

Fairfax Station ❖ Laurel Hill

CONNECTION

Clifton ❖ Lorton ❖ Lorton Valley ❖ Crosspointe

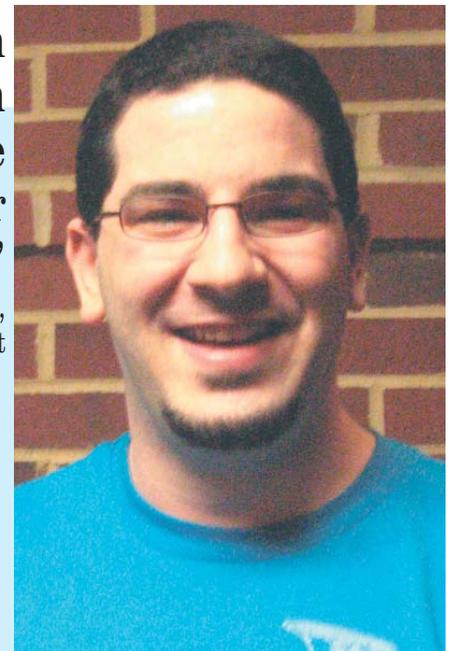
“Although FCPS provides voluminous budget materials to the public, they do not provide a clear picture of the whole budget.”

— Sara Mayhew, Fairfax Area League of Women Voters



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

— Christian Donlon, Fairfax resident



“Teachers and IA’s teach children; administrators don’t.”

— Mark Glaser, Fairfax County Federation of Teachers

S.O.S. — Save Our Schools

NEWS, PAGE 2

Parents, civic leaders lobby School Board to save programs on budget chopping block.

“This budget proposed a communications office of 13 people. Our own U.S. senators have two communication people to serve the entire state.”

— Catherine Lorenze, Fairfax Education Coalition founder



“Having seen the success of the program first hand through my younger brother, I decided I could not pass up the opportunity.”

— Amanda Powers, Orange Hunt Elementary School parent and Lorton resident



“Half-day kindergartners are not getting the same opportunities as full-day kindergartners.”

— Michele Nellenbach, Mount Vernon resident

“One has to remember that even when a child has the same language at home, there is no formal instruction.”

— Iliana Sanchez, George Mason University student



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SPORTS, PAGE 10 ❖ CALENDAR, PAGE 12 ❖ HOME SALES, PAGE 15 ❖ CLASSIFIED, PAGE 16

PHOTOS BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE/THE CONNECTION

GOP Sees Chance in 11th

Is Gerry Connolly vulnerable? Herrity to challenge Fimian in June primary.

BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE
THE CONNECTION

2009 might be remembered as the year the Fairfax County Republican Party got its groove back.

The Grand Old Party won special elections for Braddock District supervisor and Providence District School Board member, two seats that had been held by Democrats for several years. They also managed to knock off two incumbent Democrats in the House of Delegates after losing ground on that front in the last two campaign cycles.

Local Republicans also produced a 4,500-vote win in Fairfax County for Gov. Bob McDonnell (R) this past November.

Though McDonnell was heavily favored to win the gubernatorial race statewide, Fairfax County had not voted for a Republican in a countywide campaign since former President George W. Bush (R) won the county 10 years ago.

Even Fairfax's Republican Party chairman, Anthony Bedell, was taken aback by McDonnell's local win. On that election night, Bedell admitted that he was just hoping to keep the governor's race "close" in Fairfax but did not necessarily anticipate



U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11)



Patrick Herrity (R)



Keith Fimian (R)

they would win the locality.

REPUBLICAN success in 2009 has given them the confidence to turn their attention to bigger targets, namely U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D) in Virginia's 11th District Con-

"Nothing unites the Republican Party in Fairfax like the thought of getting Gerry Connolly out of office."

— Supervisor John Cook (R-Braddock)

gressional seat. Two well-known Republican candidates have emerged to challenge the Democrat and will face each other in a primary June 8.

Oakton businessman Keith Fimian, who lost to Connolly in 2008, has been actively campaigning and raising money for the better part of a year. Connolly and Fimian

squared off in the 2008 race after the incumbent Tom Davis (R) retired. Supervisor Patrick Herrity (R-Springfield) jumped into the race Jan. 13.

Connolly is considered the leader of Fairfax County's Democratic Party. He served as chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors for five years before joining Congress in 2009.

"Nothing unites the Republican Party in Fairfax like the thought of getting Gerry Connolly out of office," said Supervisor John Cook (R-Braddock).

Cook won last year's special election over a better known Democratic opponent in a magisterial district that is entirely in Connolly's congressional district.

In November, McDonnell beat Democratic opponent Creigh Deeds 55 percent to 45 percent in the 11th District, which includes

SEE FIMIAN, PAGE 14

Funding Formula Raises Ire

'Legal action' considered.

BY VERONICA GARABELLI
CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Gov. Bob McDonnell's (R) plan to continue using an education funding formula that takes money from more affluent school districts and gives it to less affluent ones has so upset Fairfax County supervisors that they are considering legal action.

"This is really a cut-and-dried issue," said Supervisor Jeffrey C. McKay (D-Lee). "It's outright discrimination against Northern Virginia."

McDonnell's decision will cut \$61 million from the Fairfax County Public Schools' budget, said Paul Regnier, a spokesman for the school district.

According to the school system's Web site, Fairfax County's school budget for the 2010 fiscal year is \$2.2 billion, so the funding cut amounts to 3 percent of the budget. Regnier said that could mean larger class sizes, the elimination of full-day kindergartens or the curtailment of foreign language emergence services.

McDonnell's office confirmed Friday, Jan. 22, that he would uphold the use of the school funding formula proposed in December by then-Gov. Tim Kaine (D).

Details will be given to agency heads next week, McDonnell's press secretary, Stacey Johnson, said in an e-mail to Capital News Service.

Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34) said he was furious when he heard the formula would be frozen at the level set by Kaine.

Petersen noted that because the real estate market had fallen in Northern Virginia, Fairfax, Prince William and Loudoun counties received lower scores on the scale than they had in the past. Ordinarily, the lower scores would have resulted in more money from the state for basic education.

"Now, thanks to the plan that was put forward by Gov. Kaine, the rules are being changed on us," Petersen said.

SEE FROZEN, PAGE 12

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 14

Muslim Youth Groups Blaze New Path

Post 9/11, Groups focus on growing sense of community among Muslim youth.

BY SOFIA SAIYED
THE CONNECTION

After their last class on Friday afternoons, as other students rush home to start the weekend, a group of 20 or so Muslim students line up to pray together in a classroom at Chantilly High School. Male and female students line up separately according to Islamic tradition.

After prayer, students discuss topics ranging from how Muslim youth should treat their parents (with love and respect, they said) to biased portrayals of Muslims in the media and their reactions to events such as the Fort Hood shooting. By 3 p.m., most of the teenagers have rushed off to part-time jobs and to hang out with friends.

The Muslim Students Association of Chantilly High School is one of at least 15 Muslim student groups at Northern Virginia high schools, most of which have sprung up in the past 10 years. Group activities typically include school wide events, community service and recreational events for



The Muslim students pray in a classroom at Chantilly High School.

members. At Chantilly High, students founded the Muslim Students Association in 2005 so that they would have a place together for Friday prayers.

At South County Secondary School, the Muslim Students Association formed in November 2009 to "help improve people's view of Islam and educate out Muslim and non-Muslim youth," said Anam Mian, president and founder of the South County

group.

Similarly, at Lake Braddock Secondary School, a group of students founded the Muslim Students Association around the time of the Sept. 11 attacks to increase awareness about Islam and Muslims, said Haider Dost, co-president of the Lake Braddock MSA.

But after almost a decade of raising awareness, groups are starting to focus

"We tried to show how you can still be patriotic and still be a Muslim."

— Ali Baluch, vice president of the Mustafa Center Youth Group

more on their members and developing a sense of community among Muslim youth.

According to Dost, a senior who splits his time between Lake Braddock and Northern Virginia Community College, the Muslim Students Association now primarily serves as a support group for its members: "The MSA is meant to foster unity for the Muslim students at Lake Braddock, make Muslims comfortable at school, and give them a place to hang out." Through weekly meetings, Dost said students build unity and strength through their shared experiences as Muslims growing up in America.

The MSA's role as a support group has been particularly important for female students who wear the hijab, or head scarf. According to Dost, girls wearing the hijab were most likely to experience stigmatization.

More recently however, Muslim students have reported only positive experiences within the school community, which Dost attributes to the work of the Muslim Stu

SEE MUSLIM, PAGE 4

Sangster Students Go Green with Gunston

George Mason University mascot is teaching children about environmental responsibility.

BY REED S. ALBERS
THE CONNECTION

He's big, not mean and his job description includes leading cheers at basketball games and helping the community go green.

Say hello to Gunston, George Mason University's new and improved mascot who recently received a make-over and added responsibilities.

"He's the school's community relations ambassador," said Traci Claar, GMU's director of community relations.

Gunston's new look features the tri-corner hat that was a trademark on the old costume, but has traded in his basketball jersey for a traditional 1700s outfit.

"He's also warmer, fuzzier and doesn't have a tail," said GMU spokesman Sarah Gallagher.

Besides leading cheers at GMU sporting events, Gunston also serves as an educator for young children.

On Jan. 25, Gunston visited Sangster Elementary School's School Age Child Care

(SAAC) program and delivered a message about green energy and how to conserve natural resources.

Through various songs, games and rhythmic clapping, Gunston helped to make the lesson fun.

The performance earned rave reviews from Maureen Galvin, a SAAC supervisor at Sangster Elementary.

"It was excellent," Galvin said of the environmental responsibility message. "[GMU] made it fun and full of information," and it's targeted to the right age group."

Sangster Elementary is just one of many SAAC programs that Gunston has visited since the "Go Green With Gunston" program began in October 2009.

Claar said the decision to have Gunston lead the green movement was simple. Who better than a gigantic green costumed character to help teach kindergartners and young school children about green energy?

"[Going green] is something we really wanted to promote," Claar said. "And it gives back to the community. The kids re-



Gunston poses for a photo with the students of Sangster Elementary School's SAAC program.

ally react to Gunston well."

Gunston also acts as an academic ambassador for Mason.

"We've been looking for a way to promote math and science in [local] schools," Claar said. "We wanted to get kids thinking about math and science careers and possibly go-

ing to school at George Mason."

Gunston's visits are more than a simple 30-minute show with games and songs. A three-week curriculum of green-themed games and activities prepares students for Gunston's visit.

SEE GUNSTON, PAGE 12



DONATED PHOTO

Members of the St. Peter's in the Woods Children's Choir perform Jan. 16 at the church's Winter Charity Gala.

Winter Charity Gala Raises \$3,700 for Haiti Relief

St. Peter's in the Woods Episcopal Church raised more than \$3,700 in relief funds for victims in Haiti. The money was donated to the Episcopal Relief & Development's Haiti Fund.

The church hosted a Winter Charity Gala on Saturday, Jan. 16, at which parishioners, friends and neighbors gathered for dinner and entertainment. Door prizes were donated by local area business such as Gold's Gym, Massage Envy, Brion's Grill and Fairfax Country Club.

The Charity Gala was originally scheduled for December, but was postponed to January due to the Dec. 19 snowstorm.

"When the earthquake hit," said Rev. DeDe Duncan-Probe, vicar of St. Peter's in the Woods, "I knew we had to dedicate the Gala to raise funds specifically for Haiti. The outpouring of generosity and support from both the parish and surrounding community was overwhelming."

