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Clifton ♦ Lorton ♦ Lucketts Valley ♦ Crosspointe

Beauty Meets Beast

News, PAGE 6

Clifton School Makeover Do-able

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Local Soldier Portrays Insurgent

News, PAGE 4



Students portraying 'Belle' and 'The Beast' from Beauty and the Beast at the fifth annual Tots Holiday Concert at South County Secondary School.

PHOTO BY JUSTIN FANIZZI/THE CONNECTION

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Former U.S. Rep. Herb Harris Receives Service Award at Dec. 12 Ceremony

Former Congressman Herb Harris received the Northern Virginia Service Award from the 11th Congressional District Committee at its annual awards ceremony Saturday, Dec. 12. U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11) presented Harris with the award ‘for distinguished and honorable service to our communities, our commonwealth and our nation.’ Harris was elected to Congress from Virginia’s 8th District in 1974. He served three terms in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416. Deadline is Friday. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

Virginia Filipinos Celebrate Simbang Gabi, one of the nine traditional pre-Christmas Masses, on Saturday, Dec. 19, 7:30 p.m. at St. Bernadette Parish, 7602 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. www.arlingtondiocese.org.

Burke Presbyterian Church events are open to everyone, at 5690 Oak Leather Drive, Burke. All events are free. Contact 703-764-0456 or www.BurkePresChurch.org.

Christmas Eve Services on Thursday, Dec. 24, 5 p.m. Children’s Pageant with children’s and youth choirs; 7:30 p.m. Candlelight Service with chancel and bell choirs; 11 p.m. Candlelight and Communion Service with folk group and flute choir.

Bush Hill Presbyterian Church, 4916 Franconia Road, Alexandria, will have Advent and Christmas services. Contact 703-971-1171 or www.bushhill.org.

❖ Family Christmas Eve Service with Communion on Thursday, Dec. 24, 7 p.m.

❖ Christmas Eve Service with Communion on Thursday, Dec. 24, 11 p.m.

Volunteers are needed Dec. 23 and 25 for the Phoenix Rising Meal Program at Franconia United Methodist Church, 6037 Franconia Road, Alexandria. Help serve bagged meals to homeless people living along the Route One corridor between North Kings Highway and the Fairfax County Parkway in Alexandria. All ages can help assemble the bag lunches and assist in delivery. Meals will be prepared Wednesday, Dec. 23, at 6:30 p.m., and delivered Friday, Dec. 25, at 5:30 p.m. 703-971-5151 or www.franconiaumc.org.

Christmas Eve Services. 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 24 at Franconia United Methodist Church, 6037 Franconia Road, Alexandria. The Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall are handicapped accessible. 703-971-5151 or www.franconiaumc.org.

Watch Night Service. 11 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 31, at Franconia United Methodist Church, 6037 Franconia Road, Alexandria. Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall are handicapped accessible. 703-971-5151 or www.franconiaumc.org.

Seniors are invited to the Lunch N’ Life sponsored by the Shepherd’s Center of Fairfax-Burke on Thursday, Jan. 21, from 12-2 p.m., at Jubilee Christian Center, 4650 Shirley Gate Road, Fairfax. The program will be presented by Phyllis Verhalen performing as Abigail Adams in period costume. Seating is limited. For reservations, call Faye Quesenberry 703-620-0161 by Jan. 14. \$8; checks payable to SCFB. If transportation is needed, call the SCFB office 703-323-4788. See www.fairfax-burkesc.org.

United Methodist Men Breakfast is on Saturday Jan. 23, at 8 a.m., at Franconia United Methodist Church, 6037 Franconia Road, Alexandria. The men of Franconia UMM (United Methodist Men) will begin another year in ministry to the men of the congregation with their annual kickoff breakfast to plan out the entire year of 2010. All men are welcome. 703-971-5151 or www.franconiaumc.org.



Congratulations to Mark A. Seamon, age 10, of Herndon, VA, winner of our Kids' Holiday Art Contest! Mark wins a \$100 U.S. Savings Bond.

Thank you to all the young artists who submitted over 150 wonderful and fun holiday drawings. Many of them are on display at our Main Office at 100 S. Fairfax Street, Alexandria. Special thanks to The Art League for judging the entries!

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Committee Says Renovation Is Possible

Proposed renovations to Clifton Elementary could be smaller and half the cost.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County staff thinks renovating Clifton Elementary would require a 13,000-square-foot addition and cost \$19 million. But in reality, say those who've researched the matter, just 6,500 square feet more would do nicely — and for just \$10 million.

During a three-hour meeting, Monday night, Dec. 14, in the Clifton Town Meeting Hall, Clifton residents heard a progress report about the Southwestern Regional Planning Study currently considering possible boundary changes, student shifts and whether Clifton Elementary continues operating.

Some three dozen people attended, including Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield); Clifton Mayor Tom Peterson; Jane Barker, wife of Sen. George Barker (D-39) and School Board member Liz Bradsher (Springfield). Leading the discussion were

Clifton Red Committee Chairman Rob Jones and Clifton Elementary PTA President Patti Hopkins.

"We researched the study content and developed alternatives," said Jones. "This is fact-based, not emotional. Lower-cost alternatives for renovations exist, [as do] viable solutions to the water needs at Clifton Elementary. And the school overcrowding is well north and east of the proposed, new-school site, next to Liberty Middle School."

"We're also keeping tabs on the costs, and construction costs are down 20-30 percent from where they were when the cost estimate was made," he said. "[Besides that], we're looking for reasonable spending, not over-the-top, out-of-control spending on renovations. Students are meeting and exceeding educational standards at the current facility."

Jones said the study committee, which represents 23 schools, has met three times. The group will convene again in late January and write a report to the School Board.

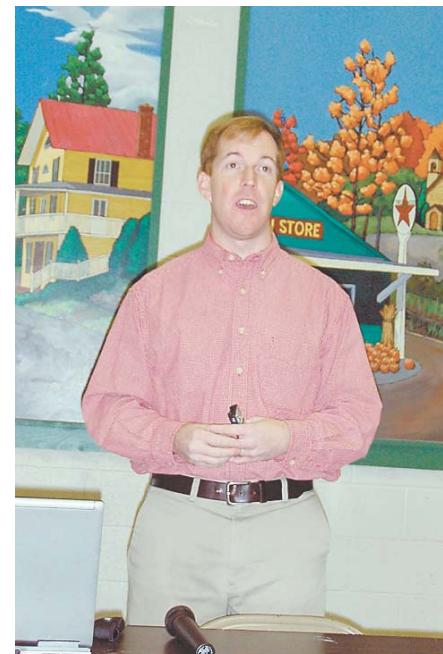


PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Rob Jones

"There's been a lot of good work done and they're digging deeply into the issues," Jones said.

If it's eventually decided a new school is needed, it could potentially take three years before it materializes because it would re-

quire a bond-issue referendum, plus time to build. "And this issue won't just affect elementary schools," said Jones. "There'll likely be a boundary study for middle and high schools, too."

ANOTHER SCENERIO could have Clifton students going to four different elementary schools — Sangster, Fairview, Willow Springs and Union Mill — and four different high schools — Lake Braddock, Robinson, Fairfax and Centreville, respectively. Although Clifton Elementary only has about 400 students, geographically it's the largest school district in the county.

Clifton parent Ina Patton said her Liberty Middle subcommittee evaluated the appropriateness of a new school going on that site and also investigated the suitability of other sites. Relevant criteria included at least 12 acres, ease of acquisition, effect on nearby schools' boundaries and proximity to the epicenter of the overcrowding.

The five, overcrowded elementary schools — Centreville, Eagle View, Greenbriar East, Greenbriar West and Colin Powell — are an average of five miles from the Liberty site. The epicenter borders Route 29 to the

SEE RENOVATION, PAGE 6

Band Shares Culture Through Music

Lake Braddock Band is traveling to China in March as part of cultural exchange program.

