

Springfield CONNECT

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To the Net

SPORTS, PAGE 10

Senior guard
Deonta Gatlin
drives the net
during the
Lancers' 68-59
loss to Woodson
on Jan. 26.

Fimian, Herrity Challenge Connolly

NEWS, PAGE 2

Local Finds His Path

NEWS, PAGE 3

SPORTS, PAGE 10 ♦ CALENDAR, PAGE 9 ♦ CLASSIFIED, PAGE 12

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Gerry Connolly (D)



Patrick Herry (R)



Keith Fimian (R)

GOP Sees Chance in 11th

Is Connolly vulnerable? Herry to face Fimian in June primary.

BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE
 THE CONNECTION

2009 might be remembered as the year the Fairfax County Republican Party got its grove 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 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 Congressional 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 Herry (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 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

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

— Supervisor John Cook (R-Braddock)

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 Herry 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 District State Senate seat vacated

SEE TWO, PAGE 6

Springfield Resident Finds His Calling

Dusty Miller helps New Orleans recover from Hurricane Katrina.

BY JUSTIN FANIZZI
THE CONNECTION

More than four years after New Orleans was devastated by Hurricane Katrina, the destruction left in the storm's wake is still visible. Homes are still abandoned, stores still lay among the rubble and the streets are still largely empty.

Springfield's Dusty Miller and eight fellow team members from the AmeriCorps' National Civilian Community Corps are seeking to erase all traces of that terrible storm and bring life back to the city that was once a vibrant cultural hub. Miller and his teammates are currently in the city's Lower Ninth Ward, an area perhaps hit the hardest by the storm, helping to rebuild and restore many of the neighborhood's houses.

"The Lower Ninth Ward is definitely in much worse shape than the rest of the city," Miller said. "It's mind-boggling how neglected it is. It's hard to imagine there hasn't



After trying college, Dusty Miller has found fulfillment through AmeriCorps' National Civilian Community Corps.

been a massive effort to revitalize this area. It's almost like a ghost town."

Miller, 21, made his way to AmeriCorps after a period time trying to discover his passion in life that saw him take various jobs. Miller, a lifelong resident of Spring-

field, graduated from Robert E. Lee High School in 2007 and went for one semester of college at Brooklyn University in New York City and then transferred to Virginia Commonwealth University for another semester. Miller said that he realized that col-

"It's unacceptable for [the area] to be in this state five years later."

— Dusty Miller

lege was not for him at that point in this life, so he decided to take on a series of jobs to find out what he really wanted to do with his life.

This journey started with a temporary job at Stoney Lonesome Farm in Gainesville for several months and continued with a month-long stint at UPS as a special package assistant during the holiday season of 2008. Then, Miller moved to New Hampshire to work on another farm for two months and then made his way back to Stoney Lonesome Farm for another stint. During his time in New Hampshire, however, he remembered a conversation with family friends after high school graduation regarding AmeriCorps. Miller said that he remembered the friends saying that their children had served in AmeriCorps and that it was a great experience for them. So, he filled out an application, underwent a couple phone interviews, and in spring 2009, received word that he had been ac-

SEE AMERICORPS, PAGE 6

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

Teen Charged Following Bathroom Brawl at Lee High

A school resource officer arrested a 16-year-old boy after he allegedly attacked another student in a restroom at Lee High School Friday, Jan. 22.

According to police, the Springfield-area teen was charged with malicious wounding of a 17-year-old boy who was punched and beaten in a school restroom. After being treated in the school clinic, the victim was transported to Inova Springfield Healthplex where he was treated for non life-threatening injuries.

The school resource officer worked closely with school officials on this incident, and police continue to investigate the case. Officials believe the confrontation may have stemmed from an apparent ongoing dispute that occurred several days earlier and may be gang-related.

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 or call Fairfax County Police at 703-691-2131.

Police Thwart New Gang

Three teenage boys were charged after a series of alleged attempts to form a new gang at Poe Middle School following the summer of 2009.

According to Fairfax County Police, the police department's school resource officer worked closely with school officials after discovering gang-oriented materials on school grounds and learning that students were attempting to recruit new gang members using a MySpace page throughout the fall of 2009. Following a series of incidents, including assaults that took place at a party in Annandale off school grounds in November, officials were able to pinpoint gang leaders and charge them with hazing, a Class I misdemeanor, on Tuesday, Jan. 19. Two of the boys are 14-years old, and one is 13.

