

# 2010 in Great Falls: Pike Debate Heats Up

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Among the issues to face Great Falls in the coming year will be a plan for dual left turn lanes onto Georgetown Pike from Route 7. Construction is not to begin until 2012, but residents are fighting the project now, as many fear it will put more traffic onto the community's already-crowded main thoroughfare.

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**Traveler and Construction Resources**

- ❖ 511 Northern Virginia  
www.511northernvirginia.org
- ❖ Megaprojects Project Info and Employer Solutions Team; 877-9595-222  
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- ❖ Virginia HOT Lanes, a public-private partnership with VDOT and Fluor-Lane  
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**From the air looking west, construction along Route 123 shows both the HOT Lanes work and a future Dulles Rail Station.**

TYSONS  
CONSTRUCTION  
UPDATE

# ‘Silver Line,’ HOT Lanes Transform Tysons Area

**Motorists will reap benefits by 2013.**

BY MIKE SALMON  
VDOT

**T**he Dulles Metrorail and Interstate 495 HOT Lanes projects are moving full steam ahead, and the traveling public in Virginia will reap the rewards of these significant transportation additions by 2013.

Phase 1 of the Dulles Corridor Metrorail project began in Tysons Corner last March and over the summer, support columns for the aerial track went up near Interstate 66 and the Dulles Connector Road (Route 267). This is where the new line, unofficially tagged the “Silver Line,” is branching off the Metrorail’s Orange Line. Phase 1, which goes as far as Reston, is mostly above ground and features a tunnel along Route 123 between the Tysons Corner Center and Tysons Galleria malls. The tunneling began in October using a machine called the “Drill Jumbo,” which uses the New Austrian Tunneling Method.

Work on five new Metrorail stations is underway, with four in Tysons Corner and one in Reston. The Tysons East station will be inside the Capital Beltway. The Tysons Central 123 station will be located at Tysons Boulevard and Route 123. Tysons Central 7 is along Route 7 near Route 123. The Tysons West station will be built at Route 7 and Spring Hill Road. The rail line then follows the median of the Dulles International Airport Access Highway to Reston where the final station in this phase is being built at Wiehle Avenue. Trains are expected to begin servicing these stations in late 2013.

Although construction of the Interstate 495 HOT (High Occupancy Toll) Lanes overlaps Metrorail construction in Tysons Corner, it is a separate project. The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority is building the \$2.7 billion Dulles Metrorail Project while the Virginia Department of Transportation, in a public-private partnership with Transurban-Fluor, is building the Interstate 495 HOT Lanes.

HOT Lanes are a system that will provide new travel choices for a faster and more reliable trip. On Interstate 495, there will be two new HOT lanes in

each direction from the Springfield Interchange to just north of the Dulles Toll Road that will be free to HOV-3 cars, motorcycles and buses. Vehicles with less than three occupants can choose to pay a toll to enter the lanes. The amount of the toll will vary throughout the day and depend on real-time traffic conditions.

Construction on these lanes started in 2008 and will replace \$260 million in aging infrastructure. This includes overpasses and bridges at the Springfield Interchange, Braddock Road, Little River Turnpike, Gallows Road, Lee Highway, Interstate 66, Arlington Boulevard, Oak Street, Idylwood Road, Leesburg Pike, Chain Bridge Road and Lewinsville Road. Crews are demolishing the old bridges/overpasses and building new ones with the goal of keeping traffic moving. The toll lanes are scheduled to be open by the end of 2012 or early 2013.

Both of these projects will significantly expand transportation options in Northern Virginia. In the mean time, some delays could occur during construction. To mitigate these impacts, Virginia Megaprojects created a traffic management plan (TMP) to offer motorists alternatives to lane closures and detours. This plan includes three new bus services: Tysons Connector, a free shuttle serving Tysons Corner at lunchtime during the week; Tysons Express, a Woodbridge to Tysons Corner commuter bus with free Wi-Fi; and a Loudoun County express bus to Tysons Corner to launch in fall 2010. Another aspect of the plan empowers businesses in Tysons Corner. The Megaprojects Employer Solutions Team is trained to help employers develop customized transportation strategies to increase employees’ commuting options. These may include shared-ride commute matching options (carpool, vanpool, bus, rail, metro and slugging); commuter services seminars or fairs; telecommuting programs; and employer and employee incentive information. To learn more about these free resources, call 877-9595-222 or e-mail: employersolutions@vamegaprojects.com.

Find more information about transportation alternatives and construction at www.VAMegaprojects.com. Drivers can sign up for an e-mail alerts and track the progress of all Megaprojects: Dulles Metrorail, Interstate 495 HOT Lanes, Fairfax County Parkway extension, Interstate 95 widening and Telegraph Road Interchange.

# New Toll Road Rates In Support of Rail to Dulles

**\$1 Toll at Main Toll Plaza; 75 cents at on/off ramps.**

**A**s of Jan. 1, 2010, toll rates on the Dulles Toll Road increased by 25 cents at the Main Toll Plaza and 25 cents at the on/off ramps. The new rates for commuters are \$1 at the Main Toll Plaza and 75 cents at the on/off ramps. After conducting a series of public hearings earlier this year, the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority Board of Directors approved this toll rate increase in November as part of the funding plan for the Toll Road and rail in the Dulles Corridor. The Board also approved two additional toll rate increases to take effect in 2011 and 2012.

The toll increase is necessary for the Airports Authority to fulfill its commitment to construct the Metrorail Project through the Dulles Corridor. That commitment is contained in agreements with the Commonwealth of Virginia and local governments in North-

ern Virginia, and is based in substantial part on the parties’ agreement that funding for the Metrorail Project is to come from Dulles Toll Road revenues, as well as contributions by the federal government, the Commonwealth, Fairfax and Loudoun Counties, and the Airports Authority.

Under its agreement with the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Airports Authority has assumed the responsibility to operate and maintain the Dulles Toll Road for a 50-year period.

In addition to the increases that became effective on Jan. 1, 2010, the Airports Authority Board of Directors has approved an additional increase of 25 cents at the Main Toll Plaza scheduled to begin on Jan. 1, 2011, and another 25 cent increase at the Main Toll Plaza scheduled to begin on Jan. 1, 2012. There will not be any increases at the ramp areas in 2011 or 2012.

**NEW TOLL RATES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2010**

Vehicle Type	At the Main Toll Plaza	At the On/Off Ramps
2 Axles	\$1.00	75¢
3 Axles	\$1.25	\$1.00
4 Axles	\$1.50	\$1.25
5 Axles	\$1.75	\$1.50
6 or More Axles (Maximum Toll)	\$2.00	\$1.75

SOURCE: Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority

AREA ROUNDUP

## Work Begins at Future Wiehle Avenue Station

As of Monday, Jan. 4, the left through lane of the westbound Dulles International Airport Access Highway (DIAAH) closed so construction crews can install caissons for the future Wiehle Avenue Metro station. Caissons are concrete shafts placed underground that serve as pier foundations to support at-grade and aerial track. This work is scheduled to take place Mondays through Saturdays between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m., and is expected to last approximately one month.

## Expanded Softball Opportunities

Girls in the Reston area, ages 6 to 16, who want to play Little League regulation softball with full rights and privileges to championship play, are invited to participate in the newly expanded Great Falls Little League Softball program, which is based at the Nike Park complex on Route 7 and Utterback Store Road, adjacent to Forestville Elementary School.

Through agreements with local Little League organizations which are not using their softball charters, the Great Falls Little League Softball program welcomes girls to come and learn the sport, develop their skills, and take part in age-appropriate, competitive softball. All levels of play are covered: Coach Pitch (5-7), AA (7-9), AAA (9-10), Majors (10-12), and Seniors (13-16). No previous experience is required, and girls of all skill levels are encouraged to participate.

Registration is open as of Jan. 1, 2010 at <http://gflittleleague.org>. Tryouts for AA/AAA/Majors/Seniors will be Saturday, March 6 at Diamond Sports Training in Sterling. For additional information on the Great Falls softball program, including additional information on tryouts, see <http://www.gflsoftball.org>.



PHOTOS BY MIKE DICICCO/THE CONNECTION

**Demolition of the Great Falls Fire Station is to begin shortly, and the new station should be complete around summer of 2011.**

**A project to make Walker Road easier to cross just south of Georgetown Pike received funding last summer and could get final approval this year.**

## 2010 in Great Falls: Pike Debate Heats Up

**What to look for in the year ahead.**

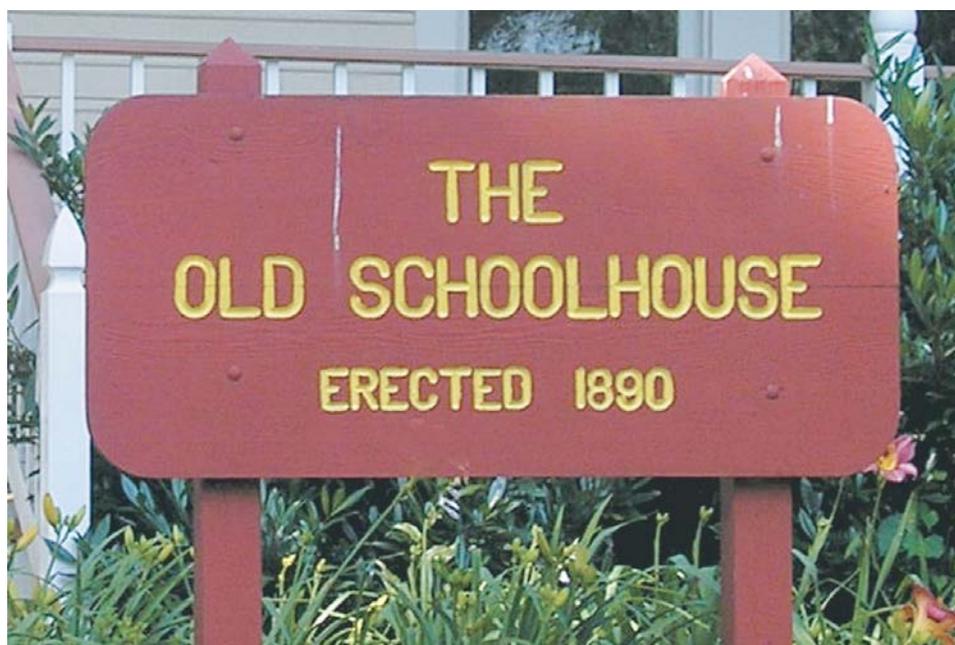
BY MIKE DICICCO  
THE CONNECTION

### Village Centre Sewer?

With the septic fields around Great Falls' central commercial district expected to be in critical condition by the end of the new decade, the Great Falls Citizens Association (GFCA) reformed its Wastewater Committee last September to come up with alternatives for handling wastewater. The group's findings, followed by public meetings on the subject, can be expected some time this year.