St. Peter's in the Woods will continue to collect donations for Haiti. More information can be found on the church's Web site by visiting [www.spiw.org].

Robbery in Lorton Area

Police are investigating the robbery of a 40-year-old man by three men in the Lorton area on Sunday, Jan. 24.

According to Fairfax County Police, the victim was walking in the 7500 block of Woodside Lane around 12:40 a.m. when he was confronted by two men. As a third man approached the victim from behind, the two men facing the victim produced handguns and demanded money. The suspects took personal items from the victim and then attempted to force him into a vehicle. The victim resisted and was assaulted. The victim was able to free himself and escape into a nearby building, where he summoned police. The suspects were described as black, around 6 feet tall, 180 pounds and wore dark clothing. Anyone with information is asked to contact Crime Solvers by phone at 1-866-411-TIPS/8477, e-mail at www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org or text "TIP187" plus your message to CRIMES/274637.

Inspect Proposed Trail Site

On Saturday, Feb. 6 from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., the Bureau of Land Management Eastern States, Lower Potomac Field Station will lead a walk of the proposed route of new hiking/biking trails on the west parcel of the Meadowood Recreation Area. Meet at 10 a.m. at the West Meadows Access at 10207 Old Colchester Road and bring a snack or lunch and be prepared to hike off-trail in whatever temperatures are called for that day. If the ground is covered with snow, the tour will be postponed. For more, call 703-339-3463.

Muslim Youths at School

FROM PAGE 3

dent Association in dispelling myths about Islam. Muslim students from Chantilly High School and Westfield High School also noted the support and respect they received from the school community.

YOUTH GROUPS often also provide teenagers with a space to discuss sensitive topics they would feel uncomfortable discussing with adults in the community who often grew up outside the U.S., said Dost.

The Lake Braddock Muslim Students Association has conducted discussions on the topics of dating in Islam, and the choice of whether to wear the hijab.

The Youth Group of the Mustafa Center, an Islamic center and mosque in Annandale, is planning a debate over whether certain types of music are permissible in Islam, a controversial topic within the Islamic community of particular interest to teenagers.

Dost and other young Muslim leaders in Virginia founded the Virginia High School MSA Council in October 2009. The council supports students starting new Muslim Students Associations, and coordinates events where members of the Muslim groups from different schools can come together to socialize and educate themselves.

Currently, the group covers only Northern Virginia, though it intends to reach out to Muslim Students Associations throughout Virginia.

In addition, there are current Muslim student groups at West Springfield High School, Thomas Jefferson High School, T.C. Williams High School, McLean High School, Madison High School, and Park View High School.

Muslim youth groups are also aware of the important function they play in today's religious climate. Though the five young men from Alexandria arrested in Pakistan last month have not been formally charged with terrorism, the case highlights the importance of moderate Muslim outlets for Muslim youth.

The Mustafa Center Youth Group seeks to meet just this need. One of the men arrested in Pakistan had been active in the Mustafa Center Mosque.

In response to the arrest of the former community member, the Mustafa Center Youth Group, made up of Muslim college students who plan recreational and educational events geared toward high school students, invited a panel of prominent American Muslim scholars and imams to speak at an event called "Calling all heroes: the error in terror." According to Ali Baluch, vice president of the Mustafa Center Youth Group, the event had initially been titled "the error in terror," but the group decided to focus on a positive message rather than categorize the event as "anti-this and anti-that."

Baluch, a resident of Fairfax who studies sociology at Northern Virginia Community College, said the title called on moderate Muslim youth to educate themselves about Islam and raise their voices against extremism, "because that's what we need right now, not more suicide bombers."

More than 100 students, parents, and community members attended the event, held Jan. 9, at the Mustafa Center. Panelists spoke about the reasons why some Muslim youth may be tempted by extremist voices on the Internet, citing difficulties in reconciling Muslim and American identity, frustration caused by American foreign policy, and low self-esteem, can make some young people more vulnerable to extremist recruiters, similar to gangs. The event focused on positive solutions to these problems.

"We tried to show how you can still be patriotic and still be a Muslim," said Baluch.

Speakers highlighted community service as an alternative to violence that would enable young people to improve the world around them. Peace was a recurring theme of the event, said Baluch.

"One speaker mentioned that there are over 100 verses in the Quran that mention peace, and just one verse about violence. One tiny verse about violence and everyone takes that one verse and twists it for their own ends."



DONATED PHOTO

Wayne Robey, Maximum Results Personal Fitness Studio's new vice president of operations, is shown here with owner Donna Speakes.

Robey Joins Maximum Results

Wayne Robey recently joined Maximum Results Personal Fitness Studio as its vice president of operations. Robey, a Virginia native and Flagler College graduate, will oversee daily business operations at the Fairfax Station fitness center. Maximum Results Personal Training Studio is a private fitness center featuring advanced MedX resistance equipment. Certified personal trainers help clients achieve healthier, more productive lifestyles in just two private, 30-minute workouts per week using a slow burn strength training protocol. Located on Route 123, approximately 2 miles south of University Mall and George Mason University at 5622 Ox Road, Fairfax Station.



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"In addition to our prayers, the people of Haiti are in great need of our compassion and assistance."

— 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

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

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Redistricting Bill

"Bipartisan Redistricting Commission created. Establishes a seven-member temporary commission to prepare redistricting plans in 2011 and each tenth year thereafter for the House of Delegates, state Senate, and congressional districts. Appointments to the Commission shall be made one each by the four majority and minority party leaders of the House and Senate and by the state chairmen of the two major political parties. Those six appointees shall appoint the seventh member and chairman of the Commission. If they cannot agree, they shall submit the names of the two persons receiving the most votes to the Supreme Court for the Court to select the chairman. The Commission will prepare plans and submit them as bills to the General Assembly. The General Assembly shall then proceed to act on the bills in the usual manner. The bill provides for Commission comments on plans as they change in the legislative process. It also spells out the standards and process to be followed by the Commission in preparing plans, including limitations on the use of political data and opportunities for public comment on the plans."