BY JUSTIN FANIZZI
THE CONNECTION

For more than 30 years, the Lake Braddock Secondary School Band has shared its music with not only the community, but their country as well. Now, in recognition for those decades of sustained success, the band is being given the opportunity to bring its music to an even bigger audience: The People's Republic of China.

The band is going on a 10-day excursion to China, from March 23 to April 1, as part of a program sponsored by the U.S.-China Cultural and Educational Exchange Foundation. During the trip, the band will play seven shows at seven different venues and take part in cultural immersion sessions that includes spending a day with a Chinese family.

"This is a great chance for us to see, first-hand, that part of the world."

— Reid Hartman, junior

doing things and be able to come home with a greater understanding and appreciation of their culture."

The opportunity for the trip arose more than a year ago, through Band Director Roy Holder's connections to the foundation. According to Holder, a group of Chinese students from Children's Palace in Beijing came to the area last year to play a series of shows in Washington, D.C. While they were in town, they reached out to a friend of Holder's for equipment, who in turn asked Holder if he could spare anything.

Holder agreed, and through that favor, the foundation's vice chairman, Dr. Song Yang, became aware of the reputation and history of Lake Braddock's band. Impressed with what he saw and heard, Yang sent a formal invitation to the school for the band to participate in the program.

Though the opportunity to play to such a vast audience excited Holder, due to financial concerns, the school was not able to commit to the trip for nearly a year and a



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Lake Braddock Secondary School Band

Help Band Get to China

Go to www.lbband.org for information on tickets for the Jan. 10 performance at the Rachel M. Schlesinger Center at Northern Virginia Community College in Alexandria and for other ways to donate money toward the band's trip.

half after receiving the invitation. According to Yang, the cost of the trip per student is \$2,500, with a \$500 contribution from the foundation, leaving the school a cost of

\$2,000 per student for all 140 members of the band. In addition, Holder said that the school wanted to investigate all of the details of the trip to ensure that if they were to commit the time and money, it was for the right reasons.

"We spent more than six months deciding if it was viable to do with high school students," Holder said. "We asked a lot of

SEE ON ROAD, PAGE 18

NEWS BRIEFS



Ashley Elmore

Local Teacher on 'Bachelor'

Ashley Elmore, 30, a marketing teacher at a Fairfax County high school, is one of the contestants on "The Bachelor" television series, which airs Monday, Jan 4, at 8 p.m. on ABC.

Elmore graduated cum laude from Virginia Tech, with a B.S. in marketing management. She received her MBA from Duquesne University with summa cum laude honors. She is currently a Ph.D. student at Old Dominion University. She was a top 10 contender in the Miss Virginia Pageant and the youngest person ever to win the Toyota and WJLA Channel 7 Working Woman of the Year award in 2006.

Her parents, Dr. James and Mrs. Peggy Elmore, reside in Pennsylvania. Ashley Elmore's sister, Erin Elmore, is an attorney in Philadelphia and was on "The Apprentice 3" with Donald Trump.

Chamber Honors Kroll, Lusk

For more than 30 years, the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce has been honoring citizens from the community for their work above and beyond the call of duty. At its Dec. 10 Annual Dinner, the Chamber recognized the efforts of two local individuals — Pfc. David Kroll of the Franconia District Police Station and Lee District Planning Commissioner Rodney Lusk of Kingstowne.

Kroll was honored for his efforts as a public servant to improve the quality of life for citizens of the Greater Springfield area. Kroll is a member of the Special Enforcement Team (SET), which is responsible for attacking and solving problems in the Springfield, Lorton and Kingstowne areas. In 2009, Kroll has led the way in arrests with 48 local warrants served, 23 criminal arrests and more than 225 traffic arrests. In addition, he initiated cases that led to the apprehension of thieves and the location of large quantities of drugs in area homes, resulting in federal prosecution.

Lusk received the Chamber's highest honor — the 2009 Herbert C. Hunter Citizen of the Year award, which recognized his volunteer work in the Greater Springfield area. A planning commissioner since 2004, Lusk is active in many community organizations. From 2002-03, he was the at-large representative on the Fairfax County Park Authority. Currently, he is the co-chair of the Grubstake Breakfast Pre

SEE NEWS BRIEFS, PAGE 5

NEWS

Know Your Opponent

Soldier portrays enemy insurgent in mock Afghan village in Germany

BY MICHAEL TOLZMANN
HOMETOWN NEWS SERVICE

HOHENFELS, Germany. As American soldiers enter a village here, they are approached by bearded men with turbans and women with burqas covering their faces. The soldiers do not know who is friend or who is foe.

The son of a Lorton woman is serving here, where fictitious Arab villages have been built with actors roaming about, giving it the look and feel of being in a war zone. The actors are supporting a mission to train American, NATO and allied soldiers on how to deal with unknown situations that are sure to face those who go to Iraq or Afghanistan.

Army Spec. Christopher A. Whorton, son of Valerie Ericson of Lorton, is a member of the 1st Battalion,

SEE INSURGENT, PAGE 7

"It's better to make mistakes here than in a war zone."

— ARMY SPEC. CHRISTOPHER A. WHORTON



PHOTO BY BENJAMIN FASKE

Army Spec. Christopher A. Whorton is a member of the 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment located in Hohenfels, Germany, at the Army's Joint Multinational Readiness Center. He functions as an enemy insurgent, or known within the Army as an opposing force, or OPFOR.

A Question of Safety

Cook concerned over bus stops near sex offenders.

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has asked public school officials to review its policy concerning the placement of public school bus stops near the homes of registered sex offenders.

Fairfax County Public Schools currently has a policy not to move bus stops or change walking routes based on information about perpetrators' homes found in the Virginia Sex Offender and Crimes Against Minors registry.

Supervisor John Cook (R-Braddock) asked that the county board to urge the school system to change this policy. One of Cook's constituents complained that her kindergarten student's bus stop was in front of a house listed as a sex offender's residence in the database, wrote the supervisor in a information piece to the other board members.

In response to Cook's request, Fairfax County Chairman Sharon Bulova (D-At-large) has sent a letter to School Board President Kathy Smith (Sully) requesting the School Board review the policy.

The Fairfax County School Board made the decision not to move student bus stop locations based on information the statewide sex offender database after consulting with the Fairfax County Police Department on the matter in 2005.

At that time, the police indicated that moving bus stops away from sex offender homes would not improve the safety of children, said the school system's chief operating officer Dean Tistadt.

"This was a very thoughtful, deliberate policy. ... It is not like we are being cavalier or insensitive about this. This policy was developed with consultation with experts in the police department," said Tistadt.

Both school officials and police remained more concerned about students' exposure to traffic than sex offenders while standing at bus stops. The school system and public safety officials agreed that high-speed vehicles posed a bigger threat to the wellbeing of students waiting for the school bus than sexual abusers, said Tistadt.

The school official said he did not want to see a situation arise where a bus stop was relocated away from a house listed as a sex offender's residence and into an area with heavier traffic.

"The greatest risk to students are vehicles. Vehicles are what we have to be consumed by when we choosing the location of a bus stop. If the police department told us it would make people safer to move children away from sex offenders, we would do it. But they, like we, understand that the real danger is vehicles," said Tistadt.

— JULIA O'DONOGHUE

NEWS

FROM PAGE 4

senter Coaching Committee for the George Mason University Century Club. He is also vice-chairman of the Business Curriculum Advisory Committee for Northern Virginia Community College. Lusk's passion is seeing to the funding and completion of the Accessible Treehouse at Lee District Park.

Lions Selling Christmas Trees

Once again, the Clifton Lions Club is working during the holiday season to help families in need in Clifton and Centreville. Working with Western Fairfax Christian Ministries, the Lions provided Thanksgiving food baskets to the needy and will provide Christmas holiday food baskets and gifts to approximately 40 families.

