

On Tuesday, several inches of snow remain on the ground in places like Fountainhead Park. A snowstorm swept through the area on Sunday evening and Monday morning.

Chapter and Verse

NEWS, PAGE 2

School Start Plan 'Very Disruptive'

NEWS, PAGE 3

Winter's Last Hurrah

PHOTOS BY ROBBIE HAMMER/THE CONNECTION
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From Korea to Virginia, a Life of Poetry

Fairfax Station's Yearn Hong Choi breaks ground in literary circles.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE CONNECTION

For 14 years, Fairfax Station resident Yearn Hong Choi, 67, has been taking an hour and 20 minute walk from his home on Preakness Lane in Lee Chapel Grove to Burke Lake Park. Usually, he sits on a bench around the lake for 10 minutes, watching the water and the birds, and sometimes the fishermen, where he prays with the trees.

"It always inspires me," said the Korean-American poet who came to this country with \$70 in his pocket. It was from those walks that he wrote the poem, "Winter Woods" (see sidebar), which is included in a collection of poetry published in "Moon of New York." He has written five books of poetry.

"He's the premiere Korean American poet in this country," said Ellen Olmstead, who

teaches comparative literature at Montgomery College. "He's put together the first and definitive anthologies of Korean American poetry in the U.S. and wrote excellent introductions to those anthologies."

"He's someone whose work I'm very excited about because he's been a groundbreaker, and he's very knowledgeable about Korean poetic traditions and American poetic traditions," Olmstead. "I like that he has many different themes and many different styles and that's a reflection of his own background from Korea."

"I thought the book was very heartwarming," said Susan Cremins, who taught creative writing at Anne

Arundel Community College for nine years. "I think he did an excellent job in trying to explain what life was like. He had a very positive outlook on everything, including death."

Choi's poems are confessions of a Korean-



PHOTO BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION

Yearn Hong Choi of Fairfax Station

American life from 1968 when he moved to Indiana University as a student. In order to make a living, he pursued a Ph.D. in political science and public administration with a specialty in environmental policy. He taught in the college of business at the Uni-

versity of Wisconsin, Old Dominion University and UDC. He also worked at the Pentagon. He went back to Korea from 1999 through 2006 to care for his aging mother, where he taught at the University of Seoul, Korea. He is married to his wife Jane, a retired pharmacist, and they have two grown children, William and Joyce.

But Choi never lost the inner poet. In fact, when he was a young boy in Korea, his father dreamed that he would be a poet. So he spent years cultivating keen powers of observation and sensitivity to make that dream a reality.

CHOI IS founding president of the Korean American Poetry Group, organized in 2001, as well as the Korean American Literary Group, organized in 1990. He is the senior member of the Korean American Literary Society and edited the book "Surfacing Sadness — A Centennial of Korean-American Literature from 1903-2003," a first anthology of Korean-American literature, which is used by many colleges. "I picked up several poems from poets, essays and short stories from each writer," Choi said. He also edited three anthologies of Korean-American poetry: "Mother and Dove," "Fragrance

SEE A LIFE, PAGE 5

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A Moment in Time

Local painter transforms household walls into travel windows.

BY AMBER HEALY
THE CONNECTION

Sharon Sheehy was surrounded by white walls and needed an escape. After spending her days in a hospital caring for her father after he suffered a stroke, she'd return to her newly purchased home, distressed about the white walls and the garden she didn't have time or energy to nurture.

"I kept thinking, if someone could put me into the Secret Garden, like in the book, that was all I wanted," Sheehy said. "Everyone is healed in the Secret Garden."

Enter Kari Cannistraro.

Sheehy had picked up Cannistraro's card at the Rose Cottage in Great Falls and called her up. She explained what she was thinking about and wasn't sure if Cannistraro could make her dream a reality.

Cannistraro was patient, compassionate and easy to talk to, Sheehy said, and after a few conversations, she let Cannistraro go to work on her foyer and hallway.

Was Cannistraro able to make her dream come true?

"It's so beautiful," Sheehy said of the finished work. In fact, Sheehy said her husband now hired Cannistraro every year, as a Christmas present, to do more work on their Clifton-area home.

"I love coming home now."

For Cannistraro, transforming rooms into landscapes has become a career almost by accident. She started painting scenes onto furniture and moved to a much larger canvas when a woman fell in love with a waterfall scene she'd painted on a chair and asked Cannistraro to paint it on her bathroom wall.

"She wanted it to look like the waterfall was flowing into her bathtub," Cannistraro said. "That idea changed my life."

From there, Cannistraro started playing in her own house, combining her love of painting with her love of travel, especially to the dramatic images of Italy.

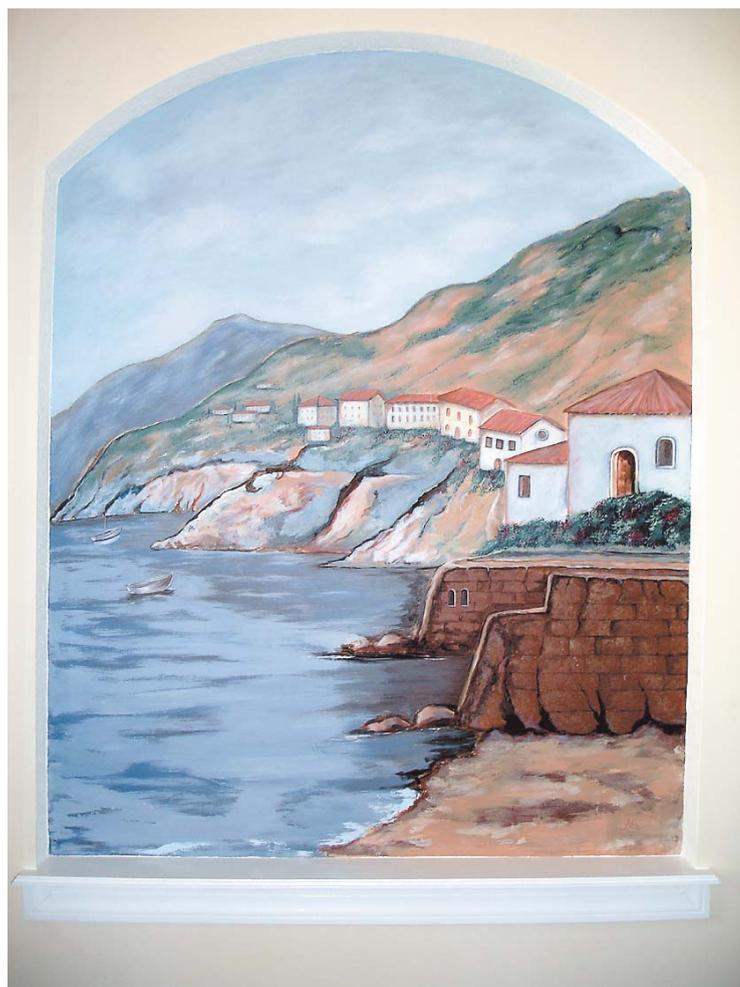
"I figure if I can't be in Italy, I want to feel like I'm there," she laughed.

FROM A DINING ROOM with columns looking out into the ruins of Pompeii to rooms for

"That idea changed my life."

— Kari Cannistraro

SEE MURAL, PAGE 15



DONATED PHOTO

Many of Kari Cannistraro's murals are Italian-themed, like this painting of the Amalfi Coast.

Advocates Pull Back from School Start Times Plan

Even proponents of later start times call current plan too disruptive.

BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County school bus driver Georgia Walsh takes students to and from West Potomac High School, Sandburg Middle School, Waynewood and Stratford Landing elementary schools five days a week.

She also picks up the same students in the morning that she drops off in the afternoon and has developed a relationship with their families, particularly those with children in elementary school.

"My parents know Mrs. Walsh is there in the morning and Mrs. Walsh is there in the afternoon," she said.

So Walsh was upset when she heard that, next fall, bus drivers may be picking up one group of students and dropping off an entirely different group of students in the afternoon.

Fairfax County Public Schools is proposing an entirely new bell schedule for schools, in part to accommodate later start times for high school students. Studies show that teenagers can benefit from a later class schedule because they predisposed to stay up later at night and wake up later in the morning.

But for bus drivers like Walsh, the new

bell schedule would only make it harder to form a relationship with the students she drives and their families, she said.