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

School Budget: Changing the Equation

Supervisor calls for new approach to cutting proposed Fairfax County school budget.

BY SUPERVISOR PAT HERRITY
R-SPRINGFIELD

Our world-class schools are the number one reason businesses and families come to Fairfax County. That quality carries a price, \$2.3 billion. The school system accounts for more than half (54 percent) of all county funding. The county is facing a funding shortfall of \$315 million for the next fiscal year and the school system is facing a shortfall of approximately \$170 million. Even in this difficult economic climate, we need to ensure the quality of our schools. However, this does not excuse the school budget from the healthy fiscal scrutiny these tough times dictate. It is past time to change the equation on how we balance the school budget.

The old equation repeated year after year is to exact pressure on the Board of Supervisors to give more money to schools by putting unpopular cuts and damaging reductions to children on the table. Every budget cycle, we go through the same formula. The School Board and staff warn that if they don't get the money they have requested, teacher salaries will be frozen, the most popular programs will be cut, class sizes will be increased, and multiple sports/activities will be eliminated (this year it is elementary band and strings, all freshmen sports, indoor track, winter cheerleading, and

more).

Contrast this to what we have done with the county budget. Despite significant growth in both the county population and the demand for county services (police, human services, etc.) caused by these tough economic times, we have begun to "change the equation" on the county budget. The Board of Supervisors and county executive have worked hard to cut spending and identify efficiencies, while limiting the impact on critical services. We got a good start last year on the county side, by reducing actual spending, but still have a ways to go.

COMMENTARY

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about the school budget. This year, Superintendent Dale is again using the same old playbook. Perhaps even more than in recent years, he is refusing to focus his budget cuts on administration and instead is proposing to cut many of the programs that make our school system the best in the country. Instead of cutting popular and effective programs, the school system should do as businesses all around the country have done — cut administrative costs and focus on functioning more efficiently.

The superintendent's proposed budget hits the classrooms hard by increasing class size. Teachers, administrators and parents agree that class size is one of the most important fac-

tors in a child's education. Because the School Board has voted to increase class sizes for the last two years, we already have serious class size issues in Fairfax County.

I have been leading a group of concerned parents, teachers, and business leaders that have been looking for alternative ways to balance the school budget without sacrificing the quality of our schools, important programs or calling for significant tax increases. Despite what we hear from the school system, there are a slew of options for accomplishing this goal, including the following:

- ❖ Investigate cutting central department administrative costs by at least 10 percent — more than \$400 million of the \$2.3 billion non-capital school budget this year is spent on central administrative departments. A 10 percent cut would reduce central administrative costs to just below 2006 levels and save approximately \$40 million. For example, the school system's communications and outreach department has 24 people in it. That's the size of a small PR firm.

- ❖ Look into the growth in school based administration for reductions. For example, the assistant principal to student ratio is higher than our surrounding jurisdictions. In addition, over the last several years, we have significantly increased the number of tests we require our students to take (non state or federally mandated tests). This puts self-imposed burdens on our teachers and schools. Today, each of our schools has an assessment coach, who

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COMMENTARY

New Equation for School Budget

FROM PAGE 6

never enters a classroom and does nothing but arrange for testing. Many of these administrators are paid for 11 or 12 months, while teachers generally are paid for only 10 months. We need to look at reducing the burdens we place on our teachers, so they can focus on teaching our children. Reducing the number of school-based administrative positions to a level that is still above Virginia requirements, and reducing the length of the contract periods for these administrators, could save more than \$25 million.

❖ Review major operations for efficiencies — transportation, school security, etc. A modest, half-hour change in bell schedule for a handful of high schools could dramatically reduce the peak number of buses required on the road at one time and save millions without impacting after school activities or sports. We also need to explore alternatives to the school security dispatch system, which currently has its own 24-hour, seven-day a week operation and management function.

❖ Conserve and carry forward funding from 2009 and 2010. According to its own student enrollment data, the school system currently has about 1,500

fewer students than it projected last year. The roughly \$15 million allocated to educate those students who have not yet shown up should be carried forward along with the approximately \$25 million carried forward from the school system's 2009 budget.

❖ Strongly advocate for, and encourage parents to advocate for, the state government to recalculate the Local Composite Index as was scheduled, so that Fairfax County receives the \$61 million it is owed. The Board of Supervisors and the School Board are both advocating for this.

This group has identified more than \$100 million of potential cuts and another \$100 million in alternatives that should be reviewed before the superintendent considers any increases in class size or cuts that impact the quality of our schools. This knowledgeable group is eager to work in partnership with the School Board and school system to review these ideas. Education is not just about money. If it were, Washington, D.C., with its high spending per student, would have the best schools in the United States. To ensure that our school system remains the best in the country, we need to implement solid spending priorities that refocus our education dollars on our classrooms, students and teachers.

MILITARY NOTES

Shelby L. Loeffler has received a four year Army ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) scholarship to attend Virginia Military Institute, Lexington. The mission of ROTC is to provide future officers with leadership qualities needed in the regular Army and the

Reserve Components. She is the daughter of Sam Loeffler of Clifton Road, Clifton, and Sherra Loeffler of 13th Court N., Arlington. Loeffler graduated in 2009 from Robinson Secondary School and is currently attending Mary Baldwin College.

Army Pvt. Luis E. Reyes Jr. graduated from the Field Artillery Automated Tactical Systems Specialist Advanced Individual Training course at Fort Sill, Lawton, Okla. He is the son of Charlene D. Evans of Treasure Oak Court, Lorton.



Members of the St. Peter's in the Woods Children's Choir perform Jan. 16 at the church's Winter Charity Gala.

