

Springfield CONNECTION

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Got The Beat

COMMUNITY, PAGE 9

Rebecca Kronz, a bass drummer at West Springfield High School, practices with the rest of the drumline before taking the stage at 2009 Symphony of Design Indoor Percussion and Winter Guard Competition.

Good Friends, Good Food

NEWS, PAGE 3

County Ups Tax Rate

COUNTY LINE, PAGE 8

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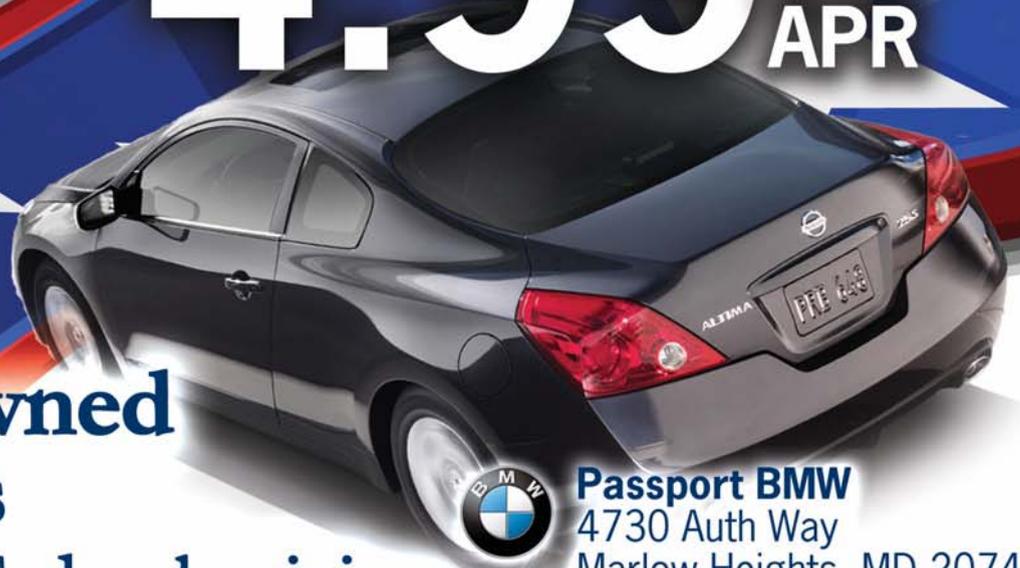
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Group Enjoys 35 Years of Fine Dining

Long-time dining club whips up dinners with international-themes.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE CONNECTION

For 35 years, a gourmet dining group from West Springfield has been whipping up to-die-for meals and rotating host nights among members. Through all the table talk of politics and religion and keeping up with family, the members have become great friends.

The group began in 1974 when a group of newcomers' husbands joined the Springfield Jaycees. Several of the wives found they enjoyed a fondness for cooking, and the gourmet group was formed. Russ and Kathy Barnes prepared the first dinner, with a Korean theme using bulgogi pots. Now the group meets four or five times a year for gourmet-themed dinners.

"I love this group," said hostess Margie Jones. "We love good food and we love good conversation and we love getting together."

Jones is one of the charter members who planned a President's Day menu on Saturday night, Feb. 21. It included a menu of Presidents' cheese spread, George's marinated mushrooms, Martha's French onion soup, Abe's asparagus salad, Mount Vernon



The members of the Springfield Gourmet Dining Group, clockwise from left, are Jack Wargo, Sally Hottle, Larry Cook, Lorraine Wargo, Ron and Margie Jones, Cathy and Len Belter, and Barbara Cook.

Beef Wellington, green goddess vegetables, Mary Lincoln's paradise carrots, chocolate martinis and cherry tree lemon pudding cakes for dessert, plus red wine and white wine pairings.

"I think this one was pretty successful," said Jones. "There's a few things I'd tweek, but I would definitely do again."

With 50 cooking classes on her résumé, Jones uses her husband Ron as her guinea pig when testing ideas. "It's really an experimental group," she said.

They try to incorporate the theme with the food, wine and decorations. Past meals have included Last Dinner on the Titanic (using the real menu), dinner at Cote d'Ore

"We love good food and we love good conversation and we love getting together."

— Margie Jones, West Springfield resident and charter member

on a pontoon boat ride with cocktails and Hemingway's "A Moveable Feast." When they did a Russian meal, they drank vodka shots. When they had a '50s party, the ladies wore poodle skirts and saddle shoes.

AT ONE Ethiopian dinner, the diners ate with their fingers. One Chinese New Year Jones made Peking duck. "That was the hardest thing I've ever done," she said.

Almost everyone agreed that the most memorable meal was Elvis Presley dinner in 1997, the one when Ron Jones dressed as The King. "We did it in January for his birthday," said Margie Jones. "But there weren't any recipes that anyone was anxious to go home and try out."

She said that in the early days it was easier to come up with ideas — like Italian or Japanese or Greek, but lately it has become more difficult because they've done it all.

Betty Fraser of Hiddenbrook in Spring

SEE FRIENDS, PAGE 9

Lorton Loses to Loudoun in Healthplex Competition

Lorton Healthplex remains on hold as Loudoun's gets green light.

BY CHUCK HAGEE
THE CONNECTION

The long-promised Lorton Healthplex just took a back seat to Inova Health System's intention to move ahead with construction of a healthplex in Loudoun County that is "to be operational in 18 to 24 months," according to Barbara Doyle, CEO, Inova Mount Vernon Hospital.

That announcement conflicts with what Doyle told members of the Southeast Health Planning Task Force at their Jan. 8, meeting at the Mount Vernon Government Center.

"All Inova Health System capital projects have been put on indefinite hold. When the economy starts to turn around, we will evaluate everything," she said at that meeting.

She also said that when that turnaround commences, the Lorton Healthplex would be at the top of the priority list. In an interview Tuesday afternoon she maintained that remained the case, but that was of little

comfort to Task Force Chairman and Supervisor Jeffrey McKay (D-Lee) or Supervisor Gerald Hyland (D-Mount Vernon).

"This is a classic case of bait and switch. This is putting business ahead of people's health care and patient services," said McKay.

"I was not only shocked, to hear that the Loudoun Healthplex was being pushed ahead of the one that has been long promised in Lorton, but mad. It's was my understanding, as well as everyone else's, that no capital projects, not already under way, were to go forward until the economic climate improved," Hyland said.

DOYLE CALLED Hyland early Monday morning at the Fairfax County Government Center prior to the start of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors meeting to break the news. "To say I was disappointed is a gross understatement to put it as mildly as possible," Hyland said.

Doyle and other representatives of IHS pleaded economic hardship at the January meeting to justify further delaying the

Lorton Healthplex. However, since that meeting, HCA's Certificate of Public Need (COPN) was rejected by the State Health Department to build a hospital in Ashburn. HCA, the for profit health care organization that competes with the nonprofit IHS in Northern Virginia to provide health care facilities, then announced it would increase the capacity of its hospital in Reston.

Doyle justified the change in IHS plans as a legal commitment to the Loudoun County health facility as part of the terms of its joining IHS. "When that merger contract was written, IHS promised a new facility in three to four years. That time is now here and we expect to have the healthplex operational in 18 to 24 months," Doyle said. "Inova feels we are financially capable of moving forward with this project and we are legally committed to do so," she said.

"Lorton is still a commitment to the community and Inova Mount Vernon Hospital. We are going to move forward with that commitment. The Loudoun project is an ex-

ception to the rule of all capital projects being on hold," Doyle said.

As chair of the task force, McKay has a different take on that rationale. "This is a direct slap in the face for Fairfax County — and particularly southeastern Fairfax County. The Lorton Healthplex was a critical element of the report written following the fight to save Inova Mount Vernon Hospital from being closed," he said.

"This is a classic case of bait and switch."

— Supervisor Jeffrey McKay (D-Lee), chair, Southeast Health Planning Task Force

"SINCE OUR JANUARY meeting the national economic picture has actually worsened — not improved. All projects system wide were to be frozen — no exceptions," he said.

"I see this as a repeat of their building the

Springfield Healthplex. They thought that HCA was going to be competition in that area — I never saw a health facility go up so fast. If HCA had filed a COPN for Lorton two years ago, we'd all be standing in the Inova Lorton Healthplex lobby right now,"

SEE HEALTHPLEX, PAGE 7



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARCIA BASSLER

Jumping Rope

On Friday, Feb. 13, students at Cardinal Forest participated in Jump Rope for Heart. They raised thousands of dollars for the American Heart Association.

sands of dollars for the American Heart Association.

Going Once, Going Twice ...

Anyone desiring a piece of Fairfax County "memorabilia," using the word in its broadest sense, may soon be able to find it on eBay if Supervisor Gerald Hyland's (D-Mount Vernon) Monday Board Matter comes to fruition. And, the financial windfall could prove substantial.

