent of its student population is considered poor.

McNair, which currently has a large low-income population, would lose its "Title I" status under the staff proposal.

— JULIA O'DONOGHUE

### VIEWPOINTS

## Valentine's Day: Celebration of Love

— MERRILL ROTH AND DANIELLE LANDAU



Nicole Landau, Oak Hill, The Madeira School, ninth grade

"My friends and I exchange hugs, sweets and cards on Valentine's Day. It is such a feel-good holiday. Everyone really has an opportunity to 'spread the love'."



Sam Faktorow of Reston, Langley High School Class of '09

"I don't really like Valentine's Day because it is very commercialized. It's not so much about love as making up for treating your significant other poorly the rest of the year. It makes people feel better about not being the best boyfriend or girlfriend, but I think if you really care about someone you should treat them well every day of the year, not just one day and if not you should break up. I think they should change the name to Hallmark Day."



Clint Leonard, McLean High School Class of '09

"It's a day where people love each other."

Natalie Holm, McLean High School

"It's just a day where you can go all out about your feelings for someone. On a normal day it would be weird, but Valentine's Day gives you an excuse."

# Bulova Becomes Chairman

**Democrat wins special election by slim margin Feb. 3.**

BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE  
THE CONNECTION

**F**ormer Braddock District Supervisor Sharon Bulova (D) was sworn in as the Fairfax County Board of Supervisor's newest chairman at the county government center Feb. 6.

Bulova defeated Springfield Supervisor Patrick Herrity (R) by 1,217 votes, a margin of less than two percent, in a special election for the countywide seat three days earlier. She replaces now U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11), who left the office to join the U.S. Congress in early January.

A 21-year county board veteran, Bulova serves as chair of the supervisor's budget committee and was a founder of the Virginia Railway Express (VRE), a commuter train to Washington D.C. with stations in southern and central Fairfax.

In opening remarks at the swearing in ceremony, Fairfax County public information officer Merni Fitzgerald also said Bulova had "championed the redevelopment of Tysons Corner as an environmental project," while serving as Braddock District supervisor.

**AS CHAIRMAN**, Bulova has her work cut out for her in 2009. Fairfax County must close a projected \$650 million budget hole in the annual budget that begins in July.

Approximately 75 percent of the local government's revenue comes from real estate taxes and the county's property values have fallen significantly. The supervisors would have to raise the real estate property tax rate 14 to 15 cents just to keep county revenue at the same level as last year.

According to Bulova, residents should brace themselves for some cuts to county services, though Fairfax will try to take care of its most vulnerable citizens.

"We will adopt changes that will bring our budget into equilibrium ... [But we] need to take care of those among us who need our help now more than ever," said the new chairman at the swearing in ceremony.

"Working together, we will come through these difficult financial times. ... The darkest hour is just before the dawn," she added.

**THOUGH FACING** a tough situation, Fairfax County's economy is also resilient, according to Bulova.

Hilton Hotels recently decided to move its headquarters to Fairfax over other local jurisdictions. The military's Base Realignment And Closure process will also bring new jobs and economic development to the southern part of the county, said Bulova.



Sharon Bulova addressed the crowd after her swearing in as Fairfax County chairman Feb. 6.



Judge Jan Brodie swore in Sharon Bulova as the new Fairfax County chairman Feb. 6.

As chairman, Bulova will also push for the extension of Metro rail west in the Interstate 66 corridor and the expansion of VRE services, she said.

**HERRITY**, whose father served as board chairman in the 1970s and 1980s, attended Bulova's swearing-in ceremony.

His race with Bulova is the closest high-profile countywide contest between a Democrat and Republican in several years. The last two Fairfax County chairmen, both Democrats, won their seats by a larger margin than Bulova did last week.

Former chairman Kate Hanley beat former Supervisor Elaine McConnell (R-Springfield) in a 1995 special election with 52 percent of the vote and approximately 3,500 ballots. In 2004, Connolly won his first chairman's race by nine points and approximately 17,000 ballots.

Bulova lost two magisterial districts, Mount Vernon and Dranesville, which Hanley and Connolly had won over the past four election cycles.

## Fairfax County Chairman Special Election Results

Fairfax County provided these returns for the Fairfax County chairman special election Feb. 3.

District	Voter Turnout (%)	Bulova	Herrity
Braddock	22.7	8,750	5,849
Hunter Mill	15.5	6,655	5,129
Dranesville	17.1	5,810	6,252
Lee	13.3	4,665	3,489
Mason	15.7	4,510	3,519
Mount Vernon	14.7	5,066	5,256
Providence	14.7	5,148	4,356
Springfield	18.9	5,758	9,155
Sully	11.9	3,437	5,023
Absentee	-	2,150	2,704
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>51,965</b>	<b>50,759</b>

Herrity said the election results prove that not all residents are pleased with the direction of the county's leadership in recent years.

"I am going to continue to stand up for what I believe in. ... Clearly there is a difference of opinion in the county," he said.

**THE ELECTION RESULTS** do not necessarily reflect the views of the larger electorate. Voter turnout for the special election, at 16.1 percent, was low countywide.

Of the Fairfax's nine magisterial districts, Braddock — which Bulova has represented for over 20 years — had the highest voter turnout of 22 percent. Springfield — which Herrity and his father have both represented — had the second highest, with 18.9 percent.

With 11.9 percent, Sully was the magisterial district with the lowest turnout in the special election. It is also the only district besides Herrity's Springfield that is represented by a Republican, Michael Frey, on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

## WEEK IN HERNDON

### Police Conclude Crash Investigation

The police department investigation of the crash that resulted in the death of Joseph Taylor of Herndon has concluded with the following findings: There was an approximate one hour delay in initial reporting of the crash; The crash most likely occurred shortly after midnight; Speed and alcohol were factors in the crash; Taylor was not wearing a seatbelt; The cause of death was a broken neck, according to the medical examiner.

Around 2:24a.m. on Thursday, Jan. 1, police responded to the area of Dranesville Road and Powells Tavern Place for a vehicle that reportedly struck a fence and fled. Officers did not find the striking vehicle.

Later that same morning, around 9:51 a.m. officers were again called to the same area for a vehicle that crashed through a fence. Officers located the vehicle, a 1997 Mazda, in the backyard of a home in the 1300 block of Rock Chapel Road. It appears the vehicle was traveling north on Dranesville Road. Just after Powells Tavern Place, the driver lost control and crossed over the median into the southbound lanes. The car struck the curb, rolled through two fences and then struck a house where it came to rest. The house was unoccupied at the time. The driver, a 31-year-old Herndon-area man was pronounced dead at the scene.

### Discussion of Intelligence Issues

The Hazak Active Retirees Chapter of Congregation Beth Emeth, Herndon, will present a talk by Mark Lowenthal, formerly assistant director of Central Intelligence for Analysis and Production, Tuesday, Feb. 17, at 1 p.m.

Lowenthal has written extensively on intelligence and national security issues, including five books and more than 90 articles or studies. His most recent book, "Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy," has become the standard college and graduate school textbook on the subject. Lowenthal will offer an overview of the relationship between the American and Israeli intelligence communities.

There is no cost and light refreshments are served. For more information, call 703-860-4515, Ext. 127. Congregation Beth Emeth is located at 12523 Lawyers Road, Herndon.

BUSINESS

# Remodeling the Process

New local business attempts to defy recession by changing the way homeowners renovate.

By MIKE DiCICCO  
THE CONNECTION

By most accounts, this is not the best time to start a business in the home industry, but that is what Herndon resident Mina Fies did last month, when she launched Synergy Design and Construction Inc. The Reston-based company consists of Fies, her husband Mark and designer Michelle Cini, who currently lives in D.C. but plans to return soon to her hometown of Reston.

The trio hopes to find success despite the plummeting economy by reshaping the process of home renovation.

The concept is relatively simple. Normally, homeowners who want to renovate contact a number of contractors and each company comes up with its own vision for the project and its own price tag. Instead, Synergy works through a detailed design with the homeowner and then puts the project out to bid among three or four of the 11 or so contractors with whom the company partners.

SEE BEAUTIFYING HOME, PAGE 15



From left, Mina and Mark Fies and Michelle Cini of Synergy Design and Construction sit in the home theater in Brian and Suzanne Pirko's basement, which Cini and Fies designed.

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# OPINION

## Gun Show Loop Hole Stays Open

**Affront to families of Virginia Tech victims leaves option open for felons and people with documented mental illness to buy guns.**

It's a common sense measure that wouldn't stop a single qualified Virginian from buying a gun. We have the technology to implement it without massive expense or additional bureaucracy.

