

Springfield CONNECTION

Franconia ❖ Kingstowne ❖ Newington

While attending Science and Math Day at Crestwood Elementary with his family on Saturday, fifth-grader Matt Merid tries on an astronaut suit from NASA.

Crestwood Astronaut

PEOPLE, PAGE 6

Remembering
The Spartans
NEWS, PAGE 3

Coffield Returns
To Coach Hawks
SPORTS, PAGE 12

SEE PAGE 10

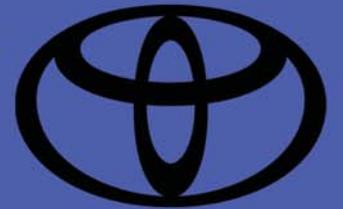
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Garden Honors Fallen Spartans

April 17 dedication event planned for memorial garden at West Springfield High School.

BY AMBER HEALY
THE CONNECTION

Corey MacRae wanted to leave something behind when he graduated from West Springfield High School. As an Eagle Scout, he needed to complete one, last, big project. With a little help from the former athletic director at the school, MacRae was able to combine the two, creating the Memorial Garden, a place where West Springfield alumni who died while on active duty in the military could be remembered.

"It was either going to be a memorial for Leslie Sherman or something for the people who died in the military, and I chose the garden," said MacRae, a senior who will graduate in June and plans to go to a college prep school in the fall. Sherman was a 2006 graduate from West Springfield and was freshman at Virginia Tech when she was one of the students killed during the April 16, 2007 shooting at the school.

So, with the help of then-athletic director Tim

O'Reilly, MacRae got to work.

First, he researched all West Springfield alumni who died while in active duty in the military, in all conflicts after Vietnam. Then he had to reach out to the families and explain what he wanted to do. He envisioned a peaceful place on school property where people could get together, remember their friends, classmates, neighbors and loved ones, their names engraved for all to see.

O'Reilly helped MacRae obtain permission from principal Paul Wardinski.

"He agreed it was highly appropriate," said O'Reilly, now a subschool assistant principal at Chantilly High School. And it wasn't entirely without precedent at the school either — the athletic field is named for one of the fallen soldiers as well.

MacRae began contacting the families of the eight alumni, and they all agreed to have their loved one included in the memorial.

The names on the memorial include Craig Weeks, Navy, WSHS 1977; Thomas Tulenko Jr., Marine, WSHS 1978; Paul Taylor, Army, WSHS 1981; Mary Ellene Robertson, Navy, WSHS 1985; Ronald Mobayed, Navy, WSHS 1986; Anders Poremba, Marine, WSHS 1987; Mark Stubenhofer, Army, WSHS 1992, and Jeff Trowbridge, Navy, WSHS 1982.

"Once we found the families, the rest was easy," MacRae said. Some had moved out of the area, some had left the country, but a few were still in the neigh-

"There's this silent bond that kind of happens among people who have experienced this same thing."

— Sallie Stubenhofer

SEE W. SPRINGFIELD, PAGE 5



Eagle Scout Corey MacRae stands next to the memorial to fallen military graduates of West Springfield High School.

DONATED PHOTO

With a Wave of the Educational Wand

Virginia's Community Colleges unveils online tool to help students find career and school.

BY JUSTIN FANIZZI
THE CONNECTION

Just a snap of the fingers, or in this case, a few clicks of the mouse, and there it is. Every answer a person many need on one of the most important topics of his or her life is right at their fingertips. Confusion is cleared, a path is laid and anxiety relieved all in one fell swoop.

That is exactly the experience that Virginia's Community Colleges were seeking to reprise when they created their newest education tool, the Virginia Education Wizard, unveiled March 13 at Northern Virginia Medical Education Campus in Springfield.

"The Wizard brings together all the information prospective students and families need today to make smart choices about their future," said Dr. Glenn DuBois, chancellor of Virginia's Community Colleges. "Everything is available with simple keystrokes, whenever and wherever users are

in their journey."

The Education Wizard is an online resource, located at www.vawizard.org, that provides real-time information to help students choose a major, a school, a career path and even help students find financial aid.

AFTER REGISTERING and creating a personal account on the Web site, the student can then proceed to the "Careers" tab, where the user is asked to complete two assessments that will help the Wizard determine which paths to put the student on. The first one is an interest assessment, which asks a series of questions and the user responds with either a "thumbs-up" or a "thumbs-down." The questions gauge which things appeal to the user, asking things like whether or not the user likes to build cabinets, conduct a symphony orchestra or write stories, among dozens of other questions.

The second assessment is a values assessment, which asks "in my ideal job, it is important that ..." and lists things like "I make

use of my abilities" or "the work could give me a feeling of accomplishment," and asks the user to rank them in importance. Once the two assessments are completed, the Wizard recommends career options that align with the user's interests and values.

Under the "Programs and Majors" section of the Web site, the user can search through specific course listings offered at Virginia's Community Colleges. The user can also search for a specific major and the Wizard will list every community college where that major is offered. The "Paying for College" section helps the user calculate the cost of college, apply for financial aid, search for relevant scholarships and even helps craft a payment plan. An additional feature of the site is a section on how to arrange a transfer between schools.

"I think that this will be a model for the

rest of the country," U.S. Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.), who was present at the unveiling of the Wizard, said. "I do not believe anything like this is out there right now. Making people's lives better is what the Wizard is all about."

"Everything is available with simple keystrokes, whenever and wherever users are in their journey."

— Dr. Glenn DuBois, chancellor, Virginia's Community Colleges

ACCORDING TO DUBOIS, the idea for the Wizard came to him while he was planning a vacation, using the travel site expedia.com. He said that when he saw he could

buy plane tickets, book a hotel and browse for rental cars all in one place, he thought that it was something that could be applied to higher education.

SOON AFTER, Virginia's Community Colleges had secured \$2.5 million in federal funds to help develop the product and Dr.

SEE NEW ONLINE, PAGE 3

FCPS Shrinks Its Request For Additional Funds

Due to an influx of federal and state funds, mostly from U.S. Congress' stimulus package, Fairfax County Public Schools will not be requesting quite as much money from the county as it had initially anticipated.

Schools superintendent Jack Dale had intended to ask the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors for \$56.8 million more for his 2010 budget than the approximately \$2.2 billion he received in operating funds for this year. Now, Dale has said the school system will only request an additional \$25 million.

"Even if you were able to give us [the extra money], there are still going to be a lot of cuts to this budget," said Dale at a joint meeting of the supervisors and School Board members March 16.

Fairfax County is facing a \$650 million gap in next year's budget overall. The superintendents came a few weeks after Fairfax County executive Tony Griffin laid out his budget proposal for 2010, which included a flat transfer and no additional funding for the school system.

With the additional \$25 million factored in, Dale said the school system will still be forced to freeze employee compensation and to eliminate 800 positions, though nearly two-thirds of the positions that would disappear will come from eliminating vacant positions rather than layoffs.

Some of the eliminated positions will come from areas like special education, alternative education and career and technical education, said Dale.

The superintendent expects the caseload for psychologists, social workers and guidance counselors to increase by 10 to 15 percent.

The eliminated positions also means the average class size will increase by half a student at the elementary school level and cause more mixed level classes, where students in two different grades have the same teacher.

At the middle school level, Dale expects classes to grow larger and, in high school, families will see a loss of smaller, specialty classes in programs like special education and the academies.

"In some cases, kids who would be in alternative education will return to the general education classroom," said Dale.

"If I don't get [the additional money], these will have to get bigger," said Dale.

In the school system's central administration, officials have completely redesigned two departments reducing the number of directors in those areas from over 20 to approximately eight.

"We are eliminating our agility. ... We no longer have an IT department where we do long-term strategic planning on technology," said Dale.

— JULIA O'DONOGHUE

Budget Town Hall Meetings

Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) is hosting two town hall meetings about the Fairfax County budget. They're scheduled for Thursday, March 19, at 7:30 p.m., at the West Springfield Government Center, 6140 Rolling Road in Springfield; and Thursday, March 26, at 7:30 p.m., in rooms 9 and 10 of the county Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway in Fairfax. Call 703-451-5515 for more details.

Tax Relief Workshop Slated

On Friday, March 20, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) will host a Tax Relief Workshop for senior citizens and people with disabilities, at the West Springfield Government Center 6140 Rolling Road in Springfield. Staff members from the county's Office of Tax Relief will meet with constituents on a one-on-one basis and help them in fill out the necessary forms.

NEWS



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARTURO SORIANO

"The home was not totally destroyed."

— Lt. Willie Bailey, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue

Firefighters clean up in the aftermath of a March 14 fire at a Springfield home.

Fire Displaces Family

Early morning blaze displaces three, causes \$150,000 in damages.

A March 14 fire in a single-family home in Springfield not only drew eight units to the two-alarm blaze, but also displaced the family as well.

At approximately 5:57 a.m., Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department units responded to a call of a house fire at 7714 Cervantes Lane, and upon arrival, four minutes after receiving the call, found the attached garage of the home ablaze, with the flames extending to the siding and attic of the home. The units that responded to the first alarm were Stations 14 of Burke, 22 of Springfield, 35 of Pohick and 41

of Crosspointe.

A second alarm was needed to bring increased assistance to the scene, and Stations 5 of Franconia, 19 of Lorton, 27 of West Springfield and 32 of Fairview responded. Within 45 minutes, the firefighters brought the fire under control.

According to fire investigators, the fire was accidental; a result of an electrical anomaly. Three adults and two family cats were accounted for and avoided any injury, as they evacuated the home when the smoke alarms activated. However, the victims were displaced, as the estimated \$150,000 worth of damage to the home forced them to seek shelter with the American Red Cross.

