

Fairfax Serving Areas of Burke
CONNECTION
Tip-Off
Time

SPORTS, PAGE 10

Woodson's David Nosal tips-off with Lee's Walter Griffin for a Patriot District match on Tuesday, Jan. 26.

Students Welcome New Citizens

NEWS, PAGE 3

Grammy Bound

NEWS, PAGE 3

PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION CALENDAR, PAGE 8 ♦ SPORTS, PAGE 10 ♦ CLASSIFIED, PAGE 16

Camps & Schools



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— Charles Mann, Inova Health System Board Member



"Luciana and I have worked with the Community Coalition for Haiti and we ask you to join us in supporting the humanitarian efforts that are under way."

— Robert & Luciana Duvall



"We all need to take swift action to make sure that relief reaches the people of Haiti as quickly as it can."

— Darrell Green, NFL Hall of Fame

Photo by © Cameron Davidson

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Spoken from the Heart

Frost Middle students welcome America's newest citizens.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

New citizens of the United States received a treat this week, during their naturalization ceremonies at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) office in Merrifield. Twelve eighth-graders from Frost Middle School — four students on three different days — read them original speeches they wrote on citizenship.

"You all did very well," said Sarah Taylor, Washington District director of the USCIS, to Monday's orators after the ceremony. "I think it makes it special for the citizens to



Fifth-grader Amanda Gebler of Wakefield Forest Elementary is flanked by Frost Middle students, from left, Fran Mahon, Wyatt Carlock, Alex Gebler and Michael Nihen.

PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

"You're speaking to these people on probably one of the top five days in their lives, so don't be nervous, just speak from the heart."

— Sarah Taylor, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

hear from fresh voices about what being a citizen means to them."

The students are all in teacher Rich Schlobach's eighth-grade civics class, and the seed for this project was sown last year, during back-to-school night. "I got the idea from Sarah Taylor, whose daughter Caitlin was in my class then," said Schlobach. "This is our second year doing it and we plan to

continue."

He has some 130 students altogether, and he has them write speeches ranging from 30 seconds to five minutes. For this event, they explained what freedom means to them, discussed some of the hurdles immigrants must overcome and decided what they wanted to tell a newly naturalized group of citizens.

Schlobach and science teacher Katie Mason read each speech and picked the ones to be read at the USCIS. "They had to be unusual and creative, plus based on personal experiences," said Schlobach. "They were really good, and it's a great way for the students to connect to what happens in the real world."

Speaking Monday before 44 new citizens from 20 different countries were Wyatt Carlock, Fran Mahon, Alex Gebler and Mikey Nihen. In addition, leading everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance was Alex's sister, Amanda, a fifth-grader at Wakefield Forest Elementary.

In Wyatt's speech, he referenced the ad

SEE STUDENT, PAGE 9

Residents Protest Proposed School Cuts

More than 200 people to testify about proposed Fairfax schools budget.

BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE
THE CONNECTION

Nearly 100 Fairfax County residents showed up to complain about schools superintendent Jack Dale's proposed budget for the 2010-11 school year during the first of three nights of public hearings Jan. 25.

The Fairfax County Public School system faces a \$166 million financial shortfall in its annual operating budget of approximately \$2 billion next year. Dale has suggested that the school system ask the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors for

an additional \$57.8 million in funding and slash approximately \$108 million in programs and other expenses to close the budget gap.

The cuts proposed by Dale include increasing class size by one student per teacher for the third year in a row and freezing all staff pay. Several popular programs, including elementary music and foreign language classes, would also be eliminated under the superintendent's proposal.

Some members of the Fairfax County School Board called the superintendent's budget cuts untenable. A few have already indicated that they intend to ask the super-

visors for school funding above and beyond the \$57.8 million Dale has suggested when they vote on a public school funding request in early February.

Fairfax County allocates approximately \$1.7 billion, or 54 percent of its total budget, to the public school system already.

In order to give the school system an additional \$57.8 million, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors would most likely have to raise the local real estate property tax rate at least 3 cents. Fairfax County generates the bulk of its revenue from real estate taxes; the state collects income taxes from county residents and uses most of that money to fund pro

SEE CIVIC, PAGE 9



Heidi Wheeler

DONATED PHOTO

With Style

Fairfax hair stylist to accompany local band to Grammy Awards.

BY STEPHANIE MARTINEZ
THE CONNECTION

It was in the middle of an event taking place at a local Clyde's restaurant when Heidi Wheeler received a phone call with shocking news. In disbelief, she hung up the phone and started to assimilate the news. It was then, when she couldn't help but scream and run like a kid in excitement. She was going to the Grammy Awards as a band's personal stylist.

"People looked at me like I was all kinds of crazy," said Wheeler. Little did they know she had just been invited to attend this year's 52nd Grammy Awards taking place on Jan. 31 as the hair and make-up stylist for some of the members of a band called Milkshake. The band, which she has known for years, was nominated for Best Musical Album for Children.

Wheeler, a Colorado native, has been working at Salon Khouri located in Fairfax for approximately three years. She has worked with lines such as Wella, Paul Mitchell, Aveda, Goldwell, Schwartzkoff, Redken, Eufora and Davines, among others.

As a child, Wheeler lived in Oregon, California and Oklahoma. She settled in Northern Virginia and, while attending school, she became interested in hair, chemistry and music.

"A strange combination, but it proved useful in my career path, an artistically driven beauty professional," she said.

Being a musician herself, Wheeler took vocal classes with Milkshake's guitarist Michael Sheppard to prepare for her per

SEE ROAD, PAGE 6

Olds Pleads Guilty to Gang Recruitment at Fairfax High

Generally, fathers tell their daughters to steer clear of people on the wrong side of the law. And they don't normally take part in illegal activities together.

But City of Fairfax police say that wasn't the case with 43-year-old Theodore Alonzo Olds — also known as “The Beast” — and his 17-year-old daughter, and they arrested the pair in September. Both former City of Fairfax residents, now living in Bristow, they were charged with gang recruitment and gang participation.