The Clifton club is also now selling Christmas trees at University Mall on Braddock Road near GMU. The Douglas firs cost about \$60 each and all proceeds will support local charities.

The Clifton Lions Club meets the second and fourth Thursday of each month at 7 p.m., at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. For more information, see www.clcv.clubexpress.com or call club secretary Jay Moughon at 703-266-3784.



Todd T. Krebs

Clifton resident **Todd T. Krebs**, CLU was selected to attend this year's Northwestern Mutual Forum, Nov. 8-11, 2009, at The Phoenician in Scottsdale, Ariz. Krebs was invited to the Forum in recognition of his outstanding year of performance, serving the needs of cli-

PEOPLE NOTES

ents throughout the region. He joined a distinguished group of representatives from across the country who have qualified for this honor. Krebs is a representative with The Washington Group, based in Fairfax.



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Stallions Present Holidays for All Ages

South County Secondary students put on fifth annual Tots Holiday Concert.

BY JUSTIN FANIZZI
THE CONNECTION

Students at South County Secondary School gave their annual gift of song and dance to the area's youngest students once again last week. This year, however, they enlisted the help of some friends to celebrate the holidays.

The students donned costumes and became some of the children's most beloved Disney characters, performing a medley of Disney movie songs and popular Christmas standards at the fifth annual Tots Holiday Concert. The concert, which had three performances on Thursday, Dec. 10 in South County's audi-

"We've changed it a little bit since we started but we still try to bring in youngsters, and this year, we focused on the dancers."

— Kelsey Turner, sophomore

torium, featured the school's band, chorus and drama students in a production that left its audience amazed.

"I really liked the show," said Campbell Johnson, 4. "I liked the music and I got to get lots of high-fives [to the characters]."

The band and chorus performed songs from the Disney movies "The Incredibles," "Aladdin," "Beauty and the Beast," "The Little Mermaid" and "Lion King," while the drama students, in full costume, acted out the scenes. The actors' choreography, Kelsey Turner said, was created

completely by the students. Turner, a sophomore member of the second period Drama 2 class, said that the students made most



PHOTO BY JUSTIN FANIZZI/THE CONNECTION

The cast of the Tots Holiday Concert.

of the costumes and scripted the scenes during several class periods before the event.

"The play was a lot of fun," Turner said.

"It was cool because we made up most of the stuff. We choreographed it during our

SEE HOLIDAY, PAGE 16

Renovation Rather than School Closing

FROM PAGE 3

north, Interstate 66 to the south, Providence Elementary to the east and Colin Powell Elementary to the west. "Having the new school at the Liberty site doesn't make sense and only meets the first two criteria," said Patton. One of the advantages of the Liberty Middle site is that the School Board already owns that property.

Patton said that few areas are available sites in the epicenter, but placing it there reduces the area affected by boundary changes. "Our initial conclusion is that it makes sense to build a school around the area where people need it the most," said Patton. By 2014, she said, Greenbriar East and West, Powell and Eagle View would be a total of 852 students over capacity, which is enough to fill a new school to capacity.

BUT THE COST to build a 950-student elementary school is estimated at \$28 million. Therefore, said Hopkins, "When you look at all the schools, both overcrowded and under capacity, it averages out to 124 students total over capacity. So the school system might decide to adjust the boundaries, rather than build a new school."

Clifton Renovation subcommittee member Charlie Rau said the draft feasibility studies should be updated with the study committee and community's input. "The end game is that we need seven of the 12 School Board members to vote in favor of Clifton renovations and of keeping the

school open," he said. "Whether Clifton [exists] or not will make a difference in the ultimate [overcrowding] solution."

If the scope of Clifton renovations is reduced, it dramatically lowers the price tag. "There are going to be hard choices," said Rau. "We may have to make decisions that'll affect our children and our children's children. We're going to have to see what we can live without, and I need some way of validating, through community feedback, that this is what the community wants." He urged attendees to fill out survey forms detailing their wishes for Clifton Elementary, "if we are to save our school." Forms are also online at www.savecliftonelementary.org.

Rau said Clifton needn't have SACC — it's one of six, county schools without it — and could have a smaller media center than other elementary schools. Said Rau: "\$10 million would get us competitive with renovations at another school and the cost to build another one." He said Clifton needs a sprinkler system for fire suppression and a water tank, because it would probably still be on well water. But he noted that nine schools total in Loudoun and Prince William counties are also on well water.

"It will come down to dollars and sense and CIP funding," said Bradsher. "We have five high schools waiting for renovation money." She said the new CIP with new numbers comes out Thursday.

CLIFTON RESIDENT Dwayne Nitz builds

band, if we met the school-system spec," he said. "But it's based on 950 students, and we have less than half of that."

"We also have some part-time staff who may not be there after budget cuts," said Jones. "And we don't have full-day kindergarten."

Nitz said an architect has sketched possible renovation scenarios and he's made and revised budgets since July. "We have a concept plan, which will change in response to the community," he said. "We've added an administrative space to the building's south side, and we think we've met the educational spec for this size facility."

NITZ ALSO contends that the school's water quality and quantity should be no problem. "We believe the water can be treated," he said. "It's acidic and degrades the copper pipes, but we're working on it and hope the water quality can be solved very soon."

"A sprinkler system could be fed by the tank and refilled by truck," said Nitz. "And that third well is high-yielding." He also stressed that a water tank costs \$200,000 to \$250,000 — not the \$850,000 that county staff estimated.

"There's no indication of structural problems at Clifton," he said. "It doesn't require major surgery. Smaller square footage and a less-intensive scope of renovation made the difference [in the overall renovation cost]. Our smaller population and lack of development in the foreseeable future allow us to look at a limited scope."



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Patti Hopkins

churches and schools and believes Clifton's renovation could be done for \$10 million. "The \$19 million estimate is based on an average of typical, major renovations to elementary schools, including walls gutted and roofs replaced, and we may not need all that," he said.

Clifton is now 46,000 square feet and county staff would have it add 13,000 more, when just 6,500 might fill the bill, said Nitz. "We don't have a multipurpose room or stage, or a dedicated room for strings and

NEWS

Insurgent

FROM PAGE 4

4th Infantry Regiment located here at the Army's Joint Multinational Readiness Center. He functions as an enemy insurgent, or known within the Army as an opposing force, or OPFOR.

"We train U.S. Army and NATO forces here at Hohenfels to prepare them to go to Iraq, Afghanistan or Kosovo," said Whorton. "We accomplish this by engaging them with situations that replicate real-life scenarios. I often play the role of an insurgent or enemy combatant. We engage the soldiers by shooting at them to make sure they get the best training possible."

With the rat-tat-tat of AK-47 assault rifles echoing through the village here, the OPFOR insurgents challenge soldiers who treat this war-gaming situation as a real-life evaluation. Allied soldiers and insurgents alike have rifles equipped with laser systems that allow for the exchange of gunfire. Everyone wears a laser receptor system that will give off a loud shrill if they are shot. The goal is for soldiers heading to the war zone to learn from potential combat pitfalls here rather than making the mistakes on the battlefield.

"We're here to teach and show them their mistakes," said Whorton. "It's better to make mistakes here than in a war zone. Even though this is not real, I'd like the soldiers to really take this training seriously."

Some of the actors here are hired civilians who dress and play the part of Arabs living in a village, while others, such as Whorton, are American soldiers who are trained in tactics used by insurgents. Combined with villages that could typify a real town in Iraq or Afghanistan, a look and feel of being in the war zone is achieved.

"The environment here is rough and rugged with lots of hills and trees. It's Germany, and it feels hot and humid in the summer and cold in the winter. But we do our best to replicate combat scenarios so the soldiers will know what to do if faced with difficult situations," said Whorton.

For Whorton, serving here in support of this teaching facility is one of many experiences found within the military so far.

"I have been in the Army for three years, and have had one deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom," said Whorton.