Raising \$3,700 for Haiti Relief

St. Peter's in the Woods Episcopal Church raised more than \$3,700 in relief funds for victims in Haiti. The money was donated to the Episcopal Relief & Development's Haiti Fund.

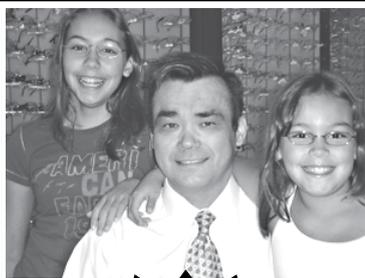
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St. Peter's in the Woods will continue to collect donations for Haiti. More information can be found on the church's Web site by visiting [www.spiw.org].

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Questions@FairfaxLL.org



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]."

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



PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

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

"The game here is a lot faster."

— Mark Noe

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. "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.

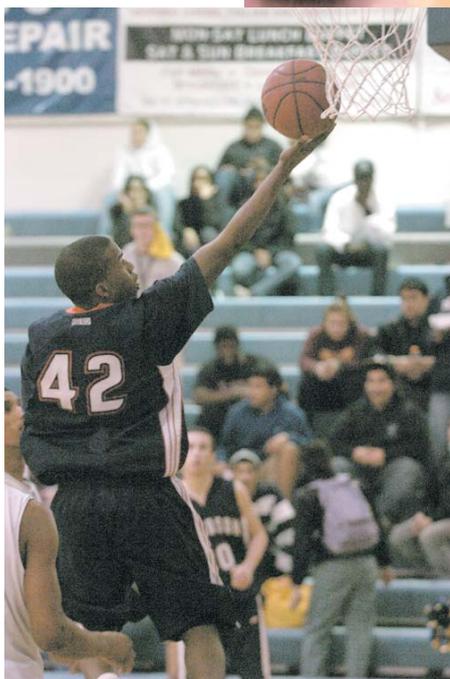
"We let a few games get past us," Lenox said. "But now we know we can play with these guys."

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 dis

SEE WOODSON, PAGE 9



Senior guard Max Lenox attempts a lay-up during the Cavs' 68-59 win over Lee. Lenox finished the game with 39 points.

5 Qs with Woodson multi-sport athlete Josh Hogan

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

A: It would have to be [Dallas Cowboy] DeMarcus Ware. He's a linebacker and he's just explosive. It's what I want to be when I play football in college [at James Madison University].

Q: How does football help your basketball game?

A: I try to bring intensity. I like to play strong and have fun out there, it's what I do in football.

Q: What's the song you have to hear before you hit the

court?

A: It would probably have to be "Bodies" by Drowning Pool.

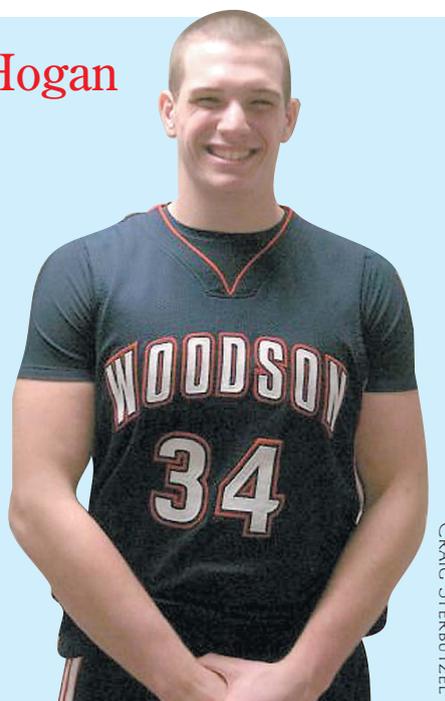
Q: Who do you have in the Super Bowl? Saints or Colts?

A: I'm rooting for the Saints. They're a younger team and I love the underdogs. They've also never been to Super Bowl before either.

Q: What's your favorite thing about being a Woodson athlete?

A: It's a great opportunity and a lot of younger kids look up to me. It's also just a great school athletically and academically.

— REED S. ALBERS



Josh Hogan

CRAIG STERBUTZEL

WEEK IN SPORTS Stallions Split Games with Annandale

The South County boys' basketball team's (11-5) quest for a winning season was stunted for at least one game as the Annandale Atoms handed them a 70-55 defeat on Jan. 22.

Mohamed Alie-Cox led the Stallions in scoring with 18 points and Gabe Jackson and Nik Biberaj added another 13 points a piece to the total.

South County returns to the court on Jan. 26, to face off against West Potomac, followed by a Jan. 29, meeting with West Springfield.

The Lady Stallions avoided a loss with Annandale with a slim 43-40 victory on Jan. 22.

Fatu Conteh led the Stallions in scoring with 15 points followed by 14 points from Simone Antwi.

The Lady Stallions will also be facing off with West Potomac on Jan. 26 and West Springfield on Jan. 29.

Robinson Races 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 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.

The girls' team will also face Chantilly (11-5) on Jan. 28.

SPORTS

Bruin Girls Qualify for States

Lake Braddock's girls' 4x800 meter relay earns 13th fastest time in state history

BY REED S. ALBERS
THE CONNECTION

Since the start of the 2009-10 Indoor track season, Lake Braddock head coach Mike Mangan's top four girls haven't competed together in the 4x800 meter relay for a number of reasons.

"Having all four girls together wasn't always guaranteed," he said. "With the snow and holidays, people were out of town as well."

His talented group of runners helped Lake Braddock claim a state title in cross-country in 2009, and Mangan anxiously anticipated the chance to load-up his relay.

The first chance came on Jan. 19 on one of indoor track's grandest stages, The Armory Track and Field Center in New York City.

With banked turns and an intimidating atmosphere, Mangan hoped his four girls — Sophie Chase, Kelly Hagan, Liana Epstein and Casey Lardner — would qualify for the Virginia state indoor track meet during The New Balance Games, a major competition featuring schools from across the coun-

try.