She also worries about elementary school students — some of which would be pushed to an earlier opening time on the new schedule — having to wait for the school bus in the dark morning. Currently, the only students who ever have to get on bus before dawn are already in high school.

"I am extremely concerned about picking up young students in the dark," she said.

THE BUS DRIVER is not alone in her opposition to the bell schedule proposal.

More than 200 people, many opposed to a change in start times, attended a community meeting about the matter at Whitman Middle School Feb. 26. The Fairfax County School Board is expected to take a vote on shifting school start times at its March 9 meeting.

Many of those attending the meeting were elementary and middle school parents, who said they worried about the impact a bell

schedule change would have on the childcare arrangements and children's after-school activities. Several also added that they didn't think the rest of the families in the school system should have to change their schedule to accommodate high school students.

"People are really against this. That is a side of this issue that I don't think has really been talked about fully," said Greg Milonovich, a West Springfield resident with children in elementary school.

Some high school groups, particularly those associated with sports, are also concerned about what impact the proposal could have on extra-curricular activities like swimming.

Even those people who have been working for years to promote later high school start times in Fairfax County Public Schools have said they can no longer support a proposal that would radically shift when thousands of children would be picked up by school buses next year.

Sandy Evans, co-founder of the Start Later for Excellence in Education Proposal (SLEEP), has been one of the county's leading advocates for pushing back the high school bell schedule.

But Evans said the current proposal in-

cludes too many drastic shifts for elementary schools. For example, some elementary schools that currently start after 9 a.m. this year would have to begin before 8 a.m. next year.

Many middle school parents are also concerned that their children would be starting school well after 9 a.m. and getting out of school later. Several are not comfortable with leaving their middle school-age children home to catch the school bus while they go to work, said Evans.

"This is not going to go as is. It just can't," said Evans.

The school system's chief operating officer Dean Tistadt said some elementary schools will have to go to school on the first school bus shift — before 8 a.m. — and some middle schools will have to start on the latest school bus shift — after 9 a.m. — to get high schools students on the middle shift.

"We are keeping costs down by having schools open from 7:50 a.m. to 9:40 a.m. If you squeeze the opening times more than that, the cost increases dramatically," said Tistadt.

School Board member Stu Gibson (Hunter Mill), who has been skeptical of efforts to change high school start times, said it is also going to be difficult to pass any proposal that changes a significant number of families' schedules in the county.

"Now we are talking about the real world changes. Are the benefits of doing this worth

SEE LATER, PAGE 7



Third grade students, from left, Rachael Graine, Matthew Schnizer, Rachel Frazee and Hayden Aspesi and sixth graders Nicole Nohra and Riley Wyant take a final look at the array of kitchen items collected by their classrooms before it is delivered to the shelter.

Students Collect Goods for Shelter

Clifton Elementary School helped put families at the Katherine Hanley Shelter on the road to self-sufficiency by collecting items for 15 “Kitchens in a Box” and donating them to the shelter. During the month of December, each class was given a checklist of kitchen items that families would need when moving out of the shelter and into their own apartment. These lists included pots, pans, dishes, cookbooks, utensils and cleaning supplies. All 15 classrooms at Clifton Elementary filled their boxes and then went above and beyond, donating small appliances and decorative items. Even the “boxes” became useful items such as laundry baskets, storage bins and carrying cases.

Train Victim is Identified

Fairfax County police have identified the man who was struck and killed by an Amtrak train last week as Michael Sheppard, 48, of the 8400 block Wasdale Head Drive in Lorton.

On Tuesday, Feb. 24, around 11:44 a.m., police were called to the train tracks near the intersection of Lorton and Gunston Cove roads and found an adult man dead on the tracks. Police said the train was traveling south when the train operator spotted a man standing next to the tracks.

According to police, the train operator blew his horn and “the man stepped on the tracks with his back to the train.” The operator activated his emergency equipment and tried to stop the train. But, say police, “The man turned toward the train and was struck.”

CRIME REPORT

Activities reported by the Sully District of the Fairfax County Police Department through Feb. 27.

ROBBERY IN THE CENTREVILLE AREA

14200 block of Heritage Crossing Lane. A 28-year-old Centreville-area man and a 25-year-old Alexandria-area woman were robbed on Monday, Feb. 23. Around 8:53 p.m. they parked in the 14200 block of Heritage Crossing Lane. As they walked toward the townhouses, two males approached and tried to engage them in conversation. One suspect brandished a handgun and demanded property from the victims. That same suspect held the woman by her neck while the second suspect took her keys. Both suspects fled on foot with the victims’ property. Neither victim required medical attention. Both suspects were described as black. The first was about 6 feet

tall and 220 pounds. He was wearing a gray hoodie, black pants and dark-colored boots. The other suspect was about 5 feet 8 inches tall and 180 pounds. He was wearing a brown jacket and a dark-colored bandana. 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

- 14300 block of Chantilly Crossing Lane.** Cash stolen from business.
- 3700 block of Centreville Drive.** Wallet stolen from business.
- 5200 block of Ellicott Court.** Jewelry stolen from residence.
- 6300 block of Multiplex Drive.** Groceries stolen from business.



The Democratic Women of Clifton celebrated their fourth anniversary Feb. 8 at the Clifton home of Judith and Merv Rosen.

Four Years for Clifton Dems

Women’s political group meets monthly at Clifton Community Hall.

On Sunday, Feb. 8, the Democratic Women of Clifton (DWC) celebrated its fourth anniversary at a party hosted by DWC member Judith Rosen and her husband, Merv.

Hundreds of photographs depicting the organization’s first four years were displayed around the Rosens’ Clifton home, which prompted much reminiscing and sharing of stories.

Formed in February 2005, the DWC was the idea of Jane Barker, wife of Sen. George Barker (D-39) and Donna Netschert, both of Clifton. They envisioned an organization that would unite Democratic women in a friendly, social atmosphere to discuss and learn about current issues and the political process, increase awareness in their communities, par-

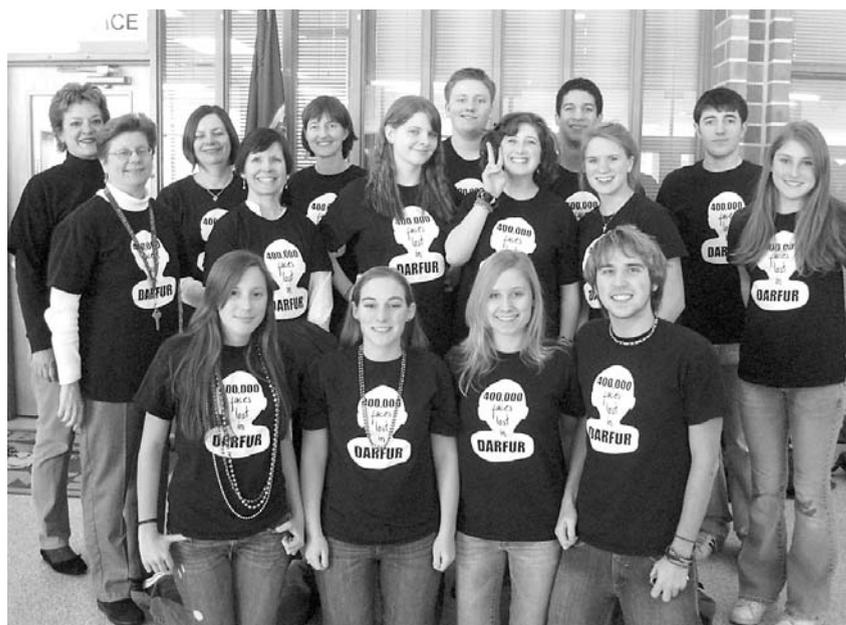
ticipate in political campaigning and work towards needed change.

The DWC is active in service to the community. As part of the National Day of Service, DWC members participated in two ongoing, year-round projects: a roadside clean-up of Clifton Road with the Adopt-a-Highway program and, in partnership with Our Daily Bread (ODB) in Fairfax, a donation of food gift cards. On Feb. 26, DWC members will attend an ODB fund raiser titled “Empty Bowls,” at which attendees will select hand crafted pottery bowls created by local artisans and enjoy a supper of soup and bread served in the bowls. Proceeds from the food card donation and Empty Bowls fund raiser will provide food for low-income families in Fairfax County.