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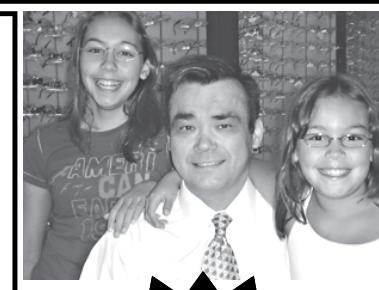
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OPINION

Clearing the Air

Non-smokers and families looking to eliminate exposure to second-hand smoke got an early and unlikely Christmas present from Gov. Tim Kaine and Virginia General Assembly on Dec. 1, when substantial restrictions on smoking in restaurants and bars went into effect.

Restaurants and bars in the Commonwealth are required to go smoke free. But many establishments will still be able to offer a smoking area.

If the business has the space and the financial ability, it is allowed to construct a separate smoking area, if it is completely walled off and has its own ventilation system.

This exception is unfortunate for several reasons.

First it is unfair to the businesses that do not

have the space or wherewithal to add smoking rooms.

Other jurisdictions, like the District or Montgomery County, Md. have passed true smoking bans, leaving a level playing field for businesses. And overall, in Montgomery County and many other places, receipts at restaurants increased after the smoking ban went into effect.

EDITORIAL Second, such restrictions fail to protect workers from the serious detrimental health effects of second-hand smoke, one of the key objectives of smoking restrictions. Especially in the current job market, restaurant workers are more likely to feel compelled to continue to work in conditions that are hazardous to their health. A full ban on smoking in restaurants and bars would pro-

New rules on smoking are flawed and fail to protect many workers, but still great step in right direction.

tect more workers.

Third, even with a separate ventilation system, many smoking rooms will continue to leach smoke into non-smoking areas every time the door is opened and closed. Those who want a truly smoke-free dining environment will still have to do a little research.

But even with all its flaws, the successful implementation of smoking restrictions in Virginia remains a bit of a miracle, and a blessing.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Upbeat Look at 2009

Economic Development Authority has worked with firms to add 4,000 jobs to local economy.

BY GERALD L. GORDON PH.D.

As 2009 draws to a close, it will be remembered as an especially significant year for Fairfax County's economy and for those who live and work here. And, the successes achieved this year will position the county and its residents well during the economic recovery and beyond.

The national unemployment rate topped 10 percent this year, and in many communities it is much higher. Job creation in many locations is non-existent. Meanwhile, in Fairfax County, we will end the year with about a 4.5 percent unemployment rate. My office has worked with dozens of companies that have added or will add more than 4,000 jobs to the economy. Decisions by Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), Hilton Worldwide and The Ignite Institute to locate their corporate headquarters in Fairfax County are especially noteworthy.

Individually, each of these new headquarters operations would be leaders in any business community. Adding another Fortune 500 headquarters — SAIC is the county's seventh — is a tremendous achievement. Hilton, perhaps the world's best-known hotel brand, and Ignite, a non-profit that is pioneering the field of personalized medicine, bring important new diversity to our economic base and business community. The same can be said of the 2007 addition of the headquarters operation of Volkswagen Group of America to Fairfax County.

Neither should we overlook the growth of the small and mid-sized firms that are the backbone of this and every economy. Of the more than 100 companies that the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority worked with this year, a vast majority of them are small busi-

nesses with fewer than 100 employees.

The successes of 2009 have important implications for Fairfax County taxpayers in 2010 and beyond. First, there will be more job opportunities, particularly compared to many other parts of the nation. Second, a larger commercial tax base means residents bear less of the cost of providing the range of high-quality services funded by the county Board of Supervisors.

Third, new workers in our community buy homes, dine in restaurants and shop in local stores. Fourth, the broader the base of companies that are here, the greater the likelihood that our economy and commercial tax base will be stable and grow. And, finally, the quality of life for which Fairfax County is known will be improved by economic stability and growth.

The mission of the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority is to build the commercial tax base by promoting the county as one of the world's best business locations — attracting companies here and working with them to stay and create jobs here and fill office space.

The FCEDA is proud of its success in 2009 to broaden the economic diversity of Fairfax County. It will help ensure that Fairfax County remains one of the best of the best places to work and live for decades to come.

Gerald L. Gordon Ph.D. is president and CEO of the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority.



Gerald L. Gordon

COMMENTARY

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Gerald L. Gordon Ph.D. is president and CEO of the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority.

No Public Option

To the Editor:

I am extremely concerned about the bill that the House recently passed and the one that the Senate is currently debating regarding health care reform. The fact that the bills require that everyone be covered by health insurance and that a public option be provided will either bankrupt the country or destroy our health care system, which many people from other countries currently flock to because their own government-run programs provide such poor care.

The following are the main points of my argument:

1. The funding discussed in the current bills is nowhere close to what will be required to provide a public option for the millions of people who will flock to it. The taxes and debt that will have to be incurred to make it workable will be enormous and bankrupt the country.

2. There is a severe shortage of doctors and nurses now. Where in the world are all the additional doctors and nurses going to come from when 94 percent of Americans are required to have health insurance?

3. In order to try to deal with this shortage and to make the public option workable, the logical next step will be to force everyone into the public option and to ration health care. In that case, it would become illegal for individuals to pay out of their own pockets for health care, which is the current system in Canada and causes thousands of Canadians to seek health care in the U.S. each year.

4. Rationing would ruin health care in this country as we know it because

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 9

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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 8

caps would have to be placed on the salaries of doctors and nurses, leading to even bigger shortages and causing the best and the brightest, who are the lynchpin of our top-notch care, to seek other careers. Under rationing, it will take months or years to get expensive tests such as MRIs. People will die in droves as their cancer or other illnesses kill them while they wait for tests or treatment. Isn't it better to go bankrupt paying for health care that is available than to die waiting for rationed care?

5. The stage is already being set for rationing with the recent government panel recommendations for obtaining mammograms and PAP smears. Breast cancer is a big killer of women at ages younger than 50, and cervical cancer can hit at any time. Who in her right mind would begin mammograms at age 50 or have a PAP smear every other year, unless she was forced to due to the rationing of medical care?

6. With the current health care bills, the elderly and disabled in particular will be left behind. It is appalling that both bills

will raid Medicare as partial payment for health care reform. The elderly and disabled paid into Medicare during their entire working lives, and now a significant portion of that money will be diverted to a system that in itself will be detrimental to the elderly due to rationing. Under rationing, the elderly will be considered "too old" for expensive tests that in limited supply will be reserved for the young. Even if they have the money to pay for the tests themselves, it will do no good because it will be illegal for them to pay out of their own pockets.

In my opinion, health care reform should

be limited to changing the regulation of the health insurance industry to make the system more fair and to keep costs down. I urge everyone to ask his or her congressmen to vote against any bill that includes a public option or to ensure that the public option is not forced upon anyone. One can read the current health care bills and find contact information for senators and representatives on the Thomas Web site: <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/thomas.html>.