"School officials found some writings and symbols on a notebook that were deciphered to be gang-related," said Police spokesman Lucy Caldwell. "This particular fledgling gang had colors and symbols attached to it."

Caldwell said that the gang was brand new and is not an extension of any existing gang. She also said that school officials felt that they have isolated this issue to the three boys charged.

Anyone with additional 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 or call Fairfax County Police at 703-691-2131.

Two Die in Springfield Blaze

A fire in a single-family home in North Springfield claimed the lives of two men on Tuesday, Jan. 26.

According to the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, units responded to a house fire at approximately 6:35 a.m. at 5643 Heming Ave. Upon arrival, firefighters encountered heavy fire and smoke coming from the rear of the home and heavy smoke from all of the windows of the rambler-style house. A second alarm and an EMS Task Force were requested, bringing more than 60 firefighters to the scene.

Crews fought the gas-fed fire from the inside of the house until conditions severely deteriorated and the floor collapsed, narrowly missing firefighters below. Those firefighters were separated from their crews, but they were able to escape safely. One was transported to Inova Fairfax Hospital for non-life threatening injuries, however.

The fire was brought under control in approximately one hour, and during a secondary search of the home,

SEE NEWS BRIEFS, PAGE 12

NEWS



Just in Time for the Super Bowl

On Jan. 10, four churches in the vicinity of Beulah Street and Franconia Road presented a new flat panel television to the volunteer firefighters of Franconia Station 5 Fire Station at 6300 Beulah St. The churches donating the TV are the Franconia Alliance Church, the Franconia United Methodist Church, the Mount Calvary Community Church and the Olivet Episcopal Church. From left are Audrey Davis, Franconia United Methodist Church lay leader; Pastor Joel Sawyer, Franconia Alliance Church; Chief Timothy Fleming, chief of Fire Stations 5 and 37; Pastor Vernell Carter, Franconia United Methodist Church; and Desmond Campbell, representative of Olivet Episcopal Church. Mount Calvary Community Church did not have a representative at the firehouse for the presentation.

Conviction in 2007 Homicide

MS-13 leader is guilty of 2007 Springfield murder.

After deliberating less than two hours, a federal jury last week found an MS-13 gang member guilty in connection with the 2007 murder of a rival gang member in Springfield. He is Carlos Bladimir Montoya, also known as ACiego, 26, of Sterling.

On Thursday, Jan. 21, in U.S. District Court in Alexandria, he was convicted of conspiracy to commit murder in aid of racketeering activity, aiding and abetting murder in aid of racketeering activity and aiding and abetting the use of a firearm during a crime of violence causing death. Montoya faces a mandatory sentence of life in prison when he's sentenced on April 9.

According to court documents and evidence presented at trial, Montoya was the leader of the Unidos Locos Salvatrucha (ULS) clique of MS-13. On the night of May 5, 2007, he drove four fellow MS-13 gang members — including Oscar Lobo-Lopez, also known as "Joker," and Sergio Amador Amador, also known as "Dado," — to the 7200 block of Commerce St. in Springfield.

There, Lobo-Lopez and Amador fatally shot Melvin

Reyes, also known as APelon. The MS-13 gang members killed Reyes because he was believed to be a member of the rival, 18th Street gang. The rules of MS-13 require its members to attack and/or kill rival gang members.

After Montoya and other MS-13 gang members patrolled for Reyes in the days preceding the murder, the five MS-13 members found him at the Springfield Garden apartments. The four passengers exited the vehicle and, armed with handguns, Lobo-Lopez and Amador chased and fatally shot Reyes seven times.

The five gang members then fled in Montoya's vehicle. In the days following the murder, Montoya drove two of them to a bus station in Washington, D.C., to travel to New York. The firearms used in the crime were recovered months later in Long Island, N.Y., by the Suffolk County Police Department.

Both Amador and Lobo-Lopez were later sentenced in federal court. On June 5, 2009, Amador, 29, received life in prison plus 10 years. On Sept. 18, 2009, Lobo-Lopez, 30, was given two consecutive life sentences plus 10 years.

Montoya's case was investigated by the FBI's Washington Field Office, plus Fairfax County and Suffolk County police. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Morris Parker and Rebeca Bellows prosecuted it.

— BONNIE HOBBS



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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."