"The home was not totally destroyed," said Lt. Willie Bailey of the Fire and Rescue Department. "But because of the smoke damage throughout the house, [the occupants] will have to stay out until it is up to par."



PHOTO BY ROBBIE HAMMER/THE CONNECTION

Lifesaving Awards Fairfax County Police Sgt. Todd Erlandson, Master Police Officer Joseph Flynn and police officers Quang Bui, Anthony Capizzi, Christopher Coleman, Oaln Faulk IV, Stephen Foley, Matthew Griffin, Christopher Hutchison, Jonathan Lowery, Brett Manthe, Eric Nelson, Michael Greene, Shay Nelson, Jonathan Ward and public safety communicator Erin Tracy were presented with Lifesaving Awards during the 31st Annual Valor Awards at the McLean Hilton on March 12. The officers represent the West Springfield, McLean, Franconia, Fair Oaks, Reston, Mount Vernon and Mason District Station and the Department of Public Safety Communications.

W. Springfield Eagle Scout Plants Memorial Garden

FROM PAGE 3

borhood, like Sallie Stubenhofer.

Her son, Mark, was killed four years ago in Iraq. While the West Springfield Post Office was dedicated in his name a few years ago, Stubenhofer said she's honored to have her son included in this memorial garden.

"I have to say, I was very impressed with Corey," she said of MacRae. "Mark wasn't an Eagle Scout, but he was involved with everything like Corey is. Mark was an athlete, he was very involved in school, he liked volunteering his time. Corey reminds me a lot of Mark."

The Stubenhofer family has also organized an annual golf tournament in Mark's name each spring, scheduled for April 27 this year.

WORK BEGAN on construction of the garden last fall. MacRae, along with some help from friends, family and other scouts, designed a garden with a Japanese maple tree on either side of the memorial stone, encircled with white flagstones and some decorative shrubs.

"I haven't seen how it looks when all the flowers are in bloom, but I hope it looks good," MacRae laughed. In addition to the volunteers who helped him plant the garden, MacRae got some help from a local Home Depot, the Merrifield Garden Center and Eastern Memorials, which helped with the memorial stone.

"The stone looks better than we hoped it would," the scout said.

MacRae and the families of those being honored will have the chance to see the garden in all its blooming glory during a dedication ceremony, scheduled for April 17 at 4 p.m.

While his work is nearly completed, MacRae is still receiving words of encouragement and appreciation from the fami-



As part of his Eagle Scout Project, Corey MacRae, left, works with volunteers to plant a memorial garden at West Springfield High School.

lies he's honoring.

"It was absolutely a no-brainer to say yes when he asked us," Stubenhofer said about including her son's name on the memorial. "I was surprised and impressed a young student would think of something that significant to so many people."

Stubenhofer, who lives in Springfield, said she hasn't seen the memorial yet, but is looking forward to having the comfort of being with other families who share this painful, deeply personal experience of loss.

"There's this silent bond that kind of happens among people who have experienced this same thing," she said. "It's very rare to be in a group where everybody gets it and you don't have to worry about who still feels uncomfortable, even four years after Mark's death. It's ... comforting."

Cathy Wenzel agreed. Her brother, Craig Weeks, was killed in a car accident while

on temporary duty in California, just a few months before his son was born. Wenzel said her family, including her brother's widow, is planning to attend, making the trip to West Springfield from across the country.

"Mom and I will be flying in from Washington State, and my brother, Blake, will be driving up from North Carolina," Wenzel wrote in an e-mail. "Craig's widow, Hai, is hoping to get leave from her job with the Navy Reserve. She has been stationed in Germany for the past several years, and will be flying in from there, if her leave is approved. I haven't heard if Craig and Hai's son, Craig, will be able to attend or not, but I hope so."

An older sister, Christie, will not be able to attend the ceremony. Also missing will be their father, who died about a year ago.

"He was very proud of Craig and his ser-

vice and he'd be thrilled to have this memorial built to honor those who died," Wenzel said.

Like Stubenhofer, Wenzel has only seen the memorial in photos and is eager to see MacRae's completed work and meet him in person.

WHILE HE is no longer at the school, O'Reilly said he's proud MacRae carried through with his plan.

"My father and my brother are retired military people and I have always valued what they do for us as a country and as citizens. It is the right thing to do everywhere really," O'Reilly said.

MacRae also has the support of his parents, Cindy and Sandy MacRae. Corey MacRae is the last of three sons to complete their Eagle Scout projects, the third to graduate West Springfield, the third to make his parents proud by achieving the highest rank in scouting.

Cindy MacRae said that after her son graduates, the class of 2011 has agreed to maintain the garden, but said donations are being accepted at the school to pay for its upkeep. While the family hopes it will never be needed, space is available on the stone to engrave more names, should other West Springfield graduates lose their lives in the line of duty.

At the top of the stone is engraved a simple but fitting tribute: "In honor of our classmates who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our country."

To Help

Donations for continuing maintenance for the West Springfield Memorial Garden can be made by sending checks to West Springfield High School, 6100 Rolling Road, Springfield, VA 22152.

New Online Tool Helps Students Find Career Path

FROM PAGE 3

Craig Herndon, the director of the community colleges' career and education resources was placed in charge of designing it. Richmond-based Chmura Economics & Analytics and internal professional at the community colleges then completed the programming.

Part of what spurred the creation of the Wizard, according to Robert Templin, the president of Northern Virginia Community College, was the severe shortage of healthcare workers. Templin said that the demand for registered nurses is actually moving faster than the number of students that Virginia's Community Colleges have in that program and said that some hospitals around the region have even had to close beds due to the shortage.

"We have been working with business leaders and the business community for the last five years," Templin said. "And we recognize that a shortage of healthcare work-

Use the Wizard

Go to www.vawizard.org to register and start developing a career path.

ers means that there are jobs to be had."

VIRGINIA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES are already looking ahead to what is next for the Wizard, even though the Wizard has just debuted. The community colleges are currently exploring partnerships with organizations such as the Virginia Department of Education, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, the Education Credit Management Corporation and the Virginia College Savings Plan to develop a more in-depth, expanded version of the Wizard.

"I think that this is great," Sen. George Barker (D-39) said. "It's great to see people of all ages have something that can make a difference in their lives. This is a tremendous value."



U.S. Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.) talks to the students in attendance after the presentation.

PEOPLE



Crestwood Elementary students and their families learn about snakes from Hidden Pond Nature Center staff while attending Science and Math Day at the school March 14.



Andrea Aguilar, a fifth-grader at Crestwood Elementary, and Maya Ramos, a kindergarten student, play a variety of brain games while attending Crestwood's annual Science and Math Day on Saturday.

All About Science

Crestwood students learn about science through hands on activities.

Crestwood Elementary School conducted its annual Science and Math Day on Saturday, March 14, with a variety of activities including representatives from NASA, a variety of reptiles from the Hidden Pond Nature Center, a telescope demonstration, a Mad Scientist demonstration, a planetarium show, a variety of games and much more. "This is a chance for our kids and their parents to connect with what they are doing here at school and a chance for them to see their children's projects that have been displayed," said Mary Person, principal at Crestwood Elementary.



Crestwood Elementary School conducted its annual Science and Math Day on Saturday, March 14, with a variety of activities including representatives from NASA, a variety of reptiles from the Hidden Pond Nature Center, a telescope demonstration, a Mad Scientist demonstration, a planetarium show, a variety of games and much more.



Crestwood Elementary students and their families had the chance to learn about reptiles, including a turtle, from the Hidden Pond Nature Center staff while attending Science and Math Day at the school March 14.

PEOPLE NOTES

MILITARY NOTES

Air Force Airman David A. Bickerstaff has graduated from basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas. Bickerstaff is the son of Dean Bickerstaff of Braddock Mews Place, Springfield, and a 2008 graduate of Annandale High School.



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.

The Fairfax Library Foundation has named the 2009 Friends Scholarship Fund Continuing Education awardees. They are **Renee Edwards**, Fairfax County Public Library Early Literacy Outreach Manager; **Carey Hagan**, Librarian; **Susan Ujka Larson**, Youth Services Manager and **Leslie Scully**, Assistant Page Manager from the George Mason Regional Library in Annandale; and **Andrew Pendergrass**, Branch Manager at the

Patrick Henry Library in Vienna.

The Library Foundation's Friends Scholarship Fund encourages the continuing education among FCPL staff and volunteers by awarding scholarships that underwrite education outside of a formal degree program. The fund provides several full or partial scholarships twice a year ranging from \$150 to \$1,000 to support the training of individuals within the Fairfax County Public Library System.

Individuals demonstrating the potential for outstanding achievement in the library profession who are enrolled in an accredited Masters of Library Science program may apply for one of three competitive Academic scholarships

awarded annually at \$3,000 and a special \$3,500 named scholarship honoring Library Director Edwin S. Clay, III. The Academic element of the Fairfax Library Foundation's Friends Scholarship Fund was established to deliver expert library services to County residents by attracting highly qualified future librarians to the Fairfax County Public Library.

Air National Guard Airman Smithchai Chutchainon has graduated from basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas. He is the son of Thippaphan Chutchainon of Floyd Ave. in Springfield, and a 2000 graduate of Robert E. Lee High School.

NEWS

Kings Jesters Get 'Ugly'

The Kings Jesters of Kings Glen Elementary School present "Honk Jr.," the magical musical retelling of Hans Christian Anderson's classic story of "The Ugly Duckling." Sixty-five students have been working after school for three months so that they can bring the joy of live musical theater to their family, friends and the community. The public is invited to enjoy the musical March 24-26, 7 p.m., in the school gym, 5401 Danbury Forest Drive, Springfield. Tickets are available pre-sale through the school office for \$4 or at the door for \$5. Proceeds go directly into the production of the next Kings Jesters' production.