He based his suggestion on an effort underway in Gwinnett County, Ga., in which the local government has been posting a variety of items on eBay and racking in "a profit of more than \$1 million," according to Hyland. He noted that the practice of using eBay to dispose of excess and discarded items by local governments isn't new, but "is rapidly expanding."

"After two years, the county's [Gwinnett] online store has turned into a thriving business. The cost to maintain the county's online store is \$90 per transaction including a \$45 commission for eBay," Hyland said.

"I hope in the future we can dispose of our old diesel generators and worn out automated external defibrillators, pre-owned lawn tractors and excess cell phone power adapters, and see if the County Executive can find a way to sell them all on eBay," he said.

To accomplish that, Hyland proposed that county staff evaluate the Georgia model program and return back to the Board of Supervisors with a recommendation.

McKay to Kaine: 'We're Ready'

Getting Fairfax County's oar in the Federal Stimulus Package water was the primary thrust behind a Board Matter introduced by Supervisor Jeffrey McKay (D-Le) during the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors' meeting Monday. It included a December 2008 list of "shovel ready infrastructure projects" to accentuate "how quickly an infusion of federal funding could jump start the local economy,"

McKay said. "These projects include transportation, wastewater/stormwater solutions, and construction and renovation of facilities for schools and public safety, with the majority of projects ready to begin construction in 2009, and all ready to begin by 2010."

The county list includes many projects that would be built to green standards in line with the emphasis on increased green infrastructure by President Obama, according to McKay. He also called for county staff to post the county's proposed stimulus package projects on the Governor's Web site, www.stimulus.virginia.gov, as Gov. Timothy Kaine has requested for transparency purposes.

A letter from the supervisors to Kaine, containing that list of projects, stated, "This is a remarkable and historic opportunity for Northern Virginia and for the entire Commonwealth. Fairfax County is ready and willing to do our part in beginning the economic turnaround."

NEWS

HOT Lanes On the Way

Construction on 95/395 Hot Lanes to begin late 2009, early 2010.

BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County elected officials and some residents remain concerned about the High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes project planned for interstates 95 and 395 even as the Virginia Department of Transportation marches forward with the project.

The 95/395 HOT lanes plan, like its sister HOT Lanes project under construction on the Capital Beltway, is the result of a public-private partnership between the commonwealth and two private companies, Fluor Corporation and Transurban Group. According to state officials, construction on the 95/395 HOT lanes is set to begin at end of 2009 or the beginning of 2010.

THE PROJECT would convert the current high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes in the Interstate 95/395 corridor into HOT lanes, where cars with fewer than three people can pay a fee to ride in free-flowing traffic. The HOT lanes toll increases as traffic becomes worse so cars and buses in the special lanes can continue to move at 45 miles per hour.

Fluor Corporation and Transurban Group hope to make a profit off of the people paying tolls, though critics refer to HOT lanes as "Lexus" lanes, saying the fee could rise to exorbitant rates that only the wealthy could afford. Many of those who live closer to Washington, D.C., particularly in Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, have also complained that the HOT lanes would just result in more traffic congestion on their neighborhood roads.

VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION officials said the 95/395 HOT Lanes project would provide some capacity, new travel options and structural enhancements to the highway corridor.

Only two HOV lanes currently exist along Interstates 95 and 395 and the HOT lanes project would add a third free-flowing traffic lane, that could be used by carpools, buses and motorcycles for free in addition to the new paying customers. The project also adds an 8-mile extension onto the existing 28-miles of HOV lanes along Interstates 95 and 395.

Through the partnership, Fluor, Transurban and the commonwealth will also add new access points to the HOV lanes at the Springfield Interchange, Shirlington Rotary, Seminary Road, Fairfax County Parkway, Franconia-Springfield Parkway, and Eads Street.

The private partners would also construct new Park & Ride lots, adding over 6,000 new spaces, that would lead to increased bus service along Interstates 95 and 395, said officials.

The project also allows Virginia to increase its enforcement of in the 95/395 HOV lanes. People are only supposed to use the HOV lanes during rush hour if they have three or more people in their car, but

several carpools complain that they frequently see cars at peak hours with only one or two people in them.

With the addition of the HOT lanes would also come new sound wall construction and repair. Upgrades would also be made to Virginia Railway Express stations in the area, according to a presentation.

BUT SOME local elected officials in the area have either remained silent or taken a negative view of the 95/395 HOT lanes project.

"We have not taken a position on it and I don't know if we will. ... There is already effective HOV in the corridor and we would want something that enhances what is there and doesn't take away from what is working very well," said Fairfax County Chairman Sharon Bulova (D-At-large).

"It is ridiculous to give a green light to 395 HOT lanes at the same time we give a green light to 495 HOT lanes."

— Supervisor Jeff McKay (D-Lee)

Supervisor Jeff McKay (D-Lee), whose district includes the Springfield Interchange, said Virginia should wait before putting HOT lanes in the 95/395 corridor to see if the concept works on the Capital Beltway.

"It is ridiculous to give a green light to 395 HOT lanes at the same time we give a green light to 495 HOT lanes. Let's get 495 in place and let's see how it works before we tear up every road in Northern Virginia at the same time," said McKay.

McKay was supportive of the HOT lanes project along the Capital Beltway primarily

because it would allow bus service where mass transit options currently do not exist. The same does not hold true for the HOT lanes project along 95/395, where his constituents already have access to bus service.

"On 395, we have transit already and we have HOV lanes already. What does the public get in the way of commuter options? They don't get any new ones really. HOT lanes should give commuters options and I don't see that on 395 really," said McKay, who is not supportive of the project.

But Supervisor Patrick Herrity (R-Springfield), whose constituents would also be impacted by the project, said he favors 95/395 HOT Lanes, though he wants to protect "slugging," a practice in which people will pick up strangers at designated locations so they can meet the carpool quota to use the HOV lanes.

"I am generally supportive as long as it doesn't impact sluggers. So far, I haven't seen anything that shows it would negatively im-

"They are going to add vehicles and there is no place for them to go."

— Al Havinga

SEE HOT LANES, PAGE 7

NEWS

Supervisors Praise Kaine for Ban

Supervisor Jeffrey McKay (D-Lee), as chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Legislative Committee, joined Board Chairman Sharon Bulova (D-At-large) in a Feb. 23 letter to Gov. Timothy Kaine (D) congratulating him on his recent legislative victory banning smoking in most restaurants and bars statewide. But, they want the effort against smoking to continue.

"We applaud your consistent efforts over

the years in trying to restrict smoking in public places. We believe this year's success in putting in place reasonable restrictions is a major step forward in Virginia ... advocacy for such an essential public health issue must continue to move forward," they said.

Paramount to their suggested continuing campaign against smoking is the health risks and cost of public funds in dealing with secondhand smoke exposure. They noted that "secondhand smoke is responsible for 1,700 deaths per year" and that "the Commonwealth spends \$113 million per year

on health care expenditures related to secondhand smoke exposure."

— CHUCK HAGEE

Teen Charged with Thefts from Vehicles

Believing a 17-year-old Fairfax boy broke into vehicles and stole GPS units, iPods and other items from cars parked in the Rutherford-area subdivision, Fairfax County Police have charged him with larceny. He was arrested Feb. 13 after an officer saw on the

Internet several items for sale that matched stolen-property reports filed throughout the first two weeks of February in the West Springfield Police District.

The officer, posing as an interested buyer, contacted the seller and made arrangements to meet. They met at the King's Park Shopping Center where the officer was able to make positive identification of the items and link them to the stolen-property reports.

Police are now trying to match the stolen items with their rightful owners. Anyone believing he or she was a victim of these auto larcenies may call 703-644-7377.

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Getting To Know ...

Abe Jeffers, new principal at Robert E. Lee High School in Franconia.

At the beginning of January, Abe Jeffers stepped into the role of principal at Robert E. Lee High School in Springfield. As a teenager, Jeffers was inspired by a professor of political science to become an educator. That early inspiration has carried over into to Jeffers' goal of helping Lee's students on the road to success.

Number of years in the community. 2.5 years.

Family. Wife, two dogs and one cat

Education. High school, Oneida, Tenn.; B.S. from the University of Tennessee; M.Ed. from the University of Virginia; Ph.D (ABD) from Ohio State University

What was your first job? Chairperson of the National Education Association Student Program, D.C.

PROFILE

Activities/interest/hobbies. Attending R.E. Lee High School activities; hiking, reading, fishing, church, biking, spending time with my wife.

Favorite local restaurants. Any of the Great American restaurants like Mike's, Burrito Jyoint, Austin Grill, Paridiso Italian Restaurant, Bertucci's .

Community concerns. Finding ways to get parents involved in their children's education, school funding and the success of students.