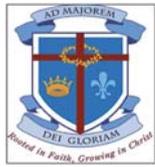
— Robert & Luciana Duvall



"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

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NEWS

Two Challenge Connolly

FROM PAGE 2

by Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli (R). Hunt was favored to win the special election in the district, which 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 Herryty, 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 Herryty'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 Herryty's decision to enter the race. By all accounts, Herryty has spent most of the last year preparing for a second try at the Fairfax County chairman position af-

ter 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 Herryty 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 one industry in Northern Virginia is government contracting. I understand that industry better than any other candidate in this race," said Herryty, 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 Herryty 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 Herryty against Fimian.

At the time Herryty 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.

"Herryty 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.

AmeriCorps Volunteer

FROM PAGE 3

cepted.

"I heard about AmeriCorps in high school at a gathering with family and friends," Miller said. "They said that both of their sons had done it and really enjoyed it, and that really planted a seed in me."

Miller was assigned to the Vinton, Iowa campus, which is one of five that AmeriCorps has across the country. Upon his arrival, Miller said that he spent a month undergoing training on an array of things from CPR to shelter construction to van driving. At the end of the training, Miller and eight other Civilian Corps members were placed on a team and assigned to a project in Des Moines, Iowa, working with Habitat for Humanity for one month.

"We were doing finishing work — painting laying sod, building sheds," Miller said. "It got really cold during the last week, but it was a great experience."

AFTER DES MOINES, which was the first of five projects that Miller will be assigned over the course of his 10-month service commitment, Miller and his team were immediately assigned to the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans. Miller said that the team was given a two-week holiday break and then gathered again for the Jan. 12 trip to New Orleans, where they are partnering with Lowernine.org to help rebuild the devastated area over a period of six weeks.

"Initially, we were taken on a tour of the area and we heard the stats that only 20 to 30 percent of people have returned since the storm, and it just didn't make sense to me how little was being done," Miller said. "It's unacceptable for [the area] to be in this state five years later."

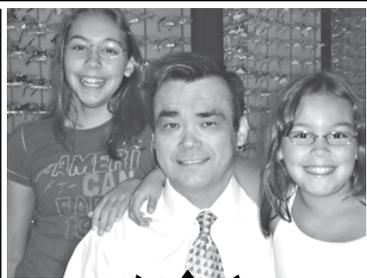
In the city, the team spends eight hours a day on various tasks. Miller said that for the first two weeks, he has been working at one house, tearing down rotten wood and replacing it with new wood and preparing the home for new drywall.

"Dusty is a really fun but hard worker," said teammate Victoria Gibson. "He loves doing this kind of thing and you can tell that he gets a lot of joy out of helping people. I'm really happy he is on my team."

Miller said that he will find out about the team's next assignment at the end of the six weeks in New Orleans, and that it can be anything from building homes again to filling out tax forms for people to doing environmental work such as removing invasive species from a forest. After the 10 months and five assignments are completed, Miller will receive a \$5,000 scholarship for any educational endeavor he wishes to pursue. Until then, he is completely focused on bettering life in the Lower Ninth Ward, a determination that is not lost on his colleagues.

"He is very idealistic, but he puts that into action," Team Leader Dan Emmons said. "He really believes in the work we're doing and he really pushes us."

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NEWS

Springfield House Fire

A fire at a single-family home in Springfield displaced four adults Monday, Jan. 25.

According to the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, units responded to a house fire at a two-story, spilt level home located at 6825 Ridgeway Drive at approximately 9:30 p.m. Upon arrival, firefighters encountered heavy fire and smoke coming from both floors of the home. Crews fought the fire from inside the home until conditions severely deteriorated and the floor began to collapse.

The fire was brought under control in approximately 30 minutes. All four occupants evacuated the home prior to arrival of firefighters and were displaced. Red Cross is assisting the occupants. The damage is estimated at \$175,000, and the cause is under investigation.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

SATURDAY/JAN. 30

Town Hall Meeting. 10 a.m. at the Snyder Center in Kingstowne, 6450 South Van Dorn St., Kingstowne. With Del. Mark Sickles (D-43), State Sen. George Barker (D-39) and Supervisor Jeff McKay (D-Lee). 804-698-1043.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 10

NARFE Springfield Chapter 893 Meeting. 130 p.m. at the American Legion Post 176, 5620 Amherst Ave., Springfield. With a presentation by NPS Park Ranger Jason Martz on Secrets of the Lincoln Memorial. Open to the public. rmgallagher@verizon.net or 703 455-4373.