Connolly Hosts Open House

U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11) is hosting an open house at his Annandale office on Saturday, March 21, from 1-3 p.m. Everyone is invited to meet Connolly and his staff and learn about the services offered to the residents of the 11th Congressional District. Connolly's District Office is located at 4115 Annandale Road, Suite 103, in Annandale. The Annandale District Office number is 703-256-3071. A second District Office is scheduled to open soon in Prince William County. The Prince William District Office number is 703-670-4989. Connolly's District Office staff is available Monday through Friday from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. to assist the public in handling matters relating to the federal government. Light refreshments will be served at Saturday's open house in Annandale.

FAITH NOTES

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.

Over 1,000 eighth graders, including students from Burke, Vienna and Springfield-based schools Our Lady of Good Counsel, Nativity and Saint Bernadette, will be encouraged to consider the Lord's call at the 14th Annual Eighth Grade Vocations Mass. The Mass encourages students to prayerfully seek their vocation as a religious, priest, consecrated or married person. The Eighth Grade Vocations Mass will take place at Holy Spirit in Annandale on March 18. Currently, 32 seminarian and 56 men and women religious are in formation from the Diocese of Arlington.

Rev. Mike Zello Jr. will speak Sunday, March 22, 6 p.m., at the Healing Service at Jubilee Christian Center, 4650 Shirley Gate Road, Fairfax. He is the director of Teen Challenge of Fredericksburg, Va. 703-383-1170. www.jccag.org.

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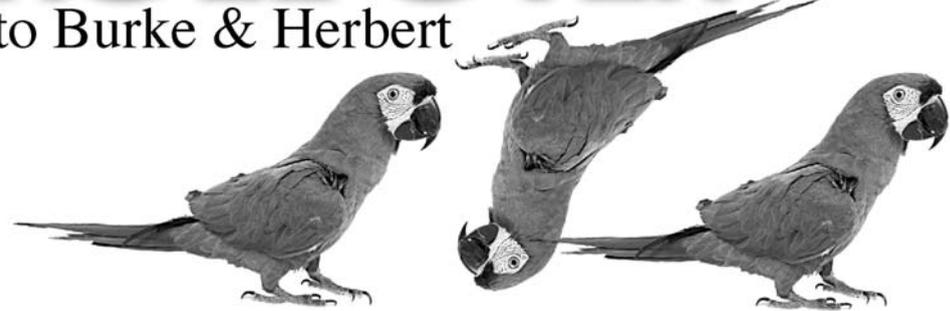
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PROPOSED NEW ISSUE

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Big Questions about Voting

Glitch in special election, but budget crunch causes Fairfax to go without voting paper trail until 2010.

BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE
THE CONNECTION

After the polls closed last week, one voting machine reported that 724 people had used it, even though officials at the precinct had recorded only 707 people walking through the door. There was also another voting machine at Fairview, which had already tallied 348 of the 707 votes.

Fairfax County election officials ultimately concluded that supervisor-elect John Cook (R) defeated at-large school board member Ilyong Moon (D) by a slim margin of 89 votes in the Braddock District's special election March 10.

But for almost 24 hours, officials could not call the race's outcome or even determine the number of ballots cast in the election because of the malfunctioning machine at the Fairview precinct in Fairfax Station.

When the machine was cracked open a day after the election, a more appropriate number of votes, 359, showed up on a roll of tape in the "ballot log" and among the "ballot images," or digital photographs taken of each vote cast on the machine. So far, no one is disputing the results.

Election officials are still unsure of what caused the voting machine to report the wrong number of votes in the first place.

"Once we ran the ballot log and the ballot images, we saw that there were 359 actual votes on the machine. We just don't know why the machine tallied up 724. ... We have one machine with an anomaly and we don't know what caused it," said Rokey Suleman, Fairfax County registrar.

"Nothing like this has ever occurred before. We don't know if the machine malfunctioned or if we did something wrong," said Suleman.

LAST WEEK'S voting machine problems are a sign of bigger problems ahead, said cyber-security expert Jeremy Epstein and other computer scientists. Fairfax County's electronic voting machines produce no ballots or paper trail and it would be impossible to verify the number votes or what they were cast for if an

electronic voting machine malfunctioned and voting information could not be retrieved. There is no hard copy or paper "back up" system if something goes wrong.

"We are entirely reliant on the software that is in the electronic voting machines to function correctly. ... When you have been writing software for 25 years, you know that is not a good thing to do," said Epstein, senior computer scientist with the Cyber Security Research and Development Center at



PHOTO BY ROBBIE HAMMER/THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County's electronic voting machines do not produce a paper trail and are susceptible to program glitches, according to computer scientists who have studied the issue.

SRI International in Arlington.

Epstein, a Braddock District resident, said an overwhelming majority of computer scientists believe there should be a paper trail that can be independently verified.

"There have been many many bugs in election software over the years and, one day we may not be able to recover from it. This bug may have affected past elections and nobody ever noticed it before. It could have given the wrong number of votes to the wrong candidate and nobody noticed," said Epstein, who advocates for voting machine security both nationally and locally.

Epstein and other advocates prefer optical scan voting machines, which require people to fill out a paper ballot with a pencil before running it through a scanning tallying system. The optical scan machines leave a verifiable paper trail.

DURING LAST November's presidential and congressional elections, Fairfax County equipped each polling station with at least one optical scan machine, and gave people

the choice of using either an electronic device or the optical scan to record their votes. But the current county budget crunch led election officials to forego using optical scan machines and to rely entirely on electronic voting machines during the three special elections that have taken place in Fairfax County in 2009. Suleman said he also intends to

only use electronic voting machines with no paper options or backup during the Democratic primary for statewide races in June and the general elections, including the Governor's race, in November.

"We are only using the electronic voting machines right now because of costs. We don't have money right now for paper ballots. ... The issue is the cost of paper. You have to understand that paper is expensive," said Suleman.

ACCORDING TO

Fairfax County budget documents, the three 2009 special elections – including a House of Delegates race that affected one precinct, a countywide chairman's race in February and the Braddock election – have cost the locality an extra \$300,000 this year. Printing paper ballots for the county chairman's race alone could have driven up the price tag another \$200,000, said Suleman.

If the county is offering paper ballots to voters, it is prudent to have enough to cover a voter turnout of 100 percent, plus a little, even though that number of people is very unlikely to turn up at the polls, said Suleman. According to county records, the voter turnout in November's presidential election, which was regarded as high, was 78.7 percent. In last month's special election for county chairman, it was 16.1 percent. "That is a tremendous amount of waste in paper but you have to be prepared for every voter to show up at the polls," said Suleman.

Still there are people who said they would be more comfortable with some wasted paper ballots than electronic voting machines. "I am not surprised that it is a little bit more expensive if you consider how many people in Fairfax County are going to cast votes in the governor's race. ... It is a little surprising to me that it costs \$200,000 for 400,000 sheets of paper," said Scott Surovell, chairman of the Fairfax County Democratic Committee.

Following the Braddock District election, he now expects the organization to look at a resolution calling for Fairfax County to do away with using its electronic voting machines altogether. "It is the only way to ensure that there is paper trail that reflects the voters' intent. ... The biggest concern is

that the voting machines can have malfunctions as they get older and may not reflect the voters' intent or record the votes correctly," said Surovell.

Epstein, who talks to people from all over the country about issues regarding voting machines, the voting machine malfunction in the Braddock district election could be the most serious malfunction noticed in the country so far.

"Nobody in the United States has seen anything like this. It is screaming and shouting that something is definitely wrong. ... I wasn't surprised that [the malfunction happened] but I was surprised how egregiously wrong it was," he said.

"We are entirely reliant on the software that is in the electronic voting machines to function correctly. When you have been writing software for 25 years, you know that is not a good thing to do."

— Jeremy Epstein, computer security expert

AS A SECONDARY issue, Surovell said he is also concerned about going through next fall's elections with only electronic voting machines because they take longer for voters to use than optical scan machines.

In November 2008, both Surovell and Suleman credited some of the success of the Presidential Election Day and its huge turnout to the fact that voters were given the option to use optical scan machines, allowing lines to move more quickly. Widespread

absentee voting at nearly a dozen locations helped as well, but that is unlikely to be available this November, also due to budget constraints.

"I am worried about moving people through the line on Election Day [in November 2009]. The registrar's office has proposed cutting out all satellite absentee voting which will make the lines on election day horrific," said Surovell.

Eventually, Fairfax will have to move away from electronic voting machines and toward an entirely optical scan system.

In 2007, Clifton Del. Tim Hugo (R-40) moved a bill through the Virginia General Assembly that prohibited localities from purchasing new electronic voting machines, requiring them to buy optical scan equipment when the electronic devices break down. Following the 2000 presidential election problems in Florida, Hugo chaired a bipartisan commission in Virginia that investigated the risks of electronic voting machine equipment.

"As someone who has both won and lost an election, it is OK to lose but you need to know that you truly lost. ... It will ensure the integrity of the voting system and the integrity of each vote to have a paper ballot," said Hugo.

"If the voter is not sure and doesn't feel confident that his vote was counted, then he will lose confidence in the entire system," he added.

School Staff Proposes Buying GPS Systems for Buses

Just a few days before school Superintendent Jack Dale announced he might have to eliminate approximately 800 positions in Fairfax County Public Schools, members of his staff suggested purchasing global positioning systems (GPS) for those school buses that don't already have them. At a March 5 School Board meeting, officials said GPS devices could help the school system save additional money on fuel because it would give school bus drivers the shortest. They proposed using \$500,000 saved in this year's budget because of reduced fuel costs to purchase the technology.