Right now, some of the guns sold at gun shows in Virginia are sold without the background check required of gun sales in any other official setting. This allows even convicted felons, stalkers with restraining orders against them, and people with documented mental health problems that could make them a danger to themselves or others a clear path to purchasing a firearm.

There is no reason for this.

In November, at the "Nation's Gun Show" the Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly was the scene of record gun sales. It was an ebullient gathering of people with shared interests, and no doubt all but the tiniest percentage of participants were law-abiding, responsible people, fully qualified to own the guns they were buying. The record sales were motivated in part because of concern by some gun enthusiasts about new restrictions on some firearms that could come with Democratic control of Congress and the White House, and in part because of the recession.

### EDITORIAL

Why would those people want to run the risk that a tragedy like the one at Virginia Tech nearly two years ago that claimed the lives of 33 people would involve a gun purchased without a proper background check at the Nation's Gun Show?

For the record, the Virginia Tech shooter was able to buy his guns legally because his name was mistakenly not included on the list of those excluded from gun ownership; he was previously ruled a danger to himself or others and should not have been able to buy from a licensed gun dealer. But if he had been excluded through normal means, he could have traveled a few miles from his home to the gun show in Chantilly in search of weapons he could buy without a background check.

In any event, legislation in the General Assembly that would have closed the gun show loophole is dead for this year. Only one Northern Virginia senator, Ken Cuccinelli, voted against closing the loophole.

### COMMUNITY NOTES

Send information to [herndon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:herndon@connectionnewspapers.com) or call 703-917-6437. Deadline is Thursday. Photos/artwork welcome.

All 37 **Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department stations** are holding a food drive for local homeless shelters through Wednesday, Feb. 11. Drop off non-perishable food items at all stations.

The **Herndon Police Department** is now seeking children ages 14-17 to attend the Youth Police Academy on Thursday evenings, March 5-May 7, 6-8 p.m. at the Herndon Police Department, 397 Herndon Parkway. The Youth Police Academy is a 10-week program that offers area teens a better understanding of the Police Department and a greater awareness of the daily challenges faced by police officers. Fee: \$10. Applicants must provide their own transportation to and from training. Acceptance into the program is subject to review of applicant's criminal record and police contact history. For an application visit [www.herndonva.gov](http://www.herndonva.gov) or contact PFC Christopher W. Farbry at 703-435-3134 or [Christopher.Farbry@herndonva.gov](mailto:Christopher.Farbry@herndonva.gov).

The **American Legion**, Wayne M. Kidwell, Post voted to donate a total of \$7,000 dollars to the following Veteran organizations: VA Veterans Care Center, DC VA Medical Center, Angel of Mercy, Marine Semper Fi Fund and Fisher House Foundations. These funds were raised during the Memorial Day Poppy Campaign and Snow Cone sales at the

Herndon Festival last year. In addition to the organizations above, a donation will also be made to the Herndon High School Naval Junior ROTC in appreciation for all the help they provide the Post throughout the year.

**Partial scholarships are available for new English as a**

**Second Language (ESL) classes.** Northern Virginia Community College and The Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce are now enrolling qualified participants for new ESL for Employment classes that start in February. To qualify for the matching scholarship, applicants need to be from moderate-income households, complete NOVA's ESL screening test and present documentation needed to work for U.S. employers. To learn more about any of NOVA's 8 ESL for Employment class locations for the Spring 2009 semester, call 703-764-7779 or e-mail [eslemployment@nvcc.edu](mailto:eslemployment@nvcc.edu).

The **Fairfax County Police Department** is seeking residents to attend the upcoming Spring Citizens Police Academy, held Thursday evenings March 12-May 16, 6:30-10 p.m. The Citizens Police Academy is a 10-week program and classes are a combination of lecture and interactive activities. Topics include SWAT and special operations, gangs, 911 communications center, patrol, crime prevention, crime scene, identity theft and a tour of the Adult Detention Center. The program is offered free of charge. Applicants must live or work in Fairfax County, be 18 and provide their own transportation. E-mail [CPA@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:CPA@fairfaxcounty.gov) or call 703-280-0713 for applications.

**Mothers First-Herndon/Reston** is a nonprofit support organization helping women transition from careers to at-home motherhood. Meetings are on the **first and second Wednesdays** of each month at 10 a.m. at the Herndon Fortnightly Library, 768 Center St., Herndon. Mothers First will go on a field trip to the Udvar Hazy Air and Space Museum Feb. 18, 4:15 p.m. RSVP to 703-467-0391.

**Square dances** at the Herndon Senior Center, 873 Grace St., Herndon, **every Saturday**. \$5 for 6 classes for seniors, \$10 for non-seniors. Call 703-464-6200.

### BULLETIN BOARD

To have community events listed in the Connection, send to [herndon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:herndon@connectionnewspapers.com) or call 703-917-6437 with questions. Deadline is Friday.

#### WEDNESDAY/FEB. 11

**Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee.** 7 p.m., Hoover Conference Room, 765 Lynn Street, Herndon. The Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee will meet. Call 703-435-6804.

#### FRIDAY/FEB. 13

**Lincoln-Reagan Dinner.** The Republican Club of Greater Reston is hosting the seventh annual Lincoln-Reagan Dinner at 6:30 p.m. at the Hidden Creek Country Club, 1711 Clubhouse Road, Reston. \$50/person. RSVP by Feb. 9 to RCGR, P.O. Box 2891, Reston VA 20195.

#### WEDNESDAY/FEB. 18

**MOMS Club.** 10-11:30 a.m., Herndon Community Center, 814 Ferndale Ave., Herndon. The MOMS Club of Herndon will host its monthly meeting. All Herndon and Oak Hill stay at home mothers are welcome. E-mail [herndon\\_moms\\_info@yahoo.com](mailto:herndon_moms_info@yahoo.com).

#### MONDAY/FEB. 23

**NARFE Meeting.** 11:30 a.m., Amphora's Diner Deluxe, 1151 Elden St., Herndon. The National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association Chapter 1241 will have a luncheon meeting. Christopher D. Allen, Advanced Financial Advisor, Ameriprise Financial Services, will speak. Call 703-435-3523 to make your choice of lunch entree for \$16. Visit [www.vanarfe.org/1241/1241news.pdf](http://www.vanarfe.org/1241/1241news.pdf).

### VOLUNTEERING

**Become a volunteer stream monitor** and help Reston Association assess the health of our streams. Assist with stream monitoring at several locations throughout Reston during all season. A **training workshop** will be held **Feb. 11, 7:30-9:30 p.m.**, at 1930 Isaac Newton Square, Reston. Contact Ha Brock, Volunteer Coordinator, at 703-435-7986.

The **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program** is seeking volunteers to deliver free tax preparation services at no cost to working families and individuals. Volunteers contribute a few hours weekly during tax season to help prepare tax returns, or serve as greeters, screeners, site coordinators and interpreters. To register as a volunteer contact James Do at 571-749-7838, TTY 703-533-5316, or [james.do@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:james.do@fairfaxcounty.gov).

### Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors. Send to:

Letters to the Editor  
The Connection  
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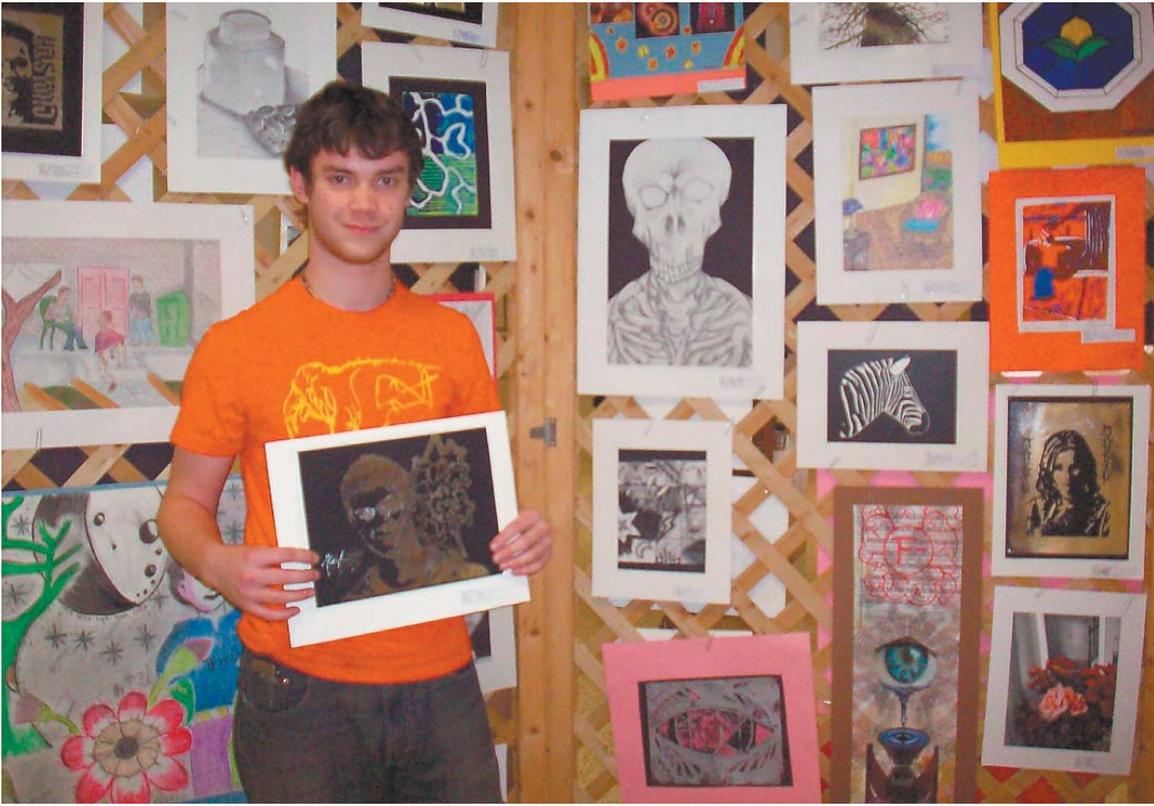
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Richard Costigan, a senior from Herndon, with his artwork.

# Herndon High Celebrates Art

The 19th Herndon High School Art Show showcases art students' talents.

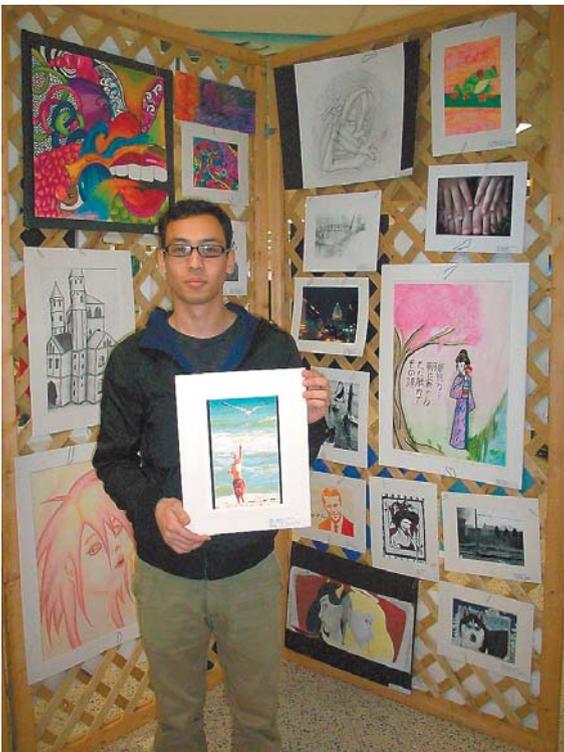
Once again, the Herndon Fine Arts Department extended an invitation to experience the Herndon High School annual student-art exhibit. In both the teachers' and the student's opinions, this year trumps past years in the diversity of contributions. The art show, a collection of more than 1,000 pieces, was displayed in the gym foyer and showcased artwork from every art class. The long list includes 3-D, photo, computer graphics and many more media. Haseeb Sarabi, a senior in both AP Photo and AP Studio classes, said, "This year there is much more of a stress

on social issues, current events and politics."

The artwork ranged from photographs, to prints, to drawings and even computer-altered images. Susan Silva, a faculty member in the Fine Arts Department, said she was truly impressed with this, her first show at Herndon High School. Silva said, "It is great to see the students display their work like this. There is no pressure because there are no awards, so the students can just strut their stuff."

Wayne Zink, also an art teacher at Herndon High School, has been involved with this show for years. "There is not only more artwork this year, there is more of a range of types of art styles. I'm really impressed with my students." The show came down this past Friday as the Herndon Fine Arts Department started brainstorming for next year's show.

— DANIELLE LANDAU



Haseeb Sarabi with his photograph.



Hailey O'Brian, a senior from Reston.

PHOTOS BY DANIELLE LANDAU/THE CONNECTION

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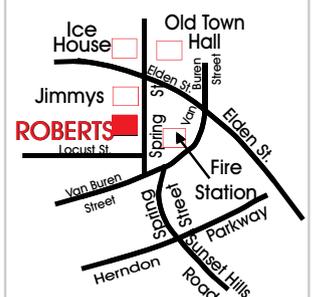
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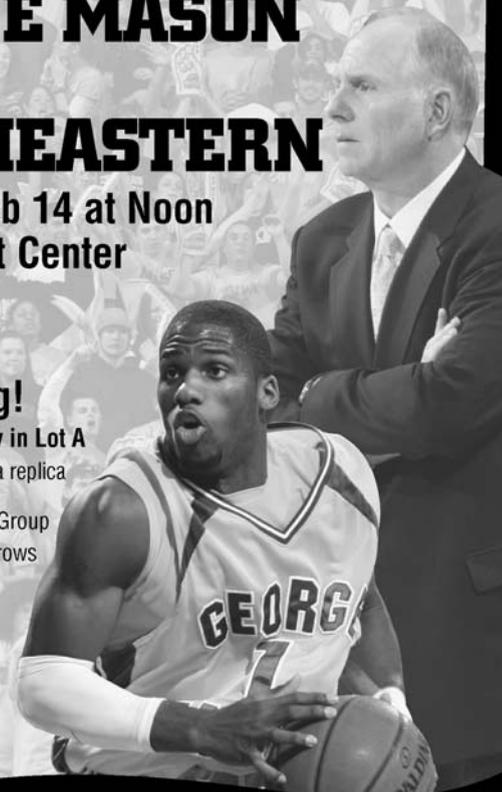
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## CALENDAR

Send announcements to herndon@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-917-6437. Deadline is Thursday for the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged. For additional listings, visit www.connectionnewspapers.com.

### WEDNESDAY/FEB. 11

**Adult Book Discussion.** 10:30 a.m., Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Call for title. Call 703-689-2700.

**I Love the Color Red.** 10:30 a.m., Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Stories and activities. Ages 2-3 with an adult. Call 703-689-2700.

**Valentine's Day Storytime.** 11 a.m., Herndon Fortnightly Library, 768 Center St., Herndon. Celebrate Valentine's Day with stories, songs, activities and a craft. Ages 2-5 with adult. Call 703-437-8855.

**Spanish Chats.** 7 p.m., Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Informal refresher for people who want to practice Spanish. Adults only. Call 703-689-2700.

### FRIDAY/FEB. 13

**Lincoln Day Dinner.** 6:30 p.m., Hidden Creek Country Club, 1711 Clubhouse Road, Reston. Reston Republicans will host the seventh annual Lincoln Day Dinner. Choice of entree (NY Strip Steak or Chicken Florentine), salad, dessert, champagne toast, glass wine. Cash bar. \$50/person. Mail check and stating entree preference to RGR, P.O. Box 2891, Reston, VA 20195. Call 703.406.9740.

### SATURDAY/FEB. 14

**The Fabulous Hubcaps.** The Fabulous Hubcaps, an oldies and classic rock show band, will perform at the Herndon Community Center, 814 Ferndale Ave., 8-11:30 p.m. Tickets: \$35/person. Call Yvonne at 571-313-0189 or e-mail Chris at cmogensen@cox.net.

**Contra Dance.** 7:15-10:45, Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Celebrate Valentine's as

### ART

An exhibition of **contemporary landscape paintings and sculpture** will be on display at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon, through **March 9**. The reception will be held Feb. 21, 5-7 p.m. Large paintings by Jo Fleming of Great Falls and bronze sculptures by Bill Moore of Silver Spring, MD will be shown.

The **Elden Street Players** received 13 nominations for outstanding performance in three productions during calendar year 2008. The Washington Area Community Theatre Honors program announced the nominations at The Birchmere in Alexandria. WATCH is an organization of thirty area community theater companies founded for the adjudication and presentation of annual awards recognizing artistic and technical excellence in community theatre throughout the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area. The awards ceremony will be held March 1, 7 p.m., at the Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria.