Kristina E. Paquette
Springfield

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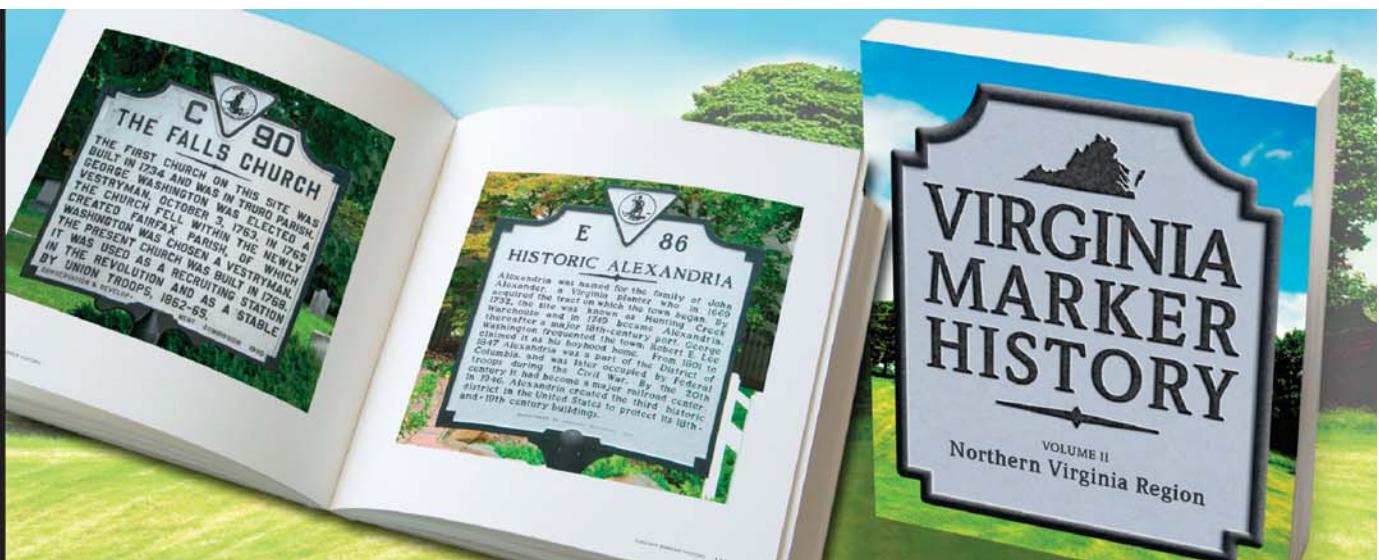
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THINGS TO DO

The following events and exhibits are open at the Workhouse Arts Center, which is located at 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. For more information, call 703-495-0001 or visit www.workhousearts.org.

Holiday Hours. Special Gift Shop Hours for those last minute gifts: Monday, Dec. 21, 12-5 p.m.; Tuesday, Dec. 22, 12-5 p.m.

Free gift-wrapping offered. Stop by Gallery W-16 from Dec. 21-24 and receive complimentary gift-wrapping on any purchase from the Workhouse Works show. Workhouse Studio Buildings, Gallery W-16 and Gift Shop hours: Wednesday, Dec. 23, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.; Thursday, Dec. 24, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.; Friday, Dec. 25, closed; Thursday, Dec. 31, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.; Friday, Jan. 1, closed. Gallery W-16 will be closed from Dec. 25-Jan 6 for renovations. Studio Buildings are open regular hours, except those noted above.

Holiday Workshops: Thinking of taking a class at the Workhouse? Free "Art of Movement" Holiday Classes are offered Monday, Dec. 28-Saturday, Jan. 2. For full schedule, go to www.workhousearts.org.

Gallery After Hours: Point Blank. Saturday, Dec. 19, 7:30 p.m. Come to the Workhouse and get into the holiday spirit with an evening of great cover songs, fun and dance, with Washington D.C.'s favorite party band, Point Blank. Advance tickets are \$10 member/\$8 non-member and can be purchased at www.workhousearts.org.

Give the gift of watercolor classes with instructor Catherine Hillis at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton. The class, Make Your Watercolors Glow, is suitable for young adults through adults, who are beginners or intermediates. The eight-week class will meet Saturday mornings, beginning Jan. 16, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Information about the instructor is available at www.catherinehillis.com or at Studio #1006, Building Ten at The Workhouse. To register, call 703-584-2900 or go to www.workhousearts.org.



'Winter,' encaustic by Julie Dzikiewicz

Arts Education Night & Film Screening.

Saturday, Jan. 2. Reception featuring information about Workhouse classes and programs with a focus on the Win-



'El Vino Blanco de la Casa,' watercolor by Catherine Hillis

AT THE WORKHOUSE

ter 2010 quarter runs from 4-7 p.m. Instructors and students are invited to learn more about our education and outreach offerings, participate in an interactive game, win door prizes and more. Light fare and soft drinks, cash bar available. Free tickets, reservations recommended. Film Screening of "Class Act" begins at 7 p.m. Free, reservations recommended, cash bar available. For more, visit www.classactthemovie.com

Second Saturday Art Walks.

Saturday, Jan. 9, 6-9 p.m. The Workhouse Studio Artists will keep their doors open after hours. The Association of Interior Design Professionals (AIDP) will host a reception in conjunction with the Art Walks in W-16 from 6-7 p.m. to bring together artists, interior design professionals and the public to highlight the creative incorporation of original art into interior design settings. All are in-



'Oaks VI,' woodcut by Norma Pfaff

vited to talk art and design with these creative design professionals. Don't forget to pick up your Workhouse Passport to chronicle your adventures and experiences and to enter to win special prizes.

Stars on Sunday: Le Hotclub de Biglick.

Sunday, Jan. 10, 5:30 p.m. In the 1930s, a style of music known as gypsy jazz was made famous by the legendary Django Reinhardt. Today, this music is kept alive by a group known as Le Hotclub de Biglick. Cash bar and light fare available. For more information, visit www.lehotclub.com. Tickets \$15-\$25 and can be purchased at www.workhousearts.org.

Ongoing Exhibit — Best of the Collector's Showcase

Dec. 24. The exhibition presents pieces of art from the top 13 artists chosen at the Third Annual Collector's Showcase. These diverse pieces of artwork are suitable for both the novice and the experienced collector. The exhibition will be shown on the second floor of Gallery W-16.

New Works: Faculty, Student, Staff Exhibition. All Workhouse Arts Center 2009 instructors and their students have been invited along with LAF staff to exhibit New Works in Gallery W-16 from Jan. 6-30. An artist's reception is Sunday, Jan. 17, from 2-4 p.m.

New Exhibition: "Winter Solstice." Jan. 6-31. Come in from the cold and celebrate the return of longer days with new works by the Building 5 artists, who are welcoming new artists Allen Levy and Songmi Park. The artists work in a variety of mediums to include encaustic, woodcut, Chinese brush, colored pencil, scratchboard, collage, mixed media, porcelain, glass, oil, acrylic and watercolor. Opening reception is Jan. 9, 6-9 p.m., during the Second Saturday Art Walks at the Workhouse. Gallery and Studio Hours: Wednesday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sunday, 12-5 p.m.

Northern Virginia Bead Society Designer Challenge Exhibition.

Jan. 9-31. With help of the Northern Virginia Bead Society (NVBS), the Workhouse will offer a series of events. The NVBS has encouraged members of the community to appreciate and participate in the visual arts through beads since 1992. On Jan. 10, a day of bead demos will be featured in Building W-7 from 12-4 p.m. A "Bead Boot Camp" is offered Sunday, Jan. 24 from 11 a.m.-5 p.m., where a variety of demos and mini-workshops will be taking place. A small fee may apply for workshop kits. The opening reception for the exhibition is Saturday, Jan. 9, from 7-9 p.m., in building W-16.

Winter Class Registration. The winter quarter begins on Jan. 11 and there is still time to register for classes and workshops. Registration can be completed by phone, fax, mail or online at www.workhousearts.org.

CALENDAR

Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416. Deadline is Friday. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

THURSDAY/DEC. 17

Starlight, Starbright. 10:30 a.m. Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Sparkly stories, songs and activities. Ages 2-5 with adult. Call for title. Adults. 703-249-1520.

FRIDAY/DEC. 18

Natalie MacMaster: Christmas in Cape Breton. 8 p.m. at George Mason University's Center for the Arts Concert Hall, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Celtic melodies and classic Christmas carols. Tickets are \$23-\$46. Youth through grade 12, half price when accompanied by an adult. Charge by phone at 888-945-2468 or www.gmu.edu/cfa.

Lunch Bunch. 12 p.m. John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive, Alexandria. Bring lunch and come for stories. Birth-5

with adult. 703-971-0010.