Several School Board members quickly rebuffed

the request.

"Why if we saved \$500,000 in fuel costs would we not apply it another way? I want to know the justification for making an investment in GPS when we may have to cut \$20 to \$30 million out of the budget already," said School Board member Stu Gibson (Hunter Mill.)

"I am skeptical of buying anything at this point. I am looking for anything to offset the unacceptable class size proposed," said School Board Jane Strauss (Dranesville.)

— JULIA O'DONOGHUE

Herrity Pushes Vote On Federal 'Card Check' Bill

Supervisor Patrick Herrity (R-Springfield) tried to force a vote at the county board level on the controversial federal "card check" legislation March 9. The federal bill has been pushed by the organized labor community and rejected by some business interest groups across the country.

Both the Virginia Chamber of Commerce and Republican gubernatorial candidate Bob McDonnell have recently been vocal about their opposition to "card check," which would ease the process for forming a union in the workplace.

Herrity said Virginia's status as a "Right to Work" state – a place where organized labor has less influence – has been a boon to the Fairfax County economy. Several businesses choose to locate in Fairfax instead of Montgomery County, Md. because of Virginia's labor laws, said Herrity.

"It provides us with a very real competitive advantage over the county across the river in Maryland," he said.

But several supervisors said that they either did not agree with the premise of Herrity's board matter or felt ambushed by it at the last minute. Many said it would have made more sense for Herrity to bring up the subject in the supervisors legislative committee meeting a few days earlier.

"I can't support this primarily because I don't agree with it. But I also really think this belongs in legislative committee," said Supervisor Cathy Hudgins (D-Hunter Mill).

"I have a lot stronger views on other legislation that goes before the U.S. Congress. ... I just don't think we should be taking a position on this," said Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville).

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The law firm of Woodley & McGillivray has filed an overtime pay collective action lawsuit against Freedom Mortgage Corporation on behalf of loan officers who were not paid overtime required by the Fair Labor Standards Act ("FLSA") and state laws. For example, the complaint alleges that Freedom Mortgage Corporation failed to pay its loan officer employees one and one-half times their regular hourly rate in overtime compensation when they worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek. The FLSA explicitly requires employers to provide overtime compensation to non-exempt employees when they work in excess of 40 hours per week. These violations of federal and state laws could cost hard-working loan officers substantial overtime wages. In addition to loan officers, we are also interested in talking to loan processors and closers.

If you are interested in participating in a lawsuit seeking to recover these lost overtime wages, plus an equal amount as liquidated damages, please contact:

Douglas L. Steele or Heidi Burakiewicz
at Woodley & McGillivray

1125 15th St., NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20005

Call us Toll free: 1-866-833-8860

Or call: (202) 292-1803 or (202) 292-1809

Or email us at: DLS@wmlaborlaw.com or HRB@wmlaborlaw.com

ADVERTISING MATERIAL

CALENDAR

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/MARCH 19

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

Going Green, 10:30 a.m. at Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Stories, songs, and activities highlight Ireland. For ages 2-5 with adult. 703-249-1520.

Springfield Writers' Group, 7 p.m. at the temporary Richard Byrd Library, 6315 Backlick Road, Springfield, on the second floor of the Bank of America building. Share your work, give and receive feedback in a supportive setting. Adults. 703-451-8055.

Kites, 4 p.m. at the John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive, Alexandria. Let's make a kite. Age 6-12. 703-971-0010.

Comedy Night at Jaxx with Justin Kincaid and Friends, 8 p.m. at Jaxx Night Club, 6355 Rolling Road, Springfield. \$5. 703-569-5940 or jaxxroxx.com.

FRIDAY/MARCH 20

The Russian National Ballet Theatre in "Cinderella," 8 p.m. at the George Mason Center for the Arts, on the Fairfax campus at the intersection of Braddock Road and Route 123. A pre-performance discussion, free to ticket holders, begins at 7:15 p.m. on the Grand Tier III. Tickets are \$27-\$54. Age 12 and under, half price Charge by phone at 888-945-2468 or visit www.tickets.com. www.gmu.edu/cfa.

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

Lunch Bunch, 12 p.m. at the John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive, Alexandria. Bring lunch and join us for stories. Birth-5 with adult. 703-971-0010.

Tax Relief Workshop for Senior Citizens and People with Disabilities. Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) is hosting a Tax Relief Workshop 9 a.m.- 1 p.m., at the West Springfield Government Center, 6140 Rolling Road, Springfield. Staff members from the Office of Tax Relief will be on hand to meet with constituents on a one on one basis and to assist them in filling out the necessary forms. Fairfax County provides real estate tax relief and car tax relief to citizens who are either 65 or older, or permanently and totally disabled, and meet the income and asset eligibility requirements. For eligibility requirements contact the Tax Relief Office at 703-222-8234 or taxrelief@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Slave to the Metal Festival with Olympus Shall Burn, DieManic, Bitter, Cab Ride Home, Pain!, Another Empty Box, Minus the Head, Embers for Ashes, Arsenic and Downfall, 6:30 p.m. at Jaxx Night Club, 6355 Rolling Road, Springfield. \$10 in advance, \$12 day of show. 703-569-5940 or jaxxroxx.com.

Theater Performance. The Providence Players of Fairfax will perform the mystery "Rehearsal for Murder" by Richard Levinson and William Link, 7:30 p.m., at the James Lee Community Center Theater 2855 Annandale Road, Fall Church. Tickets are \$15 for adults \$12 for children and seniors and can be reserved by phone at 703-425-6782, e-mail at providenceplayers@cox.net. For more, visit www.providenceplayers.org.

SATURDAY/MARCH 21

Gunston Hall Kite Festival, 12-5 p.m. at Gunston Hall Plantation, 10709 Gunston Road, Mason Neck. Hands-on colonial activities for children, an 18th-century puppet show, hearth cooking demonstrations, and exploration of a modern fire truck. Food service available for picnics. Bring a kite or purchase one from the Museum Shop. The Garden Club of Fort Belvoir will offer spring plants for



The Russian National Ballet Theatre will perform twice at the George Mason Center for the Arts, dancing 'Cinderella' on Friday, March 20 and 'Sleeping Beauty' on Saturday, March 21.

sale. \$10 adults, \$6 ages 6-18, \$2 ages 2-5 years. \$25 Family Admission for up to 2 adults and 3 children. 703-550-9220 or www.gunstonhall.org.

The Russian National Ballet Theatre in "Sleeping Beauty," 8 p.m. at the George Mason Center for the Arts, on the Fairfax campus at the intersection of Braddock Road and Route 123. A pre-performance discussion, free to ticket holders, begins at 7:15 p.m. on the Grand Tier III. Tickets are \$27-\$54. Age 12 and under, half price Charge by phone at 888-945-2468 or visit www.tickets.com. www.gmu.edu/cfa.

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

Make It Up As You Go, 1 p.m. at Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Have some laughs and develop your creative side by playing theater games at this improvisational comedy event. Ages 12-18. 703-249-1520.

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

Garfield Elementary PTA Arts and Crafts Show, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at 7101 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Free admission. Over 65 vendors selling handcrafted items, silent auction and raffle. lhoangnguyen@gmail.com.

Concerts from Kirkwood, featuring Laura Choi Stuart, Soprano and Steven Coombs, Baritone, 3 p.m. at Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, 8336 Carrleigh Parkway, Springfield. Free, donations accepted. 703-451-5320 or www.kirkwoodpres.com
Staff Basketball Game: Silverbrook Elementary School vs.

Halley Elementary School, 6 p.m. at South County High School, 8501 Silverbrook Road, Lorton. Refreshments, school souvenirs, half-time entertainment by both schools' music departments and more.

Life of Agony, Spoiler NYC, Afreudianslip, Union Street and more. 8 p.m. at Jaxx Night Club, 6355 Rolling Road, Springfield. \$18 in advance, \$20 day of show. 703-569-5940 or jaxxroxx.com.

Theater Performance. The Providence Players of Fairfax will perform the mystery "Rehearsal for Murder" by Richard Levinson and William Link, 7:30 p.m., at the James Lee Community Center Theater 2855 Annandale Road, Fall Church. Tickets are \$15 for adults \$12 for children and seniors and can be reserved by phone at 703-425-6782, e-mail at providenceplayers@cox.net. For more, visit www.providenceplayers.org.

SUNDAY/MARCH 22

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

The Academy of Ancient Music, 4 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. Hear all six of Bach's Brandenburg Concertos. A pre-performance discussion, free to ticket holders, begins at 3:15 p.m. on the Center's Grand Tier III. Tickets are \$24-\$48. Charge by phone at 888-945-2468 or visit www.tickets.com. www.gmu.edu/cfa.

In Alcatraz 1962, Attila, Centuries, Lifted Down, I Am the Messenger, Await the rise, Kilgore Trout, Brutallion and more. 4:15 at Jaxx Night Club, 6355 Rolling Road, Springfield. \$10 in advance, \$12 day of show. 703-569-5940 or jaxxroxx.com.

Vegan Cooking Class. "International Cuisine." 10 a.m.-1 p.m., at 9302 Hallston Court, Fairfax Station. \$50/person. Learn meat and dairy-free cuisine from other cultures without leaving home with guest chef Shashi

Chopra from the Taj Mahal restaurant in D.C. Class includes food samples, recipes and coupons. Pre-registration required. Call 703.643.2713 for space availability. www.localdc.com/.