"We felt like we should be able to run a state qualifying time when we had an opportunity," he said. "The race in New York was the perfect chance."

The Armory Track and Field Center bills itself as one of the nation's fastest places to run. Senior Liana Epstein said it was the perfect place for the girls' relay debut.

"Any time we get to go to the Armory and race, we know it's going to be good," she said. "We knew we were ready to run fast. It was nice to have it play out [in New York]."

COUPLED WITH the anticipation of running in such a high-profile race and running as a unit for the first time, the girls turned in a time of 9:19.90, the 13th fastest 4x800 Virginia indoor track time. It also set a school record for the fastest time during a non-championship race.

"We fought really hard," Epstein said. "We

were just going for [the qualifying time] and we're really happy with how our first race [as a group] went together."

Lardner said the atmosphere of The New Balance Games helped the team to focus on the relay's goal.

"It was really exciting to compete against tons of teams," she said. "Before our race, we saw professional athletes running the mile. It just brought us down to earth to see them running and reminded us what we needed to do."

The boys' 4x800 meter relay team also delivered a standout performance, despite Mangan's uncertainty going into the race.

What he got was one of the boys' fastest times in Lake Braddock's recent history.

The boys' time of 8:12.62 narrowly missed the Virginia state qualifying cut.

"We had the parts, but we hadn't put together a full [team]," said relay team member Matt Hoogland.

"It was a surprise to see that we were that close to getting to the state [qualifying] time," Hoogland said. "It was just fun to be there and get that close."

"We knew we were ready to run fast."

— Liana Epstein

Woodson

FROM PAGE 8

trict 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.

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.

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.

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.

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CALENDAR

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

FRIDAY/JAN. 29

Lunch Bunch. 12 p.m. John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive, Alexandria. Bring lunch and listen to stories. Birth-5 with adult. 703-971-0010.

Spot-LYTE Company presents: "Incorruptible." 8 p.m., Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. 703-495-0001 or www.workhousearts.org.

Outerloop Presents: Love Hate Hero, Four Letter Lie, Of Machines, Sleeping with Sirens. All ages. \$10 advance, \$12 door. Doors open at 5 p.m., show at 5:15 p.m. TBA, Simply Chaos. 21 and Up \$10 advance, \$12 door. Doors open at 10:15 p.m., show at 10:30 p.m. Jaxx Nightclub, 6355 Rolling Road Springfield. 703-569-5940.

SATURDAY/JAN. 30

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.

Spot-LYTE Company presents: "Incorruptible." 8 p.m., Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. 703-495-0001 or www.workhousearts.org.

SUNDAY/JAN. 31

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.

Paul Di'Anno, Icarus Witch, TBA, Baby Jayne. 21 and Up. \$18 advance, \$20 door. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., show at 7 p.m. Jaxx Nightclub, 6355 Rolling Road Springfield. 703-569-5940.

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.

Evening Book Discussion Group. 6:45 p.m. Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. "The Art of Racing in the Rain" by Garth Stein. Adults. 703-339-4610.

It's Groundhog Day! 10:30 a.m. Lorton Library, 9520 Richmond Highway, Lorton. A fun groundhog-themed story time with shadows, silliness and songs. Age 2-5 with adult. 703-339-7385.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 3

Blue Sky Puppet Theater and Open House. 10:15-11:30 a.m. at St. Christopher's Preschool, 6320 Hanover Ave., Springfield. Preschoolers free. Reservations required at 703-451-1845 or preschool@saintchristophers.net.

Open Irish Song Session. 8:30-11:30 p.m., at Hard Times Cafe, 6362 Springfield Plaza, Springfield. This song session is open to anyone who would like to sing or listen to Irish songs. Songbooks provided, but singers may bring their own songs as well. All kinds of Irish/Scottish songs are welcome, be they ballads, rebel

songs and drinking songs. To learn more, contact Wayne Jordan at wvjordan@aol.com. Hard Times: 703-913-5600.

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.

Practice Your English. 10:15 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Conversation group for adults learning English. 703-339-4610.

THURSDAY/FEB. 4

Blue Sky Puppet Theater and Open House. 10:15-11:30 a.m. at St. Christopher's Preschool, 6320 Hanover Ave., Springfield. Preschoolers free. Reservations required at 703-451-1845 or preschool@saintchristophers.net.

Owl Tales. 10:30 a.m. Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Stories about owls. Age 13-23 Months with adult. 703-249-1520.

Daytime Book Discussion Group. 12:15 p.m. Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. "Olive Kitteridge" by Elizabeth Strout. Adults. 703-339-4610.

Reading and Rocking Preschool Class. 10:30 a.m. Lorton Library, 9520 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Early literacy storytime. Ages 2-4 with an adult. 703-339-7385.

FRIDAY/FEB. 5

Fairfax Symphony Valentine Pops Gala: Amore! An Evening of Italian Love Songs. At the Hilton McLean Tysons Corner, 7920 Jones Branch Drive, McLean. 6:30 p.m. silent auction and cocktail reception, 8 p.m.

dinner, 9 p.m. FSO in concert with tenor Robert Petillo and soprano Jeanine Thames. \$300 per person or \$3,000 per table, available by credit card at 703-563-1990, or by check to Fairfax Symphony Orchestra, 3905 Railroad Ave., Suite 202N, Fairfax, VA 22030. www.fairfaxsymphony.org.

Jewish Scout Shabbat. Congregation Adat Reyim invites all Jewish Scouts, Scouters and their families to the annual Scout Shabbat service at 8 p.m. Those wishing to present a Jewish Religious Emblem Award to a Scout or to participate in services may contact CAR at 703-569-7577. Congregation Adat Reyim is located at 6500 Westbury Oaks Court in Springfield. Scouts are asked to wear their uniform.