Naturalist Boot Camp. Send Children ages 6 to 10 to a naturalist boot camp on at Hidden Pond Nature Center. Help them burn off that holiday excitement and focus on the adventure of learning about natural world from 6:30-10:30 p.m. They will hike, go critter watching, meet, feed and hold live animals. They will make a craft with natural items. The boot camp will conclude around a campfire with snacks, holiday songs, and ghost stories. The cost is \$30 per child per day. Reservations are required. To reserve a child's spot, call 703-451-9588. Hidden Pond Nature Center is located at 8511 Greeley Blvd. in Springfield.

SATURDAY/DEC. 19

Gallery After Hours: Point Blank. 7:30 p.m. at the Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Cover songs and dancing with Point Blank. Advance tickets \$10 member, \$8 non-member. www.workhousearts.org or 703-584-2900.

PAWS To Read. 11 a.m. Lorton Library, 9520 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Read to Chance the therapy dog for a 10-minute session. Call to

register. Arrive early to check in. 703-339-7385.

Santa at Lake Accotink. Santa wants to take pictures with visitors' pets from 1-2 p.m. Take a photo of a dog, cat or other pet with Santa. Bring own camera and get the shot you want. The registration fee is \$5 per pet. Santa offers hayrides from 3-8 p.m. Call early to get your preferred hayride time. The fee is \$8 per person and babies on laps are free. Registrations must be made in advance. Call 703-569-0285 to make a reservation or for more information. Visa and MasterCard are accepted. For more information about Lake Accotink Park, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/.

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call 703-451-9588. Hidden Pond Nature Center is located at 8511 Greeley Blvd. in Springfield.

Cocoa and Crafts at Lake Accotink Park.

10 a.m.-12 p.m. at Lake Accotink Park, 7500 Accotink Park Road, Springfield. For children ages 6-10. \$23 per child. Crafts, hot chocolate and a movie. Reserve at 703-569-0285.

SUNDAY/DEC. 20

A Festival of Music. 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. at Sydenstricker United Methodist Church, 8508 Hooes Road, Springfield. Combined choirs, band and orchestra. Reception between the performances. 703-451-8221 or www.sumcdisciples.org.

Naturalist Boot Camp. Send Children ages 6 to 10 to a naturalist boot camp on at Hidden Pond Nature Center. Help them burn off that holiday excitement and focus on the adventure of learning about natural world from 1-5 p.m. They will hike, go critter watching, meet, feed and hold live animals. They will make a craft with natural items. The boot camp will conclude around a campfire with snacks, holiday songs, and ghost stories. The cost is \$30 per child per day. Reservations are

required. To reserve a child's spot, call 703-451-9588. Hidden Pond Nature Center is located at 8511 Greeley Blvd. in Springfield.

MONDAY/DEC. 21

LifeLine Screening. 9 a.m. at American Legion Post #162, 8210 Legion Drive, Lorton. Five screenings available, for cardiovascular conditions, osteoporosis and more. Packages start at \$139. 1-877-237-1287 or www.lifelinescreening.com.

Read to the Dog. 3:30-4:30 p.m. John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive, Alexandria. Read aloud to a trained therapy dog. Age 6-12. 703-971-0010.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 23

Practice Your English. 6:30 p.m. Kingstowne Library, 6500 Lansdowne Centre, Alexandria. Conversation group for adults learning English. 703-339-4610.

Travel Club. 1 p.m. Richard Byrd Library, 6315 Backlick Road, Springfield. Bring lunch. Adults. 703-451-8055.

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Exhausted Bruins Fall in State Finals

Lake Braddock loses 35-21 in first finals appearance in school history.

BY REED S. ALBERS
THE CONNECTION

Lake Braddock head coach Jim Poythress knew his team wanted to fight. As he looked into his players' eyes at halftime of the Virginia Division 6 AAA state finals on Dec. 12, he saw a team still spent from a week of short rest.

"One thing I've been able to do all year is look in my guys' eyes and know where we were," he said. "I felt like...they were drained at the half. They were trying to do everything they could to come back and win the game, but they were just drained."

The Bruins had only four days to prepare for the school's first appearance in a state finals at The University of Virginia's Scott Stadium in Charlottesville. Lake Braddock's state semi-final game was originally scheduled for Dec. 5, but due to weather and field conditions, the game with Battlefield was postponed to Dec. 7.

The Thomas Dale Knights from Chester, who played their state semi-final game on Dec. 5 against Oscar Smith, had a full week to prepare for Lake Braddock's high-flying offense.

Poythress said the short week of preparation may have played a role in the Bruins' slow start in the state finals.

Thomas Dale got an early jump on the Bruins with two touchdown drives in the first half and never looked back, defeating the Bruins 35-21.

"I didn't feel like going into the game we would give up the rushing yards we did," Poythress said of Thomas Dale's 249 rushing yards.

THE SECOND HALF didn't start any better for the Bruins as the Knights put together another touchdown drive and intercepted



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Thomas Stickford hauls down a Thomas Dale receiver short of the goal line.

a Michael Nebrich pass for a touchdown.

"I knew that we had to score offensively," Nebrich said. "I forced the interception a little bit."

Nebrich was picked off three times in the game, ending a strong stretch of passing where the junior had been intercepted just five times in the past nine games.

Despite the turnovers, the junior quarterback was able to put together three touchdown drives in the game, but the spread offense that had dazzled Northern Region opponents looked anemic against Thomas Dale's 3-4 defense.

"We tried to do everything we could," Poythress said. "We changed our blocking scheme, our slants, nothing got us going. It just wasn't our night."

Further adding to the frustration was a

controversial missed fumble call. During a 73-yard touchdown drive, Bruins' defender Nate Fleming forced a fumble that would have stopped a Thomas Dale scoring drive.

Instead of giving possession to the Bruins, referees called the Thomas Dale runner down and placed the ball at the 1-yard line.

A video replay of the play brought out boos from the Lake Braddock fans, but Poythress said the fumble wasn't the reason for the loss.

"We could've had the break and maybe it would have made a difference," Poythress said. "Maybe we would have gotten some momentum and maybe things would have changed, but let's not forget they drove it right down there."

The game ends a season that saw the Bru-

"We tried to do everything we could."

— Jim Poythress

ins transform into state title contenders thanks to an infusion of life into the offensive, courtesy of assistant head coach Bill Renner's spread offense.

THE BRUINS also were able to avenge their two losses to Woodson and Robinson during the regular season in the regional playoffs.

"I'm very proud of our kids," Poythress said. "We had a heck of a run, but it seemed like we ran out of steam."

For Nebrich, the disappointing loss will serve as a motivator for his upcoming senior season.

"I'm going to take what I did this year and implant it into next year's team," Nebrich said. "We're going to be back next year, I promise you that."

WEEK IN SPORTS

Popcorn, Soda And Basketball

Students looking for a cheap date or a fun event to enjoy on Friday, Dec. 18 should look no further than a doubleheader basketball match between Lake Braddock and Robinson.

At the upcoming Lake Braddock and Robinson Varsity Basketball Challenge, students wearing a Burke basketball shirt will be admitted inside the game free and receive a coupon for a free soda and box of popcorn.

The T-shirt admission is good for

both the boys' and girls' varsity basketball game.

Tip-off is set for 5:45 p.m. for the girls and 7:30 p.m. for the boys. Both games will be played in the main gym at Robinson Secondary School.

Rams Rifle Team Starts Season 2-0

The Robinson Rams Rifle team defeated Yorktown 1141-1083 on Dec. 9.

Lauren Alman shot a 295 out of 300 to help the Rams overcome the Patriots.

The Rams are now 2-0 in Potomac High School Rifle League competition this season.

Robinson Wrestling Second in Annapolis

Robinson head wrestling coach Bryan Hazard doesn't have his sights set on hanging a particular championship banner, but his expectations for the 2009-10 Rams mirror the program's success over the last decade.