Theater Performance. The Providence Players of Fairfax will perform the mystery "Rehearsal for Murder" by Richard Levinson and William Link, 2 p.m., at the James Lee Community Center Theater 2855 Annandale Road, Fall Church. Tickets are \$15 for adults \$12 for children and seniors and can be reserved by phone at 703-425-6782, e-mail at providenceplayers@cox.net. For more, visit www.providenceplayers.org.

MONDAY/MARCH 23

Rolling Valley Elementary Kindergarten Information Sessions, 10:30 a.m. at Rolling Valley Elementary School, 6703 Barnack Drive, Springfield. For parents of students who will be five years old by Sept. 9. 703-923-2700 or CerryChechile@fcps.edu.
Open Mic, 7:30 p.m. at Kate's Irish Pub, 6131 Backlick Road, Springfield. 703-866-0860 or www.katesirishpub.com.
Writer's Group, 7 p.m. at the Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Read your material aloud for feedback. Adults. 703-339-4610.

TUESDAY/MARCH 24

West Springfield Pyramid Art Show, 7-8:30 p.m. at West Springfield High School, 6100 Rolling Road, Springfield. Selected artwork will be presented from schools in our pyramid, from the elementary level to high school. 703-426-2100.

VITA Tax Help, 6-8 p.m. at the Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Adults. 703-339-4610.
Computer Tutoring, 3:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. at Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Get

EDITOR'S PICK



The Gunston Hall Kite Festival is on Saturday, March 21 at Gunston Hall Plantation, with hands-on colonial activities for children, an 18th-century puppet show, hearth cooking demonstrations, and exploration of a modern fire truck. Bring a kite or purchase one from the Museum Shop. The Garden Club of Fort Belvoir will offer spring plants for sale. Children ages 6-12 can learn about Kites on Thursday, March 19, at the John Marshall Library in Alexandria.

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

one-on-one help with computers, common software applications and navigating the Internet. Call for details and to sign up. Adults. 703-249-1520.

Acoustic Open Mic Night with Bob Gaynor of the Roadducks, 8 p.m. at Jaxx Night Club, 6355 Rolling Road, Springfield. No cover charge. 703-569-5940 or jaxxroxx.com.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 25

Library Writers Peer Review

Group, 7 p.m. at the Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Review peers' works and receive in-depth feedback on your own work. Adults. 703-339-4610.

Mother-Daughter Book Club, 7 p.m. at Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Mother-Daughter book club for girls 9-11. Call for title. 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 people learning English. Adults. 703-339-4610.

THURSDAY/MARCH 26

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

Lamb Frolics, 10:30 a.m. at the temporary Richard Byrd Library, 6315 Backlick Road, Springfield, on the second floor of the Bank of America building. Enjoy a drop-in storytime with books, songs and fingerplay about lambs. Age 2-5 with adult. 703-451-8055.

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

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

Tell It Again, 6 p.m. at the temporary Richard Byrd Library, 6315 Backlick Road, Springfield, on the second floor of the Bank of America building. Hear the story "Dora the Explorer: Eggs for everyone/Huevos para todos" in Spanish and English. Age 4 to 12 with adult. 703-451-8055.

"So You Want To Be a Star..." 2 p.m. at HeartBeats Music & Dance, 8060 Rolling Road, Springfield. A free lecture for aspiring dancers, singers, actors and their parents by Peter Sklar. Reservations required. For ages 6-18 only. No one under age 18 will be admitted without their parent or legal guardian. 703-440-9000.

Semi-annual Used Book Sale, sponsored by the Friends of the Burke Centre Library. Thousands of used books at great prices. Early bird sale for Friends of the Library only, 4-8 p.m., at Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. 703-249-1520.

FRIDAY/MARCH 27

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

Burke Centre Friends Book Sale, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. at Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. 703-249-1520.

Lunch Bunch, 12 p.m. at the John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive, Alexandria. Bring lunch and join us for stories. Birth-5 with adult. 703-971-0010.

Frayz, Oz Boyz and Dave the Barber, 8 p.m. at Jaxx Night Club, 6355 Rolling Road, Springfield. \$20 in advance, \$25 day of show. 703-569-5940 or jaxxroxx.com.

Employment Workshop, 7-10 p.m., at the Mott Community Center, 12111 Braddock Road, Fairfax. Presented by the Fairfax County Department of Community and Recreation Services the workshop includes Interview Do's and Don'ts, Tips for Job Applications and Dressing for Success. In addition, the University of Phoenix will offer a free scholarship workshop for parents on how to find and apply for scholarships for college-bound teens. Both Events are free but require pre-registration by calling Chris Goldbecker at 703-278-8605, TTY 711 by March 25. For more, contact: Chris Goldbecker at Christopher.Goldbecker@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Semi-annual Used Book Sale, sponsored by the Friends of the Burke Centre Library. Thousands of used books at great prices. 10:30 a.m. 5:30 p.m., at Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. 703-249-1520.

Theater Performance. The Providence Players of Fairfax will perform the mystery "Rehearsal for Murder" by Richard Levinson and William Link, 7:30 p.m., at the James Lee Community Center Theater 2855 Annandale Road, Fall Church. Tickets are \$15 for adults \$12 for children and seniors and can be reserved by phone at 703-425-6782, e-mail at providenceplayers@cox.net. For more, visit www.providenceplayers.org.

SATURDAY/MARCH 28

The Northern Virginia Chorale and the NVCC Annandale Chorale present "Shakespeare in Spring", 8 p.m. at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 5800 Backlick Road, Springfield. Vaughan Williams' Serenade to Music, George Shearing's Music to Hear, Joseph Haydn's The Creation and more. \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door. Age 12-24 \$10, under 12 free. www.northernvirginiachorale.org or call 703-239-2180.

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

George Jones and "Conway Twitty: The Man, The Music, The Legend, The Musical," 7:30 p.m. at the Patriot Center, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Tickets are \$34.50, available online at www.ticketmaster.com or via Phonecharge at 703-573-SEAT.

Burke Centre Friends Book Sale, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. 703-249-1520.

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

Kaydee Puppets, 10:30 a.m. at the John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive, Alexandria. Puppets perform "The Little Red Hen's Wacky Week" and "The Princess and the Pea." All ages. 703-971-0010.

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.

Messiah United Methodist Church Women's Lenten Prayer Breakfast, 8 a.m. at 6215 Rolling Road, Springfield. Reserve at 703-569-9862 or office@messiahumc.org.

"So You Want To Be a Star..." 4 p.m. at HeartBeats Music & Dance, 8060 Rolling Road, Springfield. A

free lecture for aspiring dancers, singers, actors and their parents by Peter Sklar. Reservations required. 703-440-9000.

Stop Hunger Now Meal Packaging Event, 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m. and 2-5 p.m. at Sydenstricker United Methodist Church, 8508 Hooes Road, Springfield. Participants will work in an assembly line operation mixing, bagging and boxing dry ingredients of a high-protein, vitamin-rich, chicken-rice casserole. Child care provided. Contact LaRae Curry at 703-455-5124. www.stophungernow.org.

Sponge, Dirt, Crooked Crow, GI9 and Crow Moon, 8 p.m. at Jaxx Night Club, 6355 Rolling Road, Springfield. \$17 in advance, \$20 day of show. 703-569-5940 or jaxxroxx.com.

Clifton Horse Society Annual Meeting, 5:30-8:30 p.m. at Hemlock Overlook, 13220 Yates Ford Road in Clifton. Bring a dish for the potluck. Contact Ursula Moore at 703-830-1965 or jeffursula15@cox.net.

Semi-annual Used Book Sale, sponsored by the Friends of the Burke Centre Library. Thousands of used books at great prices. 4-8 p.m., at Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. 703-249-1520.

Evening of Jazz with Dick Hyman presented by the City of Fairfax Band. Master class 2 p.m., at George Mason University, Center for the Arts, Grand Tier III, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Concert is 8 p.m., at Fairfax High School Auditorium, 3501 Rebel Run, Fairfax. The master class is free and open to the public. General admission concert tickets are \$13 Adults, \$7 Seniors. Free admission for children and students 18 and under. Doors open one hour prior to concert. Free parking. Purchase tickets online at www.fairfaxband.org. Group discounts are available with advanced sales. To reserve a seat, call 703-757-0220.

Theater Performance. The Providence Players of Fairfax will perform the mystery "Rehearsal for Murder" by Richard Levinson and William Link, 7:30 p.m., at the James Lee Community Center Theater 2855 Annandale Road, Fall Church. Tickets are \$15 for adults \$12 for children and seniors and can be reserved by phone at 703-425-6782, e-mail at providenceplayers@cox.net.

SUNDAY/MARCH 29
Karaoke, 7:30 p.m. at Kate's Irish Pub, 6131 Backlick Road, Springfield. 703-866-0860 or www.katesirishpub.com.

Empowered Women International Multi-Media Exhibition Reception, 2-4 p.m. at the Workhouse Arts Center Gallery W-16, second floor, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Featuring the We the People Project, an art exhibition that highlights a vision of America today, and includes storytelling, poetry and music from participating artists. The exhibition runs through April 4.

Stop Hunger Now Meal Packaging Event, 1-4 p.m. at Sydenstricker United Methodist Church, 8508 Hooes Road, Springfield. Participants will work in an assembly line operation mixing, bagging and boxing dry ingredients of a high-protein, vitamin-rich, chicken-rice casserole. Child care provided. Contact LaRae Curry at 703-455-5124. www.stophungernow.org.

Sing Me Insomnia, six Watt, Beatnik Flies, Fight Cloud, The Cliched, Thomas, Ugly Thrash Demon, Stuck in the Mud, The Offset and Nightmare Ritual. 4:15 p.m. at Jaxx Night Club, 6355 Rolling Road, Springfield. \$8 in advance, \$10 day of show. 703-569-5940 or jaxxroxx.com.