Mandarin Oriental, Washington D.C., in association with Galerie Brigitte of Reston, presents an exhibit of modern lacquer, Vietnamese paintings, "**Blending Traditions: Contemporary Lacquer**" by Duong Sen. The gallery, located on the ballroom mezzanine level of Mandarin Oriental, Washington, D.C., will run the exhibit **now through February**. The artwork is available for

Susan Taylor calls a contra dance to the music of the June Apple Band. Beginners' workshop 7:15-8 p.m., dance 8-10:45 p.m. Admission: \$7 (workshop free). Partner not necessary. Bring snack to share (juice provided). Call 703-476-4500.

**Valentine's Day at the Hyatt.** Hyatt Regency Reston, 1800 Presidents St., Reston. The Hyatt is offering two packages for Valentine's Day. Enjoy a three-course dinner at the hotel's Market Street Bar & Grill Restaurant, breakfast for two and champagne and strawberries for \$269 per couple. Stay in the Presidential Suite, have Dom Perignon, chocolates and more and wake up to breakfast in bed for \$2,999.99 per couple. Call 703-709-1234 for reservations.

**Chocolate Festival.** 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Floris United Methodist Church, 13600 Frying Pan Road, Herndon. Floris United is hosting the 17th Annual Chocolate Festival to raise funds for charity. This event is open to everyone in the community and will feature chocolate, music, games, door prizes, a silent auction and a live auction. For every package of diapers brought to donate, one raffle ticket will be given. Call 703-793-0026.

### SUNDAY/FEB. 15

**Capitol Steps.** The Capitol Steps Benefit Performance to benefit Reston Interfaith will take place at 7 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Reston, 1800 Presidents St., Reston. Enjoy wine, desserts, a live and silent auction and sponsorship opportunities. Call Amy McDowell, Events and Communications Manager, at 571-323-9582 or Amy.McDowell@restoninterfaith.org or visit www.restoninterfaith.org to sign up.

### WEDNESDAY/FEB. 18

**Newsseum Trip.** 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Join Reston Association for a trip to the Newsseum, the world's most interactive museum. This trip is for Senior adults, 55 years and older. Bus pick up locations at Hunters Wood Shopping Center, Thoreau Place and Lake Anne Fellowship House. \$30/



**The Greater Reston Arts Center, 12001 Market St., Suite 103, Reston, will hold "Focus Exhibitions" through Feb. 14. Works from Erin Antognoli, Joy Every and Marcia Wolfson Ray will be on display.**

purchase through Galerie Brigitte. Call 703-860-2345 or visit www.galeriebrigitte.com.

Works by **Matthew Best** will be on display **through April 6** at the Greater Reston Arts Center, 12001 Market St., Suite 103, Reston.



**Australia's Audrey Auld will be performing her acoustic roots music Sunday, Feb. 15, 4 p.m., at the Tortilla Factory, 648 Elden St., Herndon. Tickets: \$20. Call 703-620-3168.**

Reston Residents; \$36/Non-Reston Residents. Call 703-435-6577 to register.

### THURSDAY/FEB. 19

**Canines in Reston.** 7-8 p.m., Reston Association, 1930 Isaac Newton Square, Reston. Learn about the coyote and how they are changing fox behavior. \$3/RA members; \$5/non-residents. Reservations required by Feb. 17; call 703-435-6530.

### SATURDAY/FEB. 21

**Norman Wright and the Travelers** are performing their bluegrass music at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 1090 Sterling Road, Herndon, 7:30 p.m. Tickets: \$12; call 703-435-8377.

**Reston Chorale.** 6 and 8 p.m., Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. The Reston Chorale will perform two shows. Visit www.restonchorale.org.

### SUNDAY/FEB. 22

**Jazz Meets Rock.** 2-3 p.m., Frying Pan Farm Park, 2739 W. Ox Road, Herndon. Explore the evolution of style during the years when greats like John Coltrane and Grover Washington were kings. Free. Call 703-437-9101.

**Capitol Steps.** 7 p.m., Herndon High School Auditorium. The award winning political satire group Capitol

**Audition.** 7:30 p.m., Lindsay C. Petersen Hall, 266 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. The Reston Community Players are holding auditions for their production of "Laughing Stock." There are 9 male roles and 5 female roles.

### SATURDAY/FEB. 28

**Audition.** 2 p.m., Lindsay C. Petersen Hall, 266 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. The Reston Community Players are holding auditions for their production of "Laughing Stock." There are 9 male roles and 5 female roles.

### THEATER

"**Shining City,**" Elden Street Players at the Industrial Strength Theatre, **through Feb. 14**. See eldenstreetplayers.org.

"**Hansel & Gretel,**" Theater for Young Audiences, Elden Street Players at the Industrial Strength Theatre, **through Feb. 15**. See eldenstreetplayers.org.

"**The Full Monty,**" Reston Community Players at CenterStage of the Reston Community Center, 8 p.m., Friday, **March 6**; 8 p.m. Saturday, **March 7**; 8 p.m., Friday, **March 13**; 8 p.m., Saturday, **March 14** (sign interpretation); 2:30 p.m., Sunday, **March 15**; 8 p.m., Friday, **March 20**; and 8 p.m., Saturday, **March 21**; 2:30 p.m., Sunday, **March 22**; 8 p.m., Friday, **March 27**, and 8 p.m., Saturday, **March 28**. See www.restonplayers.org.

"**Falsettos,**" Elden Street Players at the Industrial Strength Theatre, **March 13-April 4**. See eldenstreetplayers.org.

"**Something Different 2009,**"

Theater for Young Audiences, Elden Street Players at the Industrial Strength Theatre, **March 21-April 5**. See eldenstreetplayers.org.

"**Laughing Stock,**" Reston Community Players at CenterStage of the Reston Community Center, 8 p.m., Friday, **May 1**; 8 p.m. Saturday, **May 2**; 8 p.m., Friday, **May 8**; 8 p.m., Saturday, **May 9** (sign interpretation); 2:30 p.m., Sunday, **May 10**; 8 p.m., Friday, **May 15**, and 8 p.m., Saturday, **May 16**. See www.restonplayers.org.

"**The History Boys,**" Elden Street Players at the Industrial Strength Theatre, **June 5-27**. See eldenstreetplayers.org.

"**Fairytales in Training,**" Theater for Young Audiences, Elden Street Players at the Industrial Strength Theatre, **June 13-28**. See eldenstreetplayers.org.

"**Amour,**" Elden Street Players at the Industrial Strength Theatre, **July 31-Aug. 22**. See eldenstreetplayers.org.

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## THE COUNTY LINE

# Getting Started on Start Times

## School Board asks for answers on impact to athletics.

BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE  
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County School Board members pushed staff to answer questions about the impacts of changing school start times as they launched a community outreach effort this week.

The School Board is considering moving back start times for older students, in part because research suggests it is beneficial for teenagers to start school later so they don't need to rise so early. With current start times, high school and secondary school buses pick students up shortly after 6 a.m.

The proposal would also affect the start times for several elementary schools since Fairfax County Public Schools uses the same buses in three different shifts to carry the entire student population to school.

Currently, Fairfax schools start between 7:20 a.m. and 9:25 a.m., with most high schools in the "first tier" of school start times, beginning before 8 a.m. Under the new proposal, which could go into effect next year, all schools would start between 7:50 a.m. and 9:40 a.m., with no high school classes getting under way earlier than 8:30 a.m.

The school system hopes to get feedback from the public on the proposal at seven community dialogues scheduled for Feb. 24, 25 and 26.

They are also encouraging residents to fill out a new survey about the bell schedule change, which can be found at <http://www.fcps.edu/news/start>.

The School Board expects vote on the bell schedule proposal in early March.

**FOR YEARS**, a group of citizens have been advocating for the later high school start times, attending nearly every school board meeting and signing up to provide public testimony on a regular basis. They formed the organization SLEEP, which stands for Start Later for Excellence in Education Proposal, and collected thousands of signatures in support of their cause.

But recently, community members wary

## Community Dialogues on Bell Schedule Changes

The School Board will hold public meetings about proposed changes to school start times. Note multiple locations on each night.

**FEB. 24, 7 P.M. – 9 P.M.**

Annandale High School, Longfellow Middle School, Oak View Elementary School

**FEB. 25, 7 P.M. – 9 P.M.**

Herndon High School, Rocky Run Middle School

**FEB. 26, 7 P.M. – 9 P.M.**

Providence Elementary School, Whitman Middle School

of the initiative, particularly those who have concerns about its impact on high school activities like sports, have started to organize in opposition to later start times.