The committee created two sub-groups, with one dedicated to exploring onsite alternatives to traditional septic systems, while the other looks into the options for and possible ramifications of a limited sewer line to serve the area around the intersection of Georgetown Pike and Walker Road. Committee members hoped to present their research within six months, but GFCA President Ralph Apton has encouraged them to give themselves a year or so.

Many Great Falls residents have long considered the community's lack of sewer connections to be a key to maintaining the area's low density and "semi-rural" character, as septic systems require large lots and can handle limited wastewater. However, committee members have said the only sewer option under consideration was a "forced main" that would only take wastewater from the Village Centre area and carry it to the county's sewer system via the Colvin Run area. Developments along the sewer line would be unable to connect to it. In the event of a sewer, it would likely serve a district including the shopping areas around the intersection, the fire station, the Grange,



**The Great Falls Citizens Association is working to make the Old Schoolhouse, as well as the nearby Grange, more accessible to the community's nonprofit groups.**

the library and Great Falls Elementary School.

Committee members were clear that they were only on a fact-finding mission until their research is presented. Public meetings and community input are to follow before the committee and the GFCA make a recommendation. Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville) has said he will only back an option that has the support of the community.

### New Fire Station, Turn Lane

Since talk of replacing Great Falls' nearly 50-year-old fire station began about seven years ago, residents have expressed concerns that closing a traffic cut-through on the property would have disastrous effects

on rush hour on Walker Road. The cut-through, which will close shortly as demolition of the old station begins, runs between Walker Road and Georgetown Pike and is an especially popular alternative for drivers who would otherwise turn right from southbound Walker Road onto Georgetown Pike.

As a solution, the Fairfax County Department of Transportation proposed building an extended right-turn lane from southbound Walker Road onto the Pike. Initially, the turn lane was not expected to be completed until this spring or summer, while work on the station was scheduled to start last summer. However, due to scheduling changes, the turn lane was recently completed, with the fire station's demolition to begin early this year.

Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services

(DPWES) officials have said the cut-through would need to be closed before demolition began because station operations and equipment will have to be temporarily housed in the area that drivers have been cutting through. Firefighters will work out of a trailer, and a large bubble will shelter equipment until the new station is completed sometime around the summer of next year.

One reason the station's construction was delayed was that the DPWES found itself wrangling over the property's frontage with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). The state agency wanted to widen Georgetown Pike along the front of the property and install a curb and gutter, an approach that the county said it could not get residents to buy into. In the end, a compromise was struck, and a curb and gutter will be installed without widening Georgetown Pike.

The county plans to continue hauling the fire station's wastewater offsite by truck, but it is still looking into the possibility of purchasing a neighboring property for use as a septic field.

### Pedestrian-Friendly Village Center

A project to make Walker Road more pedestrian-friendly just south of Georgetown Pike received funding from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) last summer and was put out to bid in early December.

For most of its length, Walker Road is a narrow, two-lane street, but between Great Falls Village Centre and Great Falls Shopping Center it opens into a broad expanse that can be daunting to pedestrians trying to cross from one shopping center to the other. The upcoming project, which could get its final approval this year, would effec

SEE BATTLE, PAGE 14



**Frank Barnako, Lighthouse: Pemaquid Lighthouse is perched on a granite peninsula in New Harbor, Maine.**

## Frank Barnako Exhibits at Great Falls Library

The Great Falls Library is featuring the photography show "Maine, Frankly" by Frank Barnako, a long-time Great Falls resident. The show, which opened on Jan. 2, runs through March.

"Midcoast Maine is more than granite ledges and pine trees,"

Barnako said. "My photographs focus on Mainers' patriotism, the region's beauty and the long-forgotten summer fun at county fairs that lives on in there."

Retired from a career in journalism with USA Today, NBC, WTOP Radio and CBS MarketWatch.com, Barnako has now found time to exercise his eye for photography.

Further information can be found on the Web at [frankbarnako.com](http://frankbarnako.com) or by e-mailing [frank@frankbarnako.com](mailto:frank@frankbarnako.com).

## Donald C. Hakenson to Present 'Gray Ghost' Stories

The Great Falls Historical Society will present its January 2010 program, *The Escapades of John Singleton Mosby the "Gray Ghost,"* by Donald C. Hakenson on Wednesday, Jan. 13, at 7 p.m. at the Great Falls Library.

Hakenson will be telling tales about John Singleton Mosby, "The Gray Ghost," and his activities in Fairfax and the Great Falls areas during the "War of Northern Aggression" — the Civil War. Last year, the members of the Great Falls Historical Society toured "Merrybrook," the home of the Civil War spy Laura Ratcliffe whose efforts contributed to saving the Gray Ghost from capture and possibly death.

Hakenson has been researching, analyzing and visiting sites of unknown civil war skirmishes and locations especially related to Col. John S. Mosby and his Rangers for the last 20 years. In the last 12 years, he has concentrated his efforts on the Gray Ghost and the combat incidents, events and heritage that occurred in Fairfax County.

## After Christmas Sale at Claude Moore Farm

The Claude Moore Colonial Farm will conduct an After Christmas sale at its GateHouse Gift Shop, Wednesday, Jan. 6 through Sunday, Jan. 10 from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. The farm is located at 6310 Georgetown Pike in McLean with easy access off Route 123 and Georgetown Pike. Parking is free.

Everything in the shop is discounted 40 percent. Browse jewelry, china and glassware, 18th century reproduction toys and educational kits, jams, soaps, lotions and candles, a variety of gently used books and more. Proceeds benefit local living history museum and only privately operated National Park.

## NEWS

# Deeper Cuts for Schools?

**Freezing state funding would add \$50 million to the schools' projected budget shortfall of \$100 million to \$200 million.**

BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE  
THE CONNECTION



**Budget cuts at West Potomac High (pictured above) and other Fairfax schools could be worse than expected if Virginia General Assembly members from other parts of the commonwealth refuse to change a state funding formula.**

**T**he Fairfax County School Board was already discussing the elimination of elementary school foreign language instruction, most full-day kindergarten classes and the majority of the county's summer school program as a way to cope with a projected budget shortfall of \$100 million to \$200 million during the 2010-2011 school year.

Now, they may have to come up with a longer list of program cuts thanks to Gov. Tim Kaine's latest state budget proposal, announced in December.

Kaine (D) recommended freezing the state education funding formula, a move that would result in Fairfax schools losing an additional \$50 million to \$60 million in financial help from Richmond during the next school year.

Fairfax County already provides the majority of its school system's budget. In 2010 for example, the locality covered approximately 73 percent of Fairfax Public Schools \$2.2 billion operating budget.

If Fairfax County wants to make up for a state funding cut of that magnitude, the local Board of Supervisors would have to raise the local property tax rate approximately 2.5 to three cents this spring.

Fairfax's foreign language in elementary schools program costs about \$2.5 million and the foreign language immersion program costs about \$2.1 million annually. The school system spent just under \$5 million on traditional summer school and about \$30 million on full-day kindergarten this year.

"If we had \$50 million, we might be able to avoid an increase in class size," said school board member Stuart Gibson (Hunter Mill District).

**VIRGINIA'S** education funding formula takes into account several factors but largely relies on property values and median household income to determine how much money each school district receives from the commonwealth.

Described by legislators as a "complicated algorithm," the formula is designed to cover a larger portion of public education costs in Virginia's school districts with the fewest financial resources. The formula assumes that jurisdictions like Fairfax — considered one of the wealthiest localities in the country — can more easily afford to fund its own education systems through local taxes.

As a result, the state covers relatively little of Fairfax County Public Schools budget when compared to what they provide for other localities.

Virginia provides approximately \$23.47 for every \$100 spent on public education in Fairfax County. In other Virginia school districts which reap the most from the current funding formula the state provides \$84.47 for every \$100 spent on public education, according to Fairfax County documents.

"Any time you have a state funding formula that is

based on relative wealth, we don't do very well," said Del. Dave Albo (R-42), who represents Lorton, Springfield, Fairfax Station and Burke.

**BUT** Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William counties were expected to benefit financially from a scheduled recalculation of the state education funding formula this year.

Though property values and average household incomes remain high in Northern Virginia overall, Fairfax and these other local jurisdictions saw a more substantial drop in home prices when compared with other Virginia localities.

The result should have been that Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William received a larger slice of the state's overall education funding next year.

**"No other region of Virginia would tolerate this type of discriminatory treatment."**

— Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34)

But if incoming Gov. Bob McDonnell (R) and the Virginia General Assembly take up Kaine's suggestion and decide to "freeze" the state's education funding formula, Fairfax and others will not see an increase in education funding.

Ninety-seven of the commonwealth's 136 school districts — and constituents represented by the majority of the Virginia General Assembly's members — would be negatively impacted by the scheduled change in the formula, so it is

likely that the freeze will be seriously considered and approved in the upcoming session.

The situation may be particularly tense because the General Assembly will likely have to cut state education monies across the board anyway, as the result of an overall budget shortfall.

"Any time you cut education, people are trying to get as much money as they possibly can," said Albo.

**ALBO** and other local members of the General Assembly said they are ready to fight any proposal to freeze the formula, even if they are outnumbered by their colleagues in the state legislature.