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Calendar Listings

The Connection Newspapers contain a Calendar of Upcoming Events every week. While we cannot guarantee that every event we receive information about will be listed, here is the information we need for your upcoming event to be considered for the Calendar. We welcome photographs of similar events held previously, which sometimes appear with Calendar items.

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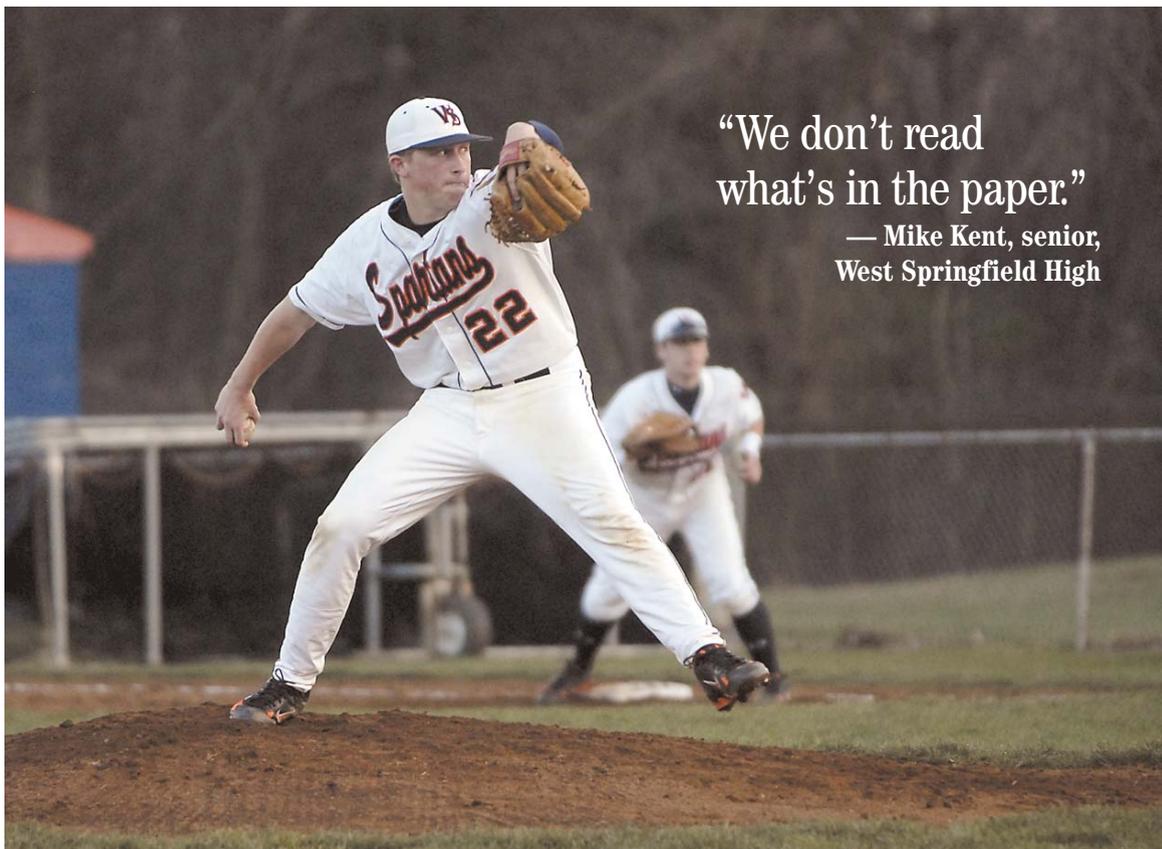
Please submit your calendar information at least two weeks before your event. Clear photographs from similar previous events are always welcome. All events should be open to the public. We give first priority to free events. Send listings to:

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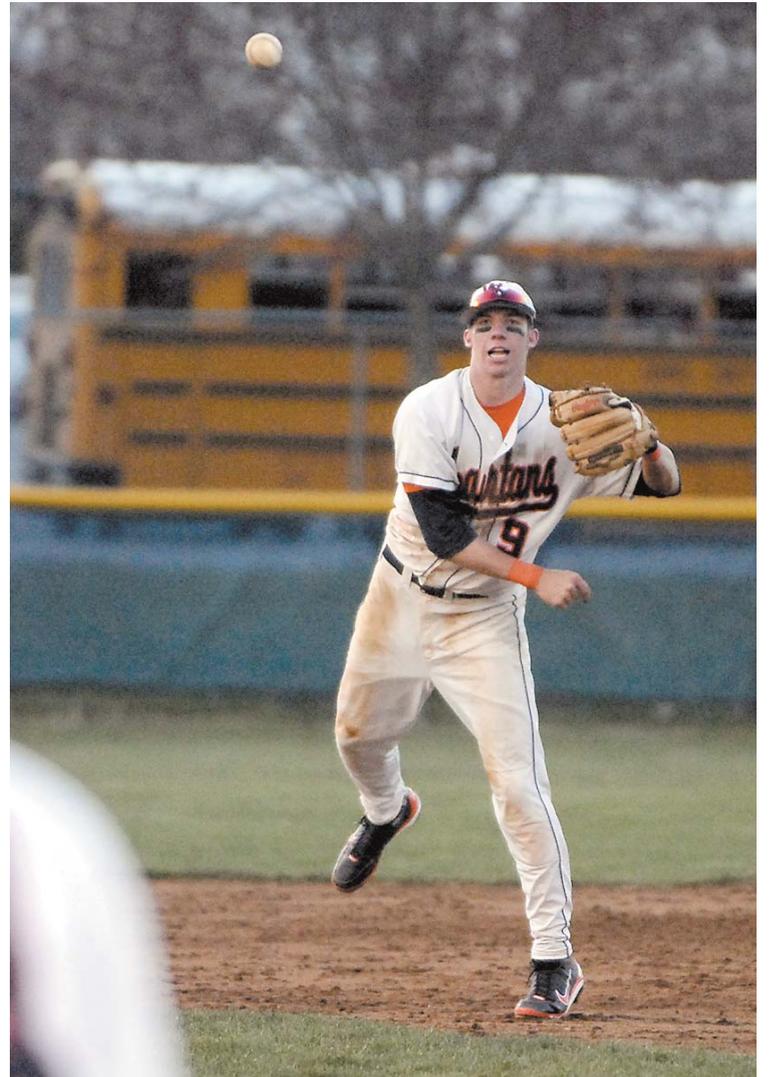
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“We don’t read what’s in the paper.”

— Mike Kent, senior,
West Springfield High

Senior pitcher Mike Kent (Clemson) leads an experienced West Springfield pitching staff that also includes Bobby Wahl, who verbally committed to play for Ole Miss.



FILE PHOTOS

Bryn Renner, the West Springfield baseball team’s starting shortstop, has been rehabbing a shoulder injury from football season but head coach John James expects him back next week.

Ignoring the Obvious

West Springfield baseball loaded with talent but could care less about expectations.

BY JASON MACKEY
THE CONNECTION

Any number of insults or indignations relative to the West Springfield baseball could appear in this space, and it’s likely that not a single Spartan would ever see them. While the Spartans return many key components from last year’s 16-8 team, which advanced to the Northern Region semifinals, nobody is buying into any of the pre-season hype.

“We don’t read what’s in the paper, and we don’t listen to what people say about

us,” said right-handed pitcher Mike Kent, a Clemson-signee. “We just want to play our game. And if we play our game, we’re gonna win. That’s all we worry about.”

It’s not as if Kent has anything personal against the print industry, but, rather, he and his teammates have walled themselves off from the outside world, from the expectation that they should be the team capable of unseating the defending Patriot District and Northern Region champions, Lake Braddock.

West Springfield played Lake Braddock close in last year’s district title game but

eventually suffered a 12-8 loss, walking 12 Bruins in the process. Whether they can get back to that spot is a long way off from any Spartan’s mind.

“Being a region favorite, we just have to go in there one practice at a time and try to get better,” Bryn Renner said. “That’s all we’re focused on.”

BY THE DEMEANOR of fifth-year coach John James’ team, one might suspect that West Springfield has totaled, oh, maybe five wins a year for the past five seasons. But most of the team’s seniors are three-year starters, including two who’ll play Division-I baseball next season.

Renner, a North Carolina-signee, plans to

play both baseball and football at the school. He threw for 3,123 yards and 35 touchdowns on the football field this past fall and hit .360 with 20 RBIs and 24 runs scored on the baseball diamond.

But Renner is also nursing a left shoulder — not his throwing one — injury initially suffered during the football season. Despite playing basketball for the past three seasons, Renner skipped his senior campaign to ready himself for baseball. According to James, he’s been taking batting practice, the shoulder has responded well and Renner should be cleared to play next week.

“He’s a positive kid, and he brings a lot of

SEE SPARTANS, PAGE 13

Coffield Out of Retirement To Coach Hayfield

BY JASON MACKEY
THE CONNECTION

After stepping down at the end of the 2007-08 season, a year during which he led the Lee girls’ basketball team to its first-ever Northern Region title, Rudy Coffield

“I’m really happy and excited to be back.”

— Coach Rudy Coffield,
Hayfield Secondary

wanted to focus on spending time with his grandson and tending to family matters.

But something unexpected happened along the way: Coffield’s daughter and her family learned that they would be moving to Germany, part of a necessary transfer because of his daughter’s job with the federal government.