Cardinal Forest PTA Third Annual Fun Fair and Silent Auction. 5:30-8:30 p.m. at Cardinal Forest Elementary School, 8600 Forrester Blvd., Springfield. Moon bounce, cake walk, food and more. Tickets for games are 50 cents each, available at the door. 703-569-7518.

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

SATURDAY/FEB. 6

Jeri Sager. 7:30 p.m. at Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1624 Trap Road, Vienna. West Springfield High School alumnus and Broadway star Sager debuts at the Barns of Wolf Trap with her solo cabaret show, "Broadway by Jeri." Accompanied by a four-piece band, Sager will re-create her roles in "Cats," "Les Misérables" and "Evita." \$25. 703-938-2404 or

www.wolftrap.org.

One-on-One Computer Tutoring. 10-11 a.m. Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Learn to use a computer, navigate the Internet, and work with common software applications. Call for an appointment. Adults. 703-249-1520.

VITA Tax Assistance. 10:30 a.m. Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. 703-339-4610.

Birds in Your Backyard Science Class. 2 p.m. Lorton Library, 9520 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Assist the researchers at Cornell University in monitoring bird populations. 703-339-7385.

MONDAY/FEB. 8

Little Valentines. 10:30 a.m. Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Stories, songs and fun for Valentine's Day. Age 24 months to 5 years with adult. 703-339-4610.

Early Reader Book Discussion. 3:30 p.m. John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive, Alexandria. Titles: "Library Lil" by Suzanne Williams and "Paul Bunyan" by Steven Kellogg. Ages 6-8 with adult.

TUESDAY/FEB. 9

Outerloop Presents: For the Fallen Dreams, The Ghost Inside, Your Demise, Suffokate, An Obscure Signal, This Time Never, Calvin Broadus, TBA. All ages. \$10 advance, \$12 door. Doors open at 5 p.m., show at 5:15 p.m. Jaxx Nightclub, 6355 Rolling Road Springfield. 703-569-5940.

Fun With Twos and Threes. 10:30 a.m. John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive, Alexandria.

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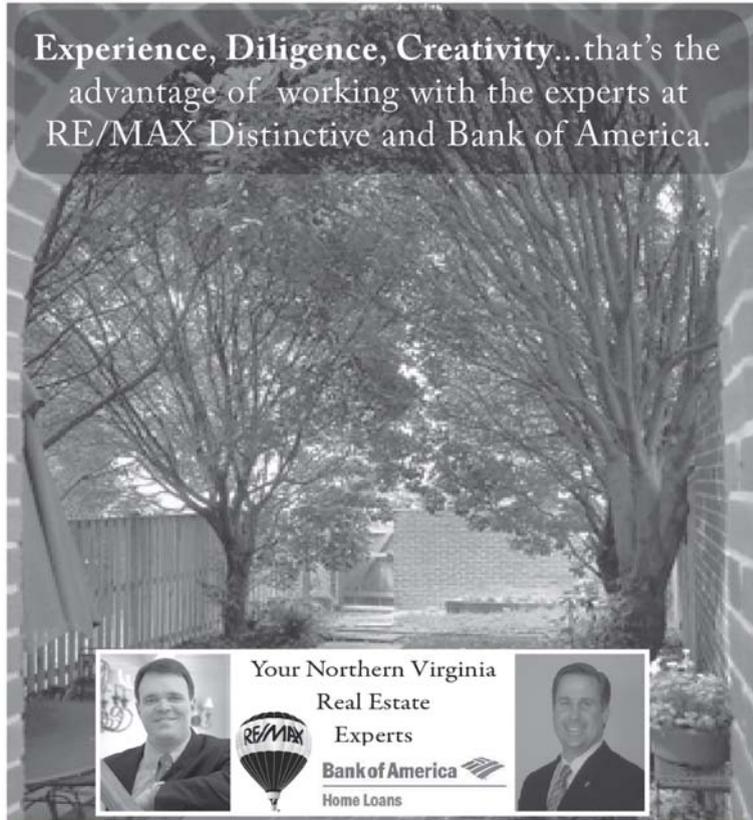
Congregation Adat Reyim Havdallah, Pasta Dinner and Bingo Night, on Saturday, Feb. 6 at 6500 Westbury Oaks Court, Springfield. 6 p.m. Havdallah service followed by pasta dinner at 6:30 p.m. and games at 7:30 p.m. Bring non-perishable food donations and gently-used clothing to be donated to ECHO. \$4 for individuals, \$10 for families. Mail checks and registration to CAR or register online at www.adatreym.org/news-a-events/269-pasta-bingo or 703-569-7577.

Franconia United Methodist Church, 6037 Franconia Road, Alexandria, will have a sermon series through Feb. 21 at the 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. services, based on Bishop Robert Schnase's book "The Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations." 703 971-5151 or admin@franconiaumc.org.

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." 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.

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Frozen Formula

FROM PAGE 2

On Jan. 12, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors voted 10-0 to look into legal action if the McDonnell administration upheld the freeze in the school funding formula.

The formula is called the Local Composite Index, or LCI. It determines which localities can pay the most for basic kindergarten-through-12th-grade education and which ones cannot. It is calculated using adjusted gross income, taxable retail sales and true value of real property.

This year, Fairfax's score went from .76 to .71; Loudoun fell from .67 to .58 and Prince William dipped from .44 to .40.

That should have meant more money for those school districts. However, Kaine — and now McDonnell — decided to freeze the formula at the previous scores.

That decision will please some localities, such as Russell County, in the southwest corner of Virginia.

Dr. Lorraine C. Turner, superintendent for the Russell County Public Schools, said her school district would benefit from the LCI freeze.

"If it's frozen at last year's rate, the state will give us more money, as opposed to asking the locality to pay for it," Turner said.

In December, Kaine proposed freezing the LCI until the 2012 fiscal year. He said this would help protect 97 school divisions that would lose money if the formula were recalculated.