"The [funding formula] is used to measure the wealth of a locality and, for years, it has been used to jerk us around. Now, for the first time, the numbers are actually moving in our direction. Now that the system is actually starting to benefit Fairfax, they are asking us to freeze it out," said Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34).

"No other region of Virginia would tolerate this type of discriminatory treatment. ... We must fight against it," he added.

PHOTO BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE/THE CONNECTION

# COMMUNITY

## Holiday Luncheon at The Old Brogue

On Thursday, Dec. 10, The Old Brogue sponsored "The Annual Great Falls Village Centre's Women's Holiday Luncheon." The Ladies of Great Falls had a special lunch at the Old Brogue hosted by Julie Maher and Colleen Orme and after the luncheon strolled through the Village Green to take advantage of the many shops and businesses that Great Falls has to offer. This was done to promote "Shop Great Falls." Pictured above, from left, are: Heidi Mraz, Helen Vasiliadis, Michelle Buller, McNair Bishop, Alison Regen and Sally Marvin. Below, Colleen Orme and Helen Vasiliadis. For more information, call 703-759-2485 or visit [gfvcca@aol.com](mailto:gfvcca@aol.com).





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## COMMUNITY



From left, Ryan Gilbert, Nick Hodge, Brad Hodge, Reid Weitzel, Peter Ongman, Mark Turner, Kevin McCormick, Patrick McKee, Sam Hauda and Corey Hodge take a quick break between unloading donations.

### Community Responds to Eagle Scout Call for Donations

On Sunday, Jan. 3, Brad Hodge, a Boy Scout in Great Falls Troop 55, completed his Eagle Scout project. The project was to organize and lead a community-wide collection of clothes and household goods to benefit the Falls Church Clocktower Thrift Store. Proceeds from the thrift store benefit the nonprofit organization, Northern Virginia Family Service, which assists families in need in the area.

Although Hodge had distributed fliers with bags to the Great Falls Community, and his project was mentioned in the Great Falls Connection and through the Neighbors Network, as well as the Great Falls Historical Society, he did not know if the community would respond to his request or not.

Being optimistic, he rented a 16-foot truck and asked the Great Falls Community to bring their donations to the Village Center on Sunday, between 2-4 p.m.



Troop 55 Boy Scouts Graham Reid, Elie Kawmy, Peter Ongman and Mark Turner help load donations into the truck.

Hodge and the Boy Scouts helping him were overwhelmed by the response of the Great Falls Community. Beginning at 2 p.m., cars, vans and SUVs arrived without pause until the 4 p.m. deadline. Close to 100 donors arrived with a total of 321 bags of clothing,

children's books, household goods and electronics and filled the 16-foot truck front to back and top to bottom.

Hodge, Boy Scout Troop 55 and the Clocktower Thrift Store are all very grateful for the generosity of the Great Falls Community.

### St. Francis Creche Preschool Presents Christmas Story



Sixty-five children from the St. Francis Creche preschool in Great Falls participated in a school-wide presentation of the Christmas Story at St. Francis Episcopal Church on Friday, Dec. 18.



**Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service**  
Monday, January 18, 2010  
from 10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.  
George Mason University's Johnson Center

Families of all shapes and sizes can volunteer at projects with Fairfax 4-H, FACETS, the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia and the Orphan Foundation of America – in the convenience of one, central location.

To register to participate, visit [www.volunteerfairfax.org](http://www.volunteerfairfax.org).

Walk-in registrations will be accepted as supplies are available; pre-registration is encouraged. Projects best suited for elementary-aged children.

"Everybody can be great because anybody can serve."

Martin Luther King, Jr.



## MILITARY

To have community events listed in the Connection, send to [greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is Friday.

Air Force Maj. **Park D. Ashley** is returning to the U.S. after a deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Ashley, a security assistance officer with 18 years of military service, is normally assigned to the 82nd Aerial Target Squadron at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla. He is the son of Clarence and Clara Sue Ashley of Great Falls, a 1985 graduate from Langley High School, and a 1990 graduate of the Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta.

Air Force 2nd Lt. **Courtney N. Hintz** has entered the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Md., as a first-year medical student, to be trained as a physician. She is the daughter of Roger M. and Nancy K. Hintz of Seneca Knoll Drive, Great Falls, a 2005 graduate of Langley High School, and a 2009 graduate of the University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

**Keith A. Tooley** has been commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army after successfully completing the Army ROTC program and graduating with a bachelor's degree from West Virginia University. Tooley is the son of Jean D. Reimers of Great Falls and is a 2004 graduate of Langley High School.

**Constance Lynne Solina** was promoted to U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander on Sept. 3. Currently with the Functional Integration Management and Training Directorate for the Center for Seabees and Facilities Engineering,

she previously served in Iraq with the 4th Naval Mobile Construction Battalion in 2007, earned a civil engineering degree from Purdue University and a masters of environmental engineering from the University of Texas, Austin. Solina is the daughter of Pamela Beck Danner and David L. Danner of McLean, and a 1996 graduate of Langley High School.

**Air Force Lt. Col. Nicholas E. Russo** participated in Proud Shield II/Giant Sword II, a bombing, navigation, weapons loading, and security forces competition conducted by the Eighth Air Force to demonstrate the military's readiness and ability to project airpower around the world, set up a strategic deterrent to threats to American interests, and meet national defense objectives. Russo is director of operations assigned to the 2nd Bomb Wing at Barksdale Air Force Base, Bossier City, La., and has served in the military for 16 years. He is the son of Vincent and Reeta Russo of McLean; his brothers are Brian Russo and Mark Russo, also of McLean. Russo received a bachelor's degree in 1993 from Davidson College, N.C., and a master's degree in 2002 from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical College.

Army Pfc. **Eric Z. Reynolds**, a 2007 graduate of Oakton High School, has graduated from the Infantryman One Station Unit Training at Fort Benning, Columbus, Ga. He is the son of James and Susan Reynolds of Oakton.

**Michael Thompson**, of Vienna is among 10 James Madison University students that trained for three days with Special Forces soldiers at Fort Bragg, N.C., as part of the Army ROTC Ranger Group.



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# OPINION

# Happy New Year

## Keep in touch.

At the Connection, we invite our readers to fill us in, literally. As we begin the New Year, we are reminded that we need to hear from our readers.

As local, weekly newspapers, the Connection's mission is to bring the news you need about your community, to give you the information you need to enjoy the best things in and near your community, to advocate for community good, to call attention to unmet needs, to provide a forum for dialogue on local concerns, and to celebrate and record milestones and events in community and people's lives.

To succeed at any of that, we need your help.

Let us know how we're doing and let us know what is going on in your part of the community. If you have questions or ideas, call us or send us an e-mail.

We invite you to send letters to the editor or to send an e-mail letting us know about something you especially liked or didn't like about our coverage.

We appreciate readers' ideas. If you see some-

thing that you think might be a story, or something you have a question about, give us a call, or drop us a line.

If you know of a person or an organization doing important work, something that might make a good feature story, we are looking for people to feature each week.

We want to know if someone in your family or your community published a book, became an Eagle Scout, raised money for a good cause, accomplished some feat like running a marathon or having art included in an art show.

We publish photos and notes of a variety of personal milestones and community events, including births, engagements, weddings, anniversaries, awards and obituaries.

We are also interested in events at your church, mosque, synagogue, community center, pool, school, club, etc. E-mail us a photo and a note about the event. Be sure to include the names of all the people who are in a photo, and say when and where the photo was taken.

We also publish notes about news and events from local businesses. Notes about openings, new employees, anniversaries are welcome.

It is especially important to us to let people

## EDITORIAL

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Misleading Photo

To the Editor:

While your article on bow hunting in Fairfax County ["Deer Hunt Proceeds in Colvin Run Park," Great Falls Connection, Dec. 23-29, 2009] represented a fair and balanced perspective on this controversial issue, any attempt at objectivity was negated by the accompanying photo of Bambi, a young spotted fawn, looking so sweet and innocent it pulled at the heart strings. First of all, it is highly unlikely that bow hunters would target such a young animal since it would yield very little meat. Second, most fawns lose their spots by September of their first year so there aren't any around this time of year for bow hunters to shoot.

A picture is worth a thousand words. Your choice of photo only serves to exacerbate the contention between bow hunters and those opposing their activities. As a staff member of the National Wildlife Federation, I understand the need for controlled management of a deer population that is out of control. But if you are to report on this topic, please choose a photo that accurately depicts the animals being shot, not a young Bambi.

Mary Burnette  
Great Falls

### Pike Becomes 'Route 7 Bypass'

To the Editor:

Route 7, a main commuter artery, is, at minimum, three lanes wide all the way from Leesburg to the Fairfax County line.

Kudos, Loudoun County. Almost immediately after crossing into Fairfax County, Route 7 then funnels — down to two lanes — and continues to be dysfunctionally narrow (due to lack of funds) all the way until the Beltway.

This dozen-mile-long bottleneck has long ensured a brutal drive during peak periods and, as a consequence, numerous commuters bail-off (of Route 7 eastbound) and detour onto what has become a very heavily-traveled, rural/rustic road — Route 193/Georgetown Pike.

Recently, however, both VDOT and Fairfax County's elected leaders have concluded (Oh, of course the decision has been made. Remember Arnon Chapel Road and the Fairfax County Water Authority?) that how they will attend to this long-standing, nightmarish, main arterial bottleneck is to duplicate it elsewhere. (You think I'm joking, don't you?)

Where it intersects with Route 193, they are going to widen Route 7 to five lanes, and have two of these lanes turning onto unsuit-

able-for-heavy-traffic-in-countless-ways Route 193 — while still leaving Route 7 a mere two lanes — all the way from Reston Parkway to the Beltway.

This \$37 million project buys approximately one less mile of Route 7 two-lane bottleneck, while doubling the amount of traffic entering onto already gridlocked Route 193 during any one Route 7 traffic light-cycle.