For the last two years, the DWC has also donated, packaged and mailed holiday care packages to soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The DWC sponsors a monthly book club and publishes a monthly newsletter to keep members informed of current issues and events. Mid-month up

SEE ANNIVERSARY, PAGE 9



For Darfur

On Tuesday, Feb. 24, approximately 200 students and teachers from around the area participated in Darfur Shirt Day. The purpose of the event was to raise awareness of the violence that has been raging in the African nation for years. Here are some of the Robinson Secondary students and teachers who participated in the event.

A Life of Poetry

FROM PAGE 2

of Poetry: Korean-American Literature" and "An Empty House: Korean-American Poetry."

Inspiration for Choi's poetry comes from his personal life and from being a political scientist. He writes about racial discrimination, the Virginia Tech tragedy and the war on terror as easily as writing about his grandmother when she harvested potatoes.

"The life of the poetry is based on metaphor, symbols and ideas and thought," Choi said. "And ultimately, poetry is supposed to provoke the people's minds and agitate the people's minds."

"Some sort of metaphor should be mobilized to make a poem," he says. "Yesterday I noticed a crocus coming out in the trail ... A poet is supposed to see it. If not, they should not be a poet." He said he's constantly "searching for endless meaning for the little things surrounding me."

Choi compares himself to Robert Haas, the Pulitzer Prize-winning American poet.

"Certain things I can express in prose, certain things I can express in verse," Choi said, of his poetry. "Small things make life beautiful and sustaining."

In the poem, "America," which Choi

wrote in 1968, he muses on baseball, Chevrolet and apple pie. "I tried to beautify and glorify the average man enjoying life, hamburgers, Coca Cola and sportscasts."

But today, that poem's taken on a more serious meaning. "Now I see some negative attack on these three symbols," he said. "GM is falling down, there's steroids in baseball and apple pie is making Americans fat with high levels of cholesterol."

Choi was the first Korean American poet to read his poems at the Library of Congress in 1994 and again in 2003. The late poet laureate and Pulitzer Prize winner Gwendolyn Brooks who died in 2001, was the consultant to the Library of Congress. "She invited me to read my poems to an American audience in the Library of Congress," Choi said. "She was the first person who discovered me, supported me and encouraged me."

Choi has also written about Korea-U.S. relations, environmental protection and conservation in many publications, including the New York Times, the Washington Post and the Washington Times.

In May, Choi will read his poem "The Immigrant's Dream" during the Naturalization Ceremony at the Fairfax County Government Center.

Choi is a Presbyterian but some think he's a Buddhist, and out of 85 poems, five or six display his religiousness. "Sometimes if you try to reveal your religious life, the poetry quality goes down," he said. "I am very cautious whenever my religious view in life comes into my poetry."

He is now searching for a publisher for his book of prose, "Song of Myself, A Korean American Story."

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SUNDAY/MARCH 8

Democratic Women of Clifton Monthly Meeting, 3-5 p.m. at the Clifton Community Hall, 12641 Chapel Road, Clifton. Guest speakers, including Del. David Bulova (D-37), speaking on local and regional issues and efforts for conservation,

TUESDAY/MARCH 10

South County Federation Meeting, 7:30 p.m. at the South County Secondary School, 8501 Silverbrook Road, Lorton. For more information about the the Federation visit Southcountyfederation.com.

Winter Woods

The fresh scent of pine,
The sound of icy flakes
Landing on bare trees, and
Water flowing beneath the frozen creek,
Clear air.

High blue skies over the tall trees,
Small birds flying over leafless branches
Rustling and dropping snow,
Sunshine, peace and solitude
Of a snow-dusted trail,
A sprinkling of pine needles and seeds
Courtesy of a strong wind,
Deer hoof prints, and
A poet's visit
All make the winter woods
a beautiful world.

(I have a chance to see things not visible
in the other three seasons. Winter has an expansive vista.)

— YEARN HONG CHOI

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■ Sterilization

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OPINION

Later Start Times Still Possible

Not this proposal, but later start times still worth effort, without hurting athletics and activities.

Next week, the Fairfax County School Board should direct school staff to resolve the many issues and concerns raised about moving high school start times.

Years ago, moving start times for high schools in Fairfax County was impossible because it would have cost \$20 million. That was about a decade ago.

Now, after five years of intensive study and probing by a group of dedicated parents, it turns out that start times could be moved back from 7:20 to 8:30 a.m. at no cost at all.

This alone makes it hard to have a lot of confidence in the financial forecasts coming from the school system.

The devil is in the details, and the details put forward in the proposal last month are fraught with conflict. While it represents a technically feasible plan, it clearly stops there. It seems to have maximized the size and number of changes that Fairfax families would face next year, and Fairfax families have responded

accordingly.

Thousands of people turned out for community forums on the topic, responding with intensity in several directions. Teens and their families worry that later start times will throw a wrench in carefully orchestrated after school activities. Parents of children who attend different schools complain that they would have to accommodate vastly different schedules.

EDITORIAL

The parents who have advocated for later start times have science on their side. But even the many advocates of affording teens an extra hour of sleep have concluded that the current proposal is not workable for the coming year.

IT'S CLEAR that this proposal has too many unresolved issues to move forward for next fall as many had hoped.

But this should be the beginning, not the end, of this proposal. An 8:30 a.m. high school start

time won't cost \$20 million to implement, and it should be compatible with high school sports, including swimming, and other extracurricular activities. Both Arlington and Loudoun manage this start time, and their sports teams compete with Fairfax sports teams in some leagues.

It isn't fair for school staff to dump a half-baked proposal on families without answering the obvious questions. Fear of change will stymie progress.

It's also essential to try to minimize the changes forced on elementary and middle schools individually. For example, if an elementary school has an early time now, it shouldn't be moved to a late time in transition.

These are logistics that can and should be addressed so that it's possible to address healthy start times without compromising athletics or activities.

All change is hard. Some change is worth the effort.

Let's put in the effort to try to resolve the conflicts, not use unresolved questions to fan the flames.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

New Leadership Needed

To the Editor:

Sen. Dick Saslaw (D-35) is Virginia's Blagojevich, peddling influence to the highest bidder, but we deserve better from our legislators.

Energy efficiency is cheaper than building new generating plants and provides environmental benefits to boot. A no-brainer.

Virginia Democrats should look for new leadership before the next session.

Roger Diedrich
Fairfax

Gun Bill and The Senator

To the Editor:

I would like to commend you on your recent editorial calling for background checks for private sales at gun shows. It is indeed common sense that guns sold at well-attended gun shows should be sold to only those who are law-abiding citizens. If we are indeed concerned about public safety and the prevention of gun violence, then buyers should be subject to a background check to determine whether they are convicted felons or have a court order deeming them a danger to themselves or another. Licensed dealers routinely run background checks at gun

shows. Indeed, most individuals purchase their guns from licensed dealers. If a buyer passes a background check, they have the freedom to buy and own a gun. It is ludicrous to think that requiring a private seller to run a background check interferes with the freedom to purchase a firearm.

Your editorial rightfully noted that Sen. Ken Cuccinelli (R-37) was the only Northern Virginia legislator to vote against SB 1257, Sen. Henry Marsh's (D-16) bill to require background checks by private sellers at gun shows.

What was most interesting was your juxtaposition of Sen. Cuccinelli's letter describing his Attorney General race and his efforts to pass a bill allowing Choose Life license plates. Sen. Cuccinelli has gone on record to say he would never compromise on background checks; however, he would "trade" background checks if college students could conceal carry on campus. Furthermore, his bill, SB 1528, allows conceal carry permit holders to obtain a permit after taking a one-hour safety class over the Internet. There is no requirement that the permit holder demonstrate he or she can actually handle a firearm. Imagine if we could obtain a driver's license over the Internet without showing we can actually drive a car.

It is ironic that this senator, who calls himself pro-life, is not only adamantly opposed to any

commonsense gun laws, he is a relentless advocate for expanding gun rights. It is also ironic that a man who is running for Attorney General shows such lack of concern for the public's safety.

Both this year and last, members of Virginia Tech families, including Sen. Cuccinelli's two constituents, Joe and Omar Samaha, testified in favor of SB 1257. Again, for the second year in a row, Sen. Cuccinelli stepped out of the room during their testimony. Sen. Cuccinelli has stated time and time again that the Virginia Tech families have not said anything he has not already heard. However, had he stayed, he would have heard Omar Samaha's testimony that he purchased 10 firearms from private sellers, within an hour, with no questions asked, at a Richmond gun show. Regardless, Sen. Cuccinelli owes his constituents enough respect to stay and listen to them; after all, they are the ones who have suffered the most egregious loss of life.