Police said they were recruiting students at Fairfax High and, on Wednesday, Jan. 20, in Fairfax County Circuit Court, Theodore Olds pleaded guilty to six criminal offenses. Before officially accepting his pleas, though, Judge Charles Maxfield made sure he knew the full ramifications of his actions.

“Are you entering your pleas of guilty, freely and voluntarily, and because you are, in fact, guilty of these crimes?” asked the judge.

“Yes, sir,” said Olds.

“Do you understand that, by doing so, you give up your right to a trial by jury and to confront any witnesses against you?” asked Maxfield. Again, he said he did.

Maxfield noted that there was no plea agreement in this case and that other charges against Olds were dropped in Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. There are also no state sentencing guidelines for gang participation, but the judge said he could give Olds as much as 60 years in prison.

Maxfield further advised Olds that, by pleading guilty, he may be waiving any right to appeal the sentence he receives. Then, after the judge accepted Olds' pleas, Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Marc Birnbaum explained the case against him.

“In May 2009, Fairfax County and Fairfax City police learned that the Bloods street gang was active at Fairfax High,” said the prosecutor. “Source No. 1 stated that the Elm Street Piru set [of the Bloods] had been active in Fairfax County for three years, since 2006.”

According to the source, said Birnbaum, “The defendant came from New Jersey and was a five-star general in the gang. His daughter was a three-star general. The source said there were 20-30 members in the gang here.”

Members paid dues of \$80/month; meanwhile, also in May, School Resource Officer Shawn Sutherland investigated several cases of larceny and fraud at Fairfax High.

“The defendant recruited new members between Fairfax County and Norfolk, and at Fairfax High,” said Birnbaum. “Source No. 2 said the defendant's daughter recruited her.”

Recounting other episodes, the prosecutor said that, in June 2008, “Source No. 3 said the defendant's daughter approached him about joining the Bloods. He also talked to the defendant — known in the gang as ‘Theo’ or ‘The Beast.’ [Olds] told him he'd have cars, girls, places to stay and bail money, if there was ever a problem. Later, [Olds] recruited Source No. 3 and two others into the gang.”

However, said Birnbaum, in winter 2008, Source No. 3 fell behind on his dues, so the gang “forced him to withdraw money from his bank. Another time, they took his wallet. He said he was intimidated by the defendant and others.”

The same problem arose in March 2009, and Olds called Source No. 3 and demanded he pay his dues. “He was afraid of the defendant, so the defendant's daughter called him to come to their apartment and said her father wasn't there,” said Birnbaum. “But when he entered [their] apartment, [Olds] was there and brandished a handgun.”

Eventually, though, warrants were obtained for both father and daughter and, on Sept. 25, they were apprehended by the Northern Virginia Gang Task Force during a traffic stop in Manassas. Afterward, said Birnbaum, Olds

SEE NEWS BRIEFS, PAGE 6

NEWS

Chocolate Lovers Unite

City of Fairfax hosts 19th Annual Chocolate Lovers Festival Feb. 6 and 7.

BY JUSTIN FANIZZI
THE CONNECTION

For the 19th consecutive year, Fairfax residents can spend a weekend indulging in one of the guiltiest of pleasures without shame, an offer that thousands annually cannot refuse.

The two-day Chocolate Lovers Festival, slated for Feb. 6 and 7 in Old Town Fairfax, seeks to encourage community participation and to encourage tourism in the city during a typically down month, using chocolate as a unifying theme. This year, all of the festival staples return but with additions that are sure to keep the event as exciting and entertaining as ever.

“The festival has always been one of our favorite annual events because it brings so many people to the city,” Mayor Robert Lederer said. “It brings the whole downtown area to life during those two days. It's a real neat aspect of what our community does throughout the year.”

As in previous years, the main draw for the event is the “Taste of Chocolate.” Both days, more than a dozen local confectioners will be selling their products around Old Town Fairfax. However, this year, Norman Davis of The Sweet Life in Annandale, who is a judge for another festival event, will conduct a raffle at the Taste of Chocolate for a two-tier custom chocolate cake. Davis, a veteran of several challenges on the Food Network, will have a table to collect raffle tickets and will also have chocolate products and books on display. In addition, a few days prior to the festival, said Beverly Myers, chair of the festival committee, coupons will be loaded onto the festival Web site to use at the vendors.

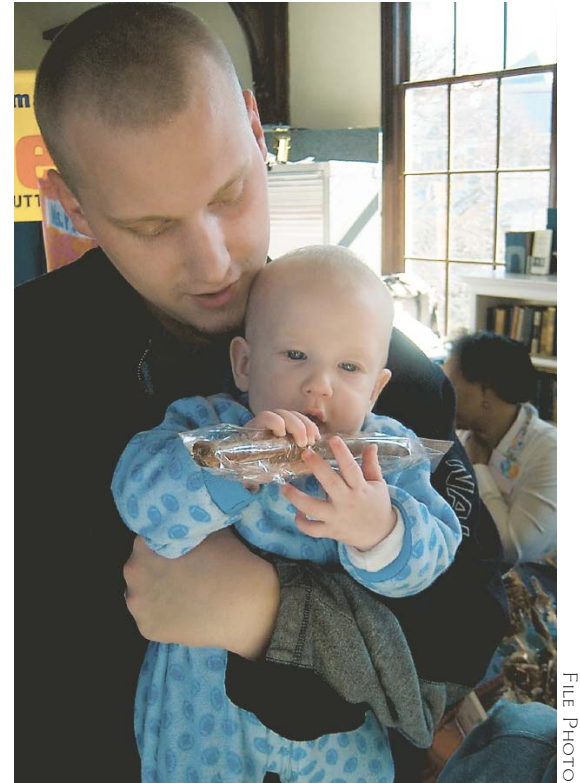
“We reached out to some of our downtown vendors,” Myers said. “They have taken out ads for specials during the Taste of Chocolate for discounts on many of their products.”