To recap: Because the main commuter artery, Route 7, is unquestionable, and known to everyone to be way too narrow (in Fairfax County), what will be done is detour two lanes of its traffic onto a one-lane-in-each-direction, undivided, unshouldered, ungraded, hilly, meandering, rural, "scenic byway."

If it matters, Virginia's very first Scenic and Historic Byway.

(Apparently, Fairfax County has adopted a "First-In, First-Out" policy concerning Virginia's Historic Scenic Byways?)

But, as a consequence (if the most minimal of safety considerations are then taken):

1) The traffic-light timing at the (Route 193 and) Utterback Store, Springvale, Walker, River Bend and Old Dominion intersections will need to be "doubled."

2) A traffic light will need to be installed at the BB&T/U.S. Post Office intersection to allow left-hand turns onto westbound 193 during morning rush hours.

## Contact Us

For the Great Falls Connection, email [greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com) or contact Editor Kemal Kurspahic at [Kemal@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:Kemal@connectionnewspapers.com), or call 703-778-9414.

## Get Involved

The first day of the 2010 General Assembly session is Wednesday, Jan. 13.

The House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees will hold a Regional Public Hearing on Friday, Jan. 8, at 10 a.m., at the Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale Campus. The hearing will focus on the Governor's proposed 2010-12 Biennial State Budget and is open to the public.

Fairfax County's delegation to the General Assembly will hold a pre-session public hearing on Saturday, Jan. 9, at 9 a.m. at the Fairfax County Government Center. Sign up to speak by calling the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors at 703-324-3151.

know about events ahead of time in our calendar of events. We appreciate getting notice at least two weeks ahead of the event, and we encourage photos. Events for our calendars should be free or at nominal cost and open to the public.

In covering the issues, we strive to provide a voice for our readers. We look forward to hearing from you.

— MARY KIMM.

[MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](mailto:MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

## THE CONNECTION

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Great Falls

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**NEWS DEPARTMENT:**  
To discuss ideas and concerns,  
Call: 703-778-9410  
e-mail:  
[greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Kemal Kurspahic**  
Editor ♦ 703-778-9414  
[kemal@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:kemal@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Mike DiCicco**  
Community Reporter  
703-778-9441  
[mdicicco@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mdicicco@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Julia O'Donoghue**  
Education & Politics  
703-778-9436  
[jodonoghue@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:jodonoghue@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Ken Moore**  
Courts & Projects  
[kmoore@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:kmoore@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Rich Sanders**  
Sports Editor ♦ 703-224-3031  
[rsanders@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:rsanders@connectionnewspapers.com)

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**Editor & Publisher**  
Mary Kimm  
703-778-9433  
[mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Editor in Chief**  
Steven Mauren  
**Managing Editors**  
Michael O'Connell, Kemal Kurspahic

**Photography:**  
Robbie Hammer, Louise Krafft,  
Craig Sterbutzel

**Art/Design:**  
Geovani Flores, Laurence Foong,  
John Heinly, Wayne Shipp,  
John Smith

**Production Manager:**  
Jean Card

**CIRCULATION: 703-778-9426**  
**Circulation Manager:**  
Linda Pecquex  
[circulation@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:circulation@connectionnewspapers.com)

**CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS,  
L.L.C.**  
**Peter Labovitz**  
President/CEO

**Mary Kimm**  
Publisher/Chief Operating Officer  
703-778-9433  
[mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Jerry Vernon**  
Executive Vice President  
[jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Wesley DeBrosse**  
Controller

**Debbie Funk**  
National Sales  
703-778-9444  
[debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com)

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## OPINION

# Facing Tough Budget Choices

Outgoing state delegate previews the 2010 session.

BY MARGI VANDERHYE

**A**s state legislators head to Richmond for the 2010 Session of the General Assembly, competing budget proposals by outgoing Governor Tim Kaine and incoming Governor-Elect Bob McDonnell will be foremost on the agenda. These are tough times for state legislatures around the country. Since early 2007, Virginia has slashed \$7 billion from its two-year General Fund budget of roughly \$30 billion. State services across the board have been affected by layoffs and program reductions.

Still, Virginia has fared better than most states. Our unemployment rate has declined from its peak and is now nearly four points below the national average. We have attracted \$13.5 billion in new economic investments in the last four years, including five Fortune 500 companies. Both Hilton and SAIC moved their international headquarters to McLean this past



fall. We have preserved our coveted Triple A bond rating, and we have maintained an excellent public education system from pre-K through higher education, factors that have repeatedly earned us the designation as “the best state in which to do business.”

In Virginia, the General Assembly is constitutionally required to balance its budget. Given that current revenue is not sufficient to fund existing programs, even at already reduced levels, the legislature must now find an additional \$4.2 billion in savings, spending cuts, or new money to offset current declines – preferably without doing permanent damage to the structure of our economy. The theme of this year’s Assembly will be: “What Do We Expect Government to Do?”

The underlying principles of the 2010 Session will center on the basic expectations for what we call “core government services.” Can we maintain an acceptable pupil-teacher ratio in our schools? Hold

the line on college tuition? Have an ambulance or fire truck to show up in less than five minutes? Find a caregiver for a disabled loved one? Do we expect the state to identify and assist the mentally ill? How will VDOT maintain our streets?

When revenue projections fall dramatically, how much are we willing to alter our expectations rather than fund the shortfall? Over the longer term we can find greater efficiencies and savings in government, such as my proposal to overhaul the state’s cumbersome and costly workforce training programs. But these longer-term solutions are no substitute for the difficult work and tough choices before the legislature right now.

Governor Kaine has proposed \$2.3 billion in spending cuts and \$1.9 in income tax increases to be dedicated to local governments as reimbursement for the total elimination of the car tax. He has stated that further cuts to core services would jeopardize our ability “to

SEE RICHMOND, PAGE 15



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# CALENDAR

Send announcements to [greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is Thursday for the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged. For additional listings, visit [www.connectionnewspapers.com](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com)

## THURSDAY JAN. 7

**Asylum Street Spankers.** 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$17. 703-255-1566 or [jamminjava.com](http://jamminjava.com).

## FRIDAY JAN. 8

**An Evening with SGG.** 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$25. 703-255-1566 or [jamminjava.com](http://jamminjava.com).

**Chicago City Limits.** 8 p.m. at The Barns at Wolftrap, Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1624 Trap Road, Vienna. Improv comedy. \$22. 703-938-2404 or [www.wolftrap.org](http://www.wolftrap.org).

## SATURDAY/JAN. 9

**Big Bad Voodoo Daddy.** 8 p.m. at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. 703-790-0123.

**John Jorgenson Quintet.** 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$20. 703-255-1566 or [jamminjava.com](http://jamminjava.com).

**Why Don't My Kids Listen to Me?** 10 a.m. at Christ the King Lutheran Church, 10550 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Workshop by the Parent Encouragement Program for parents looking to increase cooperation in their family. Pre-registration required at 703-242-8824.

**Chicago City Limits.** 7:30 p.m. at The Barns at Wolftrap, Wolf Trap



**Shela Qamer, a member of Great Falls Studios, is having a solo exhibit, 'Peace in Colors,' Jan. 2 through Jan. 30, at Great Falls Library. Reception will be held on Saturday, Jan. 23, 2-6 p.m. at the Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike. The picture shows her painting, 'Wind.'** For more information, visit [www.shelaqamerart.com](http://www.shelaqamerart.com)

Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1624 Trap Road, Vienna. Improv comedy. \$22. 703-938-2404 or [www.wolftrap.org](http://www.wolftrap.org).

**Langley High School Choir Concert.** 7 p.m. at Cornerstone International Church, 12113 Vale Road, Oakton. 703-264-1273.

**Reston Contra Dance.** 8 p.m. at the Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Free beginners' workshop 7:15-8, dance 8-10:45. Admission \$8. 703-476-4500.

**Legal Aspects of Separation and Divorce.** 10 a.m. at the McLean Government Center, 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean. \$45 non-members, \$35 members. [www.thewomenscenter.org](http://www.thewomenscenter.org) or 703-281-2657.

## SUNDAY/JAN. 10

**A Journey Through The Roots of Rock.** 2-3 p.m. Frying Pan Farm Park and Visitors Center, 2707 West Ox

Road, Herndon. With Katy Benko and Julie Crosson. Recommended for age six and up. 703-437-9101.

**Old-Fashioned Game Day.** 2-4 p.m. at Frying Pan Farm Park and Visitors Center, 2707 West Ox Road, Herndon. Dominoes, Backgammon, Monopoly and Parcheesi. Free. 703-437-9101.

**Twelfth Night And The End of The Holiday Season.** 1-3 p.m. at Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Sip tea and make a craft to take home. A tour of the house is included in the fee. Age 8 and up; children under 12 years must be accompanied by an adult. \$20 per person. Reservations required at 703-437-1794.

**Thatswhatshesaid, Counting Out Loud, Matthew Pablo and A+ Dropouts.** 2 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$10 in advance, \$13 at the door. [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

**This Day Waits, Sub-radio Standard, Streetlight Silhouettes, Bybrooke and Box Robots.** 6 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$10 in advance, \$13 at the door. [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

## MONDAY/JAN. 11

**Ultimate Fighting Championship, with Gray Maynard and Nate Diaz.** 6-15 p.m. at George Mason University Patriot Center, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Tickets \$43-\$203, at [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com) or at 703-573-SEAT. 703-993-3000 or [www.patriotcenter.com](http://www.patriotcenter.com).

**Open Mic Showcase hosted by Ron Good.** 7 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$2. [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

## TUESDAY/JAN. 12

**Colvin Run Community Center Weekly Dance.** 7 p.m. at Colvin Run Schoolhouse, 10201 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. \$10. [www.colvinrun.org](http://www.colvinrun.org).

**Jammin' Java's Mid-Atlantic Band Battle II.** 7:30 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$10. [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

**Understanding Your Financial Situation.** 7 p.m. at the Women's Center, 127 Park St., N.E., Vienna. Free. Registration required at [www.thewomenscenter.org](http://www.thewomenscenter.org) or 703-281-2657 ext. 266.