"Our goals are always to be the best,"

Hazard said. "I don't know if we ever set it for a district, region or state title, but we definitely want to be the best."

During the weekend, Robinson sent its varsity team to the Ed Perry Invitational in Annapolis, Md. The Rams finished second, one point behind Archbishop Spaulding, and captured six individual championships.

Dallas Smith (103 pounds), Jake Smith (112) and Jacob Crawford (130) each finished first in his respective weight class and remain unde-

SEE WEEK IN SPORTS, PAGE 15

SPORTS

Gallo Is Woodson's Coach on the Floor

Behind senior's leadership, Cavaliers begin 2009-10 season strong with 2-1 record.

BY REED S. ALBERS
THE CONNECTION

In one year's time, W.T. Woodson basketball player Melissa Gallo expects to be playing with Boston University's basketball team, hoping to make an impact in her freshman year.

But before Gallo can start thinking about draining jump shots as a Terrier, she still has unfinished business as a Cavalier.

"I'm looking forward [to college]," she said. "But I have things I need to work on here."

The talented guard has been an offensive catalyst for the Cavaliers in her three years of varsity play. For her final season at Woodson, the senior is looking to add another element to her game.

"I've really tried to focus on defense," she said. "I'm a scorer, but working on my defense is a priority."

"I'm being more of a leader on the court,"

— Melissa Gallo

ship?

"I'm being more of a leader on the court," she said. "It's my senior year and it's a role that I've been in before, but I need to do it for the younger players."

Head coach Pat Neri said the lessons Gallo can teach now will be echoed throughout the program in future seasons.

"[The younger players] see her working

Despite the talk about defense, Gallo's recent performances show she's still going to be a dynamic scoring threat.

On Dec. 8 against Fairfax, Gallo racked up 19 points in the Cavs' 60-56 loss. The momentum carried with her to the Cavaliers' 61-35 crushing of Patriot District rival Lake Braddock on Dec. 11 where she scored 15 points.

With defense on the mind, but point scoring in her blood, what more could Gallo do to help the Cavaliers chase a Patriot District and Northern Region championship?



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Melissa Gallo drives the net with a lay-up during the Cavaliers victory over Lake Braddock on Dec. 8.

hard in practice and her devotion," Neri said. "Younger players come up to me and say 'What do I have to do to be like Melissa?'"

The answer to that question is simple, he

said.

"I tell them to go ask her," Neri said. "Ask her how to handle the ball, or shoot or do what she does."

The older-sister vibe Gallo gives off at practice is the result of her own experiences as a budding freshman basketball player.

"I was a freshman on varsity, so I know how to treat [younger players]," she said. "I want to treat them the way I'd want to be treated if I were them."

Another attribute that Neri sees in Gallo is her ability to act as a coach on the floor.

"She can look up at the clock and recognize the situations," Neri said. "She knows exactly what I want without me telling her and [she can] get the kids to play that way."

With a 2-1 start to the season, Neri said he's impressed with how his older players have meshed with younger players.

"I'm really excited about the young kids and the way they've blended in," Neri said. "There's a very good chemistry on the team with our seniors and our freshmen."

The Cavaliers have five seniors on the team, but with Gallo's guidance and continued chemistry between the two freshman and two sophomores, Woodson's team could be building something special.

"This is the best depth we've had in a few years," Neri said.

Crashing the Books and the Boards

South County's Butler hopes excellence in classroom will breed victory on the court.

BY REED S. ALBERS
THE CONNECTION

Senior guard Antonio Butler wants to add a winning season to the South County boys' basketball team's record book, a feat that hasn't been achieved in the school's five-year history.

"It's the most important thing for us," he said. "It's at the top of our list."

As one of the team's captains, it's Butler's job to identify problem areas on the team and lead by example to fix them.

His first order of business for turning the program around?

STRONGER performances in the classroom, not just on the basketball court.

"[Winning] has to start in the classroom," he said. "Everyone needs to get good grades. If we do good in the classroom, it will show on the court."

Butler said he got the idea for stressing academics from his own personal success in the classroom earlier this year.

"I started out the first quarter well," he said. "I want to carry that through the second quarter."

For some high school students, the phrase "student-athlete" might as well read "ath-

lete-student," but Butler's commitment to focusing on both school and basketball isn't going unnoticed by his teammates.

"In the hallways, he hustles and makes us get to class on time," said junior forward Mohammed Alie-Cox. "He makes us get to practice on time. In practice, he makes everyone work even harder."

The extra hard work is paying off early.

Through four games, the team is 2-2 with a victory over Robinson, a member of the historically strong Concorde District, and Annandale.

In South County's two losses, the team kept each game close, losing to Hayfield on Dec. 4 (50-42) and Oakton on Dec. 8 (64-57).

Not a bad start for the Stallions, who started 1-9 last December, but second-year head coach Wendell Johnson isn't concerned about past performances.

"We are thinking about what we can do to be a better team each night," Johnson said.

While Butler is changing his team's mindset through hard work in class and on the court, Johnson is hoping a position change for Butler will energize the Stallion's offensive attack.

Butler, who originally played forward, is



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

South County senior guard Antonio Butler is easing into the role of captain for the Stallions and has made academics a priority for his team.

being called upon to take on the role of point guard.

"He's running point guard for us right now," Johnson said. "He's bigger, stronger and can hold onto the ball. It's going to be big for us if he gets the hang of [the posi-

"Everyone needs to get good grades. If we do good in the classroom, it will show on the court."

— Antonio Butler

tion]."

Butler concedes that the change is unsettling.

"Switching to point guard is an adjustment," he said. "I usually play forward, but they want me to be more of a passer. It's kind of difficult, but I'm coming into it."

BUTLER IS ALSO growing accustomed to what it means to be a leader. As one of three seniors on the team, Johnson is hoping younger players will follow Butler's example.

"He's learning [leadership]," he said. "He's in a new role of being the older kid. He's been on varsity since he was a sophomore and followed and watched. Now it's his team."

Butler, who is being recruited by Widener University in Wilmington, Del., admits the leadership role is just as foreign to him as point guard.

"I've never really been the leader of a team," he said. "I've always played a back-ing role, but I'm stepping into it fine."

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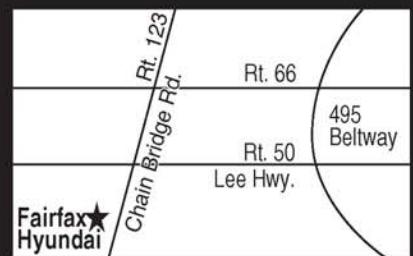
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SPORTS

FROM PAGE 12

feated on the season. Roman Perryman (140), Mickey Bennett (145) and Ben Stallings (152) also won individual tournament titles for Robinson.

Shon Topper (125), Charlie Vannoy (135) and Wes Jones (160) finished runner-up for the Rams.

"Our top 10 guys are wrestling great," Hazard said.

Robinson also sent several young grapplers to the NOVA Classic in Fairfax.

While Robinson has been one of the more competitive programs in the Northern Region, the Rams last won a region title in 1991. The team's last district title came in 2005.

Nebrich Nominated For Player of the Year

Lake Braddock quarterback Michael Nebrich was nominated as an Old Spice Player of the Year on Dec. 13.

HEALTH NOTES

Life with Cancer has a variety of support programs for cancer patients and their families at the Cancer Family Center, 2700 Prosperity Ave., Fairfax. 703-776-2841 or www.lifewithcancer.org.

The Clifton Presbyterian Church has a Caregiver Support Group that meets the second and fourth Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the church, 12748

Richards Lane, Clifton. This group is for caregivers of seniors with Alzheimer's, dementia, and other age-related problems. 703-830-9175 ext. 17.