The Chocolate Challenge and Silent Auction, two popular activities at the event, will also run both days, Myers said. At the challenge, attendees can see displays of chocolate cakes and sculptures made by the area's foremost pastry chefs and confectioners made almost completely out of chocolate. Then, attendees can vote on the best piece of art. The silent auction runs concurrently both days with the challenge, and according to Myers, donated cakes and other items will be up for bidding. In addition, admission tickets to the challenge can be entered into another prize raffle, including two autographed copies of “True Blue” by David Baldacci.

“We're very excited about the additions to those

Chocolate Lovers Festival

Go to www.chocolatefestival.net or call the Festival hotline at 703-385-1661 for full festival information including full event schedule, directions and more.



FILE PHOTO

Ethan Reynolds and son Sean Thomas, 5 months, of Fairfax, enjoy a chocolate treat at the 2009 Chocolate Lovers Festival.

two events,” Myers said. “[Davis and Baldacci] were both very generous.”

As usual, the festival kicks off Saturday morning with the Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast in the fire station on University Drive. The menu features pancakes, regular and chocolate chip, sausage, coffee, juice and milk and the cost is \$6 per adult, \$4 for children ages 4 to 10 while those age 3 and younger eat free. Several other events run throughout the weekend, including historic re-enactments, children's activities, a craft show at Fire Station 3, open houses at historic buildings and much more.

In addition to all of the festivities, the festival committee will also award a grant to a charitable organization, which is an annual highlight of the event. This year, Myers said, the committee chose to give a portion of the festival's proceeds this year to the city's Independence Day Celebration Committee. The committee serves as a fund-raiser for the city's annual Independence Day celebration activities, which includes a parade, fireworks and more. Past grant recipients include Fairfax High School's Helping Hand Fund, the Northern Virginia Ronald McDonald House, the Lamb Center and the Salvation Army.

“We were very happy to receive the grant,” said Myers, who is also a member of the Independence Day Celebration Committee. “We're very proud of our parade. It is one of the largest in Virginia, and this will help make it even better.”

Most of the event takes place outdoors, but visitors don't need to worry about weather conditions, Myers said. She said that the event will go on, rain or shine. “It doesn't matter what the weather is like because the crowds are always there. It's doesn't matter what else is going on. People will always come to eat chocolate.”

“It doesn't matter what else is going on. People will always come to eat chocolate.”

— Beverly Myers

COMMUNITY

Small Grants Available. The Commonwealth Circle of Northern Virginia is a women's charitable organization that supports social service activities in Northern Virginia through financial contributions and volunteer efforts. It is now accepting applications for small grants from not-for-profit organizations with IRS 501(c)(3) status serving residents of Alexandria, Falls Church, Arlington and Fairfax counties. Call 703-536-9873 or write to Susan S. Teunis, Grants Chairman, Commonwealth Circle, 3306 N. Columbus St., Arlington, Virginia 22207. Applications for 2010 funding are due by March 1.

Join the Shepherd's Center of

Fairfax-Burke for its Adventures In Learning program open to all adults age 50 or better. Registrants bring a bag lunch and stay for a full day of exercise/classes/activities and socializing, or pick and choose the classes that interest them the most. For the spring session, classes will meet each Monday, from March 22-May 3 (except April 5), 9:30 a.m.-2:45 p.m., at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 5114 Twinbrook Road, Fairfax; registration fee-\$30. Class schedule and registration forms will be available on-line starting Feb. 19 at www.fairfax-burkes.org or by calling the SCFB office at 703-323-4788.

The Literacy Council of North-

ern Virginia (LCNV) helps adults learn to read, write, speak and understand English through one-to-one tutoring programs and English classes. Each year, LCNV conducts tutor-training workshops to prepare volunteer tutors to provide individualized instruction to adult students who want to improve their English literacy skills. A \$40 training fee covers the cost of books, materials and instruction. All tutor-training workshops take place at the James Lee Community Center, 2855 Annandale Road in Falls Church. ESOL Tutor Training Workshop takes place on Saturdays, Feb. 20 and 27 and March 6, from 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. For more, e-mail volunteers@lcnv.org.

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Road to the Grammys

FROM PAGE 3

formance at her sister's wedding. After 11 years, Sheppard and Wheeler crossed paths again when performing together at a show in Leesburg. When her profession became a point of conversation with the guitarist, she was offered to be the band's personal stylist. This occurred months before the nomination.

Milkshake is a children's rock band whose songs and videos have been featured in radio and TV channels such as PBS Kids and Discovery Kids. "All the players are top notch rockers from their own world, bringing their own personalities to Milkshake," said Wheeler. "It's really your kid's very first rock concert."

The band is made up by vocalist Lisa Mathews, drummer Tom Moon, bass player Cord Neal, keyboardist Brian Simms and guitarists Mikel Gehl and Sheppard.

"She'll be working with Lisa mostly, and then myself and the other guys with hair," said Sheppard, adding that Wheeler will help the band's look reach the next level. "I think it's a great idea to have help when and wherever possible."

Wheeler started making music in the early 1990s with the band Thunder Alley. Once they split up, she continued to perform at functions and karaoke to maintain her voice. Nevertheless, she thinks the journey is just starting as she's currently working on her first solo album.

"A strange combination, but it proved useful in my career path, an artistically driven beauty professional."

— Heidi Wheeler

According to Jennifer Elkhouri, co-owner of the salon, Wheeler is a multitasking person. "I think it's fantastic that she got this opportunity to go to the Grammys," said Elkhouri. "Not only to do the hair and make-up for some of the members but to be surrounded by musicians and be put in that environment."

Wheeler will be going on a four-day trip to the Grammys. "Of course, I expect Milkshake to bring home the Grammy, but their nomination makes them winners already," she said. "It's a wonderful thing and I'm proud to be a part of it."

As for her future goals, Wheeler hopes to one day open her own salon and be able to succeed in both of her passions, music and styling.

"On a personal note, there is something to be said about success by association," she said. "The band's talents and my talents, it's a great match. I thank the salon for being artistic-minded in their approach to helping me further my career, and I thank the band for inviting me to join them on this one-of-a-kind event."

NEWS BRIEFS

FROM PAGE 4

described himself to police as a "bust-your-mouth-open kind of guy."