## WEDNESDAY/JAN. 13

**Winter Wonderland.** 10:30 a.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Stories, music and activities about snow. Ages 3-5 with adult. 703-757-8560.

**Jammin' Java's Mid-Atlantic Band Battle II.** 7:30 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$10. [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

**The Escapades of John Singleton Mosby, the 'Gray Ghost.'** by Donald C. Hakenson. 7 p.m. at the Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. 703-757-8560.

## THURSDAY/JAN. 14

**The Grandsons.** At The Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. 7:30 beginner lesson, 8-10 p.m. live music. \$10. 703-424-1745 or [www.headoverheelsdance.com](http://www.headoverheelsdance.com).

**Jammin' Java's Mid-Atlantic Band Battle II.** 7:30 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$10. [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

**Recollections of McLean and Great Falls.** 7:30 p.m. at the McLean

Historical Society, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. With Carole Herrick. Free. [schulm@erols.com](mailto:schulm@erols.com) or 703-442-9370.

**Financial Planning During Separation and Divorce.** 7 p.m. at the Women's Center, 127 Park St., N.E., Vienna. \$45 non-members, \$35 members. [www.thewomenscenter.org](http://www.thewomenscenter.org) or 703-281-2657.

## FRIDAY/JAN. 15

**Capitol Steps.** 8 p.m. at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. 703-790-0123.

**U.S. Navy Band's 33rd International Saxophone Symposium.** 8 p.m. at George Mason University Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. With clinics, recitals and vendor displays, 3-7 p.m. 202-433-2525 or [www.navyband.navy.mil/saxophonesymposium](http://www.navyband.navy.mil/saxophonesymposium).

**Chelsea Lee.** 6 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$15. [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

**Sonos.** 10 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$15. [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

## SATURDAY/JAN. 16

**The Gizmo Guys.** 2 p.m. at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Age 5 and up. 703-790-0123.

**Capitol Steps.** 8 p.m. at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. 703-790-0123.

**U.S. Navy Band's 33rd International Saxophone Symposium.** 8 p.m. at George Mason University Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. With clinics, recitals and vendor displays, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. 202-433-2525 or [www.navyband.navy.mil/saxophonesymposium](http://www.navyband.navy.mil/saxophonesymposium).

**Learn Tai Chi.** 1 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. The ancient art of movement, energy awareness and mental concentration. Wear comfortable clothes and shoes. 703-757-8560.

**So You Think You Can Dance Fairfax County Competition for Teens Audition Rounds.** 3-5 p.m. All contestants will need to fill out a Team Registration Entry Form prior to the audition, at any teen center or at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/rec](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/rec); go to Teen Services. Audition locations are:

- James Lee Teen Center, 2855-A Annandale Road, Falls Church.
- Mott Teen Center, 8100 Braddock Road, Fairfax.
- Reston Teen Center, 12196 Sunset Hills Drive, Reston.
- Hideaway Teen Center, South County Government Center, 8350 Richmond Highway, Alexandria.

**Northern Virginia Model Railroaders Open House.** 1-5 p.m. at the W&OD Depot (along bike trail), 231 Dominion Rd., Vienna. Operating HO scale display depicting the Western North Carolina Railroad, a portion of the Southern Railway. Free, donations accepted. [www.nvrm.org](http://www.nvrm.org) or 703-938-5157

**Sonrise.** 7:30 p.m. at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 1090 Sterling Road, Herndon. Bluegrass. \$12. 703-435-8377.

**Chelsea Lee.** 6 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$15. [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

**John Eddie (full band).** 9:30 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$15 in advance, \$18 at the door. [www.jamminjava.com](http://www.jamminjava.com).

**Northern Virginia Country Western Dance.** at Luther Jackson Middle School, 3020 Galloway Road, Falls Church. Line dance at 7:30 p.m., beginners' couples dance at 8 p.m. Open dancing 8:30-11 p.m. \$10 for NVCWDA members, \$12 for non-members, \$5 for ages 16-20 with student ID. [www.nvcwda.org](http://www.nvcwda.org) or 703-860-4941.



**Great Falls Elementary School's Caroline Wildman, cast as child-size doll, astonishes party guests when she comes to life and dances.**

## Great Falls Students Perform in 'The Nutcracker'

Ten Great Falls students ages seven to 18 performed in the Conservatory Ballet's annual production of the holiday classic, "The Nutcracker." The final two performances took place on Saturday, Jan. 2, at the Madeira School Theater in McLean.

Great Falls Elementary School sixth grader Caroline Wildman was cast in a range of roles, including a cameo and several duets. She spent hours perfecting turns and jumps and her timing to get ready for this year's performances. "I like learning all the dances. Each one is a whole different experience," said Wildman.

With ten performances in the annual Nutcracker production, Artistic Director Julia Redick assembled three casts, allowing her students to dance a variety of roles. "The Conservatory is a performing arts school," said Redick, "and 'The Nutcracker' provides our students performance opportunities so criti-

cal to their artistic growth. It also makes ballet accessible to local children and their families."

Great Falls resident Mairin Moriarty as the Dew Drop Fairy, guided in the smallest butterflies to welcome Marie and the Nutcracker Prince to the Land of Sweets. She and her younger sister Elise have performed in numerous Nutcrackers over the years.

Established in 1972, the Conservatory offers early childhood, pre-professional and adult programs in ballet, flamenco, Irish and other dance forms to more than 1,200 students. Its curriculum program produces more professional ballerinas than any other pre-professional dance academy in the greater Washington area. Students have performed with numerous well-known companies including American Ballet Theater, Dance Theater of Harlem, The Bolshoi, Boston, English National, Fort Worth and Stuttgart Ballets.



**Herndon High's Georgina Greenleaf weaves a spell on the audience dancing as Spanish Chocolate.**



## Here's What's Happening at MCC

Open a World of New Possibilities!  
**Winter Session Registration**

Begins Monday, Dec. 7, for district residents; Monday, Dec. 14, for all others

Plan to sign up now for our new winter session! We have a wide variety of classes, day trips and activities to warm the winter months.



### The Capitol Steps

Fri., Jan. 15, & Sat., Jan. 16, 8 p.m.  
**\$45/ \$40** district residents

McLean just can't get enough of these political jokesters. Always a sell-out, so get your tickets early!

### Concerts at the Alden

Christopher Schmitt, Pianist  
Sunday, Jan. 10, 3 p.m.  
**Free Admission**

Free chamber music concerts sponsored by the Friends of the Fairfax County Public Library and the Alden Theatre.

### The Gizmo Guys

Saturday, Jan. 16, 2 p.m.  
**\$14/\$10** McLean district residents

These jugglers extraordinaire rapid-fire act exhilarates and inspires side-splitting laughter in audience members of all ages.

### 7th Annual McLean MLK Jr. Day Celebration

"Embrace the Dream"  
...Exploring our American Blues Heritage  
Sunday, Jan. 17, 3-5 p.m.

General Admission: Adults: **\$5**; Children: **\$3** (age 10 and younger), includes reception.

Come join the McLean Community Center as we celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

**The McLean Community Center**  
1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean VA 22101  
703-790-0123/TTY: 711

[www.mcleancenter.org](http://www.mcleancenter.org)

7<sup>th</sup> Annual  
**McLean Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration**

**Embrace the Dream**  
Come join the McLean Community Center as we celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Exploring our American Blues Heritage  
**Sunday, Jan. 17 3-5 p.m.**  
In the Alden Theatre  
**General Admission:**  
Adults: \$5  
Children: \$3 (age 10 and younger), includes reception.

We've got barbecue and the blues!  
Program features the Original New York Style Blues of Michael Hill's Blues Mob. Hill has been called one of modern blues most talented songwriters and guitarists by Living Blues Magazine. This is highly energetic music with a soulful consciousness. ([www.michaelhillbluesmob.com](http://www.michaelhillbluesmob.com))  
Keynote Speaker, Dr. Ed Jackson, Jr., Executive Architect D.C. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial Project Foundation, Inc. Come hear the latest on this memorial project.  
Community BBQ Buffet Reception catered by the Tender Rib of Temple Hills, MD  
Presented in cooperation with the DC Blues Society

Tickets are available at the Alden Theatre Box Office, online or by telephone (703-573-SEAT) through Ticketmaster, or by mail-in order form.

The McLean Community Center  
1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean VA 22101  
703-790-0123/TTY: 711  
[www.mcleancenter.org/special-events](http://www.mcleancenter.org/special-events)

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Fri., Feb. 26 vs. New York Knicks @ 7PM  
Tue., Mar. 9 vs. Houston Rockets @ 7PM
- UPPER LEVEL PACKAGE INCLUDES:**  
Mon., Feb. 1 vs. Boston Celtics @ 7PM  
Fri., Feb. 19 vs. Denver Nuggets @ 7PM  
Fri., Feb. 26 vs. New York Knicks @ 7PM

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All listings are due by Monday at 3 p.m.

## LETTERS

FROM PAGE 8

neighborhood — while continuing to ignore the root of the problem — is both insane and inexcusable.

**Jim Poppleton**  
Great Falls

P.S. Let's not live delusionally. We should also replace the "Georgetown Pike - Virginia (Scenic) Byway" sign with a "Georgetown Pike - Route 7 Bypass" sign, and go ahead and pro-actively install commuter speed humps along Seneca, Beach Mill and River Bend. (To pay for the humps, Fairfax could start taxing Great Falls' homes that use well-water.)

P.S.S. You will hear the argument that there must be two lanes exiting off Route 7 onto Route 193 to prevent a Route 7 congestion issue. Hogwash. If Fairfax County would make Route 7 improvements half the priority Loudoun County did, there would be minimal traffic feeling the need to bail-off of Route 7 onto a squiggly, little, hilly, often zig-zagging road.