With the newfound free time, Coffield went back to work. On Monday night, Hayfield Secondary School and its director of student activities, Steve Kewer, hired Coffield to coach its girls’ basketball team, a position that became vacant when fourth-year coach Richard Carlock resigned.

After winning the 2007-08 region title at Lee, Rudy Coffield retired. Now he’s back.

“It wasn’t out of my system,” Coffield said. “I knew I wanted to get back into it, but I just didn’t think that it would be this quick. But it’s a good thing. I love doing it. I love the kids. There are some good people in this region, and I’m really happy and excited to be back.”

The reason for Coffield’s return is loaded with irony. While he was stationed in Germany as a member of the U.S. Army in the

1980s, Coffield got his start in coaching at Munich High School. He moved back to Virginia in 1993, took a job at Jefferson and finally landed at Lee prior to the 2003-04 season.

In 2007-08, Lee went 25-4, topped W.T. Woodson in the Northern Region title game at George Mason’s Patriot Center and lost

SEE COFFIELD, PAGE 13

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



FILE PHOTO

Rudy Coffield, who coached the Lee girls' basketball for five seasons between 2003-08, was hired to fill the same role at Hayfield Secondary School on Monday evening.

Coffield To Coach Hawks

FROM PAGE 12

to Princess Anne in the Virginia AAA state quarterfinals. In his now-ongoing 25-year coaching career, Coffield has a record of 250-103.

HAYFIELD went 6-17 this past winter and lost in the Patriot District quarterfinals to West Springfield. Though hired less than a month after the team's final game, Coffield feels a sense of urgency to get his players involved in some type of off-season work.

"We have to hit the ground running," Coffield said. "We have a lot of work to do. I don't know what they've done in the off-season in the past, but we do

a lot between our weight training and conditioning and we try to get the kids playing, whether it's AAU or summer leagues."

Kewer took 18 applications for the job, and, with the help of a search committee, whittled those down to seven primary applicants. From that point, Kewer and the committee interviewed three prospective coaches and offered the job to Coffield late Monday afternoon while the coach was on his way home from his day job as a school resource officer at Key Middle School in Springfield.

"He's a police officer in the community, he knows the community, he knows the kids," Kewer said. "He has a plan to get them to where we want to be."

Spartans Loaded with Talent

FROM PAGE 12

positive energy," James said. "He has a good work ethic, and I think he's definitely a kid that the younger guys can take a lesson from."

And Even when Renner is cleared to play, he could still spend a significant amount of time as a spectator. With Kent, the Spartans have a surefire ace, which could lead to more strikeouts and less ground balls for Renner to field.

"I definitely hope so," Renner said.

Kent, a first team All-District pick the past two seasons and a first team All-State selection this past spring, is also ranked as the 13th-best prospect in the state of Virginia by Perfect Game, a high school baseball scouting service.

A YEAR below Kent is junior left-hander Bobby Wahl, who went 5-1 last spring with a 1.89 ERA and has verbally committed to Ole Miss. Both have gotten stronger this off-season, which has had a positive effect on both the velocity and break of their pitches, but both have also gotten smarter.

"They're learning more each day," James said. "You

can definitely see the thinking; the cognitive aspect of pitching has increased in both of them. The physical skills are something we work on, but the cognitive skill, they have to absorb that knowledge. And they do a good job of that."

HAYFIELD will move to the National District next season, and the Hawks would like to make one last, positive impression on the Patriot

before they depart, a desire shared with many of the school's coaches.

Five sophomores will see significant time and as many as four could start for third-year coach Scott Broyles, whose team went 3-17 overall, 2-12 against district opponents last spring.

But the one constant that Broyles will have exists in senior first baseman Taylor Kewer, who led the team in batting average (.431), on-base percentage (.523), RBIs (17), hits (25), runs scored (15) and doubles (five) last spring.

Shortstop/pitcher Kenny Booth, who had arthroscopic surgery on his elbow last year but is considered healthy now, should also help the Hawks, along with catcher Ben Adduci, who threw out 10 of 29 base stealers last spring.

"They're learning more each day."

— Coach John James, West Springfield

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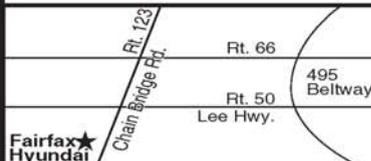
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OPINION

Fair Market Value?

Less than a month ago, Fairfax, Arlington and Loudoun counties, and the City of Alexandria, like other local governments, mailed each property owner a new assessment of the fair market value of the property.

What is your home's fair market value?

Most homeowners probably believe that the fair market value of their home is what they could sell it for in a reasonable period of time right now — say putting it on the market this week and allowing 30-60 days. How much would that be?

It's a tough question this year, with values dropping by more than 12 percent on average in Fairfax, nearly 15 percent in Loudoun, less than 5 percent in Alexandria and about 2 percent in Arlington.

The tax assessors base their decisions on the sales of "comparable" properties that sold in 2008, sometimes earlier. But with the number of sales down dramatically, there are sometimes very few "comparable" sales. In Fairfax County, the majority of sales are foreclosures.

But the assessors have decided that foreclosures should not be taken into consideration as a comparable sale.

This is questionable, and the exclusion of

foreclosure sales likely inflates the value of many, if not most, properties. If houses in your neighborhood have sold in foreclosure for dramatically reduced prices, does that affect the value of your house? You know it does.

The value on the piece of paper sent to your house will determine the amount of property tax you owe this year, based on the tax rate which in most places will not be precisely set until April.

Local governments' budgets, the amount of money they have to fund schools, public safety, libraries and many other services, depend directly on how much the homes in each jurisdiction are worth, based on the tax rate. This is more so in Virginia than in many other states where localities have more leeway in choosing sources of revenue. Localities in Virginia are more dependent on property taxes because the General Assembly has strictly limited their access to other taxes. In Virginia, because it is a "Dillon Rule" state, localities only have exactly the power that the General Assembly has bestowed on them.

YOU CAN APPEAL your assessment, but the deadlines are fast approaching and the bur-

— was gradually dimming.

Last summer, I made an extended trip to visit my husband who had been called to serve in the Army in Alaska. One day while walking alone by a river, I found myself suddenly filled with tears. While I did not know what they were about, I could tell there was some unknown change looming in the months ahead. Yet with the sadness came a certain sense of peace.

LETTERS Whatever it was, its time was come.

Back in Springfield, my five-year contract was coming to an end. All along, it was clear both the current owners and I wanted me to stay in that office. But for some reason, one thing and another seemed to keep delaying the new contract from becoming finalized. Then in late November, a number of random but adverse things came together all at once such that I suddenly knew that the "sadness" from that day back in Alaska had been about my practice. I was forced to finally admit I no longer belonged there.

When a business relationship fails or a contract negotiation falls through, human nature is to try to blame the other party. But the truth in my case is, there was nothing all that wrong on either side. I just no longer fit in with the mission in that Springfield office.

To the Springfield community, it was my great privilege to have devoted my energies for 25 years to your eye care needs. The satis-

faction of those years will always remain one of the greatest joys of my life. Moving on is a sorrow beyond compare.

To my long-time patients, I want you to know how much I have appreciated your loyalty and the gift of the trust you placed in me over the years. I will always think of one and another of you with great fondness. I hope you will see my departure nor as an abandonment of you. But perhaps rather as a moving on to serve a different purpose.

While I am not giving up optometry altogether, I am focusing most of my energy now on a book I am writing. It is a service to my fellow man that only I can perform. Anyone interested in what I am doing now can look me up online.

Dr. Margaret Placentra Johnston
Optometrist
Springfield

Perpetuating Lies

To the Editor:

The editorial ["Loop Hole Stays Open," Connection, Feb. 12-18, 2009] is another bias opinion by your staff writer which is designed to infuriate the public over gun ownership and gun shows. Gun shows are well regulated, much more than the general public realizes, because newspapers fail to report the facts reporting selective

Many concerns about assessing properties in Northern Virginia this year.

den of proof is entirely on the homeowner. You will need to be prepared to cite comparable sales from 2008 that justify your view of your home's fair market value. There are two possible steps to appeal, first to the local department of tax administration, then to each locality's Board of Equalization. The Board of Equalization is independent of the tax assessors office; it is made up of citizens appointed by the governing board.

IN FAIRFAX COUNTY, the deadline to appeal to the Department of Tax Administration is April 3, and appeals to the next level must be postmarked no later than June 1. The second deadline could well roll around before a homeowner gets an answer to the administrative appeal, so it's important to engage in both processes at once.

See <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dta/> for instructions and information.

— MARY KIMM
MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

views which support one side of the issue. If this so called loophole was closed, a law-abiding citizen would become a criminal in the personal sale of a gun to a member of his family or close friend if he did not do a back ground check and report the sale to the federal government. That is why Sen. Cuccinelli (R-37), who uses common sense, voted against this further intrusion by the federal government into our lives.

It is so easy to blame the crime on the guns without looking at the cause and contributing factors. When you disarm people, you automatically make the eligible victims for criminals.

There is no rallying outcry to ban automobiles that result in the loss of life or 42,000 people annually from auto accidents. Neither do we seem to be concerned that accidental deaths caused by physicians per year are 120,000. This compared to approximately 1,500 gun deaths per year out of 80 million legal gun owners seems insignificant.

The constant vilification of honest gun owners by the media, drumming on the public's fears and ignorance, makes the problem worse, in the way propaganda used to plague communist countries. Repetition of even the most self-evidently outrageous lies eventually gains acceptance, defying all logic or reason.

Charles Thomas
Burke

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21 Announcements

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Girl Scout Cristina Sullivan put together a presentation to promote breast cancer awareness and early detection.