Furthermore, Birnbaum said, "The defendant said he'd robbed so many people he couldn't say a number. And he admitted 'blessing in' new gang members from Fairfax High School."

Defense attorney Neal Olesker said he and his client didn't agree with all the evidence presented by the prosecution. But, he added, "We do agree with the evidence that supports the pleas."

Maxfield then found Olds guilty of all six charges of gang participation and recruitment of juveniles into a gang. He ordered a pre-sentencing report be made and set Olds' sentencing for April 9. Birnbaum requested that Olds continue being held in jail without bond and the judge agreed.

Resource Officer Shawn Sutherland investigated several cases of larceny and fraud at Fairfax High. According to a warrant written by an undercover police officer, confidential sources told police that "the gang makes money by committing crimes, such as larcenies and robberies, at [Olds'] direction."

— BONNIE HOBBS

Murphy Is Not Indicted

In August 2009, City of Fairfax Police charged a Dunn Loring woman, Kara E. Murphy, 22, with stealing from Marshall's department store at 9640 Main St. However, when her case went before the Fairfax County grand jury, last Tuesday, Jan. 19, she was not indicted.

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FAITH

Burke Presbyterian Church is participating in the Church World Service (CWS) humanitarian relief efforts to help the victims of the earthquake in Haiti. The public can help CWS in its urgent disaster response by assembling and donating a hygiene kit or a baby kit. BPC is a collection point for the kits. To create a kit, visit either www.BurkePresChurch.org and click on "Haiti Relief" or visit www.ChurchWorldService.org and click on "Hygiene Kit" or "Baby Kit." Both of these sites provide specific instructions on how to assemble a kit. Drop off kits at Burke Presbyterian Church, located at 5690 Oak Leather Drive, Burke. Phone the church office with any questions at 703-764-0456.

Renew Your Wedding Vows on Valentines Day on Sunday, Feb. 14, 11 a.m., at Messiah United Methodist Church, 6215 Rolling Road, Springfield. The sanctuary will be decorated for a wedding and this opportunity to reconnect with God and your spouse in a meaningful way. The church will sell flowers for "brides" to carry in the service. A nursery is available for age 2 and under, and Sunday School classes for age 3 through sixth grade. Immediately following the service, couples are invited to a wedding style reception in the Fellowship Hall. Bring wedding albums to share with others, enjoy a light snack and wedding cake.

Messiah's Marriage Matters Ministry will also offer the six-week class "Dream Team: Building Unity in Marriage," on Sundays, Feb. 21-March 28, 9:30 a.m., and on Wednesdays Feb. 24-March 31, 7:15 p.m. Free child care will be available. Register at 703-569-9862.

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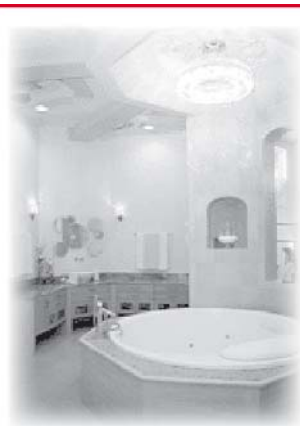
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CALENDAR

To have community events listed, send to south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416 with questions. Deadline for calendar listings is two weeks prior to event.

FRIDAY/JAN. 29

Friends of the Pohick Regional Library Used Book Sale. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Choice selections. All ages. 703-644-7333.

The Kennedys and Maura Kennedy's Solo CD Release. 7 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$18. www.jamminjava.com.

Springfield Community Theatre presents "Heros." 8 p.m. at The John Swayze Theatre at the New School, 9431 Silver King Court, Fairfax. \$18 general admission, \$15 seniors and students. 703-866-6238 or www.sctonline.org.

Brendan's Voyage. 7-9:30 p.m., at The Auld Shebeen, 3971 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax. 703-293-9600.

Aspen Ensemble: The Discovery Series. 8 p.m. The Barns at Wolf Trap, Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1624 Trap Road, Vienna. \$35. 703-938-2404 or wolftrap.org.

SATURDAY/JAN. 30

Friends of the Pohick Regional Library Used Book Sale. 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Choice selections. All ages. 703-644-7333.

Sing Me Insomnia, The Goodnight Anthem and Struan Shields. 6 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$12. www.jamminjava.com.

An Evening with Charlie Hunter. 9:30 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door. www.jamminjava.com.

Springfield Community Theatre presents "Heros." 8 p.m. at The John Swayze Theatre at the New School, 9431 Silver King Court, Fairfax. \$18 general admission, \$15 seniors and students. 703-866-6238 or www.sctonline.org.

Brendan's Voyage. 7-9:30 p.m., at The Auld Shebeen, 3971 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax. 703-293-9600.

John Eaton. 7:30 p.m. The Barns at Wolf Trap, Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1624 Trap Road, Vienna. \$25. 703-938-2404 or wolftrap.org.

SUNDAY/JAN. 31

Martina McBride and Trace Adkins. 7:30 p.m. at the George Mason University Patriot Center, 4500 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. Tickets are \$49.75-\$69.75, available at all

Ticketmaster locations or Phonecharge at 703-573-SEAT. 703-993-3000 or www.patriotcenter.com.

Friends of the Pohick Regional Library Used Book Sale. 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Choice selections. All ages. 703-644-7333.

Springfield Community Theatre presents "Heros." 2 p.m. at The John Swayze Theatre at the New School, 9431 Silver King Court, Fairfax. \$18 general admission, \$15 seniors and students. 703-866-6238 or www.sctonline.org.

MONDAY/FEB. 1

Weeping Weeds & Veils: Victorian Mourning Customs. 7 p.m. Fairfax County Cemetery Preservation Association meeting, City of Fairfax Regional Library, 10360 North St., Fairfax. Free. 703-322-1811.

Can You See My Shadow? 10:30



Jewelry by Janine Bland

a.m. Kings Park Library, 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke. Groundhog Day stories and activities. Age 3-5 with adult. 703-978-5600.