## Alternative To Saying 'No' on Pike

Kathleen Murphy offered a good summary of the problems facing Great Falls with the proposed two-lane Left Turn from Route 7 East onto Georgetown Pike [Great Falls Traffic: A Way Forward, Great Falls Connection, Dec. 23-29, 2009]. However, she has overlooked some vital elements of the matter, and offered solutions unlikely to solve the problem.

Ms. Murphy's suggested alternatives are at best minor improvements. While "constructing an alternative route into Loudoun County" is for example a fine idea, where would it be? This would likely devastate substantial residential areas, and what residents will accept that? I too support other means of transport, and increased telecommuting, but even that will not solve the problem.

No one wants more traffic on Georgetown Pike, nor would we want to see it lose its character (and Virginia Byway designation) by making too drastic changes. Yet, throughout its history, the Pike has

been a key route to Washington (hence its name), and will remain so. We can at best seek ways to control its use so it is advantageous for both Great Falls and other Virginia residents.

The problem is not just the traffic on Georgetown Pike, but the bottleneck caused by traffic turning left from Route 7 East. The existing volume means the lights must be timed to allow enough time to funnel traffic from Route 7 East onto the Pike, from a single turning lane. This in turn impedes traffic on Route 7 West, especially in the evening rush, and traffic coming out from Seneca Road. There is however a solution that can meet everyone's concerns, provided it is implemented properly.

For sake of argument, let us say the left turn signal currently stays green for Route 7 turning traffic for one minute. If it takes each car an average of 2 seconds to pass through the intersection and turn onto the Pike, then 30 cars can turn onto the Pike for each light iteration. However, all cars on Route 7 West, or on Seneca Road,

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 19

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## PEOPLE

# Contributing to Clean Energy

### Local high schooler improves fuel cell, wins scholarship.

BY WILLIAM SCOTT MARTIN  
THE CONNECTION

**O**n Dec. 7, Thomas Jefferson High School junior Andrew Swoboda of Oakton became a fifth place winner for the Siemens Competition in Math, Science and Technology. Andrew (known to his friends as AJ) Swoboda won a \$10,000 scholarship along with partner Ryan Lindeborg for their work on hydrogen fuel cells.

Swoboda and Lindeborg did their research at the University of California, Santa Barbara in the summer of 2009. The research began as simple interest in the subject of fuel cells.

"I've always been the kid that likes figuring out new things," said Swoboda. "The whole idea of clean energy is kind of like a big deal right now, so when I heard about it, it sounded like an interesting thing to do."

In fact, Swoboda's paper entitled "Optimization of Platinum Nanoparticles for Proton Exchange Membrane Fuel Cells Using Pulse Electrochemical Deposition" makes a significant advancement, halving the platinum required to create fuel cells.

All fuel cells require platinum as a catalyst material, about 0.5 mg of platinum per square centimeter. "The problem with hydrogen fuel cells that are around right now is that when they are plated, a lot of platinum, which is a catalyst metal, is wasted," said Swoboda. "We thought if we could minimize the amount of platinum, we could reduce the cost."

By altering how the platinum is plated using Pulse Electrochemical Deposition, Swoboda and Lindeborg managed to reduce use of platinum from 0.5 mg per centimeter to about 0.2727 per centimeter.

**SWOBODA** described how he carried out his research. "We made a bunch of different samples using different parameters that we wanted to vary to see which one would be the best," he said. "After we analyzed all the samples, we picked which parameters we wanted to use in making the actual fuel cell and we made three hydrogen fuel cells we actually tested in the lab to see their performance." He described the final fuel cell as being "better than half of the commercial fuel cell but we used half the amount of platinum."



**AJ Swoboda with his parents, Eileen and Jim, and his plaque and medal for placing fifth in the Siemens Competition in Math, Science and Technology.**

Despite the potential significance of this discovery, Swoboda warned not to draw too much from it. "It's still a work in progress, it's not anywhere close to being done," he said. "It feels pretty awesome. Once it kind of all slowed down and went back to our normal lives, it's a pretty big

accomplishment."

Eileen Swoboda, AJ's mother, said, "We're unbelievably pleased for AJ and that the whole thing was totally unexpected and a fantastic experience."

In addition to his research, AJ Swoboda is in National Honor Society, on the soccer team and in

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



**AJ Swoboda giving a presentation during the 2009 Siemens Competition.**

Team America Rocketry Challenge. "It comes down to time management. OK, I'm coming home and I have an hour, can I do any homework so I have an hour to spare when I'm at home?" said AJ Swoboda about how he manages it all.

AJ Swoboda also had a published book, "What Seniors Write at America's Best High School," a collection of 75 college application essays from Thomas Jefferson.

**ABOUT HIS FUTURE,** AJ Swoboda has ideas, but he isn't set on any particular path. "Right now, I'm really interested in engineer-

"The whole idea of clean energy is kind of like a big deal right now, so when I heard about it, it sounded like an interesting thing to do."

— AJ Swoboda

ing, I've taken some electives at Thomas Jefferson that are geared towards engineering and this hydrogen fuel cell project is related to engineering. I'm not sure where that'll take me but right now that's what I think I'll be doing in the future," he said. "I haven't thought that deeply into my career because that's way out there."

AJ Swoboda isn't set on where he'd like his scholarship to take him. The Siemens corporation gives more than \$7 million annually in scholarships; in particular, the Siemens Competition in Math, Science & Technology awards "exceptional achievement in science, math and technology," according to Siemens.

AJ Swoboda said he is thankful to those who made winning the prize possible. "My school has been really supportive of this whole Siemens thing," he said.

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## NEWS

# Battle for Pike Intensifies

FROM PAGE 3

tively narrow that stretch of road to three standard-size lanes and would include a crosswalk running between the Wachovia Bank and the parking lot in front of Safeway.

From Columbine Street northward, much of the reconfigured road is to include one through-lane in each direction, a shared left-turn lane in the middle and a parking lane on each side. Trapezoid-shaped curb extensions would keep motorists from driving in the parking lanes, effectively narrowing the road. This would also allow the speed limit to be dropped from 35 mph to 25 mph.

It is planned that the community will pitch in for landscaping, for example in the curb extensions, but the local cost will not be known until construction bids are received.

The project was first conceived as an addendum to a 1999 traffic calming study, but there was no funding for design work at that time. VDOT completed the design last February, and it quickly won the approval of the Great Falls Citizens Association and the Great Falls Business and Professional Association.

ager, who is in charge of activities at the Grange, to make the facility more available to the local residents who funded its renovations. Apton said he hoped to see some food and drink machines installed in the lower level to raise revenue. He also said he wanted to help institute weekly or monthly activities in the lower level, such as bridge and backgammon tournaments or exercise activities. These would solicit individual donations rather than requiring a \$90 fee.

The schoolhouse, meanwhile, should be opened up to nonprofit groups either for free or for a nominal fee during weekdays, Apton said. The GFCA will continue to work with county officials on this front, on behalf of all Great Falls nonprofit groups, throughout the year.

## Fighting the Dual Left Turn

Since at least 2000, residents of Great Falls have opposed a Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) plan to build dual left turn lanes from Route 7 onto Georgetown Pike, but the battle recently heated up, following a well attended public meeting on the subject in mid-November.

The dual left turn lanes onto Georgetown Pike are part of a larger project that is to widen Route 7 from four to six lanes between the Fairfax County Parkway and Reston Avenue. The road is six lanes wide in Loudoun County and in Tysons Corner but narrows to four lanes between the two localities. The entire stretch is to be widened eventually, but most of that project remains unfunded and unscheduled. Construction on the portion between the Fairfax County Parkway and Reston Avenue is to begin in 2012.

Georgetown Pike has become a popular alternative to Route 7 for commuters, and traffic on both roads is reduced to a crawl during rush hours. Residents of Great Falls fear that the additional turn lane will only exacerbate the situation on their road by making it more easily accessible to through-traffic. VDOT, on the other hand, has said the change would not put more traffic on Georgetown Pike, as the road's narrow, winding character would limit the number of vehicles that use the road. The agency said the additional turn lane was a safety measure and would reduce rear-end crashes that result from drivers in the current left-turn lane giving up and jumping back into traffic.

In mid-December, Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville), Del. Margi Vanderhye (D-34), Del. Elect Barbara Comstock (R-34) and State Sen. Janet Howell (D-32) all signed a letter to Virginia Secretary of Transportation Pierce Homer raising concerns about the dual turn lanes onto Georgetown Pike, which is a designated scenic and historic byway. The Great Falls Citizens Association also recently sent a letter to VDOT requesting that its focus be shifted to completing the widening of Route 7 rather than adding a turn lane onto Georgetown Pike.

## A Center for the Community?

As one result of the 2008-09 Area Plans Review process, language was added to the county Comprehensive Plan stating that the Great Falls area should be considered for some sort of community center.

However, Great Falls Citizens Association (GFCA) President Ralph Apton has said that for the time being, he is especially interested in restoring the Grange, the historic structure just east of the library, to the community center status it once enjoyed. Apton also said he hoped to reopen the nearby historic schoolhouse to nonprofit groups at an affordable price.

Until April of last year, the citizens association met at the Grange for free and other nonprofit groups paid a nominal fee. Nonprofits did not have to pay at all to use the neighboring schoolhouse for meetings. However, in the face of budget cuts, the Fairfax County Park Authority restructured its fees for facilities throughout the county as of last April 1, and nonprofit groups now must pay \$90 to use either the Grange or the schoolhouse. Neither is used much anymore, particularly during the week. The only other public meeting space in Great Falls is in the library, which has cut its hours and is overbooked. The GFCA executive board has since been meeting in the Executive Suites in Great Falls Village Centre, which was offered to the board as a favor, and its committees are scrambling for meeting venues, often convening at the Old Brogue.

Apton noted that the Grange and schoolhouse were both renovated with money from private local groups. He is working with the Riverbend Park man-

## BULLETIN BOARD

To have community events listed in the Connection, send to [greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is Friday.

### SATURDAY/JAN. 9

**Why Don't My Kids Listen to Me?**  
10 a.m. at Christ the King Lutheran Church, 10550 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Pre-register at 703-242-8824. [www.PEPparent.org](http://www.PEPparent.org).