The Senate Courts of Justice committee passed Sen. Marsh's bill despite Senator Cuccinelli's vote. When the bill reached the floor of the Senate, Sen. Cuccinelli requested that the bill be passed for the day with no reason given. That delay allowed a full-court press to wavering senators who ultimately voted against it, an action a New York Times Editorial described as follows: "Bereft of courage as public servants, the Richmond senators made clear their crocodile

tears about closure, shed in the immediate horror of students gunned down."

Seung Hui Cho did not purchase his guns at a gun show, but had he been denied the purchase of his guns at a gun shop, he could have gone to a private seller at a gun show to avoid a background check.

Lu Ann Maciulla McNabb
Centreville

Thanks to Reps.

To the Editor:

Congress recently reauthorized and expanded the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and President Obama signed it into law.

SCHIP provides matching funds to states to insure children whose parents make too much money to qualify for Medicaid but not enough to pay for health insurance. The legislation will make it possible to enroll more children in SCHIP and prevent states from denying healthcare to children currently enrolled.

Our representatives in Congress from Northern Virginia — U.S. Reps. Gerry Connolly (D-11), Frank Wolf (R-10) and Jim Moran (D-8) — deserve our praise for a vote in favor of this important legislation.

John L. Fitzgerald
Senior V.P. Inova Health System; CEO
Inova Fair Oaks Hospital

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NEWS

Later Start Time Proposal 'Disruptive'

FROM PAGE 3

the trade offs that have to be made to accomplish this? On balance, people don't believe the potential benefits are worth the disruption," said Gibson.

But School Board member Brad Center (Lee) believes some of the concerns people have could be mitigated if the county and school system worked together. For example, Fairfax schools could possibly offer "before school" programs for middle school students instead of "after school" programs, should those students be moved to a later bell schedule, he said.

"I believe that some of the issues can be mitigated or resolved. Not all of them but definitely some of them," said Center.

Some people may also be too caught up in how the details of the plan will impact their lives personally instead of looking at the problem holistically, said School Board President Dan Storck (Mount Vernon).

"To some degree it is very personal at this point," said Storck.

But there were at least a few high school students who showed up to support the proposal.

West Potomac senior Maiya Ilyas said she often has to take a nap when she gets home from school activities and then wakes up later in the evening to do her homework.

"My body functions better at night so I wake up to work at night," she said.

Hayfield Secondary School sophomore Evan Haskel said he struggles with staying awake in class and being able to concentrate during the day because his sleep schedule is off.

"It can make kids tired and cranky and incapable of learning properly when they wake up that early," said Haskel.

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Schools May Lease 2nd Administration Building

Fairfax County Public Schools is considering leasing space in an office building that it had hoped to purchase for administrative functions until the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors killed the proposal Feb. 23.

The school system plans to convert two of its existing administrative buildings in the Falls Church area back into schools next fall. Staff said they need to find new office space for those central workers being displaced by the conversion.

"We are not pursuing the acquisition of Gatehouse but that doesn't mean we don't still have space issues that have to be resolved," said the schools chief operating officer Dean Tistadt.

Had the building purchase gone through, Tistadt had planned to put those administrators and others in the new building, "Gatehouse II," a property adjacent to the school system's current central office building in Merrifield.

Though no final decisions have been made, the school system may decide to rent space for administrators in the "Gatehouse II" building anyway, said Tistadt.

"It is one of the things that we are looking at but no decisions have been made about that building," he said.

For the most part, the School Board strongly backed the "Gatehouse II" proposal. They said buying the extra administrative building would save the school system money, in part because it would no longer have to rent as much office space. "This is an option that would have allowed us to save money and help reduce overcrowding in schools," said School Board president Dan Storck (Mount Vernon.)

The proposal was met with large-scale public opposition. Critics said it was not appropriate for the school system to acquire a new administrative building during a budget crisis when schools may increase class size and cut teachers next year.

"The timing for this was just no good. There was tremendous opposition to moving forward with a proposal to purchase an administrative building right now," said Fairfax County Board of Supervisors chairman Sharon Bulova (D.)

Given the current economic climate, Bulova said she had a hard time feeling confident about the school system's prediction of cost savings.

"We are dealing in a very unstable economic climate and I wasn't sure that the savings in the long term or the short term were truly predictable," she said.

Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay said he was wary of the county acquiring more debt when the county economic is not supposed to experience an upturn until 2012.

"Just because you find a good deal doesn't mean you execute it at the expense of everything else. By that logic, everyone would be out there buying a house right now," said McKay.

Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville) was not convinced that the school system could not fit the administrators they need to move into the administration building they own now.

"They never demonstrated they couldn't clear out of the two office buildings they really need for schools by consolidating and crowding into the existing space they have," said Foust.

The School Board could cause problems if they decide to lease "Gatehouse II" after the county board voted down the purchase.

"I would view that as slap in the face. I think that is going to make life really difficult if they do that," said McKay.

— JULIA O'DONOGHUE

THE COUNTY LINE

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Budget Process Falls Short

Critics: \$650 million shortfall calls for more 'revolutionary thinking.'

BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE
THE CONNECTION

After months of pouring over Fairfax County's lines of business, the Dranesville Budget Task Force made 13 recommendations about local government spending to its district supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville). Near the top of its short list, the citizens' advisory group asked that the county seriously consider the consolidation of county offices and programs in the face of a \$650 million shortfall in next year's budget.

The county should look into combining public information and technology officer positions across its departments and agencies, they said. The task force also specifically recommended Fairfax look at merging the Department of Administration for Human Services and the Department of Systems Management for Human Services for cost savings.

"There are certain things in the budget that are very good. There are also things in there that seem a little rich," said Jim Mietus, a task force member who worked for the federal government's office of management and budget for 33 years.

BUT FAIRFAX COUNTY executive Anthony Griffin disappointed those expecting him to lead a major overhaul or restructuring of county government. Griffin was not available for an interview for this story.

In his initial budget proposal Feb. 23, Griffin included only one consolidation of a county department and agency. He proposed moving the planning commission into the department of planning and zoning.

"Globally speaking, it is not revolutionary. ... During these times, it is going to take revolutionary thinking to manage this kind of shortfall," said Supervisor Jeff McKay (D-Lee.)

"I was just disappointed we haven't done anything structurally with the budget. All we did with that budget is take some of the reductions that the agency heads put on the table," said Supervisor Patrick Herrity (R-Springfield).

In a recent interview, McKay rattled at least four different agency and department mergers he thought the county should investigate for potential cost savings: Fairfax's revitalization office could possibly be folded into the county's department of planning and zoning; the park authority and department of community and recreation services could be combined; the office of emergency management might be able to move into the department of public safety; and Fairfax's new homelessness office does not necessarily have to be separated from the department of housing, according to McKay.

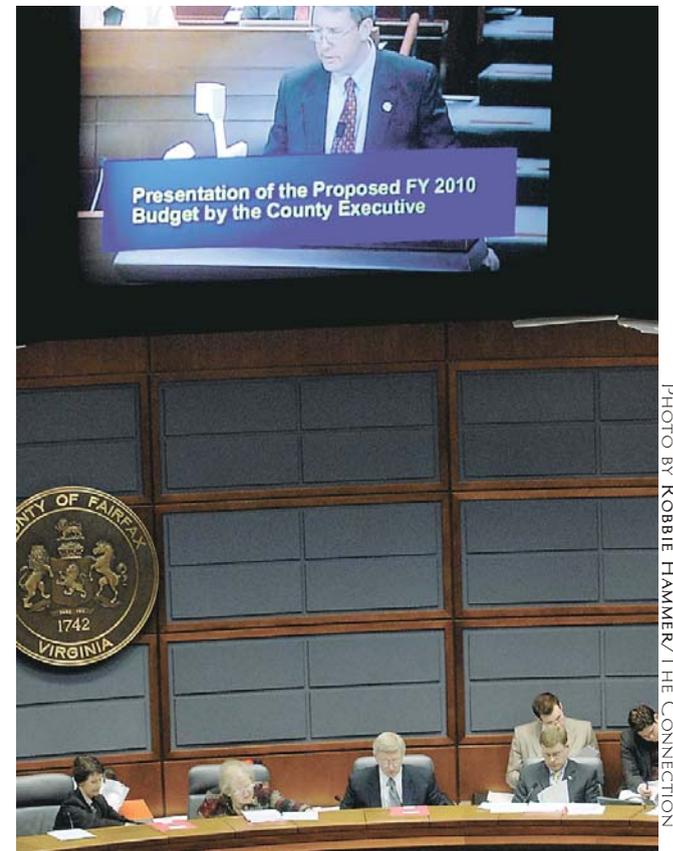
"Where you save money in these consolidations is the upper level management positions," he said.