They formed advocacy organizations like WAKE (Worried About Keeping Extracurriculars) and SOS (Save Our Sport). Many are particularly concerned how later start times might impact the high school swim program.

**DURING A WORK SESSION** Feb. 9, some School Board members pressed staff for answers regarding the later high school start times' effect on "late buses," which provide transportation for students participating in sports and other programs after school.

## Get Involved

Fill out a new survey about proposed bell schedule changes at <http://www.fcps.edu/news/start.htm>. A list of current start times and proposed start times for every school in the county is available at the same site.

The school system's transportation department was unable to give specifics on the later high school start times impact on "late bus runs." But transportation official Linda Farby said the buses would need roughly 30 more minutes to come back to the high schools after their traditional afternoon drop-offs.

Instead of elementary schools, several middle schools would be among the last dismissals in the school system each day and buses would have to complete longer routes before coming back to pick up students at high school late for sports events or other activities, said Farby.

"The answer is yes it will delay late bus service," she said of the proposal to change the bell schedule.

**THE SCHOOL SYSTEM** could also face a shortage of bus drivers if the high school start times — and therefore the high school "late buses" — were pushed back since some employees are not willing to work the later hours, according to Farby.

Farby also left open the possibility that the school system could be forced to lease or rent more vehicles to help with "late bus" transportation if the existing fleet was not able to accommodate the later transportation schedule by itself in a timely manner.

Under the current proposal, the school system would save money if it switched to later school start times, though the need to rent or lease more buses could affect the estimates of the proposal's cost savings, according to staff.

School Board member Kathy Smith (Sully), who has been skeptical of the proposal to change the bell schedule, said officials also have no way of modeling how the new bell schedule would interact with traffic patterns.

"This model does not and cannot tell you the effect of being in traffic," said Smith.

Some school staff said it is also difficult to judge the impact a bell schedule change could have on high school sports travel, given that team schedules are likely to

change if the proposal takes effect next year.

For example, in order to accommodate the later high school start times, more games and sporting events are likely to take place on Saturday, said school officials.

But School Board members generally supportive of the bell schedule change said staff should provide more specific information, not just speculation, about the impact the later high school start times would have on after-school activities like sports.

"I think it is a mistake to go into town hall meetings without any more information. ... [The information on late buses] should be made available to the public," said School Board member Kaye Kory (Mason).

"I would say if we don't have the facts together, then we don't do the public meetings," said School Board member Tina Hone [At-large] of the community dialogues scheduled for later this month.

**FURTHER DISCUSSION** of the public meeting format revealed how touchy the issue of a bell schedule change has become for the school system and School Board members.

Officials are taking pains to record an introduction to the issue of bell schedule changes that will be played at all public meetings on the topic, so that there is no differentiation between the staff presentations at each session.

"We have tried to do so that it is not biased in any way," said School Board member Liz Bradsher (Springfield).

"That is why we are taping the introduction, so everything can be the same across the board," said School Board member Tessie Wilson (Braddock).

Yet there was some question at the School Board's work session about what type of role the "science of teenage sleep" should play in the recorded presentation.

In general, School Board members who support the bell schedule change thought studies linking later high school start times to better teenage health and academic performance should play a larger role in the video. But others, who are skeptical of the proposal, said they had not seen any evidence that there was link between high school start times and academic performance.

"I have never seen a correlation between later start times and student achievement," said Smith.

"If there is not an impact on learning, then why are we even looking at this?" replied School Board member Phil Niedzielski-Eichner (Providence) to Smith's statement.



Some Fairfax County residents feel high school students have to be on school buses too early in the morning.

PHOTO BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE/THE CONNECTION

## COUNTY NOTEBOOK

### County Tax Rate Over The Years

Fairfax County faces a projected deficit of approximately \$650 million next year and several supervisors had admitted the county will probably have to increase the real estate property tax rate to close the budget gap.

If the supervisors wanted to hold county revenue — and the average residents' real estate tax bill — to its 2008 level, they would have to increase the tax rate approximately 14 to 15 cents per \$100 of assessed value, the highest single real estate tax rate increase of the last 30 years.

But even with a 14 to 15 cent increase, the real estate tax rate would still only be \$1.03, significantly lower than any rate approved by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors from 1978 to 2005.

Still, most residents have seen their actual real estate tax bill nearly double since 2000, even as the tax rate has continued to go down every year. The tax rate — at its lowest in 2007 and 2008 — did not provide much tax relief, given that most residents were still paying much more to the local government for their home or commercial property than they had in years past.

The following is a chart of the Fairfax County real estate tax rate and the amount it has fluctuated annually since 1978:

#### FAIRFAX COUNTY REAL ESTATE

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Year	Tax Rate	Annual Fluctuation
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1979	\$1.64	(\$0.10)
1980	\$1.54	(\$0.10)
1981	\$1.54	\$0.00
1982	\$1.51	(\$0.03)
1983	\$1.47	(\$0.04)
1984	\$1.47	(\$0.00)
1985	\$1.46	(\$0.01)
1986	\$1.39	(\$0.07)
1987	\$1.35	(\$0.04)
1988	\$1.32	(\$0.03)
1989	\$1.30	(\$0.02)
1990	\$1.19	(\$0.11)
1991	\$1.11	(\$0.08)
1992	\$1.11	\$0.00
1993	\$1.16	\$0.05
1994	\$1.16	\$0.00
1995	\$1.16	\$0.00
1996	\$1.16	\$0.00
1997	\$1.23	\$0.07
1998	\$1.23	\$0.00
1999	\$1.23	\$0.00
2000	\$1.23	\$0.00
2001	\$1.23	\$0.00
2002	\$1.23	\$0.00
2003	\$1.21	(\$0.02)
2004	\$1.16	(\$0.05)
2005	\$1.13	(\$0.03)
2006	\$1.00	(\$0.13)
2007	\$0.89	(\$0.11)
2008	\$0.89	\$0.00
2009	\$0.92	\$0.03

# SCHOOLS

The next **Herndon High School PTSA Meeting** will be held Wednesday, **Feb. 11**, 7 p.m. in the Lecture Hall (Door #1). Dr. Jack Dale, Superintendent of Schools for Fairfax County, will be the guest speaker. Issues currently under consideration that will impact our students, including the 10 Point Grading Scale recently approved by the School Board, FCPS Budget and School Start Times/Revised Bell Schedule.

**Chris Skinner** will be at Herndon High School Thursday, **Feb. 12** to speak to students on **"The Ultimate Learning Experience."** Students will hear from Skinner during the school day and he will give a presentation to parents at 7:30 p.m. Skinner will speak about the power of choices in determining how our lives progress.

**Spring Sports Physical Blitz Day** at Herndon High School will be held **Feb. 12**, 2:30-3:30 p.m. Coaches from each Spring sport will be collecting and reviewing physicals in the Gym lobby from all athletes who plan to attend try-outs. Every athlete must have a physical on file by Feb. 23 and will not be allowed to participate in try outs until one is submitted. Coaches may also be collecting Emergency Care, Communicable Disease and Extracurricular Policy forms along with physicals; check team Web site for details. Any athlete who does not submit a physical on Feb. 12 will need to bring their completed physical to Ms. Sheedfar after school in the Athletic Training Room before they will be cleared for participation.

The Herndon High School Band Parents Association presents the **2009 Bingo Blast** Friday, **Feb. 20**, 6-9 p.m. in the Herndon High School cafeteria, 700 Bennett St., Herndon. Prizes and food on hand. All proceeds benefit the Herndon High School Band.

Learn about post-secondary education options at a workshop entitled **"What Am I Going To Do After High School?"** Wednesday, **Feb. 25**, 7-8:30 p.m. at South Lakes High School, 11400 South Lakes Drive, Reston. Free. E-mail Natashi.Anthony@fcps.edu or call 571-423-4150 to register.

**Herndon Elementary School**, 620 Dranesville Road, is holding a Career Fair Thursday, **April 2**, with session one from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. and session two from 1-3 p.m. Call 703-326-3117, fax to 703-326-3197 or e-mail Tiffany.Bryant@fcps.edu or Donna.Neil@fcps.edu to register.

During February and March, **Glory Days** will donate a percentage of your purchase to the Herndon High School Class of 2011. Submit an itemized receipt (not credit card copy) to Sherry Amado or Keysha Moon. Ask your neighbors, friends, relatives to save and donate their receipts. Receipts can either be mailed to the high school c/o Ms. Amado or Ms. Moon or placed in the box located in the main office.