How did you get involved in education? During a summer program between my junior and senior years of high school held at the University of Tennessee, a professor of political science said if we want to make a difference, really make a difference in the world, be a teacher. That really struck me, and I decided to become a science teacher during my senior year in high school.



PHOTO BY ROBBIE HAMMER/THE CONNECTION

Lee High School Principal Abe Jeffers took over the position at the beginning of 2009.

What was your first job in Fairfax County Public Schools? Assistant principal at McLean High School

What's the one thing you'd like the Lee High community to know about you? I care deeply about our wonderful students at Robert E. Lee and will work hard to help them learn and succeed in whatever post secondary path they choose.

Personal goals. Find more time to be with my wife, positively influence those around me to do their best, positively impact and influence public education and be an innovative high school principal who finds ways to help students succeed.

— MICHAEL O'CONNELL



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARCIA BASSLER

100 Days

The first grade class at Cardinal Forest Elementary celebrates the 100th day of school in song during the Colonial Day Bug Bash Valentine Kinder Tea Fun Fair.

Koger Cases Near End

Koger enters eight Alford pleas to felony counts in Fairfax.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Eleven days after being sentenced to 66 months in federal prison for embezzling more than \$3 million from Virginia homeowners associations, Jeffrey Scott Koger entered Alford pleas to eight different criminal felony counts in Fairfax County Circuit Court.

On Tuesday, Feb. 17, Koger entered Alford pleas to three counts of attempted capital murder of a police officer, three counts of aggravated malicious wounding and two counts of use of a firearm during the commission of a felony, according to court records.

A defendant who enters an Alford plea admits that the prosecution has enough evidence to convict, without admitting guilt. The court may then impose a sentence as if the defendant had been convicted of the crime.

Koger, 39 of Oak Hill, is scheduled to be sentenced at the end of May in Fairfax. He faces the possibility of life in prison.



SHERIFF'S PHOTO

Jeffrey Koger

KOGER PREVIOUSLY worked hard to make his family company successful, but began embezzling money to support investments and a lavish lifestyle for his new wife, according to federal court documents filed by his defense attorney Peter D. Greenspun.

As it became apparent that his theft was being discovered, Koger also struggled with untreated mental health problems including bipolar disorder, alcohol dependence, bulimia nervosa and borderline personality disorder as well as gambling addictions, Greenspun wrote.

Koger went on a shooting rampage that seriously wounded three people in the early morning hours of Feb. 2, 2008.

Koger stopped his 1990 Jeep Cherokee behind a taxicab stopped at a traffic light at the corner of Seminary Road and North Beauregard Street in Alexandria in the early morning of Feb. 2, 2008, according to police reports and testimony at Koger's earlier court hearings in Fairfax County.

Koger got out of his Jeep, walked to the taxi driver's window and fired several shots into the cab. The driver suffered serious and lasting injuries.

Koger shot two other men in another car, who escaped him by driving into the Fairfax County Police Station on Franconia Road.

Koger eventually fled in his Jeep, leading a Virginia State trooper and others on a chase. Koger crashed into a traffic control box in front of Springfield Shopping Mall, and got out of his car with a firearm in his hand.

When Koger fired his weapon, the trooper and Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority officers shot back, hitting Koger. He was hospitalized with life-threatening injuries, but recovered.

Koger had a blood alcohol content of .25 or higher — three times the legal limit to drive — according to federal court documents.

After being shot, Koger said, "Help me, they're coming to get me."

SEE EIGHT, PAGE 11

Healthplex

FROM PAGE 3

he said.
 "They are going to have a lot of explaining to do at our [Task Force] next meeting. When you have a need you meet it or you don't — ethically," McKay said.

Doyle said that she was first made aware of the decision to move ahead with the Loudoun Healthplex on Feb. 18 by her supervisor Kylanne Green, chief administrative officer, IHS. However, the merger specifications were written at least three years ago.

But no official announcement was made until she called Hyland Monday morning and told IMVH physicians during a Department of Medicine meeting at the hospital Monday night.

"I have still not received any official word on this. I don't appreciate that as chair of the Task Force," said McKay late Tuesday afternoon.

Although Doyle was not able to say how large the new healthplex would be or how much it would cost, she did verify it would contain an emergency room, outpatient medical services and room for a number of physician offices. When actual construction would start has not been determined, according to Doyle.

HOT Lanes

FROM PAGE 4

pact sluggers. ... I am less enthusiastic about that project than the one on the Beltway," said Herry.

AT LEAST one "slug" said he had concerns about the project. Springfield resident Al Havinga said a back up already exists where cars from the 395 HOV lanes dump into Washington, D.C., which is adding time to his own commute. Adding HOV capacity in the 95/395 corridor without adding capacity at the destination points, such as Washington D.C., the Pentagon and other job centers, means that back ups like the one he encounters would only grow worse.

"They are going to add vehicles and there is no place for them to go once they get to the District or the Pentagon," said Havinga

Instead, Havinga said officials should consider increasing the number of people that need to be in a car to use the HOV lanes from three to four. The move would cut down on the number of cars on the road but increase the number of commuters riding in them, he said.

Gary Kramer, D.D.S.
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THE COUNTY LINE

Tax Rate Hike To Fund Reduced Budget

Ninety-five percent of residential properties decline in value; proposed budget raises average tax bill by \$14.

BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County Executive Anthony Griffin proposed holding most residents' real estate taxes relatively steady in 2010 even though Fairfax experienced the single largest drop in home property values ever recorded this year and most citizens' real estate taxes would have gone down significantly otherwise.

Griffin has suggested the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors raise the real estate property tax rate 13.5 cents per \$100 of assessed property value, potentially the largest real estate tax rate increase in the county's history. The measure would help close the approximately \$650 million gap in Fairfax's fiscal year 2010 budget, which goes into effect July 1.

It compensates for the sharp decline in the county's real estate values and, therefore, real estate tax collection. Since last year, residential property values have fallen 12.55 percent in value and commercial properties have fallen 4.51 percent in value.

If the supervisors adopted Griffin's recommendation, the real estate tax rate will go from 92 cents per \$100 of assessed value to \$1.05.5 per \$100 of assessed value. The average homeowners tax bill would increase approximately \$14 from last year.

Griffin has also proposed cutting county jobs, freezing county employee pay and reducing some services. Residents would also see an increase in some user fees, he said.

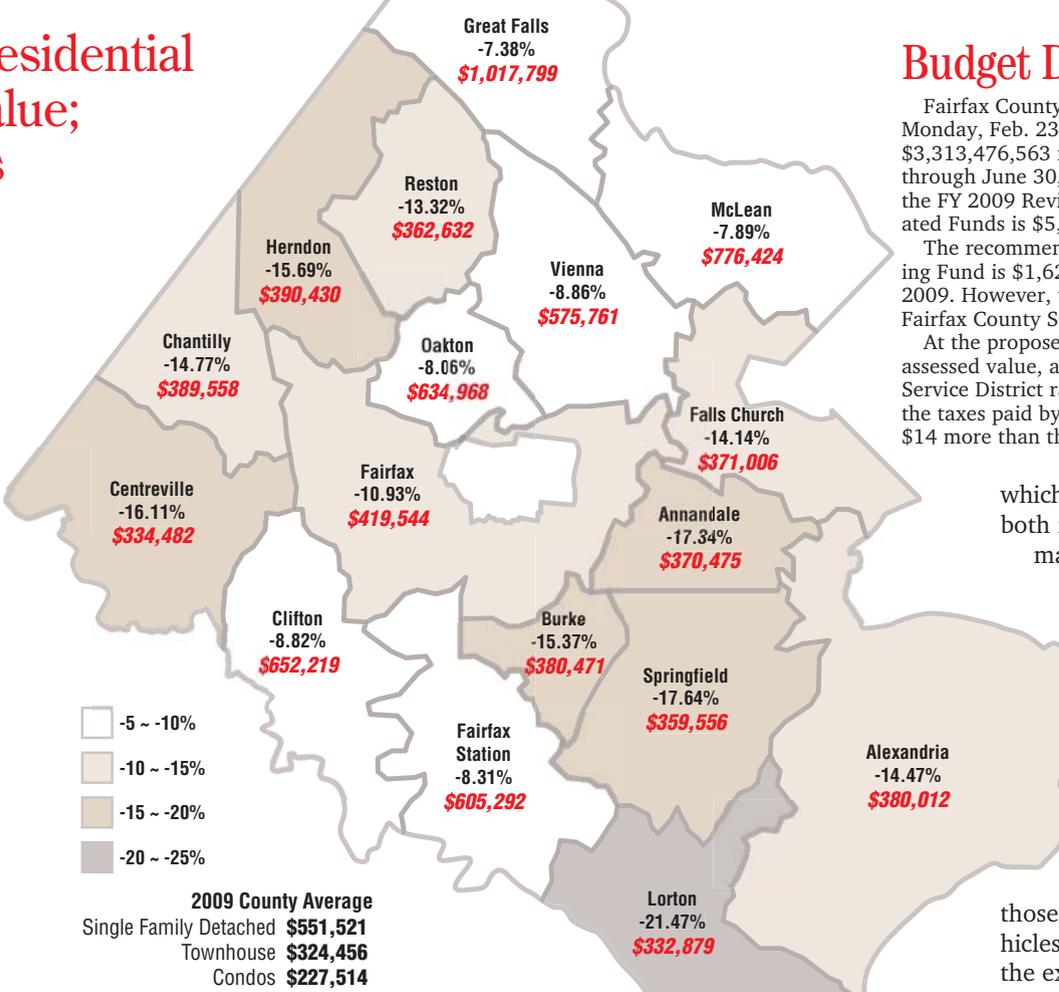
FAIRFAX COUNTY Public Schools has been spared more than other county agencies in Griffin's proposal.