Calling All Guys. 7 p.m. Kings Park Library, 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke. Book discussion group for boys. Samurai Shortstop by Alan Gratz. Age 9-12 with adult. 703-978-5600.

TUESDAY/FEB. 2

Teen Book Club. 6:30 p.m. Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Food, fun and reading. Age 12-18. 703-249-1520.

Girls Rock! with Ivy Rose, Mad Brenda and The Shields Brothers Band. 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. \$10. 703-255-1566 or

www.jamminjava.com.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 3

Buckwheat Zydeco, General Admission Dance. 8 p.m. at Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1624 Trap Road, Vienna. \$22. 703-938-2404 or www.wolftrap.org.

Tales for Twos: Kittens and Mittens. 10:30 a.m. Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Stories, songs and activities about three kittens who have trouble with their mittens. Age 24-35 months with adult. 703-644-7333.

Writers' Roundtable. 6 p.m. Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Discuss your work with other writers. Adults. 703-644-7333.

Needlework Group. 10:30 a.m. Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Bring a project to work on in the company of other needlecrafters. 703-249-1520.

The Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia showcases artwork by local artists Sarah D. Samuels and Janine Bland through Feb. 16, in the Bodzin Art Gallery, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. For more information, call 703-323-0880; e-mail

IreneG@jccnv.org; or visit www.jccnv.org. Gallery hours are Sunday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-10 p.m.; Friday, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.; and Saturday, 12:30-6 p.m.

Fairgrounds. 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. \$10. 703-255-1566 or www.jamminjava.com.

THURSDAY/FEB. 4

Fairfax High School Choral Department Cabaret Night. 7:30 p.m. at Fairfax High School, 3501 Rebel Run, Fairfax. Tickets cover admission, dessert and a beverage. \$10 adults; \$5 seniors, students or children over 2. \$25 for a family of four. A separate raffle for gift baskets will also be available. www.fhscorus.net.

The Persuasions. 8 p.m. at Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1624 Trap Road, Vienna. \$25. For more, call 703-938-2404 or visit www.wolftrap.org.

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COMMUNITY

Student Speeches Welcome New Citizens

FROM PAGE 3

versity overcome by one of the Little Rock Nine students, a Marine who helped raise the flag on Iwo Jima and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

"These men and women had no special advantage," said Wyatt. "They were all normal citizens following the duties and responsibilities they inherited when they became a citizen of the United States of America. All of the proud men and women from the past have set the ideals of the citizenship bar high. I hope that you can set it even higher."

Fran called American patriot Nathan Hale's words, "I only regret that I have but one life to give for my country," inspirational. Then, reading Robert Frost's poem, "The Road Not Taken," Fran said it illustrates people's "ambition to go new places and learn new things."

He said the new citizens are adventurous, like most Americans, and he urged them to "take the road less traveled. I hear it's full of twists and turns, but it's also quite an adventure."

"Without you, America would no longer be the melting pot," Alex said. "It would just be a regular, old, metal pot with one ingredient. What you have accomplished today marks another point in history that began in 1892 when Ellis Island first opened



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

The new U.S. citizens and their families.

to allow immigrants such as yourselves to become citizens of the United States."

He also said he could connect to what the new citizens have endured. "My entire family is Jewish, which doesn't make things easy," said Alex. "My family that emigrated from Russia went through the same exact struggles as you. [Being] Jewish, they must have been prejudged by people. ... Cherish your citizenship. Now you belong to the

greatest country in the world."

Mikey told the new citizens that their different cultures and ethnic backgrounds are great things because they'll further diversify America. He said this country has remained strong through hardships, and he asked the newcomers, "Will you stay strong when we are hated?" He noted that their persistence to become naturalized shows character.

"Our founding fathers, too, used to be foreigners, but have been praised as some of the best people to ever come through here," said Mikey. "Even though we have different tones of skin, different personalities [and] different tastes, we are still brethren of the same country. We are all the same on the inside, place of origin aside."

Afterward, the four students discussed their speeches and the ceremony. "I liked it," said Wyatt. "It was pretty cool. I know relatives who've gone through this process, and now I got to experience it firsthand."

Fran had never been to a naturalization ceremony before and enjoyed being there. Alex's favorite part was when each person stood when his or her birth country was announced. "It was a fun, unique experience," said Mikey. "And it was like a first taste of life in America for those people."

Taylor called the event a "natural fit" with the students' civics curriculum. "It was a great opportunity to bring what they were learning in class to life," she said. "When these students give such beautiful and inspirational speeches, it's very meaningful to the new citizens."

"It's wonderful for us, as an office, to do outreach with the community," Taylor said. "Beforehand, I told the students, 'You're speaking to these people on probably one of the top five days in their lives, so don't be nervous, just speak from the heart.'"

Civic Leaders Lobby School Board over Budget

FROM PAGE 3

grams in other parts of the state. The state also keeps the county from instituting other taxes.

For the past few years, the local chapter of the League of Women Voters has complained that Fairfax County Public Schools operating budget remains opaque, even to those in the league, who are active in trying to understand county spending and expenditures.

THE LEAGUE of Women Voters believes that democracies depend on informed citizen participation, which the school system makes difficult by not presenting budget documents in an easy-to-understand format, said Sara Mayhew, a member of the organization.

"Although FCPS provides voluminous budget materials to the public, they do not provide a clear picture of the whole budget. We get information about some trees but not the forest," said Mayhew.

Even if Fairfax County Public Schools has to freeze teacher pay next year, Mark Glaser would like to see the School Board give current teachers a two-step salary increase on paper, so that teachers would not be put at a disadvantage once the economy rebounds.

Glaser, president of the Fairfax County

Federation of Teachers, said one of the problems with foregoing a salary step for teachers during the 2010-11 calendar is that it would cause many staff members to lose out money for years to come.

Teachers who are due an increase in their salary this coming year will continue to be behind where they should have been in terms of compensation for much of their teaching career, he said. By putting the "step" in this year on paper, but not actually handing out the money that goes along with it, the school system will avoid putting its current employees at a disadvantage in the future.

Glaser also advocated for more cutting to administration and fewer decreases in teachers and instructional assistants.