The **HHS Sports Boosters Newsletter** is now available for viewing online at [www.herndonathletics.org/index.cfm?action=main.bnewsletters](http://www.herndonathletics.org/index.cfm?action=main.bnewsletters).

**Students from Carson, Herndon and Hughes Middle Schools and Herndon and South Lakes High Schools won regional awards** in the Scholastic Art Awards competition sponsored by the Alliance for Young Artists and Writers. Their work will be on display at Northern Virginia Community College's Ernst Community Cultural Center in Annandale Friday, Feb. 13-Thursday, Feb. 26. An awards ceremony for Gold and Silver Key winners is planned for Tuesday, Feb. 24, 7:30 p.m.

## FAITH NOTES

*Faith Notes are for announcements and events in the faith community, including special holiday services. Send to [herndon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:herndon@connectionnewspapers.com) or call 703-917-6437. Deadline is Thursday.*

**Congregation Beth Emeth Hazak Chapter**, 12523 Lawyers Road, Herndon, hosts prominent speakers and entertainers on the **third Tuesday of each month**, at 1 p.m. Free light refreshments are served. Call 703-860-4515, Ext. 127. The guest list is as follows:

**Feb. 17:** Dr. Mark Lowenthal, formerly Assistant Director of Central Intelligence for Analysis and Production

**March 17:** Dr. Louis Blumen, Jewish Medieval Medicine

**April 21:** Steven Gross, The Holocaust in Hungary

**May 19:** Speaker from Embassy of Israel

**June 16:** Year-end Luncheon

**St. Timothy's Episcopal Church**, 432 Van Buren Street, Herndon, is hosting their annual "Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper" Tuesday, **Feb. 24**, 6-8 p.m. Enjoy pancakes, French toast sticks, ham, and other treats. \$12/family; \$6/adult, Call 703-437-3790.

**Citizenship classes** meet Thursdays, **through March 26** at St. Anne's Episcopal Church, 1700 Wainwright Drive, Reston. The goal is to prepare qualified adult students to pass the USCIS interview and exam for naturalization to become U.S. citizens. Book fee of \$15.00. Call 703-437-6530.

**The Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation**, 1441 Wiehle Ave., Reston, welcomes the Co-op of Israeli Artists for the Israeli Arts and Crafts Fair Saturday, **Feb. 28**, 6-10 p.m. and Sunday, March 1, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. The Co-op represents artists from the artists' colony of Safed and elsewhere in Israel. Payment will be accepted by cash or check only. Visit [www.nvhcreston.org](http://www.nvhcreston.org) or call 703-437-7733.

**Cedar Run Community Church**, 13560 McLearen Road, Herndon, is hosting a live simulcast event entitled "Focus On Marriage - Seeing Your Marriage Through The Eyes Of God" Saturday, **Feb. 28**, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Visit [www.ccn.tv/focusonmarriage](http://www.ccn.tv/focusonmarriage).

A **parenting workshop** will be held Friday, **March 6**, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Trinity Presbyterian Church, 651 Dranesville Road, Herndon. Learn a three-step program to address challenging behaviors, promote positive behavior and enhance family relationships. \$29/person, \$20/couples or groups. E-mail [sarahjane@sjssolutionsllc.com](mailto:sarahjane@sjssolutionsllc.com) to register.

**Congregation Beth Emeth**, 12523 Lawyers Road, Herndon, will host a **Yiddish Club** on the **first Tuesday of each month**. Members will engage in a variety of activities that utilize the Yiddish language, including reading stories, listening to music and radio broadcasts, reading Yiddish newspapers and more. Free. Call 703-860-4515, Ext. 127.

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All listings due by Monday at 3 p.m.

# Two Oakton High Wrestlers Capture District Titles

## Herndon's Ziegler reaches 130-division finals.

BY RICH SANDERS  
THE CONNECTION

The Oakton High wrestling team had two champions crowned at last Saturday afternoon's Concorde District Championships. Cougar wrestlers Matt Patinos (160-weight class) and Chris Butters (125) both captured their respective weight-class titles.

Westfield High finished first in the team standings with 196.5 points, finishing ahead of second-place Robinson (188.5) and third-place Fairfax (119). Chantilly (85), Oakton (71), Herndon (52) and Centreville (36) finished fourth through seventh, respectively.

Patinos defeated Robinson's Wes Jones in the 160 finals. He reached the title match with wins over Chantilly's Wes Scholnick and Herndon's Adam Valcott.

At the 125 finals, Oakton's Butters defeated Westfield's Jerrod Branch in the championship match. He made it to the finals with a semifinals win over Chantilly's Lloyd Tenaglia.

Other top-four finishers for Oakton who will advance to this weekend's Northern Region Championships at Fairfax High School were David Millago (third at 215), Wade Kostkan (fourth at 152), Chris Lopina (fourth at 145) and Ethan Doyle (fourth at 140).

Herndon High saw four of its wrestlers advance to regionals. The Hornet wrestlers to go furthest at districts were Nick Ziegler, who reached the 130 finals before losing to Westfield's Brandon Berling, and Josh Pike, who made it to the 119-title match before

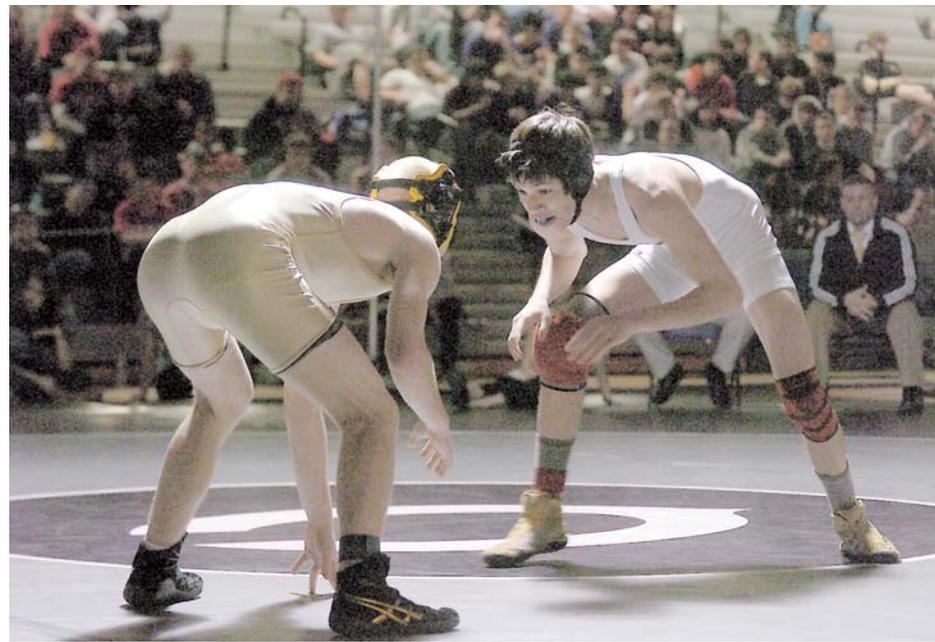


PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUZZEL/THE CONNECTION

**Herndon's Josh Pike and Westfield's John Orchard-Hays met in the 119 finals at last week's Concorde District Championships.**

losing to Westfield's John Orchard-Hays. Ziegler made it to the title match by defeating Oakton's Ryan Wood and Robinson's Charlie Vanney. Pike defeated Chantilly's Wes Litton in a semifinals match to make the finals round. Other place finishers for Herndon were Matt Olem (fourth at 135) and Gabe Pike (fourth at 103).

The Concorde District Gymnastics Championships took place at Centreville High School last Thursday, Feb. 5. The team champion was Chantilly High (143.325 points), which finished ahead of second place Robinson (133.55) and third place Centreville (127.325).

Herndon High's Lauren Sullivan (36.025) finished third in all-around competition. The all-around champion was Chantilly's Elly Taura. Robinson's Amanda Famiglletti

was second.

On vault, Sullivan (9.5) finished second, while Herndon teammate Qadera Malveaux (9.35) was fourth. Sullivan was second on beam and fourth on floor.

The Oakton High girls and boys swim and dive teams had strong showings at last weekend's Concorde District Championships. The Cougar girls finished second in the team standings with 324.5 points, behind first-place Robinson (434). The Oakton boys, meanwhile, finished third with 355.5 points, behind champion Robinson (402) and second-place Fairfax (360).

Oakton highlights included a first-place finish by the boys 200 medley relay team, made up of Michael Hallock (backstroke), KJ Park, (breast), Zach Smith (fly) and Bradley Phillips (free). Also, the Oakton boys

400 free relay team of Bradley Phillips, Kevin Cho, KJ Park and Michael Hallock took second.