McKay added that he wasn't sure he would be able to support Griffin's one recommendation for consolidation.

"I think [the planning commission's autonomy] is the one thing that makes our land use process work. I don't think you gain enough in savings to take away those independent reviews in land use," said McKay. "The only recommended consolidation in the budget is one I think citizens will object to."

WHEN DRAWING UP his budget draft, Griffin relied heavily on last fall's "lines of business" review, where county agency heads presented what reductions they would make to their individual departments if they had to take a 15 percent cut.

But several supervisors expressed frustration with the "lines



County Executive Anthony Griffin presented his proposal for the 2009 budget to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on Feb. 23.

of business" process. Many had gone into the process expecting some level of county service restructuring. But the lines of business included no comprehensive look at how the county functions or departments could be combined.

"A series of presentations of how the agency directors could save 15 percent in each of their budgets is not a 'lines of business' review. That was the point I was making early on. ... I thought we would see more sweeping changes, not just chewing around the corners of the budget," said McKay.

But the purpose of the lines of business review process was not to overhaul the county's administration, said Merni Fitzgerald, Fairfax County director of public affairs.

"The purpose was not to make structural changes and structural changes are not needed necessarily," said Fitzgerald.

Either way, the process did result in the types of changes some supervisors wanted to see in a budget cycle this dire.

"The [lines of business review] got us some reductions but it focused on the details and put us in the weeds. ... We needed more than 'in the weeds' reductions," said Herrity.

"As a new supervisor, I would like to take fresh look since we are in a fiscal crisis."

— John Foust,
Dranesville Supervisor

DURING HIS BUDGET presentation last month, Griffin said the planning commission consolidation was the only total department merger seriously considered.

"[Griffin] and his staff have apparently concluded the structure we have is the preferable one. As a new supervisor, I would like to take fresh look since we are in a fiscal crisis. This is the opportune time to make sure we are structured properly and efficiently," said Foust.

County chairman Sharon Bulova said it is not necessarily the job of the county executive to propose major overhauls in the county government. "If there are going to be major policy changes and more structural changes, it can be done with the recommendation of our staff but it is the Board of Supervisors that makes policy," said Bulova.

A small group of supervisors and School Board members started meeting two days after the budget was presented to discuss how county and Fairfax County Public Schools could share services and potentially save money.

PHOTO BY ROBBIE HAMMER/THE CONNECTION

Anniversary

FROM PAGE 4

dates and frequent Political Action Alerts also advise members of imminent legislation and encourage political awareness and involvement.

In April 2005, the newly formed DWC sponsored a candidate forum, a tradition that continues today. Nearly 100 Democratic women and their families gathered for the first forum to hear presentations by the Democratic candidates for governor and lieutenant governor of Virginia. That tradition will continue this year as the DWC hosts its 2009 Candidate Forum on April 19, 3-5 p.m., at the Clifton Community Hall. The Democratic candidates for governor and lieutenant governor have been invited to participate.

Meetings take place monthly on Sundays, from 3-5 p.m., at the Clifton Community Hall, 12641 Chapel Road, Clifton. The next general meeting on Sunday, March 8 will address the topic of the environment. Women interested in joining the DWC should visit www.democraticwomenofclifton.org or call 703-830-1355.

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Real World in Four Colors

Movie, comic book fans find a world of entertainment in graphic novels.

BY MICHAEL O'CONNELL
THE CONNECTION

Judging from the success of blockbuster films like "Iron Man," "The Hulk" and "Dark Knight," moviegoers have developed a taste for comic book movies. Will that taste, however, extend to a movie based on a comic book series that deconstructs the comic book myth? Is the public ready for "Watchmen?"

Written by Alan Moore and illustrated by Dave Gibbons, "Watchmen" was first published in 1986 as a 12-issue comic book series. DC Comics subsequently collected it into a graphic novel, which went on to become a New York Times' bestseller and one of Time Magazine's Top 100 Novels of the 20th Century.

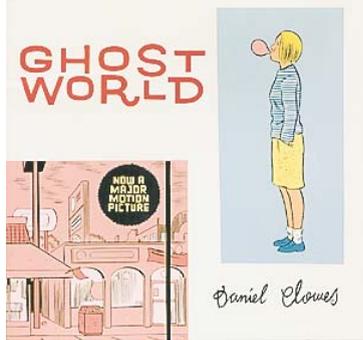
"I have a hard time believe that they're making a 'Watchmen' movie," said Mike Rhode, an Arlington resident who runs a blog about everything comics [<http://comicsdc.blogspot.com/>].

The story centers around a group of superheroes on an alternate Earth in which Richard Nixon is still president. Moore and Gibbons took the superhero myth and extrapolated how it would function in the real world.

"The real world with superheroes would be very disturbing," said Rhode. "Watchmen" has a character called Dr. Manhattan who goes in and single-handedly ends the Vietnam War. What would America be like if they could do whatever they liked to the rest of the world? It wouldn't be pretty."

Fairfax artist Matt Dembicki is also a fan of the "Watchmen" graphic novel. "It's just a wonderful piece of work," he said. "Wonderful storing telling, wonderful artwork, great pacing."

Dembicki runs the Three Crows Press blog [threecrowspress.blogspot.com] and also participates in the dconspiracy.com, which



FANTAGRAPHIC BOOKS
'Ghost World' By Daniel Clowes

like 'Ghost World' is invisible as a comic book," he said. "It doesn't really matter. And 'From Hell,' these were comic books and it doesn't really matter."

THE RISE in the number of comic book-based movies, overt or not, has paralleled the rise of the graphic novel as a popular medium. Originally collections of previously published comic books, graphic novels have evolved into standalone pieces of fiction or non-fiction.

"Will Eisner [creator of the Spirit comics of the 1940s] came up with the term 'graphic novel' as a marketing technique, when he was trying to sell a series of stories aimed at adults to a publisher," said Rhode. Even though it was a series of short stories, he called it a graphic novel."

What Rhode likes about comic books and graphic novels is the medium's flexibility. "You can tell any type of story," he said. While his tastes have grown over the years, he can still enjoy the melding of pictures and words.

"You move from Archie or Richie Rich comics to superhero comics and maybe you decide you like biographical comics like Harvey Pekar," Rhode said. "They is something you find through the medium. You don't have to give up on it just because you've grown up."

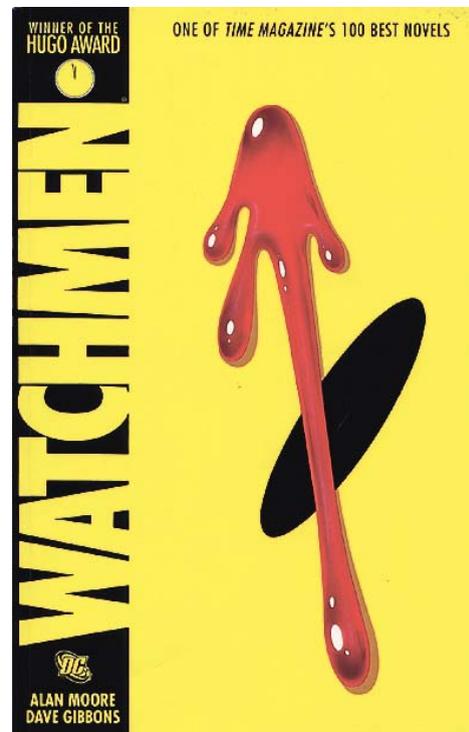
As an artist, Dembicki finds that it's relaxing to draw comics. "I like the fact that I can tell a story," he said. "On one page, I can have several pieces of art. Each panel has its own piece of art. ... The storytelling is just as important as the art."