### THURSDAY/JAN. 14

**Vienna-Tysons Regional Chamber of Commerce.** 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Board Installation Luncheon at Fleming's Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar. 1960 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. [www.vtrcc.org](http://www.vtrcc.org).

### FRIDAY/JAN. 15

**Republican Club of Greater**

**Reston Annual General Meeting and Election of Officers.** 7:30 p.m. Lake Anne Community Center. 703-406-9740.

### TUESDAY/JAN. 19

**Virginia Liberty Project Meeting with Walter Williams.** 6 p.m. The Waterford at Fair Oaks, 12025 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, Fairfax. Free. Reserve at 703-286-5241.

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# Richmond Preview

FROM PAGE 9

climb out of this national recession” with our status as an economic and educational leader intact. Governor-Elect McDonnell has stated categorically that he will not raise taxes during his term. He can and will amend Governor Kaine’s budget proposals and in doing so will have to identify nearly \$2 billion in additional cuts. He has also pledged to re-open the highway rest stops and to double the funds used to entice businesses to Virginia, requiring an additional \$25 million annually.

What do we expect government to do? The answer may vary among the voters, but if the question is never asked, the predictable result will be the lowest common denominator of expectations and government service. Those of us who value public service would ask that the electorate be diligently engaged in the debate about the decisions that affect us most.

Thank you for your own diligence in sharing your ideas and your views. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as your Delegate.

*The author has served as the Virginia state delegate in 2007-09 term.*



## Preschoolers Present Christmas Program

The students at Great Falls United Methodist Preschool performed their annual Christmas program. The children acted out the Nativity scene and sang Christmas songs. Music teacher Betty O’Malley narrated the Christmas program and the 3- and 4-year-old students performed. Below are Mary, Joseph and the drummer boys.





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# SPORTS

## 2009 — High School Sports Year in Review

**Langley Boys' lacrosse won state crown; Oakton girls reached state hoops finals.**

BY RICH SANDERS  
THE CONNECTION

**T**he 2009 high school sports year was one in which numerous teams from the surrounding McLean, Vienna and Reston areas stepped up and put together breakthrough seasons. There were championships, dramatic turnaround campaigns and the magic that takes place when members of a roster come together as one to form a tightly knit unit. The following are a few of those teams that made memories that will last a lifetime.



**The Langley boys' lacrosse team captured district, region and state crowns in 2009.**

PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

**BASKETBALL:** The Oakton High girls were the champions of the Concorde District and Northern Region championships. Under Fred Priester, the Cougars displayed their talent, grit and heart throughout the winter by going unbeaten in region play in both the regular season and playoffs. In a region tournament semifinals game against Mount Vernon at Robinson Secondary, Oakton overcame an early 21-2 deficit to defeat the Majors, 47-39.

"You have to keep your cool because if one person freaks out [at being so far behind] then it's kind of a team reaction," said Oakton freshmen point guard Caroline Coyer, who scored a season-high 22 points in the victory.

Oakton also came from behind to defeat T.C. Williams, 74-66, in the region championship game after trailing by 11 in the first quarter. Coyer tallied 21 points to garner tourney MVP honors as the Cougars improved to 28-0. Other all-tournament selections for Oakton were senior leaders Erin McGartland and Brianna Johnson. Oakton went on to defeat Atlee (Mechanicsville) and Lake Taylor (Norfolk) in state playoff games before losing in the state finals, 71-61, to Princess Anne at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond.

**THE LIBERTY DISTRICT** had three girls' teams that experienced success — Madison, South Lakes and Langley. Madison, under former Warhawks' player and first-year head coach Kirsten Roberts, started the season 0-5 before putting things together. It entered the district tournament as the No. 4-seed but defeated McLean and top-seed South Lakes to reach the title game. There, the Warhawks defeated No. 2 Langley, 40-29, at South Lakes High School in Reston. Madison senior Danielle Landry scored 11 points in the finals win and earned tourney

MVP honors. Erin Kavanaugh, the other Warhawk player to make the all-tournament team, also tallied 11 points in the win over the Saxons.

Langley had shown great fortitude in getting as far as the district finals after starting the season 2-6. Like Madison, the Saxons came together following the slow start and went on to finish 15-10. Langley defeated regular season champion South Lakes two times in regular season district play. In the district tournament, Langley trailed No. 3 Woodson by eight points in the third quarter before rallying to win. Saxon senior forward Rachel Warrick scored 25 points in the semifinals win over the Cavaliers.

It marked the final season for Cheryl Buffo at the helm of the Langley program. Buffo, in 11 years, led the Saxons to six district finals. The title game loss to Madison hurt.

"Obviously, I was very happy for the kids that we got to the district finals," she said. "It was very disappointing not to play our best in that game."

On the boys' side, Langley captured its second straight Liberty basketball crown with a district tournament finals win over top seed Woodson, 52-36. The Saxons, who struggled early in the season with a 2-4 record, won eight of their final nine regular season games, then continued to stay hot in the postseason with three straight wins to garner the district title. Senior guard Derek Baker earned tourney MVP honors.

**BASEBALL:** With six starters back from its 2008 team that went 15-8, McLean took the next step forward in 2009 and became champions of the Liberty District. Behind starting pitching aces Sean Fitzgerald and Denis Buckley, the Highlanders enjoyed a 16-4 season. They captured the regular season district title before going on to win the

district tournament as well. The Highlanders trailed defending district champion Stone Bridge, 5-0, in the championship game before rallying for an 11-8 win. A nine-run fourth inning, following a stern pep talk from head coach John Thomas, turned the game around in dramatic fashion. "I've got to credit coach Thomas," said McLean catcher Erik Payne, one of just two seniors on the young roster. "He gave an incredible speech."

**FOOTBALL:** McLean put together memorable turnaround football seasons in 2009. The program had experienced several years of losing in prior years. But their fortunes turned around last fall.

McLean had gone 0-10 in 2008 under first year coach Jim Patrick. But Patrick's squad put things together in 2009, finishing with a winning record (6-5) and qualifying for the Division 5 region playoffs where the Highlanders lost to Lee. Perhaps McLean's biggest win of the season came on Sept. 25 when the Highlanders defeated Madison, 24-21, to improve to 3-1. Later in the season, McLean clinched a winning season with a 35-34 district overtime home win over rival Langley in the final week of the regular season.

**LACROSSE:** The Langley High boys' lacrosse team ran the table with a perfect 10-0 record in the postseason to win its first-ever state championship last spring. The Saxons defeated Madison for the Liberty District crown, Robinson in the Northern Region finals and Chantilly for the state title to finish 21-1 overall.

Alex Devlin's overtime goal was the game-winner in the state championship game won over the Chargers in the contest played at Westfield High. The senior midfielder's sizzling shot off the right side found the net

and started a spontaneous on-field Saxon celebration as Chantilly, the 2008 state champions, looked on in disbelief.

"I love these players and I love this team," said an emotional Earl Brewer, the program's longtime head coach.

**SOCCER:** McLean's girls were determined to garner a Liberty District crown in 2009. The year before, the Highlanders had reached the finals before falling to Madison. But last spring, McLean took that next step. It wasn't easy for the Highlanders, who needed an overtime goal by Kristina Bettner to defeat Woodson, 2-1, in the title game. From there, McLean won region playoff games over Centreville and Lake Braddock before seeing its season end with a 4-2 semifinals loss to Chantilly in a game played at Robinson.

"A complete, total success," said McLean coach Laura O'Brien, of her team's 14-5 season. "We won the district championship and wanted to go as far as possible."

**VOLLEYBALL:** Behind standout players Elyse Richardson and Kathryn Caine, the Langley girls reached the state playoffs for the second time in three years this past fall. The Saxons lost in the Liberty District finals to Stone Bridge but came back strong with Northern Region playoff wins over West Springfield, Hayfield and Robinson to reach the finals, where they lost to South County. Langley's outstanding season ended with a setback to Loudoun Valley at states. The upset region semis win over Robinson was perhaps the highlight of the season for the Saxons. "We just played so well against them," said Langley coach Susan Shifflett. "We had to play one of our best matches to beat them."

**OTHER GREAT TEAMS OF 2009:** The underdog Langley girls' field hockey team which, as a No. 6 seed at the Liberty District tournament, upset No. 3 Marshall and No. 2 Madison to reach the finals where it gave top seed Fairfax all it could handle in a 1-0 loss. ... McLean softball, behind ace pitcher Jamie Bell, captured the regular season Liberty District crown and ultimately defeated West Potomac in a region playoff game to reach the semifinals, where the Highlanders' season ended with a setback to South County. Coach Maurice Tawil's squad went 20-4 on the season. ... The Marshall girls' tennis team won 12 straight matches during the spring season before losing to Woodson. The Statesmen received outstanding leadership from seniors Amanda Crider, Astrid Adam and Christina Nguyen. ... Langley's wrestling team, under coach John Belyea, captured its ninth straight district title last February. Three Saxons — David Helmer, Jay Ives and Anthony Kotoriy — won district crowns.

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**21 Announcements**

**TRUSTEE'S SALE OF VALUABLE IMPROVED REAL ESTATE**

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In execution of a Deed of Trust from Michael Dalakis and Tammy Dalakis, dated August 10, 2007, and recorded August 13, 2007, in Deed Book 19510 at page 1433 among the Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia, the undersigned substitute trustee will offer for sale at public auction at the front entrance of the Judicial Center for Fairfax County, at 4110 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax, Virginia, on

**Tuesday, January 19, 2010 at 9:30 a.m.**

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

Lot 6, CHAPEL, as the same appears duly dedicated, platted and recorded in Deed Book 1123 at page 56 and Outlot A of a subdivision of Lots 1, 2 and 3 and a residue of the Hicks land, CHAPEL HILL, as per Deed of Resubdivision recorded in Deed Book 1783 at page 491, among the Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia.

Commonly known as 1634 Hicks Drive, Vienna, Virginia 22182.