His recommendations call for the school system to receive the same amount of operational funds as last year and not to sustain the cuts that most other county departments will have. Griffin would reduce the school system's annual capital budget slightly next year, from \$155 million to \$140 million.

Even with a flat operational funding transfer from the county, school officials have indicated that they would still have to make drastic changes and cuts to their programs. Earlier in the year, the Fairfax County School Board had been prepared to ask for

"I didn't see any real structural changes in how we do business."

— Supervisor Patrick Herrity (R-Springfield)



2009 ASSESSMENT YEAR RESIDENTIAL ANALYSIS BY ZIP CODE AREA

Vacant and Improved Residential Property

ZIP CODE AREA	2008 MEAN	2009 MEAN	PERCENT CHANGE
ALEXANDRIA	\$444,287	\$380,012	-14.47
ANNANDALE	\$448,178	\$370,475	-17.34
BURKE	\$449,573	\$380,471	-15.37
CENTREVILLE	\$398,728	\$334,482	-16.11
CHANTILLY	\$457,053	\$389,558	-14.77
CLIFTON	\$715,300	\$652,219	-8.82
FAIRFAX	\$471,010	\$419,544	-10.93
FAIRFAX STATION	\$660,179	\$605,292	-8.31
FALLS CHURCH	\$432,102	\$371,006	-14.14
GREAT FALLS	\$1,098,936	\$1,017,799	-7.38
HERNDON	\$463,073	\$390,430	-15.69
LORTON	\$423,871	\$332,879	-21.47
MCLEAN	\$842,924	\$776,424	-7.89
OAKTON	\$690,635	\$634,968	-8.06
RESTON	\$418,371	\$362,632	-13.32
SPRINGFIELD	\$436,583	\$359,556	-17.64
VIENNA	\$631,767	\$575,761	-8.86

a three percent increase in its funding transfer from the county, a proposal that would already have required program reductions because of the school system's rising costs in areas like enrollment.

The schools chief operating officer Dean Tistadt had also said any reduction to the school system's capital budget would be "devastating" since the current level of funding falls short of what is needed to repair all the schools facilities.

On the whole, Griffin has asked the supervisors to increase Fairfax's general fund, which would be approximately \$3.3 billion, by .4 percent. But due to rising costs, the

county would have had to grow its general fund by four to five percent just to keep all the county and schools' staffing and program levels the same as this year, he said.

SEVERAL SUPERVISORS were concerned about the impact Griffin's proposed budget would have on county staff. If adopted, county employees would be asked to forfeit their the cost-of-living-adjustment they usually receive, any scheduled pay raise they were expecting, and "performance pay," for some salaried county employees.

Griffin also recommended eliminating 524 full-time "merit" county positions, which he said could result in approximately 200 county employees losing their jobs. Approximately 300 "limited term" positions —

Budget Down, Tax Rate Up

Fairfax County Executive Anthony H. Griffin proposed Monday, Feb. 23, a General Fund budget of \$3,313,476,563 for Fiscal Year 2010 — July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2010 — a decrease of 3.7 percent from the FY 2009 Revised Budget Plan. The total of all Appropriated Funds is \$5,839,237,244.

The recommended transfer to the Public School Operating Fund is \$1,626,600,722 — the same level as Fiscal Year 2009. However, the transfer request approved by the Fairfax County School Board on Feb. 5, is \$1,683,372,525.

At the proposed real estate tax rate of \$1.04 per \$100 of assessed value, along with the newly proposed Stormwater Service District rate of \$0.015 per \$100 of assessed value, the taxes paid by the average residential taxpayer will be \$14 more than the FY 2009 tax bill.

which are typically lower paying but include both full time and part time employees — may also be cut.

Supervisor Linda Smyth (D-Providence) asked Griffin to try and be more flexible when dealing with employees. She said he may want to ask for volunteers who would be more comfortable working shorter hours or retiring early before he starts to eliminate jobs.

Supervisor Jeff McKay (D-Lee) wondered whether the county could increase some fees, like those for people who park commercial vehicles on residential streets illegally, and use the extra income to keep some of the positions being eliminated, particularly in the public safety department. "We should be charging the maximum [fine allowed under state law] for those violations if it spares jobs," said McKay.

A few supervisors were also angry to see the fee to participate in the county's recreational sports teams increase from \$5.50 to approximately \$13. "At a time when you are dealing with gang violence and gang prevention, it is self-defeating to increase a tax on kids participating in sports by 200 percent," said Supervisor Michael Frey (R-Sully).

Griffin said all the revenue generated by the fee increase would go to fully fund those programs and to avoid cuts in youth sports.

But both Frey and Supervisor Patrick Herrity (R-Springfield) were upset that Griffin had set aside 1.5 cents of the tax rate for storm water management. Last year, only one cent of the tax rate had been used for storm water management.

"At a time when we are cutting everything, why are we increasing storm water management by 5 percent?" said Frey.

Herrity and Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville) said they would also have liked to see more structural changes and consolidations undertaken in the county government. During his budget presentation, Griffin said he had only overhauled one county agency, the planning department and planning commission staff.

"I didn't see any real structural changes in how we do business. ... We did not find any real structural savings," said Herrity.

COMMUNITY

A Sound of Drums

Spartan drumline performs in Feb. 21 competition.



The West Springfield High School drumline performed in the 2009 Symphony of Design Indoor Percussion and Winter Guard Competition on Feb. 21 at Potomac Falls High School.



PHOTOS BY ROBBIE HAMMER/THE CONNECTION

Zack Fleegal and the West Springfield High School drumline prepare to compete in the 2009 Symphony of Design Indoor Percussion and Winter Guard Competition.

Friends Break Bread for 35 Years in Dining Group

FROM PAGE 3

field has been with the group of 29 years. "My very first one I got very ambitious and I did an Italian dinner," she said. "I went down to the embassy to get posters and things. That was very memorable for me." She also recalled that the How to Host a Murder party was more memorable for the game portion.

Barbara Cook and her husband Larry of Lake Barcroft have been with the group 19 years. They're known for their floating barge parties which seat about 12 people. She remembered the Titanic party with its seven-course meal and wines. "Cathy (Belter) had researched it extensively," she said. She remembers the time they made baked Alaska and it melted all over the oven. "We've had some really bad failures," she adds.

WHAT STANDS out about dinner conversations in Larry Cook's mind is: "We have half Republicans and half Democrats so we have some heated exchanges from time to time," he said. "It's an interesting group because it's such an interesting mix."

Original members Cathy and Len Belter have been with the group for 35 years. Cathy represented Springfield District on the Fairfax County School Board. Len remembered a Russian dinner in which they drank vodka and threw the glasses into a stone fireplace. He also recalls the time with a suckling pig that turned out to be mostly fat. "It was cooked in the oven and there wasn't a heck of a lot of meat left," he said.



Sally Hottle with a chocolate martini and Larry Cook.

Len Belter said that he joined the group when he was 31. "We talk about our children and families, and occasionally we get into the forbidden subjects of religion and politics," he said.

Sally Hottle of West Springfield has been with the group 24 years. She remembers doing a Southwestern theme with barbecue beef brisket, corn bread and cobbler for dessert. "We gave people Western names like 'Sage Brush Sally,'" she said. She recently did a roast beef dinner and asked the wine expert from Wegmans to help select the wine for the evening. "It was wonderful," she said. "It's a very comfortable group

to be in ... Cathy's oldest daughter and my youngest daughter were in school together from the time they were 5-years-old. They're both 40 so that's 35 years we've known one another. We ski with the Belters. Our lives have sort of meshed for 35 years."