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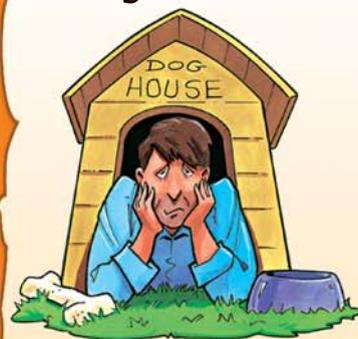


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Time for Civil Redistricting

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

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.

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

SEE NEW, PAGE 11

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

VITA. 10 a.m. Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Tax assistance. Adults. 703-339-4610.

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:

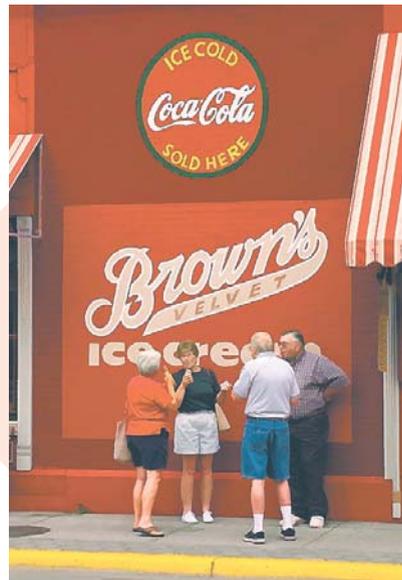
703-913-5600.

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.



'Delicious Conversation' by David Ernst, Springfield

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

Summer Recollections

The Artists' Undertaking Gallery in Historic Occoquan presents "Summer Recollections," an exhibit that features turned wood by Bob Horowitz of Falls Church and photography and digital paintings by David and Jane Ernst of Springfield. The exhibit runs through Feb. 1. The gallery is open daily, from 11 a.m.-5 p.m., and is located at 309 Mill St. in Historic Occoquan. For more information contact the gallery at 703-494-0584 or at www.theartistsundertaking.com.

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. 703-971-0010.

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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Lancers Fall in Rough Outing

Woodson prevails in close match of Patriot District foes.

BY REED S. ALBERS
THE CONNECTION

Robert E. Lee junior Walter Griffin grasped his knee and winced, letting out a small groan of pain. "I came out from a lay-up and fell on my leg," the 6-foot 3-inch forward said. "It was a rough game."

During a routine lay-up, Griffin drew the attention of Woodson defenders whose attempts to block his shot ended with them crashing down on Griffin's body after the play.

Similar plays happened throughout the Lancers' 68-59 loss on Tuesday, Jan. 26, a game chock-full of hard fouls, gritty play and end-to-end action.

"We got banged up out there," Griffin

"We're not done. We still have a lot of basketball to play."

— Walter Griffin

fin said. "Then the calls didn't go our way. It was just a very physical game for us."

The Cavaliers and Lancers spent much of the game charging hard to the hoop trying to sway momentum in their favor, but a late Woodson scor-



Junior forward Walter Griffin leaps through Woodson's Josh Hogan for a lay-up.

ing surge in the fourth quarter proved to be too much for Lee.

The loss drops the Lancers to 7-7 on the season and 3-6 in the Patriot District. The loss also comes after Lee upset Oakton 77-75 on Jan. 23.

Although disheartened, Griffin, one of the Lancers' top scorers, isn't letting his team's latest loss cloud his mind.

"If the ball bounced a different way, who knows what happens?" he said. "We're not done. We still have a lot of basketball to play."

Griffin's teammate Deonta Gatlin is hoping the team would use the recent loss to help spur improvement in weak parts of its game.

"In some plays [against Woodson], we

didn't take care of the ball," he said. "In others, we weren't ready. Defense has to win games. We've got to work on that."

Head coach Michael Harris noted that his team also is overcoming a lack of experience.

"We have some growing pains," Harris said. "We have three key returners and a lot of new guys."

Despite the up-and-downs this season, Harris is optimistic the team can be a force when the Patriot District playoffs start in mid-February.

"We have a great group of kids and we're in a tough district," Harris said. "As long as we're playing our best basketball come tournament time, we will be OK."

The Lancers return to action with a road game on Jan. 29, at 7:39 p.m., against Annandale (8-5).

Spartan Girls On a Roll

The West Springfield girls' basketball team (14-1) continued its assault on the Patriot District with a 61-49 victory over T.C. Williams on Jan. 22.