"Teachers and IA's teach children; administrators don't," said Glaser.

Catherine Lorenze wants the Fairfax County School Board to trim the school system's central administration funding by 10 percent. Currently, Dale has proposed cutting five percent of the positions in central administration, which Lorenze said does not equate to 5 percent of the total funding for central administration.

"He has proposed eliminating a lot of jobs out of central administration that are lower on the pay scale, like custodians and ad-

ministrative assistants," said Lorenze, who is part of the new Fairfax Education Coalition. The group is made up several of the country's largest education stakeholder, including the Fairfax Education Association and Fairfax County Council of PTAs.



"Music education is a major factor in breaking the cycle of poverty for many students."

— Christian Donlon, Fairfax resident

The coalition said it has done its own analysis of the schools operating budget and asserts more cuts can be made in the administration that would preserve teacher positions.

While the superintendent's budget currently preserves funding for elementary immersion, Dale said the programs could be cut, particularly if the supervisors do not give the school system the additional funding it has requested.

Iliana Sanchez grew up speaking Span-

ish at home, but she formally learned how to read and write in the language through Fairfax County Public Schools Spanish immersion program.

"As a Hispanic student, many would think I already knew Spanish. However, one has to remember that even when a child has the same language at home, there is no formal instruction," said Sanchez.

Christian Donlon has spent the last six years teaching music in some of Fairfax's neediest elementary schools in areas like Reston and Alexandria.

Donlon said, during this school year alone, 7,800 Fairfax students received an instrument to play at a reduced fee. He is worried that cutting elementary band and string programs will put poor students at greater risk to become involved in anti-social activities like drugs and gangs.

"Many students in those schools come home to a parent who must leave them unsupervised to work a minimum wage job, or worse they come home to a parent who abuses drugs and alcohol. ... Our students need these classes because it creates a comfort zone," said Donlon.

"Music education is a major factor in breaking the cycle of poverty for many students," he said.

Cavs Comfy in New District

After rocky start, boys' basketball team finds success in Patriot District.

BY REED S. ALBERS
THE CONNECTION

One trip around the Patriot District is all it took for the W.T. Woodson boys' basketball team to get accustomed to their new home.

After dropping four straight district matches to start January, the team is finally beginning to heat up with a recent three-game winning streak.

"It's a little different in this district," senior Max Lenox said. "We play a much more athletic game [in the Patriot District]."

"The game here is a lot faster."

— Mark Noe

Prior to the 2009-10 season, the Cavaliers (8-9, 4-5 in district play) were accustomed to annual match-ups with Liberty District foes, but a re-alignment of the districts sent the boys and all of Woodson's sports teams to the Patriot District.

"It's a change," Lenox said. "But we're getting used to it."

A four-game losing streak in early January showed the Cavs that they still had a lot to learn about the district's competitiveness.

"The game here is a lot faster," sophomore guard Mark Noe said.



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Head coach Doug Craig said he made adjustments to his strategies when his team joined the Patriot District.

"First time around, we weren't prepared for it."

The team is now showing that it can be a force in the Patriot District, evident by a 68-59 win over district rival Robert E. Lee on Tuesday, Jan. 26.

The victory is the Cavaliers' third district win in a row, a streak which includes wins over West Springfield and Lake Braddock.

"We let a few games get past us," Lenox said. "But now we know we can play with these guys."

THE CHANGE in district also prompted a minor change in coaching philosophy for head coach Doug Craig.

"This is a league of runs," he said. "Teams get out on 10, 12 point runs and you have to stop that. I've been calling timeouts earlier to control that."

Craig said the transition from the old district to the new hasn't hindered the team's ability to adapt.

"More than anything, it's just a different style of basketball," he said. "The Liberty District is good, but this is more up and down. You have to play more helter-skelter."

While the district has provided new challenges for his teammates, Lenox, who scored 39 points in the victory over Lee, is flourishing. He's 13 points away from scoring 1,000 career points as a Cavalier.

"I just try to do what my team needs me to do," Lenox said. "If they need me to pass, I will. If they need me to score, I can."

Lenox sat out his junior season with an injury, but his return has been a welcome one for Woodson.

SEE WOODSON, PAGE 11

Robinson Runners Race in New York

The Robinson girls' 4x200 meter relay turned in one of its fastest performances of the season at The New Balance Games on Jan. 19 in New York City.

The girls took advantage of a chance to run on a banked indoor track at The Armory

WEEK IN SPORTS

Indoor Track and Field Center, turning in a time of 1:43.96 for fifth overall at the competition.

The boys' team also turned in a speedy performance with a 3:30 time in the 4x400 meter relay.

Rams Struggle Against Wildcats

On Jan. 22 the Robinson (2-14) boys' basketball team struggled to snap a 10-game losing streak against Centreville.

The Rams lost 66-45 extending the streak to 11 games. Mike Rice led the scoring with 19 points and C.J. Cleaves rounded out Robinson's top scorers with 10.

The Rams will face Concorde District foe Chantilly (10-6) on Jan. 28.

The Lady Rams (9-6) also suffered a loss at the hands of Centreville on Jan. 22.

Robinson fell short 48-44 in the game, but the team was led by Samantha Partonen's 13 points and Brigitte Kuter's 10 points.

Don't Call It a Rebuild

Power shifts from the girls' swim team to the boys at Fairfax High.

BY REED S. ALBERS
THE CONNECTION

As a sophomore, Fairfax swimmer Joey Kelly watched as the 2007-08 girls' swim and dive team captured the school's first state title in 2008. Now, as a senior, he is a key member in the boys' bid to make a title run of their own.

"The guys have done really well this season," he said. "We've only lost two meets and we had swimmers missing at both."

On Jan. 22, Kelly and the boys closed out the regular season with a 207-107 crushing of South Lakes.

In the meet, the Rebel boys posted six region qualifying times and won every individual event in the meet.

It also was a red-letter night for Kelly as he qualified for the state



PHOTO BY REED S. ALBERS/THE CONNECTION

SEE POWER, PAGE 11

The Fairfax boys' swim and dive team finished the 2009-10 season with a 5-2 record.