The Oakton girls 400 free relay team also was second. The foursome was made up of Quinn Wilkinson, Brooke Ream, Allie Maher and Kaitlin Pawlowicz.

Oakton's Bradley Phillips won both the boys 200 free and 500 free races. Also, Oakton's Kaitlin Pawlowicz, a sophomore, took first in both the girls 200 free and 500 free races. She set district records in both races.

In the boys 200 IM, Park won with a time of 1:55.79. In the boys 100 free, Hallock took second place in the "A" final. Junior Wilkinson was fifth in the girls 100 free and sixth in the 50 free. In the boys 100 back, Hallock captured first place. And teammate Park was first in the boys 100 breaststroke. Ashley Doran finished sixth in the girls 100 back race.

The Northern Region Championships will take place this Thursday through Saturday at Oak Marr Recreation Center. Preliminaries are Thursday and Friday and the finals are on Saturday night at 5:30 p.m.

The Herndon boys' swim team finished fourth overall at the Concorde District Championships. The Hornets boys' 200-yard medley relay team of Christian Matthews, Mark Rodakowski, Danny Camozzo and Christian Polito finished second behind first-place Oakton.

Herndon's Robert Carroll finished third in 1-meter diving. Camozzo was fourth in the 100 fly. Brian Via was third in the 500 free. Rodakowski was fourth in the 100 breaststroke.

The sixth-place Herndon girls had a strong meet from Molly Cudahy, who won the 100 backstroke event. Also for the Hornets, Jenna VanCamp was third in the 100 breaststroke.

## SPORTS ROUNDUPS

The **Herndon Ice Hockey Club** won its first Northern Virginia Scholastic Hockey League (NVSHL) title with a recent 4-1 win over McLean. The victory not only clinched the regular season title, but it guaranteed the team a bye in the first round of the upcoming NVSHL playoffs.

After a series of dominating wins, the victory over McLean did not come easy as the Hornets struggled in the first two periods. Despite outshooting its opponent 11-4 in the first period, Herndon was unable to penetrate the Highlanders' netminder. The second period proved no better and ended with the Hornets in the unfamiliar position of being behind, 1-0. But the Hornets' league-leading offense finally woke up two minutes into the third period when junior Max Kortegast scored off a pass from Ville Rutanen. The goal seemed to wake the struggling Hornets and less than a minute later, senior assistant captain Chris O'Brien notched an unassisted tally to put his team ahead 2-1. The game remained close, but with just under six minutes remaining, freshman Michael Horn combined with sophomore Matt Ellison to open the Hornets' lead to 3-1. Thirty seconds later, Herndon locked up the victory with

an unassisted goal by junior Sam Stone.

Herndon was scheduled to finish off its regular season against North Stafford at Reston SkateQuest last week. Four Herndon seniors — Kyle Curran, Krister Kasulis, Andrew Norman and Chris O'Brien — were to be honored prior to the game in Senior Night ceremonies.

The **Thomas Jefferson High** boys and girls swim and dive teams narrowly lost their recent dual meets against Liberty District opponent Woodson. The boys lost 159-156 while the girls lost 161-154. Both teams finished the regular season with 4-3 records. The Jefferson team of Anna Lan (McLean resident), Lauren Laffosse, Brianna Kim and Jae Sim (Reston) won the medley relay. Individual event place finishers for the Jefferson girls included Brenna Ferris (Herndon), Sim, Kelsey Rainey (McLean) and Aedan Collins (McLean).

The Jefferson boys captured all three relays. Wade Gong (Herndon), Alex Dona, Matt Callahan (Vienna), Sam Speers (McLean) and Stephen Seliskar (McLean) were each on two winning relays and Zachary Batts (Reston) was also on a winning relay.



PHOTO BY STEVEN SILTON/THE CONNECTION

**Herndon High boys basketball player Isaac Johnson makes his move to get past a Chantilly player during the Concorde District game played last Friday night. Chantilly won a close one, 60-58. The Hornets wrap up the regular season at Westfield this Friday night.**



CONTRIBUTED

Ava McLin

# Ava's Story

**Reston Burger King teams up with MDA in honor of Ava McLin.**

“Crowns for a Cure,” Burger King’s annual fund-raiser, was kicked off last week on a particularly high note. Meghan Anderson, the Muscular Dystrophy Association’s program coordinator, planned the quick pep-talk event, jumpstarting the MDA-Burger King partnership. The Shamrock Campaign, which Anderson helps oversee, is a fund-raiser where merchandise is sold in stores and boutiques and the profits go to MDA research and funding. “Burger King Corporate got involved this year and is selling special crowns for the Shamrock Campaign,” Anderson said.

Ava McLin, a 3-and-half-year-old who lives in Reston with her parents Anya and Randy, attended the meeting to help inspire Burger King employees to sell the crowns for MDA funding. McLin, a girl who loves the outdoors, was diagnosed with spinal muscular atrophy Type II in 2006 before her first birthday. Muscular atrophy is an inherited genetic disease that causes nerves in the child’s spine to malfunction; it is one of 40 kinds of muscular dystrophy. A cure for the illness has yet to be discovered. Contributions to MDA are directed to researching the 40 types of muscular dystrophy. Both Anderson and the McLin family look forward to Burger King’s help in the fight against muscular dystrophy. To learn more visit [www.MDA.org](http://www.MDA.org) or [WWW.FriendsofAva.com](http://WWW.FriendsofAva.com).

— DANIELLE LANDAU

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# Dying To Find Out, Sort Of



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I have to admit, the pain was a bit unusual, and it had migrated so, at my wife, Dina's, insistence, I made the trek to my HMO's emergency room, relayed my symptoms to the receptionist and took a seat in their waiting room.

All things considered, the wait wasn't interminable, nor was it hours; of course, it wasn't minutes, either, but given the holiday-nature of the day, it could have been much worse.

And apparently, so could the diagnosis. After having my vital signs taken by a nurse, and answering questions from a physician's assistant, there was no clear picture (heck, at this point, it wasn't even blurry, it was completely befuddling, even after the chest x-ray was viewed) to explain my discomfort. It was so befuddling that the physician's assistant actually involved a doctor.

He asked me the standard questions. My answers offered no standard help. So much so, that I remember asking the doctor, if it only hurt when I make certain movements, perhaps I shouldn't make those movements; and then watching as the doctor shrugged his shoulders and said, "Yes, probably." And so I was excused, with the ever-popular: "If it gets worse, come back." And symptom-wise, it didn't; it got better, until five days later.

That's when the same physician's assistant called back. Still puzzled by my pain and lack of symptoms, she had, on her own initiative sought out the opinion of a Radiologist to review my chart/x-ray. Based on that consultation, I was urged to go to my nearest HMO pharmacy, that evening, to pick up a precautionary prescription to begin taking immediately. The concern was, despite being asymptomatic, perhaps I had a touch of pneumonia. And so it continued.

The next day, still improving and symptom free, my HMO called to tell me that they had ordered a CT Scan. Somewhat perplexed by their uncharacteristic speed, I nonetheless complied and went the very next day. TWO HOURS after completing the scan, my primary doctor called to discuss the results. Unfortunately — and surprisingly — there was cause (given my age and health history) for concern.

Perhaps I'd like to schedule an appointment to discuss the findings, my doctor suggested. "No, just tell me," I said. And so he did. There were lesions on my lungs that might be malignant. WHAT! Still unsure, however, the doctor scheduled an appointment with a pulmonary specialist as soon as possible. Two hours later, ON THE SAME DAY, the appointment was made for the next afternoon, with a P.E.T. scan to follow, all of which seemed incredibly fast and efficient given my previous experiences with this same HMO. Nevertheless, I was appreciative of their record-breaking haste.

The pulmonary doctor didn't interpret the x-ray and CT scan as the cancer threat that my primary care doctor and radiologist had (canceling the P.E.T. scan in the process), but nonetheless, suggested I return in a week, take a second x-ray and see what develops. And so I did. Still symptom free.

A week later, I'm back with the pulmonary specialist, second x-ray in hand. The second x-ray confirmed the doctor's suspicions that maybe I had indeed had pneumonia and so two weeks after the initial fact, I was once again excused; with the "We'll call you if ... " goodbye.

THE NEXT DAY, the pulmonary doctor calls back to say that, upon further review with yet another radiologist, he now wants to me to see another doctor, a thoracic surgeon.