Jared Smith, owner of Big Planet Comics in Vienna, has been interested in comics since he was 3. "That's how I learned to read," he said.

According to Smith, these days, it's difficult to say who the typical comic book reader is. "There are so many comic books out there

promotes self-published comic book writers and artists in the Washington, D.C. area. "My gut feeling is that people are going to realize that it's a superhero movie, but that they may not realize that it was a comic book first."

According to Rhode, "Watchmen" won't be the first comic book to fly under the radar. "Something



DC COMICS
'Watchmen' by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons

and the audience is still very, very small, it's a genre, niche market, but it has spread out to the point that people walk in and say 'I want an action story' or 'I want a really touching, dramatic story.'

At the end of the 1990s, Smith began to see a shift in the comic book markets as the number of graphic novels sold rose. "Now it's about a third of our sales are sold in graphic novels,"

To demonstrate how that shift has changed the way Smith has done business, he pointed out that three of the four walls in his Vienna shop are devoted to graphic novels. "The space that we devote to it is much larger," he said. "We carry a much larger selection of it."

Another trend that Smith has seen is the rise of the comic book writer over the artist. "Even 10 years ago, people were very interested in who the hot new artist drawing my favorite character?," he said. "Now, it's who's the great writer writing the books I like? What else has he done? ... Once we find out what people like, we'd say, 'Do you like "Watchmen" by Alan Moore the writer? Here are 40 other books that Alan Moore has written,' and they'd like them as well."

Moore isn't writing many comic books these days. However, this summer will see the release of a new sequel to the "League of Extraordinary Gentlemen," another of his works that was adapted into a film.

Other popular comic book writers include Geoff Johns, Warren Ellis, Brian Michael Bendis, Neil Gaiman, Grant Morrison and Brian K. Vaughn.

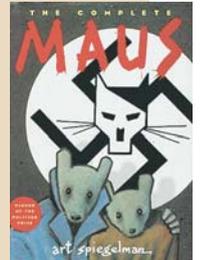
"Usually, we try to find out what they like, what their backgrounds are," said Smith. "We say, 'What kind of movies do you like? What kind of fiction do you like? We find that there is almost a comic book out there for everyone now."

What To Read ...

For those looking to dip their toe into the graphic novel waters, Mike Rhode of comicsdc.blogspot.com offers these suggestions:

'Maus: A Survivor's Tale' by Art Spiegelman

Artist Art Spiegelman tells his family's story of the Holocaust. "If you can deal with the subject matter, 'Maus' is very moving and effective," said Rhode. "Because it was published over such a long time period, Spiegelman had an opportunity to refine it."



'Watchmen' by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons

"Everybody always recommends 'Watchmen,' said Rhode. "'Watchmen' is not a starting point, in my view, because 'Watchmen' is all about deconstructing the superhero trope. If you care about superheroes, it's the best place to participate in the deconstruction."

'Sandman' by Neil Gaiman

"I think 'Sandman' has appealed to a lot of people. I like Gaiman's writing quite a bit. 'Sandman' has that problem of being written as a serial, so sometimes they don't stand alone as well as they might. ... As Gaiman wrote it for a while, it became more a traditional horror/fantasy-type thing."

'Uncle Scrooge' by Don Rosa

Artist Carl Barks drew popular stories about Donald Duck's rich uncle for over 20 years. "Uncle Scrooge was the richest duck in the world or he wanted to be," said Rhode. "Don Rosa grew up on those stories and wrote stories in between Carl Barks' stories."

'Bone' by Jeff Smith

Rhode suggests Jeff Smith's 'Bone' series a good starting point for readers of all ages. "It tells one story of what appears to be funny animal characters, but then it becomes a heroic fantasy about a girl who has to recapture her throne. ... It's a very readable, very accessible story for children and adults."

'Our Cancer Year' by Harvey Pekar

This autobiographical novel follows anti-hero Pekar as he deals with cancer. "The thing about Harvey Pekar is that most people know about the 'American Splendor' movie, which is an excellent movie about him," said Rhode. "That's a sideways way into caring about Harvey as a character or a human being, whatever."

FOR A REVIEW OF THE "WATCHMEN" MOVIE, SEE PAGE 13

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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.
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. Tickets \$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

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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. 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 to 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.

SUNDAY/MARCH 8

The Loft Gallery 23rd Anniversary Signature Show, with Artists

Reception 1-4 p.m. at 313 Mill St., Occoquan. Meet and talk to the artists, visit artists at work in their studios and watch gallery artists giving demonstrations. 703-490-1117 or www.loftgallery.org.

Gunston Hall Liberty Lecture Series, 3 p.m. at Gunston Hall Plantation, 10709 Gunston Road, Mason Neck. \$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.

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

Springfield Community Theatre presents "The Fantastics," 2 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.

Adoption Seminar, 2 p.m. at Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road Burke. Free. Barbara C. Jones of Autumn Adoptions, Inc. at 703-568-1314 or autumnadoptions@msn.com.

Getting the Vote, The Suffragist Story, 12-5 p.m. in Gallery W-16, Second Floor, Workhouse Arts Center, 9517 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Documentary videos, poetry readings, music and a period reenactment about the women who fought for, and won, the right to vote. Free. 703-584-2900 or WorkhouseArts.org.

Vegan Cooking Class: "Soups & Stews." 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at 9302 Hallston Court, Fairfax Station. \$50 per person. Class includes food samples, recipes, and coupons. Pre-registration required. 703-643-2713 or www.localdc.com/cooking.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 12



The Gunston Hall Liberty Lecture Series

continues on Sunday, March 8 with 'James Madison's Republic: From Original Intentions to 21st-Century Expectations' by David Marion, Hampden-Sydney College, with remarks by George Mason, as portrayed by Don McAndrews, and followed on Sunday, March 15 by 'The Constitution Goes to College: How Constitutional Ideas Have Influenced the Identity of American Universities,' by Rodney A. Smolla, Dean, Washington & Lee School of Law.

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Fairfax County will sponsor an Emerald Ash Borer Information Session at the Kingstowne Library on Thursday, March 12. The session will focus on signs and symptoms of emerald ash borer infestation, 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 quarantine.

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FROM PAGE II

MONDAY/MARCH 9

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

Rainbow Readers, 10:30 a.m. at the Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Colorful stories. Age 24-35 months with adult. 703-339-4610.

TUESDAY/MARCH 10

The Road to Independence, 7 p.m. at Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Playwright and actor Adam Whitley presents a one-man play about three major events leading up to the Declaration of Independence: The Stamp Act, The Townshend Act and the Boston Massacre. Adults. 703-249-1520.

Orange Hunt Art and Literacy Night Cultural Encounters, 6-7:30 p.m. at 6820 Sydenstricker Road, Springfield. Learn the history and artistic techniques of other cultures through mask making, weaving, stitchery, designing clothes for a cultural dance, origami and stories. Have a picture taken and made into a "Get Caught Reading" mini-poster. 703-913-6800.

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

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

Think Green, 10:15 a.m. at the John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive, Alexandria. Celebrate St. Patrick's Day. Age 2-3 with adult. 703-971-0010.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 11

NARFE Springfield Chapter 893 Meeting, 1:30 p.m. at American Legion Post 176, 5620 Amherst Ave., Springfield. Jim Delgado, retired director of the Voluntary Service Program, speaking on today's Veterans Affairs and how it serves the nation's veterans. Contact Rod Bricksin at rbricksin@yahoo.com. Guests welcome. 703-451-3287.

Older Adults Book Group, 2 p.m. at the Kingstowne Library, 6500

Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. "Presidential Courage: Brave Leaders and How They Changed America 1789-1989" by Michael R. Beschloss. Adults. 703-339-4610.

Science and Stories, 4:30 p.m. at Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Stories and simple science experiments. Age 4-6. 703-249-1520.

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

Lullaby Stories, 7 p.m. at the Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Join us for evening stories and activities. Pajamas and stuffed animals welcome. Age 1-5. 703-339-4610.

Springfield Art Guild March Meeting, 7:30 p.m. at Grace Presbyterian Church, 7434 Bath St., Springfield. Guest speaker Mark Isaacs, on perspective in landscapes. Donnalyne Lefever at 703-644-6677 or magickaldl@earthlink.net.