SPORTS

Power Shift for Swimmers

FROM PAGE 10

finals in the 100-meter fly with a time of 52.92, setting a Fairfax County school record in the event.

With the victory, the Rebel boys finished the 2009-10 season with a 5-2 record.

Some rivals might have thought the Rebels would be in a rebuilding stage following their state championship in 2008, but head coach Meredith Harris said it's more or less a shift in power.

"It's not really a rebuild, things have just changed," Harris said. "The focus has switched onto the boys. The boys have been improving so much. Since their freshman year, they've been building up."

Harris said that progression of the boys team is finally peaking and with Kelly and many other male swimmers at the top of their game, it could be an exciting post-season for Fairfax.

"Our boys have come a long way," Harris said. "They've always been in the shadow of the girls. This year is the year for the boys."

Kelly isn't focusing on the state meet yet, but instead, he is preparing for the upcoming Liberty District Championship meet.

"We have a lot of room to improve, but we're getting there," he said.

The senior captain does recognize that his team has grown over the course of four seasons.

"We're in a good position this year," he said.

"We have a lot of depth and we hope that we can contest in the regionals and the states."

Kelly remains optimistic that this may be the year the boys' team matches the girls 2008 state title performance. "It would be great [to win states]," he said. "I don't know when it will happen next, but hopefully it's close."

5 Qs with Fairfax swimmer Katie Rigotti

Q: What's the pump-up song you have to hear before you hit the track?

A: This year it's been Lady GaGa's "Bad Romance." The whole team listens to it on the bus before meets.

Q: What's the farthest you've been away from home?

A: I went to Mexico with my family for a vacation. It was a lot of fun.

Q: What's your favorite thing about being a part of the Fairfax swim team?

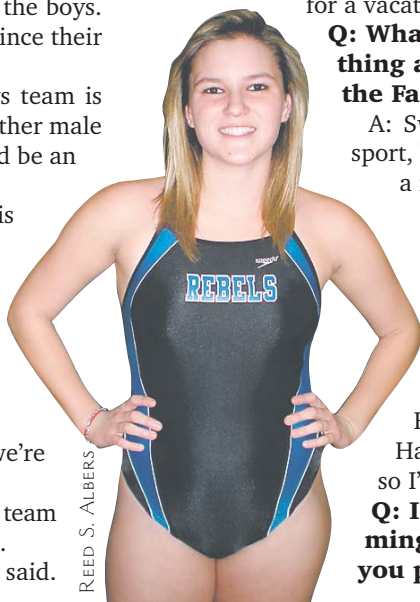
A: Swimming isn't my No. 1 sport, but I like how it feels like a family on the team.

Q: If you could train with any athlete, who would it be?

A: Probably [retired United States soccer player and former Lake Braddock student] Mia Hamm. I really love soccer, so I'd like to train with her.

Q: If you weren't swimming, what sport would you play?

A: This past year I've been working more in field hockey. ... I'm just a really big sports person.



Katie Rigotti is one of the Rebels' top female swimmers this season.

— REED S. ALBERS

Woodson Finds Place in Patriot

FROM PAGE 10

"He's the guy we can look to for scoring," Noe said. "It's good to have that on our team."

Lenox's return might be a boost for the Cavaliers, but the team is still without another one of its stars, John Schoof, who is battling a leg injury and has

been sidelined all season.

"It hurts to not have [Schoof] out there with us," Noe said. "But Lenox helps pick up the slack and we're working around [the injury]."

The Cavaliers continue their season with a road game against district opponent T.C. Williams (10-3, 8-0 in district play) on Jan. 29, at 7:45 p.m.

NEWS BRIEFS

Thefts from Truck

City of Fairfax Police have arrested an Alexandria resident in connection with a crime last weekend in the 10000 block of Blue Coat Drive. Police say a person reported Saturday, Jan. 23, at 7:54 p.m., that on Jan. 4, a former employee had taken a GPS unit and a credit card from his business truck. The victim further alleged that this person subsequently refused to return the GPS unit and made unauthorized transactions using the credit card.

Keep Children Safe

City of Fairfax Police, in conjunction with the Optimist Club, will be offering Safe Assured identification kits on Friday, Jan. 29, and Friday, Feb. 26, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., at the City of Fairfax Police Department, 3730 Old Lee Highway.

Parents will receive a full-color photo ID and a mini-CD containing digital fingerprints, a digital photo, video showing movement and mannerisms, a general physical description, vital personal information and a family code word. Private information is encrypted and accessible only by law enforcement. Missing posters can be created and printed directly from the mini-CD in English, Spanish and French. The Safe Assured ID kits are free and an appointment is necessary. Contact Sgt. Pam Nevlud at 703-385-7966.

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CONTRIBUTED

Sylvia Harris

Longtime Fairfax Resident Dies

Sylvia Elizabeth Wilkinson Harris, 89, died Jan. 21 in Smithfield, where she lived for the last three years. Harris lived in Fairfax for 49 years prior to moving to Smithfield.

Harris was born in Arlington to Robert Leslie Wilkinson and Mary Abigail Wilson Wilkinson. She graduated from Washington-Lee High School and attended George Washington University. In 1942, she married Charles "Woody" Woodman Harris Jr., of Arlington and moved to Fairfax in 1957 when Charles Harris was appointed Fairfax City postmaster.

The Harrises were active members of the community, participating in neighborhood bridge clubs, Little League, Fairfax Presbyterian Church, Fairfax Rotary Club and much more. Harris was an avid reader, history buff and fan of the arts. She was also a teacher at the Talent House Private School in Fairfax for many years.

Harris is preceded in death by Charles Harris, her parents, sister Betty Gayle Wilkinson Kilbourne, brother Robert Leslie Wilkinson Jr. and grandson James Morton Townsend IV. She is survived by her eight children Barbara Stafford (David), Sharon Schalow (Sonny) and Bill Harris (Mary) of Smithfield, Beth Young (Steve) of Hume, Charles W. Harris III (Fawn) of Ventura, Calif., Roberta Gillette (Peck) of Littleton, N.C. and Frances Harris Townsend and Mary Harris of Fort Lauderdale, Fla. She is also survived by 11 grandchildren, five great grandchildren and one great, great grandson.