Five days later, I see the thoracic surgeon, x-rays and CT scan in hand. Likewise puzzled by what he sees, he apologized for his inconclusiveness and says he too, would like to review the x-ray and scan with his radiologist to get a better understanding A biopsy and/or surgery are certainly possible but he's not sure. Moreover, he's not sure another diagnostic test (P.E.T. scan, M.R.I.) would clarify anything. Let him review everything he asks, and he'll get back to me, probably in the next day or two.

THE NEXT DAY, the thoracic surgeon calls back to tell me that he now thinks I should have the P.E.T. scan and to schedule it as soon as it's convenient. And so it continues.

Four weeks later and still wondering. I wouldn't say I'm worrying yet, however, but I am beginning to have a little trouble falling asleep.

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

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## NOTICE

We deeply regret that due to space limitations, we're no longer able to publish the Crossword Puzzle. We appreciate the week-to-week commitment and enthusiasm of our loyal participants.



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An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.  
-Werner Heisenberg

# BUSINESS

# Beautifying Home For 'Better Times'

FROM PAGE 5

"We know we're bringing the best price for the plan we know they want," said Fies, the company's founder and CEO, noting that homeowners often have a hard time comparing prices when different contractors are proposing different plans made with different products and materials.

"The whole reason Mina and Mark and I wanted to start this was because we've seen the frustration on the part of not just the homeowner but also contractors," Cini said. She has been working as an interior designer and architect for six years and previously worked with Mina Fies at a home renovation company, now defunct.

Fies has worked in sales and marketing for design firms for 16 years and is a licensed real estate agent and mortgage specialist. Mark Fies, a business manager by trade, works behind the scenes as the company's chief financial officer.

"No one expects two women to show up when they call a construction contractor," Cini said.

"The looks we get — 'You're not actually going to do the work, are you?'" Mina Fies laughed.

They don't do the heavy lifting.

**FOR EACH PROJECT**, the two women work out a few different plans and then, with the homeowner, combine elements of each plan into a final design, which specifies "everything from the faucet to the light fixtures to the towel bar," Mina Fies said. The project is put out to bid among a few contractors the company knows well and that operate in the price range and scope of the renovation, and then Synergy acts as the homeowner's agent throughout the construction. "So the client doesn't end up being their own project manager," she said.

The process is similar to the approach that is usually taken in commercial design-and-build projects.

"Our concept is absolutely working. We're not only getting interest from clients, we're getting interest from contractors," Fies said, noting that the contractors save money in marketing and design work.

"They do a great service for both the homeowner and also the general contractor," agreed Jason Kirkpatrick, owner of Kirkpatrick Construction in Centreville. He said his company often competes with other contractors who aren't offering comparable plans or quality and that homeowners may not know the difference. "We try to educate homeowners on choosing a contractor," he said, "even if they don't choose us."

Kirkpatrick said he didn't know of any

other company following Synergy's model. "There are companies out there that try to capitalize on connecting the homeowner with the contractor. What they do is so much more," he said, adding that Synergy capitalized on having each project built by the best contractor possible. "They're not going to bring me in on a project that's not a good fit," he said.

Kirkpatrick said his company does "very complicated projects that others don't want to or don't know how to" and only operates in Northern Virginia. Only when Synergy has a job that fits that profile does he expect to be contacted.

Kirkpatrick said he had also just brought Synergy in to work on one of his own projects, a partial home renovation and

large addition to a home. He said he had only ever brought one other outside designer in to work with him. "For me to bring anyone else in on any of our projects takes a lot," he said.

Having just

launched, Synergy does not have any completed projects yet, but one project Fies and Cini designed together was the basement of Ashburn residents Brian and Suzanne Pirko, which was completed last May.

**AT FIRST**, Suzanne Pirko said, the couple just wanted drywall and a bathroom. "Michelle walked us through and had great suggestions that we never would have thought of on our own."

The 1,800-square-foot basement now houses a home theater, a family room, a kitchenette, a home office, a playroom, a storage room and open spaces, as well as the requisite bathroom.

Because of the arrangement and number of supporting poles in the community's basements, most of the Pirkos' neighbors have much of their basements taken up by a single long, open space. Cini avoided this design by placing the family room and kitchenette at an angle, hiding the poles in the walls and carving a number of smaller areas out of the space.

"It feels more like an upstairs than a basement," Pirko said. "People always say it doesn't feel like a basement." Cini said this was a function of hiding the poles in walls, rather than in columns.

With the market depressed, Fies said, more people who might have moved are now trying to make their homes more livable places to wait out the slump and are also looking for ways to make their houses more valuable for when they do sell. Many are also "in cash positions," having taken their money out of market investments and seeking other ways to invest it, she said.

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Event organizers and staff from Body by Geoff take the last plunge during the annual Polar Dip at Lake Anne on Saturday.

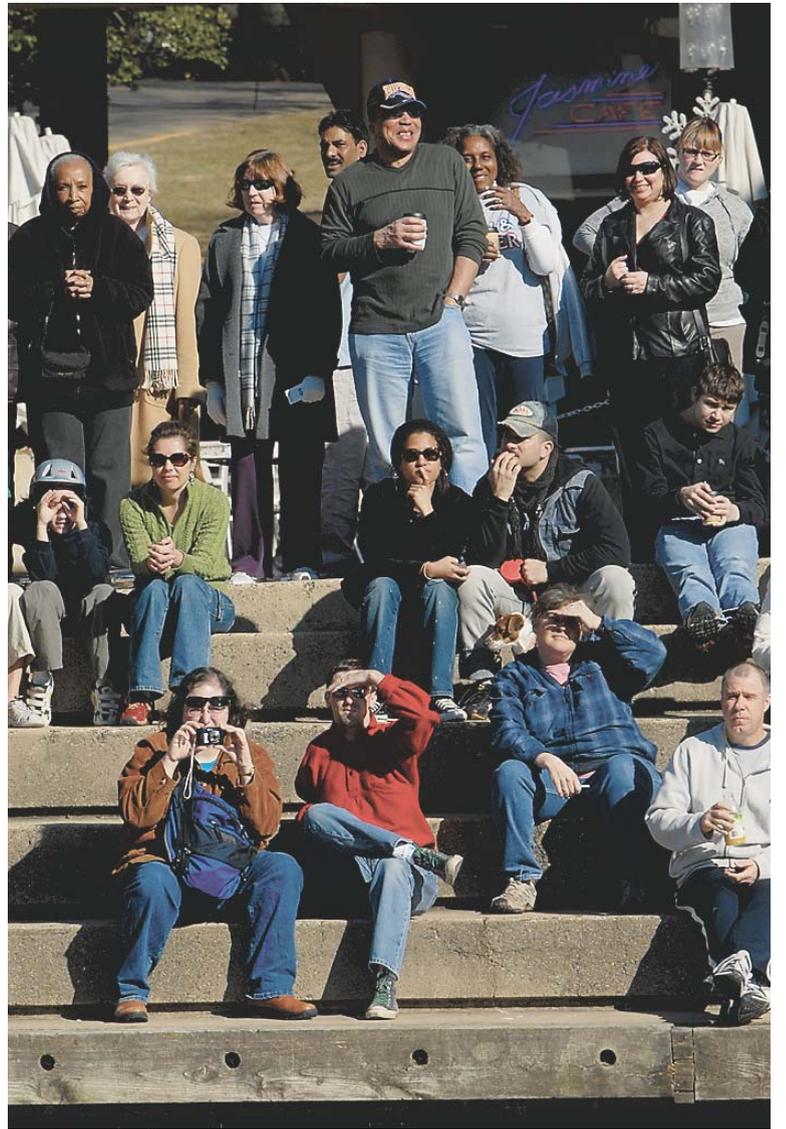
# Polar Dip Raises \$17,000



Heidi Marggraf of Reston participates in the 2nd Annual Polar Dip for the second time in Reston on Feb. 7.



Andy Susi and Bill Katrba, both of Reston, participate in the 2nd Annual Polar Dip.



PHOTOS BY ROBBIE HAMMER/THE CONNECTION

Friends and family of the Polar Dip participants watch the 2nd Annual Polar Dip at Lake Anne in Reston on Feb. 7. More than \$17,000 was raised from the event for support of Camp Sunshine.



Friends and family of the Polar Dip participants watch the 2nd Annual Polar Dip at Lake Anne in Reston.



Eduardo Faubert, chef and owner of the Jasmine Café in Reston, jumps into Lake Anne during the 2nd Annual Polar Dip at Lake Anne in Reston on Feb. 7.