**TERMS OF SALE:** A deposit of \$60,000.00 or ten percent (10%) of the sale price, whichever amount is less, in the form of cash or its equivalent will be required of the purchaser at the time and place of sale; the balance of the purchase money being due and payable within fifteen (15) days after sale, time expressly being of the essence, with interest at the rate of 7.75 percent per annum from date of sale to date of settlement. Provided, however, that if the holder of the secured promissory note is the successful bidder at the sale, no cash deposit shall be required, and part of or the entire indebtedness, including interest and costs, secured by the Deed of Trust, may be set off against the purchase price.

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

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

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

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

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

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

DAVID N. PRENSKY  
Substitute Trustee

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# Can't Handel It



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I imagine the confession I'm about to make likely will get me banned from future similar cultural events (good!). But, since I'm sitting here (here being the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.) semi-listening to their Choir & Baroque Orchestra, I have to do something, even if some might consider writing on the very program describing the music, musicians, conductor and author to which I'm listening (I didn't say subjected; after all, it was with my consent that I agreed to this outing) a defamation of my character (or lack thereof) and a defacing of sacred text. Nevertheless, as Popeye the Sailor Man said so famously, "I'yam what I'yam." And what I am not, as has been proven by this musical interlude is, a fan of George Frederick Handel's Messiah, (God forgive me) "arguably the most widely shared musical experience in our culture. Each year the oratorio is sung by tens and perhaps hundreds of thousands of people." And it is "mid nave" that I find myself not so enthralled on Sunday, Dec. 6.

And though the National Cathedral is an elegant and magnificent environment for this most traditional of presentations, I am not sure if my eyes and ears can truly appreciate its suitability. However, as I am writing (and then pausing and thinking about what to write next) I have to admit, the music and words (many of which I can't actually discern) do provide a soothing backdrop, conducive almost, to this creative process. I don't imagine, though, that the cognoscente of this music appreciate it for its inoffensive/barely noticeable/backdrop-type white noise as I do.

I mean, the Cathedral is nearly full, at \$54 a ticket – not exactly a cheap thrill (and in a challenging, shall we say, economy to boot). Apparently, these many listeners put their money where their ears are. It's only people/non-patrons of the arts like me who don't know any better and can't process the melodies sufficiently to find joy in "them thar" notes and we're nearly two-thirds ("Part The Second") through this holiday tradition. (The extremely famous "Hallelujah!" chorus is close, I'm told.)

Let me be clear, none of this commentary has anything at all to do with the amazingly talented musicians, soloists, conductors and choir performing this evening. Nor is it a reflection of the courteous and patient staff ushering (voluntarily no doubt) the hundreds of ticket-holding Handel enthusiasts to their assigned seats. It's more about an experience I have now shared with many before me, and heard much about, that I officially "don't get." I wouldn't say attending this event was worth the money we spent (like The Allman Brothers concert I saw in October was) but in an odd way, I do feel better having experienced it.

Would I go back? No. Do I regret having gone? No. Am I planning my next cultural soiree? Absolutely not! For me, enjoying such fare is an "achoiored" taste. A taste which I have not yet acquired. (I did find a great parking space on Wisconsin Ave. directly across from the Cathedral, though.)

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

## SCHOOLS

Send School Notes to [greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is Friday.

**Langley High School Wind Symphony** has accepted an invitation to perform at the Music for All National Festival, presented by Yamaha, in Indianapolis in March 2010. High school and middle school instrumental ensembles around the country audition for the festival via a taped audition sent to Music for All, one of the nation's largest and most influential organizations in support of active music making. The Langley High School Wind Symphony is under the direction of Andrew Gekoskie. Only sixteen high school concert bands were accepted into the 2010 festival, to be held March 4-6, 2010. The Music for All National Festival has taken place annually since 1992. Langley High School and other concert bands will perform at the professional concert venue, Clowes Memorial Hall, in Indianapolis. For more information, visit [www.musicforall.org/programs/mfanf/](http://www.musicforall.org/programs/mfanf/).

**Tips on Trips and Camps Fair.** Saturday, Jan. 30 at The Potomac School, 1301 Potomac School Road, McLean. Camp Fair 1 p.m.; Panel Discussion on Foreign Language Programs 12:30 p.m. Summer overnight camps, travel, language or cultural immersion programs, community service, internships and more for children 8-18. Directors of various programs will attend. 703-345-0722 or [meg@tipsontripsandcamps.com](mailto:meg@tipsontripsandcamps.com).

McLean residents **Matthew L. Barba**, **James A. Cook** and **Peter A. Lang-Stanton** have graduated from Boston University in Boston, Mass. Barba was awarded a bachelor of science degree in business administration, Cook a master's degree in criminal justice and Lang-Stanton a bachelor of arts degree in psychology.

**Hana Betts** of McLean has been named to the Hill School of Pottstown, Pa. Student Philanthropy Council for this academic year. Members are chosen based on the quality of their applications, interviews, and their sincere ability to commit time to the group. The SPC was created to allow Hill students to learn about the value and processes of philanthropy. Each year, students will award Pottstown charities approximately three to five grants with a total value of \$10,000.

**George "Alex" Mackaronis** of McLean, Denison University class of 2011, is studying off-campus for the 2009/2010 with the University of Canterbury program in New Zealand. Mackaronis majors in psychology at Denison.

McLean resident **Ben Chang**, a James Madison University student, will compete for a spot at the 34th Global Battle of the Brains Software Competition on Nov. 7 at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Chang will team with two other James Madison University students in a regional competition against teams from George Washington, American University, George Mason University and University of Virginia. Students will use programming skills and mental endurance to solve complex computing problems under a deadline. The winning team will advance to the world finals on Feb. 5, 2010, at Harbin Engineering University in Harbin, China.

**Lucas Rooney**, a 2009 Marshall High School graduate, is the first freshman ever invited to join BASIS, a group of Virginia Tech students who run a \$4million-plus fixed-income securities fund on behalf of the Virginia Tech foundation.

**Isabel Smith** of McLean, a senior majoring in sociology in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences in Blacksburg, Va., was recently presented the Moody, Pratt, Minor Scholarship. The scholarship is available to undergraduate students involved in exploring issues related to international affairs.

**Mistafa Hafid** of McLean, a junior majoring in biochemistry in the College of College of Science, was chosen to be a resident advisor at Virginia Tech.

**Jason Sarfati** of McLean, a junior majoring in international studies in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, was chosen to be a house supervisor at Virginia Tech.

## LETTERS

FROM PAGE 12

must wait that same 1-minute for the cars turning left to pass through. This causes long delays and jams traffic on Route 7 West back to Reston Pkwy or farther.

With so many cars waiting to turn from Route 7. East onto the Pike, vehicles at the back of the queue will spill over the current turning lane into the eastbound lanes of Route 7, thus dangerously impeding traffic, and causing many drivers to try to "beat the light" by leaving the queue, cutting in front of oncoming traffic, and making a dangerous U-Turn at the corner of Reston Avenue onto Route 7 West so they can turn right onto the Pike. This has caused many accidents — and even more near misses — at Reston Avenue as westbound drivers try to make a left turn or U-Turn from Route 7 West. This is particularly dangerous in fall and winter with limited visibility in darkness or bad weather.

A double turning lane, however, can allow those same 30 cars from Route 7 East to clear the intersection in say 35 seconds. The lights can (and must) be timed to limit the green signal for turning vehicles; eliminating the steep rise at that turn should further improve the pass-through rate significantly. The number of cars for each light will remain the same, but the time required to clear the intersection can be dramatically reduced. This will also reduce the waiting time for cars on Route 7 West and Seneca Road and the traffic tailbacks on each.

Consequently, the double turn lane need not increase the number of cars entering Georgetown Pike and would not have the dire consequences feared by Great Falls resi-

dents. Of course, VDOT must carefully control the timing of the light to ensure traffic is fed properly onto the Pike with a limited time window, to avoid any increase in the amount of traffic that could exacerbate bottlenecks along the Pike at traffic light intersections or in the Village. But this very simple solution will avoid any significant increase in Pike users, while eliminating the main bottleneck effects on Route 7 West and the dangers of the impeded lanes before reaching the existing turn lane on Route 7 East.

Some years ago, traffic on Route 7 West was backed up every evening almost to Colvin Run Road by cars wanting to turn left onto Baron Cameron Avenue. Building very long double turning lanes effectively eliminated those long tailbacks, and the dangerous impediments to traffic flow of Route 7 West. And traffic on Baron Cameron, or coming into Reston, has not been overwhelmingly increased. While these two routes are very different, the results of change need not be different at all.

It is very easy to say "No" to any change and to demand other solutions. However, if one cannot offer workable alternatives, then a compromise must be found. This is such a compromise, and can have very positive impact with very little negatives. Our self-interests must sometimes also consider the interests of our neighbors and fellow road users. If a solution can help them, without sacrificing our own needs and objectives, we should consider that — without a NIMBY approach.

**Robert J. Marro**  
Great Falls



Check presentation ceremony.

## Firefighters, Area Charities Receive Rotary Club's Support

Capt. Willie Bailey of the Fairfax County Fire Department accepted a check for \$2,000 from the Rotary Club of Tysons Corner at the annual Holiday Party at the Tower Club on Dec. 17. Rotarians presenting the check were: David Danner, Ingrid Parris-Hicklin, Isabel Kelly, Santa Claus (Club President, Brian Mansir) and Denise Dixon-Basil. Bailey heads up a group of firefighters, who this year have distributed thousands of school backpacks, coats and toys to needy children in Fairfax County. In addition to the check presented to Bailey,

the Rotary Club of Tyson's Corner helped with the distribution as well.

In addition to the check for the Fairfax County Fire Department, \$12,000 was also distributed to Alternative House (new computer), Pimmet Hills Senior Center (outings for members), Chesterbrook Residences (books for the library), the McLean Orchestra, Lewinsville Senior Center, Stroke Comeback (nine-week group session), Alzheimer's Family Day Care Center and Tibetan Children (computers for Internet access to e-books).



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