A memorial service will take place Saturday, Jan. 30, at 12 p.m., at Everly's Funeral Home, 10565 Main St., Fairfax, with interment immediately following. In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to Fairfax City Regional Library or Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind.

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Time for Civil Redistricting

The U.S. Census is underway, an every-10-year process that attempts to count every single person in the United States at their home address. From the results of the count come a nearly infinite number of critical decisions. The way those decisions are carried out have consequences for every one of us.

One of those decisions is the redrawing of political lines for all political offices, including the General Assembly, U. S. Congress and local offices. In Virginia, the current process allows the political party in charge to draw the lines.

Proposals in the Virginia General Assembly could lead to a change in politics and democracy here. The measures would establish the Virginia Redistricting Commission to redraw Congressional and General Assembly district boundaries without the bitter partisan hatchet that has characterized Virginia's process under each party in the past.

Tradition in Virginia holds that the ruling party decides how to redraw the lines around political districts after each census. The process in the past has involved the majority party using its power without any checks or balances to create districts that protect incumbents of the majority party and try to force out incum-

Governor ran on non-partisan redistricting; now is time for proposals in General Assembly.

bents of the minority party.

The losers in the process are the citizens of Virginia, who first find themselves in political districts that make little sense geographically or in terms of communities of interest. They then find that even if they are unhappy with their elected officials, the gerrymandering has created districts that have killed any competition between parties, and that each party strongly discourages any primary challenges.

EDITORIAL

The result: most voters have far less choice in who represents them than they should.

There are probably hundreds of ways to set up a commission or non-partisan board that would take the politics out of the process.

House Bill 323, introduced by Del. Ken Plum (D) of Reston, and Senate Bill 626, introduced by Sen. Jill Holtzman Vogel (R) pave the way for real reform and integrity in the political process.

— MARY KIMM

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Redistricting Bill

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Source: <http://leg1.state.va.us/lis.htm>

Action and Its Consequences

To the Editor:

A letter appeared recently in a local paper saying that it's time to cut the president a little slack, give the man some elbowroom to set things in order. He is, after all, only one man. Well, the uproar against this letter was instantaneous. Both the political right and left pilloried the author for her blind support of Obama. The left is mad at the president for the War in Afghanistan and broken promises of open government. The right is mad at him for being president in the first place. What seems odd is how so few commentators are rising to defend Obama at all. Here are three reasons why:

Reason One: For Republicans, it's payback time. Democrats relentlessly attacked President Bush for a now-familiar list of reasons: The way he used 9/11 as an excuse to invade Iraq, the way he lied about weapons of mass destruction, appointed opponents of regulation to oversee regulatory agencies, politicized the Justice Department, squandered the Clinton-era surplus and ignored the economy as it began to falter. Democrats deeply despised the actions of G.W. Bush and said so whenever possible. Today, the tables are turned,

and if you open Google and type in any phrase that Obama ever said, you'll first see pages and pages of criticism, and finally, links to the source of the president's real words. Based on the Dems treatment of Bush, Republicans consider their virulence to be fair retribution.

LETTERS

Reason Two: Many acknowledge that Obama has a full plate, that he's called upon to fix health care, the economy and security issues simultaneously. However, he also made many promises about transparency in government. Indeed, Obama's most soaring campaign speeches were about the end of backroom dealing, the end of "old" politics.

The "open government" promises went down much easier than acknowledging one obvious fact: Whoever ended up as president in 2008 would have to make long-avoided choices that would make everyone mad. That's why those choices were long-avoided. OK, fine, but so what? Why should the president have to defer his promises of transparency "till later, just because the job is hard? Can't he tackle everything at once, and be in the open as well? Probably not, and here's why: Although we all agree that the economy, security needs, health care spending and

the environment need immediate attention, no congressional representative wants to bear the burden of that immediacy. What if something is good for the nation, but not popular with the folks back home? A congressman might support the president at such times, might choose conscience over expediency, but only if the president is popular. Such two-mindedness is nothing you want shown on camera, but it is, honestly, the way the political world turns. We have a word for politicians who put what's good for America ahead of what's good for their district: "Unemployed."

Reason Three: As president, each time you stick your neck out and make an executive decision, you'll get criticized, which is one reason why Republicans tend to govern by not governing. Note the Republican slogans "Let the market sort it out" or "Further regulation makes things worse." Now back in 2008, there was one candidate who trudged up and down the country with stories about the bad things that happens when you let insurance industries sort it out, what happens when you let mortgage lenders and banks sort it. We agreed with him and elected that candidate by the largest margin of victory since Reagan. We did not elect the guy who said everything could be fixed by lower taxes and

that government should stand aside and allow losers to lose and winners to win, regardless of the social consequences. We sent that guy home, and we elected the guy who said he'd aggressively try to fix the economy and health care. Trouble is, there's no template for how to repair America's portion of the global economy, or how to make it so middle-class households don't lose everything they own when they face prolonged illness. This is new turf for a president, and Obama will have to get his hands dirty proposing and modifying various solutions.

But a funny thing happened last year: We've learned that such a process does not make a president look "presidential." We've learned that a president who stands aside and does nothing looks a little classier, more "in charge," more confident, a bit like he knows what he was doing, even if he's doing nothing. Perhaps that's because we could make believe that President Bush was doing a "strategic" nothing, rather than a "clueless" nothing. What we've learned in Obama's first year is that it's easier to appear "in charge" by sitting on your hands and professing faith in the American spirit and the robust economy to eventually rebound.

Jerry Armato
Fairfax

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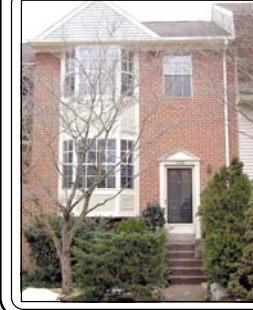


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