Logan Battle led the Spartans with 15 points and April Robinson rounded out the top scorers with 14 points.

The victory marks the eighth straight victory for the Spartans who have yet to lose a game in the month of January.

The Lady Spartans continue their season with a meeting with Lake Braddock (3-13) on Jan. 26 and close out the month with a game on Jan. 29 against South County (10-6).

Spartan Relay Looks Strong In New York

Taking advantage of a chance to run on a banked track in New York City, the West Springfield girls' 4x800 meter relay team turned in a fast performance at The New Balance Games on Jan. 22.

The girls' relay took seventh place in the 4x800 meter relay event with a time of 9:25.31.

The Battle Of Springfield

The West Springfield varsity wrestling team is asking for students to come out and support their team at the annual "Battle for Springfield" match with Lee on Jan. 27.

Wrestling starts are 6 p.m.

Umpires Needed

Northern Virginia Baseball Umpires Association (NVBUA) is in need of officials for baseball and volleyball. Umpires are needed for colleges, men's leagues, high schools and youth recreational leagues. Experience is helpful but not required. Formal classroom and on-the-job training will be provided. Classes will begin in mid-February. Umpires are needed for all communities in the greater Washington D.C. Metro area. Support your local community's sports leagues by signing up. Call Ken Williams at 703-400-3232 for more information or go to umpires.org to fill out a "New Ump" form.

5 Qs with Lee forward Fenan Woldu

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

A: It's not really one. I just prefer Nas and his first album. He's my favorite rapper.

Q: Most expensive pair of basketball shoes you've bought?

A: They're the ones I wear on the court. They're Jordan 12s and they were \$130.

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

A: To me, [Los Angeles Laker] Kobe Bryant. He's the perfect leader and you can learn a lot from him.

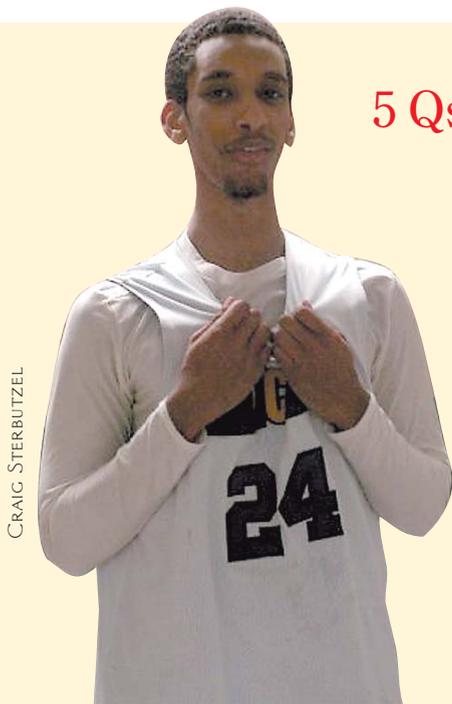
Q: Do you have a favorite sports moment?

A: Playing in the regional finals last year against T.C. Williams. We got to see the big crowds, and we want to get back there.

Q: What inspires you on the basketball court?

A: Seeing my cousins and sisters who never got to play college basketball. I want to work hard everyday so I can [play in college].

— REED S. ALBERS



CRAIG STERBUTZEL

Fenan Woldu is a 6-foot 3-inch forward for the Lee basketball team.

COMMENTARY

New Equation for School Budget

FROM PAGE 8

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

Air Force 2nd Lt. Connor B. McKeown has entered into the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS) in Bethesda, Md., as a first-year medical student of a four-year program. The student will be

trained and prepared to serve as a physician in the Army, Navy, Air Force or the Public Health Service. Outstanding scientists and health care practitioners are prepared for careers in service to the nation. McKeown is the son of Barbara

L. and Richard B. McKeown of E. South Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah. His wife, Katherine, is the daughter of Donald B. and Carol Baker of Antelope Place, Springfield. McKeown graduated from East High School, Salt Lake City.