THURSDAY/MARCH 12

Becky Mode's "Fully Committed," 7:30 p.m. at Lake Braddock Secondary, 9200 Burke Lake Road, Burke. 703-426-1070.

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

Pirates and Parrots, 1:30 p.m. at the Lorton Library, 9520 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Stories, crafts and activities. Age 4-5. 703-339-7385.

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

FRIDAY/MARCH 13

ArtNotes Concert Series with Brass 5, 7-9 p.m. in the Workhouse

Arts Center's Gallery W-16, 2nd floor, 9517 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Tickets \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door. 703-584-2900 or www.Workhousearts.org.

Becky Mode's "Fully Committed," 7:30 p.m. at Lake Braddock Secondary, 9200 Burke Lake Road, Burke. 703-426-1070.

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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. 703-866-6238 or info@sctonline.org.

Messiah United Methodist Church Girlfriends Night Out Simplicity-Tea, 7-9 p.m. at 6215 Rolling Road, Springfield. Bring a box of 24 tea bags and a favorite store bought treat. Some tea will be for tasting, but everyone will go home with a variety of tea bags. Reserve at 703-569-9862 or office@messiahumc.org.

SATURDAY/MARCH 14

Becky Mode's "Fully Committed," 7:30 p.m. at Lake Braddock Secondary, 9200 Burke Lake Road, Burke. 703-426-1070.

John Longbottom, 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. Tickets \$15 adults, \$13 students and seniors. 703-866-6238. info@sctonline.org.

Stephen Ministries Caring Ministries Workshop, 8:30 a.m. at Sydenstricker United Methodist Church, 8508 Hooes Road, Springfield. Led by Joel Keen, Stephen Ministries Center, St. Louis, Mo. \$15 per person, or \$50 for a congregation group of four or more. To register call 314-428-2600 or www.caringministry.org.

Friends of Accotink Creek Quarterly Biological Stream Monitoring, to assess water quality. 9:30-11:30 a.m. at Byron Avenue Park, and 1-3 p.m. at Lake Accotink Park. New volunteers welcome, no experience required. www.accotink.org.

IN THE DARK

Watching the Watchmen

R-rated superhero film is aimed at adult audience.

As the director of "300," a motion picture based on a graphic novel by artist Frank Miller, Zack Snyder is no stranger to the challenges of bringing a comic book to the big screen. His latest effort, "Watchmen," presents a whopping hurdle for Snyder to overcome.

Since it was published over 20 years ago, "Watchmen," the superhero equivalent of "Citizen Kane," has struggled to find its way onto film. Many directors and movie companies have taken a crack at it, but the source material's complex, multi-layered plot, superhero motif and demanding special effects have made it seem, on paper, unfilmable. At the very least, Snyder should receive credit for successfully getting the work on film and in theaters.

That major hurdle passed, the end product is quite good and offers much for movie fans looking for a little meat to their escapist superhero flick.

Set in an alternate Earth in which Richard Nixon is still president and the United States has won the Vietnam War, "Watchmen" begins as a murder mystery and reveals itself as a character study of superheroes in the real world.

Rorschach, played by Academy Award nominee Jackie Earle Haley, is a psychotic masked avenger

who investigates the death of hero/government stooge The Comedian (Jeffrey Dean Morgan). It's one sicko looking for the killer of another sicko.

Rorschach's colleagues in crime fighting are just as messed up. The middle-aged Nite Owl (Patrick Wilson) struggles with impotence and a general loss of purpose. The Silk Spectre II (Malin Akerman) is estranged from her superhero mom and godlike boyfriend Dr. Manhattan (Billy Crudup). Depicted as an eerily detached member of the Blue Man Group, Crudup's Dr. Manhattan abandons humanity to its own devices and flees to Mars. This act pushes the U.S. and Soviet Union closer to nuclear annihilation.

These are not your parents' Super Friends. "Watchmen" offers much and demands much. At 2 hours and 43 minutes in length, it's a dense film. Toward the end it gets a bit preachy and its action sequences are graphically violent throughout. The film earns its R rating.

"Watchmen" is quite watchable and rewarding to behold. It inspires and disgusts. It thrills and angers. It's provocative and mundane. It's trash fiction at its best and worst. But that's what one should expect from a superhero film aimed at adults.



MOVIE REVIEW

— MICHAEL O'CONNELL

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County Honors Football Legends

Mike Skinner, John Schaffstall and Eddie Royal inducted as part of 2009 class.

BY JASON MACKEY
THE CONNECTION

Minutes after attendees finished their chicken over rice with a side of asparagus, former U.S. Rep. (R) Tom Davis took the stage Sunday afternoon, March 1, at the McLean Hilton and told a story about his own football glory days.

"I played end, guard and tackle," Davis said as area coaches, players and supporters gathered at the 19th Annual Fairfax County Football Hall of Fame Awards Banquet. "I sat at the end of the bench, guarded the water bucket and tackled anyone who came near it."

The oft-told joke drew plenty of laughs, but Davis followed with a more poignant story about a son wanting to play catch with his father. But before the dad obliged, Davis said, he took a map of the world from a local newspaper, cut it into 25 pieces and asked his son to put it back together.

Three minutes later, the son emerged with the map re-assembled. The befuddled father asked how his son performed the task so quickly and, in the process, noticed a picture of a child on the back of the map.

The moral of the story?

"If you put the child together right," Davis said, "the rest of the world will take care of itself."

In addition to honoring the top youth league and high school coaches in Fairfax County, the event also honored the 2009



John Schaffstall, right, a longtime commissioner for the Braddock Road Youth Club, was inducted into the Fairfax County Football Hall of Fame this past Sunday.

class of inductees, which included Mike Skinner, John Schaffstall and Eddie Royal.

The evening's first inductee was Skinner, who coached at Groveton, Marshall and Centreville high schools. The longtime coach was surrounded by many of his former players, including former pros Keith Lyle and Michael McCrary and current Cleveland Browns defensive back Nick Sorensen.

"I wanted to make sure that I thanked everyone that was going to be here," said Skinner, who won a Northern Region title at Centreville in 1999 and region and state titles in 2000. "It's a great thing to do here. Other counties and other areas don't have that."

Schaffstall, a former Braddock Road Youth Club commissioner and a former assistant coach at Robinson Secondary School, insisted that the Hall of Fame was never anything that went through his mind.

"In my mind, it's kind of a shock," said Schaffstall, who's now the defensive coordinator at Strasburg High School. "It was never an aspiration. I just wanted to do the best I could for youth football."

Eddie Royal, a Westfield High and Virginia Tech graduate who caught 91 passes this past season as a wide receiver with the Denver Broncos, was the final inductee.

Though he acknowledged the impact that playing youth football in Fairfax County had on his career, Royal also made a point to

"If you put the child together right, the rest of the world takes care of itself."

— Former U.S. Rep. Tom Davis

emphasize education, calling on his own experience at Virginia Tech when he stayed for his senior year to get his diploma.

"It's a good feeling to be surrounded by a lot of people who supported me and helped me get to where I'm at right now," Royal said. "It's also good to come back and be able to talk to the young kids and try to a positive message about hard work and valuing your education."

Other honors included a proclamation by Supervisor Cathy Hudgins (D-Hunter Mill), who declared every March 1 to be Mark Meana Day in her district, honoring the longtime chairman of the Fairfax County Youth Football League.

Mike Olsen (Stone Bridge), Stephon Robertson (Edison), Bryn Renner (West Springfield), Jack Tyler (Oakton), Jovan Smith (Flint Hill) and Adrian Ingram (Battlefield) were honored as the High School Players of the Year. Mickey Thompson (Stone Bridge) and Joe Thompson (Oakton) took home Coach of the Year honors. Joey McCallum (Oakton), Tommy Verbanic (Westfield) and Kyle Spencer (Edison) all received \$1,500 college scholarships. Falls Church director of student activities Jeanne Kelly received the Karl Davey Memorial Award, and Dan Kain Trophies (Jim Preziotti, Larry Grandy and Joe Smith) was awarded the Tom Davis Meritorious Service Award. Jeff Davey of Chantilly Youth Association was recognized as the Commissioner of the Year.

'That Nuggety Competitor'

Lake Braddock's Anna Puglisi, though only 60 inches tall, stars on Division-I stage.

BY JASON MACKEY
THE CONNECTION

For three years, Anna Puglisi had hoped that her softball team, the Division-I Pennsylvania Quakers, would return to her hometown and play George Mason University. And for three years, Puglisi has been sorely disappointed.