For their Gold Award Project, Haley Ferrante and Laura Umberger re-stored oyster beds in the Chesapeake Bay.

Four Local Scouts Earn Gold Awards

On Tuesday, Feb. 17 four girls from Girl Scout Troop 656 in Springfield received their Gold Award, the highest honor a Girl Scout can achieve, in a ceremony at Messiah Methodist Church on Rolling Road. All four are seniors at West Springfield High School.

Below, each of the girls writes about their projects.

Oyster Restoration in The Chesapeake Bay

BY HALEY FERRANTE & LAURA UMBERGER

Due to over harvesting and the emergence of oyster diseases, the Chesapeake Bay has faced a drastic decline in the oyster population over the last century. A single oyster can filter up to 2 gallons of water an hour, and the oyster population could once filter the entire bay in a week. Due to oyster decline however, the remaining population would take a year to do the same amount of work.

For their Gold Award Project, Laura Umberger and Haley Ferrante worked together to help restore the oyster population by creating an oyster reef and cultivating oysters in the Chesapeake Bay. Laura asked local restaurants to save their used oyster shells and she collected them over a period of four months. The remains on the used shells decomposed naturally in crates that she built.

Haley grew baby oysters called spat beside her boat at Norview Marina in Deltaville, Va. for six months. The oysters grew in floating crates called Taylor Floats that Haley made to house the growing oysters.

Once Laura had collected enough oyster shells, she brought them down to the marina and carefully placed them in the water to create a reef in their designated site. Haley placed her live oysters on top of them and they added more dead shells around the live oysters to protect them. Together, they created a DVD explaining the benefit of oyster restoration in the Chesapeake Bay and how people can get involved. They set up a booth at the Deltaville Farmers Market and educated locals on how they could join in the efforts of cleaning up the bay. The projects are currently on display in the window at Girl Scout Council of the Nations Capital in Washington, D.C.

Wildlife Awareness And Conservation Program

BY MEGAN TALLEY

With my Wildlife Awareness and Conservation program, I worked with the Hidden Pond Nature Center on their 30th Anniversary Celebration to create a program for children between the ages of 7 and 12. I delivered an interactive presentation on making one's yard wildlife friendly to both the children and their parents, focusing on wild birds and the importance of creating habitats for them. I then, with the help of numerous volunteers, led the children in putting together birdhouses from kits I created with the help of my father. Finally, I led them on a nature walk through the park, where they tried to identify as many wild birds as they could with the aid of identification booklets I created.

I helped to raise awareness for the dras-



Girl Scout Megan Talley gives a presentation at Hidden Pond Nature Center about wildlife awareness and conservation.

tic loss of necessary habitat for some of the most common birds in our area, and gave the families numerous ways they could help protect the birds. I also helped to create a greater interest in our local Nature Center and an understanding of the importance of wildlife in our ecosystem.

Increasing Breast Cancer Awareness, Early Detection

BY CRISTINA SULLIVAN

For my Girl Scout Gold Award project, I conducted a breast cancer awareness program at Church of the Nativity and coordinated with The George Washington University hospital to allow its mammogram to come out to Burke. They of-

fered free mammograms to low-income women from the area who were 35 or older, had never had a mammogram before and lacked health insurance. I set up a room in the church with two three-dimensional poster boards on the causes and effects of breast cancer and the importance of early detection and awareness. I also had a PowerPoint presentation, refreshments, and a questionnaire for the women to complete. Twenty-four women were present over the eight-hour event, and while they waited for their mammogram appointments, they were able to view my presentation and become acquainted with the facts of breast cancer. Although some were apprehensive, all were extremely grateful for this unique opportunity. After two weeks had passed, seven women were called for further examinations based on the results of their mammograms. This demonstrated the true value of my project.



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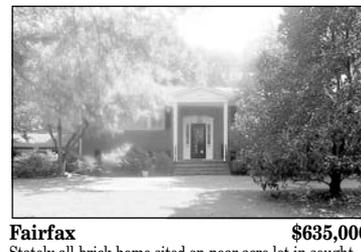
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UNDER CONTRACT IN 0 DAYS!



Let Your REALTORS Next Door show you how to sell your house quickly and for more money!



Fairfax \$295,000
Lovingly Maintained

This beautifully maintained TH features upgraded Kitchen cabinets, newer appliances, separate LR/DR w/SGD to brick patio & fenced yard. Freshly painted, newer carpet, replacement windows, and newer HVAC.



Fairfax

\$624,900

Beautiful, move in ready! Cul de sac, backing to woods, private 0.9 acre! Hardwood floors, wonderfully updated throughout! Sought after neighborhood! Clifton/Robinson.



Clifton

\$650,000

Attention Horse Lovers and Historical Buffs! Fabulous 4.2+ acre horse property w/6 stall barn, detached garage, pastures, AND an historical farm house!! Walk to 'Town of Clifton! Unbelievable opportunity to enhance this beautiful property! Clifton ES/Robinson SS!



Fairfax Station

\$924,900

Absolutely Best Price/Best Condition Home in Fairfax Station! Elegant all brick updated colonial on premium 5 acre lot. Four large bedrooms, 4.5 bathrooms, 5 fireplaces. Outstanding finished walk out lower level! Beautiful!



Come to the Heart of Real Estate

KAY HART

1-703-250-HART

1-888-529-HART

First OPEN Sunday, Mar. 22 Fairfax 22032

Robinson School Pyramid

Exceptionally lovely move-up home! Updated, New Siding, New Paint, 3 fin lvls, 4 lge BR, 3.5 BA, Office on Mn Lvl, Oversized yard w Sylvan Inground Pool, fully fenced. Quiet Cul-de-sac street, Huge parking pad for RV or Boat. Call Kay Hart for directions: 703-503-1860

Another Exceptional Listing coming soon:

Open Sunday, April 5 Fairfax 22032

Traditional Style with Contemporary Flair. Gorgeous light hardwood floors, updated, beautiful condition. Lovely yard, cul-de-sac street. Robinson Pyramid. Call Kay for information/sneak preview 703-250-HART Long & Foster, Realtors

Waiting to BUY until prices bottom out?

What happens to home prices as supply declines? Note that these are the listed homes in MRIS (as of 3/10/09) with 4+BR, 3+FB, 3 levels, 2+ garage, walk-out basement:

Price	Burke	Fairfax Station	Clifton
400-599,000	5	2	2
600-799,000	2	2	2
800-999,000	0	8	4
1,000,000+	1	10	7

Email Subject Line: It's MY Time! Sell me a great house before the prices go up



Carol G. Ford, REALTOR

GRI, ABR, Member REBAC

Real Estate Buyer's Agent

Council 703-503-4027

Call.ford@longandfooster.com

www.carolfordsellshomes.net



CRS, Associate Broker
Life Member, NVAR Multi-Million

Dollar Sales Club

Life Member, NVAR TOP PRODUCERS

Ann Witherspoon

703-503-1836



gorgeous kitchen with all the bells & whistles. 2-story Family Room w/Overlook - Main floor study/library - Sparkling HW floors - Finished LL with full BA & wet bar. Plus much more! For a private tour or more information...

CALL ANN WITHERSPOON 703-503-1836

FAIRFAX STATION - CROSSPOINTE

\$699,500

Dramatic 4 BR, 4.5 BA home w/bright, open floor plan - 1st Floor Master BR with luxury BA - 2 Fireplaces! Huge

Sheila Adams

703-503-1895

Life Member, NVAR Multi-Million

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Fairfax

\$514,900

Gorgeous 4 Level Split in popular Kings Park West, a quiet neighborhood with lots of charm. The lovely tree-lined street gives you the feel of country living close in. This beauty features 4 BRs, 3 Full Baths, located on a quiet cul-de-sac. Remodeled Kitchen & Baths, Hardwood floors, Gas Fireplace & much more. Call Sheila Adams for a private showing 703.503.1895



NGOC DO & ASSOCIATES

703-798-2899

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Fairfax Station

\$849,000

Gorgeous 4BR, 2.5BA updated, waterfront Colonial on 5+ wooded acres. Charming interior with all modern conveniences. Updated kitchen, baths, Pella windows, Hardiplank exterior, landscaping & new HVAC. Picturesque view of lake, tiered deck, foot bridges, creek and in-ground pool. Convenient yet completely private location.



Fairfax Station

\$629,000

Immaculate Crosspointe home on quiet lot, backing to huge wooded common area. New windows, updated kitchen w/ accent lighting, Silstone countertops & additional cabinets. Fantastic addition of sun room & mudroom/laundry room adds plenty of living area & walks out to tiered composite deck. Fully finished walk-up basement with built-in office area.

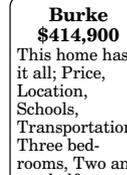


Richard Esposito

703-503-4035

Richard@LNF.com

Service is the difference I provide



Burke

\$414,900

This home has it all; Price, Location, Schools, Transportation. Three bedrooms, Two and one half Bathrooms, Office and Recreation Room on Lower Level. Step from the kitchen onto deck overlooking your own in-ground swimming pool. What a way to enjoy time with family and friends. The recreation room is highlighted by a wood stove. Windows and carpeting have been updated.



Alexandria/Potomac Yard

\$629,000

Minutes to exciting Potomac Yard featuring restaurants, theaters and shopping. One year old end unit townhome featuring hardwood floors, stainless and granite kitchen as well as a walk out recreation room for your enjoyment. Two car garage parking and convenient to Metro, Crystal City, and Reagan Airport.

LISTING YOUR HOME? CALL LONG AND FOSTER'S #1 OFFICE!
Dale Gabardy, Manager Search the Entire MLS for Your Next Home in Northern Virginia at Burke-FairfaxStation.info