The **Parkinson Foundation of the National Capital Area** offers the following support group opportunities:

Fairfax Sully Group and Exercise Class. The Support Group meets monthly on the fourth Saturday, from 10-11 a.m., with an exercise class at 11

a.m., at the Fair Oaks Sunrise Assisted Living Facility, 3750 Joseph Siewick Drive, Fairfax. 703-378-9213 or www.parkinsonstories.com.

The **Springfield Parkinson's Disease Support Group** meets on the fourth Thursday of the month at 2 p.m., at Greenspring Village, 7400 Spring Village Drive, Springfield. 703-569-2630 or 703-913-0270.



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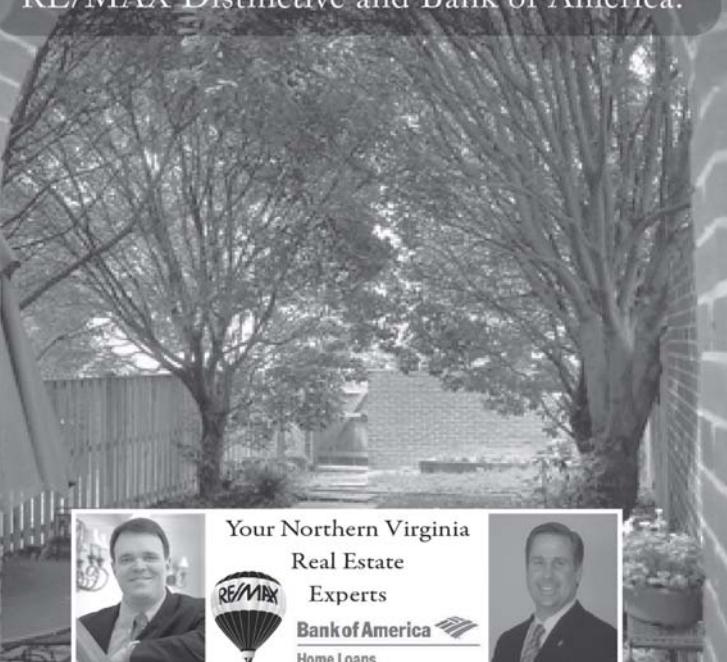
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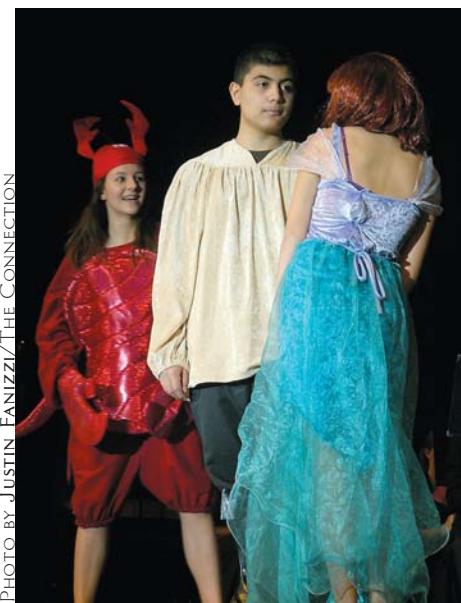


PHOTO BY JUSTIN FANIZZI/THE CONNECTION
South County students act out a scene from 'The Little Mermaid.'

Holiday Show

FROM PAGE 6

regular class days and had our first run through yesterday. There was a lot to do but it went by pretty fast because we all worked on it together."

Though the students only had one day of full rehearsals, based on the show's reviews, it would be safe to assume that the students had been working on the show for months. Many of the students sang along throughout the show and grew especially excited when they saw their favorite cartoon characters appear on stage and dance their way through the auditorium. While Simba from "The Lion King" and Ariel from "The Little Mermaid" were the most popular among the Disney characters, the children nevertheless saved the most applause and excitement for the most recognizable holiday figures, Santa Claus and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.

"The whole show was good, and I liked all the songs," said Tyler Grunzke, 6. "But Rudolph was my favorite of all."

CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS

Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416. Deadline is Friday. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

NOVA BCA, for professional and amateur poolplayers, currently plays Wednesday evenings at Fast Eddie's Sports & Billiards at 9687 Fairfax Blvd., Fairfax. Team-based play will begin Jan. 13. NOVA BCA is currently offering free membership and weekly play to those who sign up a team at www.novabca.com/formats. Contact www.novabca.com or eric.s.townsend@gmail.com.

The Springfield-Franconia Host Lions Club meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m., at the Springfield Golf and Country Club, 8301 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Lions Clubs are comprised of men and women who identify needs within the community and work together to fulfill those needs. Visiting Lions and prospective members are welcome to attend. For more information, e-mail, cad123@verizon.net

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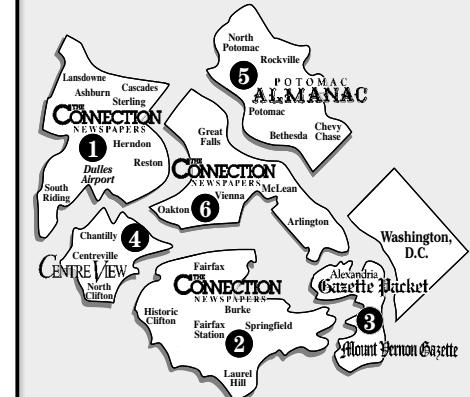
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On Road to China

FROM PAGE 3

amount of material."

That large amount of material has the Lake Braddock Band students rehearsing at every opportunity. Hess said that preparations have been moving at a fast pace, as the Symphonic Band must learn 12 songs, and the China Band is learning 14. In addition, the members of the Symphonic Band have to learn all 26 pieces, as they will be a part of the China Band as well. Hess said that the band members came into school and rehearsed for four hours on the school's teacher work day, and that the Symphonic Band has been practicing in their regular class periods and after school.

"[The preparations] have been pretty intense," Hess said. "We have a lot of after-school rehearsals, and during teacher work day, we came in for four hours. Mr. Holder is relying on us to know our parts."

While the students are busy learning all of the new songs, they are also tasked with raising money to help ease the financial burden on the band's

members and their families. The fund-raising efforts began in late August, with Glory Days Restaurant donating portions of receipts on certain days to the band program. The band also conducted 50/50 raffles at all home football games and on Dec. 10 had a large item raffle. The final fund-raising effort will come on Jan. 10, as more than 50 Lake Braddock Band alumni are giving a performance at the Rachel M. Schlesinger Center at Northern Virginia Community College in Alexandria, from which proceeds will be donated to the trip.

Between performances, all of the students will visit cultural and historical landmarks throughout the country to expand the cultural and education benefits of the program. Hess said that the students would be visiting Beijing High School, tour the Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square, Olympic Park and the Great Wall among other activities. In addition, on March 28, the students will be divided into groups of four and will be sent to the homes of Chinese families around Beijing to get a sense of how life is day-to-day in China for a deeper cultural experience.

"We're playing all American music," Holder said. "We've taken a wide swath of American music like jazz, rock and roll and others, but we split them up into what [songs] would work based on the venues we are playing. It's an overwhelming

"Learning about their culture and seeing the differences compared to our culture will help me see things in a different light."

— Lake Braddock senior Sara Dergham

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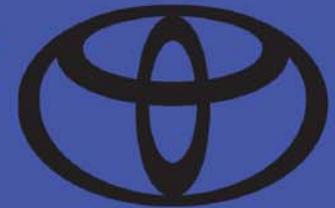
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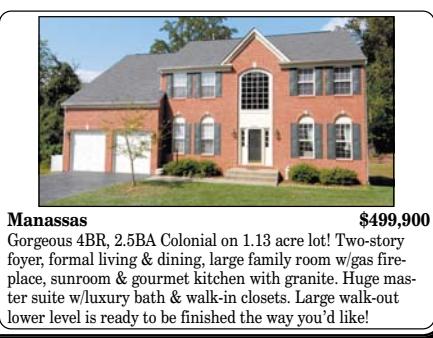
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