But during a workout early last fall, Quakers coach Leslie King approached Puglisi and told her that the team had decided to play in the 2009 Patriot Classic softball tournament at the end of February.

Puglisi's dream to return to a softball diamond near home became reality this past

weekend, as Pennsylvania played two, six-inning games on Friday — both lopsided losses — and one more on Saturday, taking a 6-1 win back to Philadelphia.

"Getting to play my senior year in Virginia and having my family and friends there that was exciting," said Puglisi, a 2005 Lake Braddock graduate and Springfield native. "My teammates were all excited because they knew we were really close to my home, and they've heard a lot about Virginia."

Puglisi's collegiate debut at home may have been just as unusual as the fact that, at 5-foot-nothing, she's playing high-level college softball. Mildly recruited out of high school, Puglisi has found a home at Penn-

sylvania, developing into one of the team's captains this spring.

IN HER FIRST at-bat on Friday, Puglisi recorded her first hit of the season. It could also hold up as her strangest. With a swing that helped her earned first team All-Patriot District honors twice at Lake Braddock, Puglisi, a left fielder, lunged after an outside pitch.

But as she ran to first base, the ball, traveling no farther than 5 feet from home plate, fell in front of St. Joseph's catcher Brooke Darreff and plugged itself into the mud-dirt mix that was produced with last week's rain-storm. Puglisi didn't record another hit during the three-game set, finishing 1-for-6.

The unusual trip continued when

SEE PUGLISI, PAGE 15



A 2005 graduate of Lake Braddock Secondary School, Anna Puglisi is a two-starter and captain for the University of Pennsylvania softball team.

Mural Artist Transforms Homes

FROM PAGE 3

children inspired by the “Lord of the Rings” books and movies, Cannistraro said there’s not much she won’t try to tackle in her painting.

In her home, it’s Italy that surrounds her. “I lived there for five years, I studied at Temple University in Rome, I’m half Italian, I met my husband, there,” she said. “Every room in our house, except the living room, has a mural.”

People might not always be able to travel to the place they love, but Cannistraro’s work can bring those places to them.

While she’s partial to Italian scenes, Cannistraro is willing to try anything, including re-creating a famous hole from one of the nation’s most famous golf courses.

Becky Zieller called Cannistraro to recreate the 12th hole from the Augusta National course, home of the Masters Golf Tournament. She was a little apprehensive because the hole is among the most recognizable for golf lovers, like Zieller’s husband.

“I called to see if she could do this, and I was nervous because it’s very specific. Everything had to be right,” Zieller said. To make matters even more difficult, Cannistraro only had three days to complete the mural, while Zieller’s husband was away on business.

The mural was a combined Father’s Day and anniversary gift, Zieller said, and when he came home, he was impressed.

“He just loved it,” she said. With one exception — the flag on the hole was supposed to be a square, but the picture Zieller gave Cannistraro had shown a triangular flag. One quick phone call to Cannistraro, and the image was corrected. It was perfect.

“We get lots of compliments on the mural,” Zieller said. “If you’re a golfer, you recognize it immediately.”

She later had Cannistraro come back and



Kari Cannistraro of Burke paints a Greek-inspired mural.

paint a tile pattern on her hardwood floors and use some picket fencing installed in her daughter’s room to create a butterfly garden scene.

“I like that she comes in and done the project all at once,” Zieller said. “She’s very artistic and creative. She does great work.”

Zieller had initially heard about Cannistraro’s work from a friend, and Cannistraro says most of her work comes from word-of-mouth referrals.

It all begins with an idea and a series of conversations to make sure artist and homeowner are on the same page of drawing paper. Sometimes Cannistraro will leave her sketches with the client to ensure they can “live with” the concept, and then she gets to work. Typically the project can be completed in as little as a week or as long as

three weeks, but any changes that need to be made are done without problem.

Cannistraro remembers a time when a mother had asked her to paint a jungle-like scene with a lion on her son’s wall. When the son returned from school, he was less than pleased.

“There was some kind of miscommunication, or the son had an idea the mom didn’t agree with,” she SAID. Turns out, the son had wanted a lion enjoying a tasty deer carcass for dinner and wasn’t happy with the picture of the proud animal.

If a client requests something Cannistraro feels is inappropriate or won’t stand the test of time, she’ll make suggestions. Some parents have asked for trendy themes, like a wall full of Pokémon during that craze a few years ago, and she’ll gently nudge them to a more general theme. One girl’s request for a room honoring the lead fairy princess in the “Lord of the Rings” was slightly adjusted into a fairyland with the character in a more supporting role.

But when a client like Lawanda Swope comes along, artist and client get the chance to play together a little. Take, for example, the bats, lizard and monkeys in Swope’s kitchen.

“My house is very eclectic,” said Swope, who lives near the Fairfax County Parkway in Springfield on a 6-acre parcel of property surrounded by fields and water. She wanted to bring the outdoors in, and has found a kind of kindred spirit in Cannistraro, inviting her into her personal resort time and again for new projects.

Cannistraro said she’s very careful with her work in people’s homes, because when the paintbrushes are set aside, her clients have to make her art a piece of their lives.

“It’s so rewarding,” she said. “There have been people I didn’t know before I started working on their house who have hugged me when I’ve finished.”



Becky Zieller called Cannistraro to paint this mural of the 12th hole from the Augusta National course, home of the Masters Golf Tourna

DONATED PHOTOS

Puglisi

FROM PAGE 15

Pennsylvania’s games on Sunday were canceled because of the inclement weather, ending the trip a few hours early as the team traveled back to Philadelphia on Sunday morning.

Though Puglisi’s teammates supported her and echoed her enthusiasm for the trip home, they were caught off guard by what Fairfax County looked like.

To those who live close to Pennsylvania’s suburban Philadelphia campus, Fairfax is a far cry from the north. When Puglisi talks about where she was born and raised, most teammates insist that she’s from a desolate farming town.

“They expected it to be a lot warmer for some reason,” said Puglisi, who, along with her team, endured substantial winds and cold temperatures on Friday and Saturday. “They don’t really know about suburban Virginia.”

PUGLISI HAD grown up around softball. Her father, Rob Puglisi, has the head coach of the Fairfax Blue Jays fastpitch team for the past 11 years and started coaching his daughter when she turned 10, first starting to play catch with her when she was 6.

The Blue Jays produced three players on George Mason’s roster: shortstop Rachael Davies (Osborn Park), pitcher Brianne Pease (Centreville) and utility player Morgan Davis (Madison). Another Mason pitcher, Oakton graduate Becky Anderson, plays summer ball with Puglisi for the Fairfax County Women’s Fastpitch League.

“It really is a big testament to their determination and their dedication to something, because it’s not easy to play at that level,” Rob Puglisi said. “A lot of kids are promoted as big-deal high school players, but they don’t really succeed much after that. These kids have busted their butts, and they’re playing at a level that most people only dream about playing.”

When Pennsylvania coach Leslie King first noticed Anna Puglisi on a recruiting trip, she nearly had to invent a word to quantify what she saw. King calls Puglisi “nuggety,” which translates best as a sort of scrappiness.

“Being small in stature, she kind of had that chip on her shoulder where she felt she had to do more to stand out,” King said. “She’s that nuggety competitor that every team needs.”

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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.

21 Announcements

NOTICE**NOTICE****NOTICE****NOTICE****NOTICE******
 The National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) hereby issues an
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No later than 4:30 pm (EST) on Friday, March 27, 2009.
 Original response to Request for Proposals with original signatures is due:
By hand delivery or post marked received date no later than 5:00 pm (EST) Friday, April 3, 2009 Proposals shall be opened and reviewed for consideration on:
5:00 pm (EST) on Monday, April 6, 2009
 Award notification shall be posted on the NACCRRA website on:
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 Responses emailed and/or mailed but not received at the designated address by the specified time and date will not be considered as meeting this requirement and will not be evaluated

21 Announcements

21 Announcements

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
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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

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:
David N. Prenskey
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5225 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W. #500
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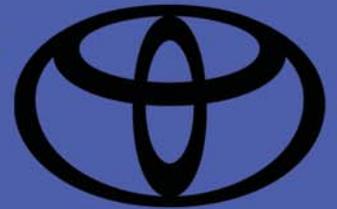
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