Lorraine Wargo, now of Leesburg, has been with the group 14 years. She remembered the Mardi Gras dinner and an Argentinian dinner when she made lamb. "It's a lot of work for the hostess," she said. "But everyone just brings something and it helps." She got to know the group in the early 1970s when they were on the Hunt Valley PTA together. "You can always move,



Hosts Ron and Margie Jones, 35-year members.

but you can never replace your good friends," she said.

"We always have good food, good wine and lively discussions," said Jack Wargo. "What really makes it interesting is someone might be talking about architecture or a government program or banking. You could hear somebody else's opinion and you can respect their opinion and you can get a different viewpoint."

Margie Jones sets the standards for the food, he said. "She keeps the cooks honest. She kind of expects you to do your thing at a high level."

PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION

Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-917-6459. Deadline is Friday. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

THURSDAY/FEB. 26

Preschool Storytime, 1 p.m. at Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Stories, songs and activities. Age 3-5 with adult. 703-339-4610.

Stories and Science, 4 p.m. at John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive, Alexandria. Stories, activities and an age-appropriate science experiment. Age 4-6. 703-971-0010.

"The Last Days of Judas Iscariot," 8 p.m. at the George Mason University Harris Theater, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. \$12, \$8 students and seniors. 703-993-8888.

Lynbrook Family Center Kick-Off, 6:30 p.m. at Lynbrook Elementary School, 5801 Backlick Road, Springfield. Families can provide input on how they would like the Family Center structured. 703-866-2940 or www.fcps.edu/LynbrookES.

FRIDAY/FEB. 27

Lunch Bunch, 12 p.m. at John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive, Alexandria. Bring lunch for stories. Birth-age 5. 703-971-0010.

SAW Songwriters Showcase, hosted by Margot MacDonald. 7 p.m. at Coffhouse, 8433 Lee Highway, Merrifield. info@COFFHOUSE.com.

Hike: Early Signs of Spring, 4:30-6 p.m. at Hidden Pond Nature Center, 8511 Greeley Blvd., Springfield. Discover wood frogs, skunk cabbage and more. For ages 6-10. \$5 per child. 703-451-9588.

Springfield Community Theatre presents "The Fantastics," 8 p.m. at The New School of Northern Virginia, 9431 Silver King Court, Fairfax. \$15 adults, \$13 students and seniors. For reservations, call 703-866-6238. info@sctonline.org.

"The Last Days of Judas Iscariot," 8 p.m. at the George Mason University Harris Theater, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. \$12, \$8 students and seniors. 703-993-8888.

SATURDAY/FEB. 28

The Viandante Quartet, 3 p.m. at the Workhouse Arts Center, 9517 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Performed by members of the Shenandoah University Conservancy. Includes opportunities for audience interaction with music professors Clyde Shaw and Doris Lederer. clorange@su.edu or

acambel@su.edu.

Frogs, Turtles and Snakes, Oh My. 10:30 a.m. at John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive, Alexandria. Meet local critters, presented by Hidden Pond Nature Center. All ages. 703-971-0010.

VITA Tax Assistance, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. 703-339-4610.

Memory Cookbook Writing, 2 p.m. at John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive, Alexandria. Author Kay Karim on crafting and publishing a family cookbook. 703-971-0010.

Go Fish, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at Lake Accotink Park, 7500 Accotink Park Road, Springfield. Free one-day trout fishing pass. Learn catch-and-release fishing techniques. Program suitable for ages 7 and up. \$15 per child, accompanying adult free. 703-569-0285.

Dave Parsons Dance, 8 p.m. at the George Mason University Center for the Arts, on the Fairfax campus at the intersection of Braddock Road and Route 123. A free pre-performance discussion begins at 7:15 p.m. on the Center's Grand Tier III. Tickets are \$22-\$44. Charge by phone at 888-945-2468 or visit www.tickets.com. www.gmu.edu/cfa.

Springfield Community Theatre presents "The Fantastics," 8 p.m. at The New School of Northern Virginia, 9431 Silver King Court, Fairfax. \$15 adults, \$13 students and seniors. For reservations, call 703-866-6238. info@sctonline.org.

Catch-and-Release Fishing Workshop, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at Lake Accotink Park, 7500 Accotink Park road, Springfield. Bring your own tackle or borrow from the park. Barbless hooks only permitted. Free one-day trout fishing pass with each reservation. \$15 per child, accompanying adult free. Reservations and prepay required. 703-569-0285 or 703-569-3464.

"The Last Days of Judas Iscariot," 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. at the George Mason University Harris Theater, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Tickets \$12, \$8 students and seniors. 703-993-8888.

SUNDAY/MARCH 1

Gunston Hall Liberty Lecture Series, 3 p.m. at Gunston Hall Plantation, 10709 Gunston Road, Mason Neck. The Constitution of 1789 in the Global Politics of 2009, with Jeremy A. Rabkin, George Mason University School of Law. \$9 adults, \$8 seniors, \$5 ages 6-18. Light refreshments served from 2:30-3:30 p.m. Guided tour included.

Register at 703-550-9220. www.gunstonhall.org.

Springfield Community Theatre presents "The Fantastics," 2 p.m. at The New School of Northern Virginia, 9431 Silver King Court, Fairfax. \$15 adults, \$13 students and seniors. For reservations, call 703-866-6238. info@sctonline.org.

Studio 4 Galleries Artist's Reception, 2-4 p.m., featuring the works of the thirteen Studio 4 resident artists at the Workhouse Arts Center, 9524 Workhouse Way, Lorton. The exhibition runs from March 4-April 26. Hours are Wednesday-Saturdays from 11 a.m.-7 p.m., and Sundays 12-5 p.m. Visit www.workhousearts.org for a list of Workhouse artists, art classes and special events. 703-584-2974.

Purim Pulse: A Community High School Purim Party, 5:30-8 p.m. at Congregation Adat Reyim, 6500 Westbury Oaks Court, Springfield. Purim party for eighth-12th graders, with interactive DJs and dancers, concert lighting, costume contest, American Idol-style contest, photo novelties and snacks. \$10. www.adatreym.org.

"The Last Days of Judas Iscariot," 2 p.m. at the George Mason University Harris Theater, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. \$12, \$8 students and seniors. 703-993-8888.

Susquehanna University Choir and Chamber Singers, 7:30 p.m. at Herndon United Methodist Church, 701 Bennett St., Herndon. The Choir includes Allison Bramnick of Fairfax, Allison Edwards of Springfield, and Margaret Frost of Herndon. Free admission. www.hurndonumc.net.

TUESDAY/MARCH 3

Computer Tutoring, 3:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. at Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Call for to sign up. Adults. 703-249-1520.

VITA Tax Help, 6-8 p.m. at the Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Tax help. Adults. 703-339-4610.

Teen Book Club, 7 p.m. at Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. How Not to Be Popular by Jennifer Ziegler. Age 12-18. 703-249-1520.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 4

Practice Your English, 10:15 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. at the Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Conversation group for people learning English. Adults. 703-339-4610.

Girls Night Out, 7 p.m. at the John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive, Alexandria. Join us for a book discussion. Call for title. Age 12-15 with adult. 703-971-0010.

Lunch Bunnies, 12 p.m. at the Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Bring a lunch and have fun. Age 1-5 with adult. 703-339-4610.

Emerald Ash Borer information session, 7 p.m. at the Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. 703-339-4610. The location of the session is based on the locations of the emerald ash borer infestations found to date, and will focus on signs and symptoms of emerald ash borer, how to identify an ash tree, treatment options, hiring an arborist or tree care company, the upcoming spring trapping program and the current emerald ash borer



Dave Parsons Dance is coming to the George Mason University Center for the Arts on Saturday, Feb. 28. Zac Hammer, Kevin Ferguson, Miguel Quinones and Billy Smith are pictured.



Billy Smith, a 2007 George Mason University dance alumnus, is now a regular member of Dave Parsons Dance, and will perform on Saturday, Feb. 28.

quarantine. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/environmental/trees.htm

have fun. Birth-5 with adult. 703-971-0010.

THURSDAY/MARCH 5

Brook Yoder, 7:30 p.m. at Kate's Irish Pub, 6131 Backlick Road, Springfield. www.katesirishpub.com.

Froggie Tales, 10:30 a.m. at Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Stories, songs and activities about frogs. For ages 13-23 months with adult. 703-249-1520.

Book Discussion Group, 12 p.m. at the Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Jim the Boy by Tony Earley. Adults. 703-339-4610.

FRIDAY/MARCH 6

Mariza sings Portuguese Fado, 8 p.m. at George Mason University Center for the Arts, on the Fairfax campus of George Mason University at the intersection of Braddock Road and Route 123. A pre-performance discussion, free to ticket holders, begins 7:15 p.m. on the Center's Grand Tier III. Tickets are \$23-\$46. Charge by phone at 888-945-2468 or visit www.tickets.com. www.gmu.edu/cfa

Brook Yoder, 7:30 p.m. at Kate's Irish Pub, 6131 Backlick Road, Springfield. www.katesirishpub.com.