Laugh to forget, but don't forget to laugh.
—Arnold Glasow

Gary Kramer, D.D.S.
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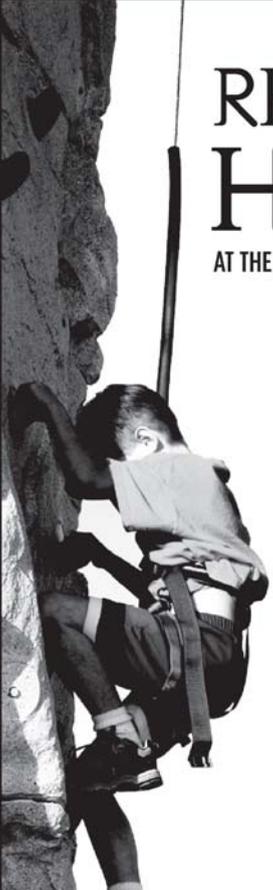
Call Specific Agents to Confirm Dates & Times.

Fairfax Station (22039)	
11611 YATES FORD RD.....\$767,500 ...Sun 1-4....Keller Williams... Karen Paris.....	571-220-7503
Lorton (22079)	
7945 ALMEDA CT.....\$469,990 ...Sat 12-4...Christopher.....Maureen Simpson.....	703-356-6035
Burke (22015)	
9500 CLAYCHIN CT.....\$749,900 ...Sun 12-4..Weichert.....Mahala Hart.....	703-691-0555
Springfield (22153, 22152, 22151, 22150)	
7500 RIDGEBROOK DR.....\$699,900 ...Sun 1-4....Long & Foster....Beckie Owen.....	703-328-4129
Kingstowne/Alexandria (22315, 22314, 22310, 22309, 22308)	
3113 MADISON HILL CT.....\$499,900 ...Sun 1-4....Weichert.....Leslie Rodriguez.....	703-400-3010
5638 GOVERNORS POND CIR...\$575,000 ...Sun 1-4....Weichert.....James Bazzle.....	703-599-8964
6805 HEATHERWAY CT.....\$359,950 ...Sun 1-4....Long & Foster...Tom & Cindy & Assoc....	703-822-0207
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8804 CAMDEN ST.....\$674,000 ...Sun 1-4....Weichert.....Greg Koons.....	703-209-7678
124 N GRAYSON ST.....\$479,000 ...Sun 1-4....Weichert.....Ron Fowler.....	703-598-0511
Fairfax (22032, 22031, 22030)	
10725 NORMAN AVE.....\$529,000 ...Sun 1-4....Weichert.....Ron Fowler.....	703-598-0511
5408 QUINCY MARR DR.....\$522,000 ...Sun 1-4....Long & Foster...Catie Morales.....	703-278-9313
4968 VAIL RIDGE LA.....\$519,850 ...Sun 1-4....RE/MAX.....Kevin Carter.....	703-930-8686
10153 BESSMER LA.....\$499,000 ...Sun 1-4....Long & Foster...Cathy DeLoach.....	703-425-8000
Woodbridge (22191)	
13093 PILGRIMS INN DR.....\$399,950 ...Sun 1-4....Weichert.....Kathleen Quintarelli.....	703-862-8808

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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."

"[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."

FROM PAGE 4

firefighters found two deceased adult males. The names of the victims will not be released until next-of-kin have been notified.

According to Capt. Willie Bailey, fire and police investigators are still investigating the cause of the fire.

Kingstowne Townhouse Fire

A fire in a Kingstowne townhouse Thursday, Jan. 21 displaced six people and caused significant damage, according to the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department.

Units responded to a report of a fire at 7303 Larrup Court at approximately 10 p.m. and upon arrival, firefighters encountered smoke and fire coming from the first floor and rear of the two-story townhouse.

Firefighters brought the fire under control within 15 minutes. The first floor kitchen sustained major damage, with some fire extension to the second floor and some damage throughout the house, totaling an estimated \$75,000. Firefighters were also able to protect the adjacent townhouses from fire exposure.

The two adults and four children living in the home escaped unharmed prior to firefighters arriving and there were no injuries. Red Cross is assisting the occupants. According to Capt. Willie Bailey, the fire was accidental and was caused by a clothes dryer.

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SPORTS



PHOTO BY REED S. ALBERS/THE CONNECTION

Two members of the girls' 4x800 meter relay, Casey Lardner and Liana Epstein, pose for a photo. Kelly Hagan and Sophie Chase were also members of the relay team.

LB Girls Qualify for States

Girls' 4x800 meter relay 13th fastest time in state.

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 country.

"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."**

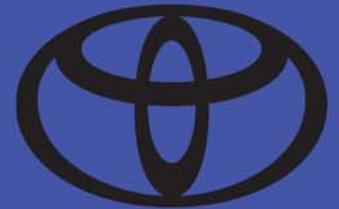
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