Gunston

FROM PAGE 3

"The kids learn about renewable and non-renewable resources from [the curriculum]," said Gallagher. "There's games and pantomimes. It's a preview of what they will learn with Gunston."

The program's success has prompted school officials to consider extending Gunston's reach beyond SAAC programs.

"The teachers who see us come in are asking if we can come to class," she said. "Budget-wise we can't get to every class, but we want to expand [the program] to Prince William and Arlington counties. We just need the funding."

For now, Gunston is staying busy with visits to SACC programs.

"There are 122 schools with SAAC programs," Claar said. "We can still do this for three years and have not been at every SAAC program."

While the new Gunston enjoys spotlight, the old Gunston may one day be recycled.

"[The old Gunston] is in the depths of the Patriot Center," Gallagher said. "We'll bring him out for old jersey nights, or you never know when he will come back."

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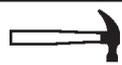
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Fimian, Herrity Face Off in June GOP Primary

FROM PAGE 2

parts of Prince William County. The 11th District seat was held by U.S. Rep. Tom Davis (R-11) who defeated his Democratic predecessor Leslie Byrne after she had served just one term in office. Davis served 14 years in office before retiring in 2008. The district was created following the 1990 census. Connolly won his seat during an unprecedented surge for Democrats in Virginia. In 2008, Connolly shared the ballot with President Barack Obama, the first Democrat in 40 years to win Virginia in a presidential election, and U.S. Sen. Mark Warner (D), one of the most popular politicians in the commonwealth.

CONNOLLY is a formidable opponent; he won by approximately 10 percentage points or more in each of his five elections.

While both Fimian and Herrity have lost elections, Connolly never has.

In 2008, Connolly beat Fimian with 55 percent to 43 percent of the vote. The previous year, Connolly won election to his second term as Fairfax County chairman with 60 percent of the vote countywide.

Connolly has also represented a portion of the 11th Congressional District since 1995, when he first won a special election to Providence District supervisor seat.

On Jan. 12, Del. Dave Marsden (D-41) scored an unexpected victory over Republican opponent Steve Hunt for the 37th Dis-

trict State Senate seat vacated by Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli (R). Hunt was heavily favored to win the special election in the district, which partially overlaps with Connolly's seat.

"I think the 11th District is now competitive again but it is not going to be an easy race," said Del. Dave Albo (R-42), whose district overlaps with Connolly's congressional seat.

Connolly, for his part, has maintained that 11th District and Fairfax County cannot be solidly counted in the Democratic column.

Though Fairfax is "trending Democratic," the voters are independent minded and look more at the quality of the candidate, rather than the party affiliation, according to Connolly.

"Candidates matter. Campaigns matter. And every election here stands on its own merits," he said.

CURRENTLY, Republicans are trying to determine who is the best candidate to take on Connolly next fall.

Party activists said Fimian is generally more popular with the conservative, "Tea Party" wing of the Grand Old Party. Moderate and establishment Republicans tend to favor Herrity, who has received the backing of almost every Republican elected official in Fairfax County.

While Fimian was likely to run against

Connolly regardless of how vulnerable people perceived the Democrat, many local Republicans think Herrity's entrance into the race is a sign that Connolly looks like he could be defeated.

"I think the fact that Pat is running indicates that both Pat and Keith think that a Republican could win," said Albo.

Some people were a little taken aback by

"It is a very difficult fund-raising environment out there and even really good fund raisers are having a tough time."

— Keith Fimian

Herrity's decision to enter the race. By all accounts, Herrity has spent most of the last year preparing for a second try at the Fairfax County chairman position after a narrow loss to Sharon Bulova (D) last February.

"I'm surprised. I had assumed he was planning to run for chairman [in 2011]," said Bulova.

But Herrity said he was encouraged by several people to challenge Connolly and run for Congress.

"I have very deep roots in Northern Virginia in business community, in the sports community and in the civic community. The number on industry in Northern Virginia is

government contracting. I understand that industry better than any other candidate in this race," said Herrity, whose father served as Fairfax chairman during the 1980s.

Despite his loss to Bulova, the fact that the election for chairman was so close energized party activists and solidified that Herrity was the new head of the Fairfax Republican Party.

"Our party is so much stronger than it was 14 months ago. Pat's race for chairman inspired a lot of people and he has kept kind of a leadership role since then," said Cook, who has endorsed Herrity against Fimian.

At the time Herrity entered the race, Fimian said he has already raised \$550,000 to compete against Connolly. The Republican, who heads a national home inspection business, is also a multi-millionaire. Activists

believe he could kick in some of his own personal fortune if that was needed.

"It is a very difficult fund-raising environment out there and even really good fund raisers are having a tough time," said Fimian.

The businessman has also tried to paint himself as a political outsider who could bring fresh, innovative ideas to Congress.

"Herrity is a politician who has spent his whole life getting ready for the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. He is a big government Republican just like Gerry Connolly is a big government Democrat," said Fimian.

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.

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.

As a single parent, Amanda Powers has had to move around a lot over the past few years, so her 6-year-old daughter has attended four schools in as many years.

Yet Powers voluntarily transferred her daughter to Orange Hunt Elementary School at the beginning of 2009 because she thought the German language immersion program would be a good fit for her child.

"Having seen the success of the program first hand through my younger brother, I decided I could not pass up the opportunity," said Powers, who drives her daughter

to school every day from their home in Lorton.

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 Spanish 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.

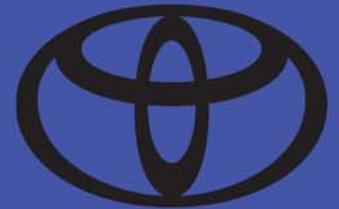
Christian Donlon has spent the last six years teaching music in some of Fairfax's neediest elementary schools in areas like Reston and Alexandria.

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.

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

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