Springfield Community Theatre presents "The Fantastics," 8 p.m. at The New School of Northern Virginia, 9431 Silver King Court, Fairfax. \$15 adults, \$13 students and seniors. For reservations, call 703-866-6238. info@sctonline.org.

Lunch Bunch, 12 p.m. at the John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive, Alexandria. Bring a lunch and

SATURDAY/MARCH 7

Nelly Custis Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution Genealogy Workshop, 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Church of the Spirit, 5775 Barclay Drive in Kingstowne. Five sessions, ranging from a quick overview of standards of research to specific resources held by federal, state, and county repositories. Register by sending name, email address and telephone number to NellyCustisDAR@gmail.com. www.nellycustisdar.memberlodge.org.

Brook Yoder, 7:30 p.m. at Kate's Irish Pub, 6131 Backlick Road, Springfield. 703-866-0860 or www.katesirishpub.com.

Springfield Community Theatre presents "The Fantastics," 8 p.m. at The New School of Northern Virginia, 9431 Silver King Court, Fairfax. Tickets \$15 adults, \$13 students and seniors. For reservations, call 703-866-6238. info@sctonline.org.

VITA Tax Help, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Adults. 703-339-4610.

Art Workshop and Collaborative Installation with Chelsea Owens, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. in Gallery W-16, First Floor, Workhouse Arts Center, 9517 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Collaborate on a group project where vision and synergy will ultimately create a multi-media, multi-medium quilt installation representing the heritage and essence of women around the world. Free. 703-584-2900 or WorkhouseArts.org.

The Workhouse Arts Center, at 9517 Workhouse Way in Lorton, is opening three exhibits in March. The Workhouse is open Sunday-Tuesday 12-5 p.m. and Wednesday-Saturday 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Call 703-584-2900 or visit WorkhouseArts.org for a complete list of Workhouse artists, exhibits, classes and workshops.

- ❖ **'Women Suffragists at the Occoquan Workhouse'** will run Sunday, March 1-Tuesday, March 31, in Gallery W-16 of the Workhouse Arts Center. Display of original documentation depicting the arrest and imprisonment of women suffragists, photographs, period costumes, and suffragist poster artwork by students of Northern Virginia Community College, Woodbridge Campus. Free.
- ❖ **'Adaptations' by Chelsea Owens** will run Wednesday, March 4 - Saturday, April 4, in

the Vulcan Gallery of the Workhouse Arts Center. This exhibit represents Owens' surrealist impression of the relationship between a woman and the world she lives in. Free.

- ❖ **The Workhouse Film Institute Film Festival Weekend** will be March 21-22, on the Second Floor of the Workhouse Arts Center. Featuring 'Lioness,' a documentary about a group of female Army support soldiers who were part of the first program in American history to send women into direct ground combat, and 'Iron Jawed Angel,' the story of the imprisonment of women suffragists at the Occoquan Workhouse. Saturday, March 21 will also feature free film events including the creation of a computer assisted, stop-action animated film and interactive, movie-themed games.

CRIME

Eight Alford Pleas for Koger

FROM PAGE 6

Greenspun filed notice of Koger's possible intent to claim the insanity defense last August.

KOGER EMBEZZLED from many of the 400-plus Northern Virginia homeowners associations that contracted services from his family's company, Koger Management Group, located in Fairfax.

Koger was the former chief financial officer of his father's real estate management firm, Koger Management Group, which filed for bankruptcy in July 2007. Robert Koger, the defendant's father, reported to the Fairfax City Police in November 2006 that he believed his son had embezzled \$800,000, kicking off the investigation.

KMG collected homeowners association dues and provided a variety of financial and maintenance ser-

vices for the HOAs. Associations in virtually every part of Northern Virginia were affected, including in Ashburn, Chantilly, Arlington, Burke, Springfield, McLean, Reston, Mount Vernon and Alexandria, among others.

Neither the United States government nor Greenspun, Koger's defense attorney, called his criminal actions "sophisticated," but Koger used more than 140 bank wire transfers to move the money for his own purposes. The embezzlement was conducted over the course of several years.

In federal court documents, Greenspun described his client as a "bright and capable businessman" who lived for years in a "frantic and type A-plus manner" helping to make KMG successful.

There is no evidence of theft before Koger began his relationship with his wife in 2002, according to Greenspun.

CRIME REPORT

Activities reported by the Franconia District of the Fairfax County Police Department through Feb. 20.

DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY/ BIAS CRIME

6300 block of Hanover Ave. A 77-year-old Springfield woman reported that someone had drawn a racial symbol on the

ground in front of her house in the 6300 block of Hanover Ave. on Friday, Feb. 13. The symbol appears to have been drawn some time between 1:30-9:40 p.m. No suspect information is available at this time. Anyone with information is asked to contact Crime Solvers by phone at 1-866-411-TIPS/8477, e-mail at www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org or text "TIP187" plus your message to CRIMES/274637 or call Fairfax

County Police at 703-691-2131..

LARCENIES

7100 block of Braddock Road. Money stolen from residence.
6400 block of Dorset Drive. Weapon stolen from vehicle.
6700 block of Frontier Drive. Laptop computer, cellular phone and GPS unit stolen from vehicle.



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THE ARMED MAN: A MASS FOR PEACE
 By Composer Karl Jenkins

Sunday, April 5 at 3 p.m.
 Performance under the direction of Robert Rudolph, Director of Music Ministries, Messiah UMC.
 All rehearsals and the concert will take place at Messiah UMC, 6215 Rolling Road, Springfield, VA 22152
 Contact Robert Rudolph, 703.569.9862, x204 or rrudolph@messiahumc.org.

THIS IS "WHISPER"



A Domestic Black & White Short Hair, spayed female. Her D.O.B. is 3/26/08. Whisper and her sister Wendy are looking for their forever home. They are sweet and smart and love to hunt. Whisper is a little less adventurous than her sister, but you will fall in love with her once you meet her.

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 Hours: Monday-Friday 10-4 and Saturday 10-3.
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Three Steps on Health Care

Smoking restrictions, SCHIP, Cobra subsidies should lead to a healthier Virginia.

For a minute, some would be forgiven for wondering if we were still in Virginia. A smoking ban for many bars and restaurants? In Virginia? Amazing.

Long overdue, the result will be a healthier environment for many employees of bars and restaurants who have toiled for years while breathing in a carcinogenic soup. It's never appropriate to say that wait staff, bartenders and others can "choose" to work in places that are smoke-free if they want to. In the current economy, the current job market, anyone who has a job knows they need to hang onto it if they can.

It's up to the state to ensure that employees work in a safe environment, and Virginia's new smoking restrictions are a good step in that direction.

The new rules will also benefit many businesses. In other areas, restaurant business has actually increased after smoking bans went into effect as more families and other people who were avoiding smoke-filled rooms come out to

enjoy the newly cleared air.

SCHIP: All of Northern Virginia's members of Congress voted to reauthorize and expand the State Children's Health Insurance Program, a step for healthier children and families here. The SCHIP program helps states provide health insurance coverage to uninsured children, providing health insurance to children and some parents with incomes too high to qualify for Medicaid, but who can't afford private health insurance. The SCHIP Reauthorization bill expands health coverage to 55,000 uninsured Virginia children who do not qualify for Medicaid, in addition to the 155,000 children statewide already covered by the SCHIP program.

The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) helps to extend health coverage to children in low-income working families with incomes above the cut-off for Medicaid coverage. Enacted in 1997, this program operates under the FAMIS (Family Access to

Medical Insurance Security). Families are eligible for this program with incomes up to twice (200 percent), of the federal poverty level. For example, in Virginia a family of four can make up to \$41,300 a year and still be eligible for FAMIS.

COBRA: As part of the economic stimulus bill recently passed in Congress, the Federal government will pay for 65 percent of the costs of continuing health insurance for people who lose their jobs. Going into effect March 1, the rule applies to people who lost their jobs or will lose their jobs involuntarily between last September 2008 and the end of 2009. (The subsidy is not retroactive; employees will be offered another chance to enroll in COBRA however.) Health insurance is available for terminated employees under COBRA, but without the subsidy, many unemployed people cannot afford the high premiums. The former employers will be required to pay the 65 percent, with the former employee paying 35 percent. Employers will be "reimbursed" by the Federal program by reducing their payroll taxes by that amount.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Ill-Conceived Proposal

To the Editor:

Changing Fairfax County Public School start times is ill-conceived, imbecilic and reckless on a number of levels. In these difficult economic times it is especially important to teach our high school students financial responsibility, and that starts with after school employment.

As a small business owner, it would be extremely difficult to hire or retain an employee with such a late start time. As a result, this would place more inexperienced motor vehicle operators on the roads after dark and increase opportunities for motor vehicle wrecks with potentially tragic consequences. This is irresponsible and places our citizens at increased risk.

Additionally, later start times will affect future opportunities for these youth forcing them to choose between after-school activities and employment. Many of our high school students already face a difficult enough hurdle matriculating into our well-respected Virginia colleges and universities. With grade scale discrimination and our Virginia colleges and universities' financial decisions to prefer the higher paying out-of-staters, why handicap our students further by limiting their opportunities?

It is foolish and disingenuous to

assume that by changing school start times this will somehow enhance the county's children's sleep. It will instead place vulnerable individuals in harms way and be harmful to our economy by financially stressing already overstressed parents and teens. It is fictitious embellishment and won't change the final result.

Mardi Vargofcak-Apker
Springfield

Realign Start Times

To the Editor:

I hope the Fairfax County School Board does decide to realign school start times. I am the mother of a kindergarten student (Cardinal Forest) and a private teacher working out of my home. Young children from babies to toddlers to elementary aged children need at least 10 hours of sleep or more, according to many child specialists and doctors, such as in "Your Child's Health" by Barton Schmitt, M.D. The majority of elementary aged children usually go to bed between 7:30 and 8:30 and wake up quite early, alert and excited to do activities right away. If the realignment is accepted and an elementary aged child would have to meet a bus scheduled to pick up by 6:30 a.m.,

this would be easily accomplished for the majority of young children who wake up by 5:30 or 6. This type of schedule is definitely my preference for my own child. I stand with my child at the school bus, so I don't care if it is still dark in the morning in the winter season when the bus comes. The only down side I see to elementary aged children going to school earlier would be the possibly increased hours/need for more use of the SACC after school care program by more parents who work.

With the realigned start times, teenagers get to sleep in longer in the morning, which according to some studies, fits their needs better. Teenagers are more alert later in the morning, which would improve test scores. The high school babysitters I hire for my child always stay up late doing homework. If the students need to, they can use President Obama's childhood habit and do some studying first thing in the morning before they leave for school in the safety of their own home. Most parents don't get home from work until 6 or 6:30 p.m. The current schedule releasing teens from high school at 2:10 p.m. I've always believed was ridiculously early. Even if your teenager has an extracurricular activity after school, only some of that four-hour gap is filled with the activity. If not, the parent worries about their child's activities while the parent is at work. We need teenagers to be at school for

roughly the same hours that parents are working. If school ends after 4 p.m. and then the teen goes to an after school activity, this aligns the student with activity that matches the parents time away from the home.

Karan Wright
Springfield

Voting Yes for Recovery

To the Editor:

U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11) deserves praise for voting for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 — a bill that recognizes the vital role clean energy can play in driving economic recovery. This bill is making an important down payment on solutions that will transform America's economy and lead to a clean energy future that will benefit generations to come.

Connolly clearly understands that these initiatives are a win-win for a strong economy and a healthier environment. By focusing on critical investments in repair and modernization of infrastructure and boosting production of renewable energy, they will reduce our dependence on dirty energy sources like coal and oil.

Steve Bruckner
Great Falls Group, Va. Chapter
Sierra Club

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FILE PHOTO

Pictured here during a win earlier this season over W.T. Woodson, freshman April Robinson has stepped into a starring role this season for the West Springfield Spartans (22-4).

Pair Sparks Spartans

West Springfield girls breeze past Langley, advance to Northern Region quarterfinals.

BY JASON MACKEY
THE CONNECTION

When the West Springfield girls basketball team took the court on Monday night for the first round of the Northern Region tournament, Sam Landers and Pui Sham, the team's two seniors, wanted to make a good impression in what could be the last home game of their high school careers.

It took all of three seconds to do so. After the Spartans won the opening tip, Landers broke free on the right wing and drilled an 18-footer, staking her team to a 2-0 lead at 7:57. Sham, one of the area's top long-range shooters, hit three 3-pointers to finish with nine points.

That quick start carried over into the rest of the game as the Spartans cruised to a 52-27 win over Langley, erasing any lingering memories of a 59-53 loss to T.C. Williams last Friday in the Patriot District finals — the Spartans' third loss to the Titans this season.

"It got us rolling," said Landers, who plans to attend Division-I Stony Brook University this fall. "When you make your first shot, that momentum carries and your team is right behind you. That picks it up for the whole team, and it's good to have that."

The win improved West Springfield's record this season to 22-4 and helped the Spartans advance to a region quarterfinal matchup Wednesday night against Mount Vernon, which ended after this edition went to press.

THOUGH LANDERS finished with six points against Langley, her role has changed from last season and earlier this year, when she was a do-it-all scoring threat. The change came about primarily because of the emergence of two talented freshmen: Logan Battle and April Robinson.

Battle, a 5-foot-9 forward, has given the team an effective low-post presence and rebounder with a nose for the ball, as she totaled a pair of game-highs with 22 points and eight rebounds against the Saxons.

"It's nice having the inside and outside scoring," said coach Bill Gibson, whose teams have won five region titles. "Starting out, we were strictly outside shooters, but we've added more inside and that's helped a whole lot because now you have to

help inside."

Battle admitted to some rocky times at the beginning of the season but feels that the team has jelled rather nicely as of late. Throughout the Patriot District tournament, Battle was the team's leading scorer with a total of 35 points in three games.

"When we first started out, it was all confusion. Now it's just straight-forward," said Battle, who scored eight points in the first quarter against Langley. "We get confused sometimes, but we have coaches who've prepared us for this so we were ready."

"When we first started out, it was all confusion."

— Logan Battle, West Springfield High

SEE SPARTAN, PAGE 15

'Karmic Stuff'

Taylor Moore, Liana Epstein have unforeseen moments to remember at regionals.

BY JASON MACKEY
THE CONNECTION

Sometimes a fourth-place finish doesn't look like much on paper, but it means the world to the athlete who achieved it. While for some, that same result may signify a day to forget. There are also athletes that no matter when or where they compete, they're expected to deliver a dynamic performance, a first-place finish or a record-setting mark. And when the two stories collide? Well, that's even better.

At the Feb. 21 Northern Region indoor track and field championships at George Mason University's Field House, the Lake Braddock girls team had one of these unsung stories unfold while receiving yet another dominating performance from its dynamic distance runner.

Senior Taylor Moore, who hurt her Achilles tendon earlier in the week and nearly wasn't able to compete, brought the Bruins from fourth to first in the 4x800-meter relay, which Lake Braddock eventually won with a time of 9:40.76. The girls team finished third with 49 points, 22 behind first-place Robinson.

"I don't know if I strained it or something," said Moore, a cellist in the school orchestra, of the Achilles injury. "Then two days ago, I pulled a muscle in my back, so I've just been struggling. But we won and that was totally unexpected."

In addition to shrugging off two injuries to run a personal-best relay split (2:22), two years ago at the Virginia AAA state outdoor meet Moore gave up her spot on the same relay team. She was sick and felt that her teammates would perform better than she was capable of.

"It was that karmic, writing-of-the-world-type stuff that she was the one that got to have the big moment," said Bruins coach Mike Mangan. The school's cross-country coach as well, Mangan acknowledged how Moore would complete her cross-country workout late at night after adjusting her schedule because of orchestra practice.

Less karmic was the performance put forth by Liana Epstein, a junior distance runner who has done nothing over the past year but distance herself from her competition. She took first in the 1,000, running a near-school-record time of 5:01.58.

The reigning Patriot District and Northern Region cross-country champion, Epstein entered high school with no competitive running experience and only joined the indoor track and field team as a way to stay in shape for soccer.

Growing up in a fitness-oriented family, Epstein used to embark on 30- or 40-minute runs to condition for a sport she thought



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Liana Epstein, a junior, finished the 1,600-meter run last Saturday at the Northern Region championship meet in 5 minutes, 1.58 seconds, nearly setting a school record.

SEE FINDING, PAGE 15

SPORTS

Spartan Duo Excels

FROM PAGE 14

WHILE BATTLE has solidified West Springfield's low-post options, Robinson has made life a bit easier for Landers on the perimeter. Last season, West Springfield was 18-9 and reached the Patriot District finals and the Northern Region quarterfinals, and the team's offense consistently flowed through Landers.

This season, she has split time between playing point guard and on the wing — the No. 2 guard spot. While it's not uncommon for Landers to still run the point against teams like T.C. Williams who apply heavy, constant pressure, Gibson has been working Robinson interchangeably with his senior leader. Sometimes, the switch is even made on the court by the two players.

"I like playing the 'two,'" Landers said. "It's a totally different look at the basket. And I still consider myself the leader of the team so I still have to run the show, but with her there too, it's a lot off your shoulders having another player there."

Against Langley, Robinson did a little bit of everything, totaling seven points, three rebounds three assists and a block. She also acknowledged that things weren't always this easy but working together has helped tremendously.

"It's been really fun for us," Robinson said. "We love this team, we love practicing and we love playing with them. We learn from our seniors, junior and sophomores and they learn from us. It's just been a great experience."



FILE PHOTO

With 22 points and eight rebounds Monday night, freshman Logan Battle, pictured here battling for a rebound earlier this season, helped West Springfield beat Langley, 52-27.

Finding Unforeseen Success

FROM PAGE 14

she was going to play in high school.

"I really didn't think there was anything special there. I just thought that everybody could go on 30- or 40-minute runs," Epstein said. "I think what happens to a lot of people is that when they try running

they become addicted to it, and it's something that sticks with you."

Epstein's freshman soccer season turned out to be her last and she's been leading races ever since. At last year's outdoor region meet, Epstein held off Herndon's Hiruni Wijayarathne by four-tenths of a second and ran a much-discussed 4:57.46.

WEEK IN SPORTS

Halley Debuts For Cavs

Shane Halley, a Lake Braddock graduate and a freshman on the University of Virginia baseball team, made a good first impression over the weekend, pitching a scoreless inning and recording his first collegiate hit. On Friday, Feb. 20, pitching the last inning of a 12-0 win over Bucknell, Halley struck out all three batters he faced, and on Sunday, Feb. 22, playing left field against Bucknell, Halley singled and later scored on a sacrifice fly as the Cavaliers cruised to an 11-1 win. Virginia improved to 5-0 this season with an 11-1 win over

William & Mary on Tuesday. At Lake Braddock, Halley was a first team All-Patriot District and All-Northern Region pick three times and won two district and two region titles. In last year's region title game, Halley went 2-for-3 with a pair of doubles, three RBIs and two runs scored as the Bruins topped Chantilly, 9-6.

Eagles Soaring

Edison's Tihut Degfae, Myah Hicks and Donelle Epps all posted first-place finishes over the weekend at George Mason University's Field House for the Northern Region track and field championships.

Degfae won the 1,000-meter run with a time of 2:30.10, besting Centreville's Dan Grimm by more

than five seconds. Hicks won the girls 1,000 (3:04.31) and Epps captured the triple jump with a leap of 43 feet, 1 1/2 inches.

"I just felt really smooth," said Degfae, whose team was second to South Lakes with 54 points. "Getting [away from the pack] helped me keep my stride and I guess keep the tempo."

Leoule Degfae, Tihut's twin brother, placed third in the 3,200 and second in the 1,600.

Elsewhere, Lee's Anton Bowman was second in the long jump (21-02.50). Hayfield's Tyler Sturgill (shot put, 49-02.75), Justin Jefferson (55 dash, 6.61) and Nathan Joyce (300 dash, 36.49) all finished second.

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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

21 Announcements

TRUSTEE'S SALE OF VALUABLE IMPROVED REAL ESTATE
Improved by the premises known as
3841 Gallows Road, Annandale, Virginia
In execution of a Deed of Trust from Arnulfo Valles Gal-damez, dated October 17, 2007, and recorded November 21, 2007, in Deed Book 19668 at page 1477 among the Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia, the undersigned substitute trustee will offer for sale at public auction at the front entrance of the Judicial Center for Fairfax County, at 4110 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax, Virginia, on
Thursday, March 5, 2009 at 10:30 a.m.

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

Lot 1, Section 1, Lucius Addition to Kenwood as the same appears duly dedicated, platted and recorded in Deed Book 2152 at page 490, among the Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia.

Commonly known as 3841 Gallows Road, Annandale, Virginia 22003.

TERMS OF SALE: A deposit of \$40,000.00 or ten percent (10%) of the sale price, whichever amount is less, in the form of cash or its equivalent will be required of the purchaser at the time and place of sale; the balance of the purchase money being due and payable within fifteen (15) days after sale, time expressly being of the essence, with interest at the rate of 6.375 percent per annum from date of sale to date of settlement. Provided, however, that if the holder of the secured promissory note is the successful bidder at the sale, no cash deposit shall be required, and part of or the entire indebtedness, including interest and costs, secured by the Deed of Trust, may be set off against the purchase price.

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

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

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

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

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

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

DAVID N. PRENSKY
Substitute Trustee

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:
David N. Prenskey
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21 Announcements

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OBITUARY



JENKS, Elizabeth "Betty", 69 of Kings Park West, passed away on Saturday, February 21, 2009. She is the beloved wife of 49 years of Robert "Bob" Jenks. Devoted mother of Robert "Chuck" and wife Suzy, John "JP" and his wife Kathy and Rosemary (Jenks) Wilhite and husband, Mark. Loving grandmother to Timothy, Kayla, Kyle, Ryan, Shannon, Talon, Sarah, Megan and Jenna. Dear sister of Patricia Tomasi, Carol Hardiman, Marion McKenna and Charles Whicker. Also survived by many cousins, nieces and nephews.

A Mass of Resurrection will be Friday, February 27th 10am at the U.S. Marine Corps Memorial Church, 3251 Embury Loop, Quantico, Virginia 22134, followed by the Commitment Service at the Quantico National Cemetery at Noon. In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to The Salesian Missions, 2 Lefevre Lane, New Rochelle NY 10801-5710

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-William Van Horne

TRUSTEE'S SALE OF VALUABLE IMPROVED REAL ESTATE
Improved by the premises known as
10255 Lindsey Meadow Court, Fairfax, Virginia

In execution of a Deed of Trust from Deborah Anne Mueller and Sergio Mueller, dated April 19, 2007, and recorded April 27, 2007, in Deed Book 19290 at page 1710 among the Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia, the undersigned substitute trustee will offer for sale at public auction at the front entrance of the Judicial Center for Fairfax County, at 4110 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax, Virginia, on

Thursday, March 5, 2009 at 10:30 a.m.
the following property being the property contained in said Deed of Trust, described as follows:

Lot 35, Section 2, The Reserve at Martins Pointe, as the same appears duly dedicated, platted and recorded in Deed Book 16397 at page 1, among the Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia.

Commonly known as 10255 Lindsey Meadow Court, Fairfax, Virginia 22032.

TERMS OF SALE: A deposit of \$70,000.00 or ten percent (10%) of the sale price, whichever amount is less, in the form of cash or its equivalent will be required of the purchaser at the time and place of sale; the balance of the purchase money being due and payable within fifteen (15) days after sale, time expressly being of the essence, with interest at the rate of 6.125 percent per annum from date of sale to date of settlement. Provided, however, that if the holder of the secured promissory note is the successful bidder at the sale, no cash deposit shall be required, and part of or the entire indebtedness, including interest and costs, secured by the Deed of Trust, may be set off against the purchase price.

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

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

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

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

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

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

DAVID N. PRENSKY
Substitute Trustee
FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:
David N. Prenskey
Chasen & Chasen
5225 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W. #500
Washington, D.C. 20015
(202) 244-4000

TRUSTEE'S SALE OF VALUABLE IMPROVED REAL ESTATE
Improved by the premises known as
4976 Dequincey Drive, Fairfax, Virginia

In execution of a Deed of Trust from Ronnie L. Montgomery and Robin Montgomery, dated December 17, 2007, and recorded December 21, 2007, in Deed Book 19716 at page 1293 among the Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia, the undersigned substitute trustee will offer for sale at public auction at the front entrance of the Judicial Center for Fairfax County, at 4110 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax, Virginia, on

Monday, March 9, 2009 at 11:30 a.m.
the following property being the property contained in said Deed of Trust, described as follows:

Lot 21, Section 1, Briarwood, as the same appears duly dedicated, platted and recorded in Deed Book 4424 at page 491, among the Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia.

Commonly known as 4976 Dequincey Drive, Fairfax, Virginia 22032.

TERMS OF SALE: A deposit of \$30,000.00 or ten percent (10%) of the sale price, whichever amount is less, in the form of cash or its equivalent will be required of the purchaser at the time and place of sale; the balance of the purchase money being due and payable within fifteen (15) days after sale, time expressly being of the essence, with interest at the rate of 6.875 percent per annum from date of sale to date of settlement. Provided, however, that if the holder of the secured promissory note is the successful bidder at the sale, no cash deposit shall be required, and part of or the entire indebtedness, including interest and costs, secured by the Deed of Trust, may be set off against the purchase price.

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

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

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

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

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

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

DAVID N. PRENSKY
Substitute Trustee
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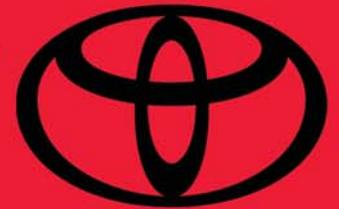
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