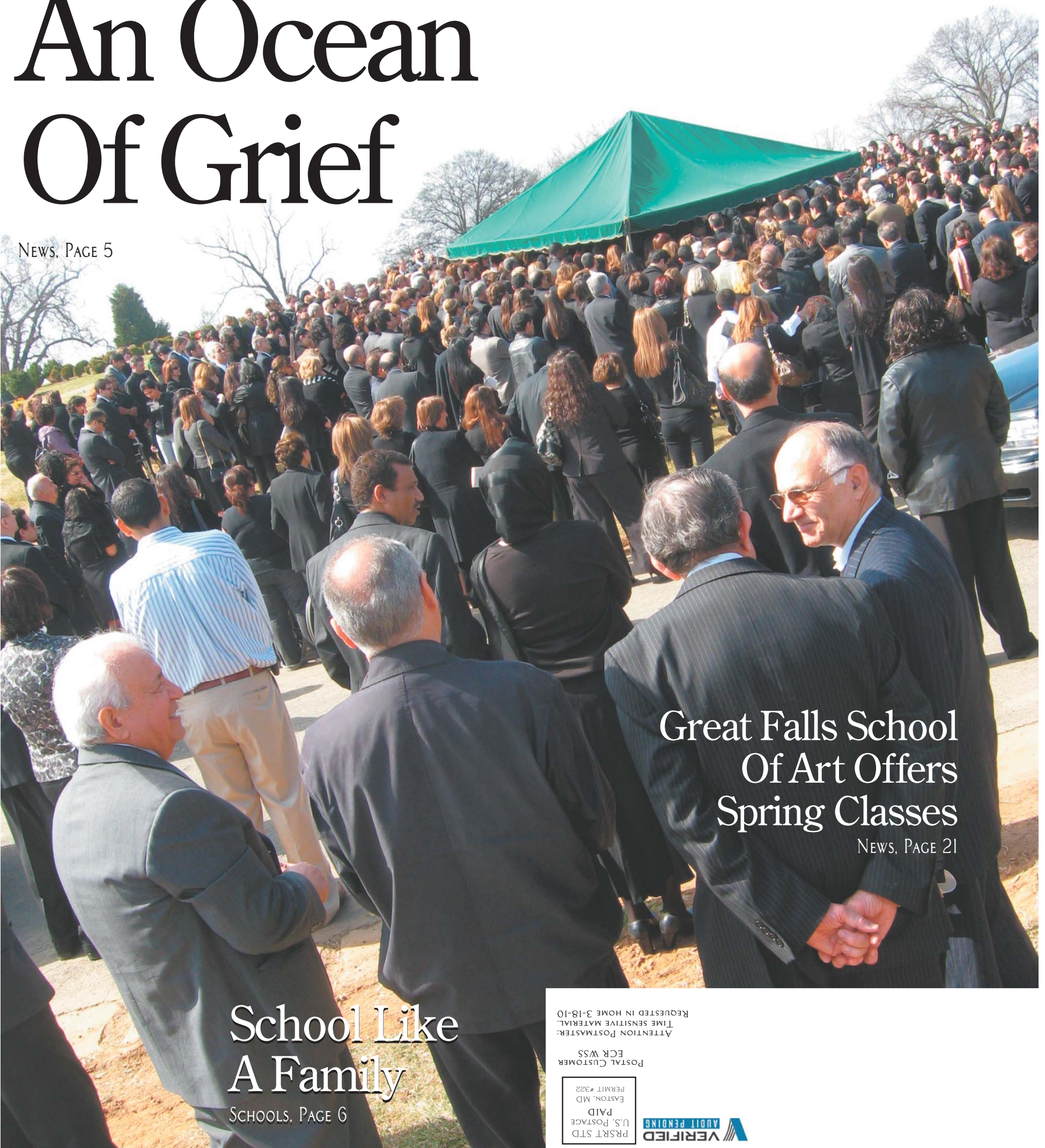


A sea of hundreds of mourners
gathers for the burial of Farshud
'Shaun' Farokhzad, 19, who died in a
car crash on Walker Road March 7.

An Ocean Of Grief

NEWS, PAGE 5

PHOTO BY MIKE DICICCO/THE CONNECTION OPINION, PAGE 8 ❖ CALENDAR, PAGE 12 ❖ SPORTS, PAGE 22 ❖ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 17



Great Falls School
Of Art Offers
Spring Classes

NEWS, PAGE 21

School Like
A Family

SCHOOLS, PAGE 6

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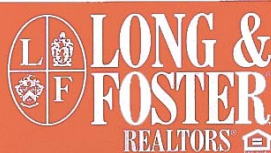
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NEWS



PHOTO BY MIKE DICICCO/THE CONNECTION

Michael DeRose, left, and McLean Rotary Club President Paul Frank, right, pose with this year's Youth service award winners, Madeline Parks, Jan Gundersen, Thomas Dee, Young Joon Cho and Abigail Dean.

Teens Set Example for Rotary

Rotary Club honors McLean, Great Falls students for embodying 'service above self.'

BY MIKE DICICCO
THE CONNECTION

McLean Rotarian Michael DeRose said he wanted to begin the club's Youth Service Awards ceremony by recognizing Langley High School senior Jan Gundersen because the single achievement the student was credited with in the event's program "in no way does justice to what he accomplished."

Gundersen was one of five high school seniors — two from Langley High School, two from McLean High School and one from the Madeira School — whom the McLean Rotary Club honored at its annual ceremony Tuesday afternoon, March 9. Each winner not only received a certificate but also got a \$400 check, said DeRose, the club's vocational director.

"It's time to feel terribly inadequate about everything you've done in your life after you hear all that these kids who are 17-years old have already done," he said, to club members as they finished their lunches that afternoon.

Gundersen was being recognized for his work on a soccer camp for 75 children in the impoverished village of Eldoret, Kenya. What made his accomplishment so impressive, said his guidance counselor, Susan Murphy, was that Gundersen conceived, developed and executed the project all on his own. While preparing to visit a relative in Kenya, he col-

lected donations of money, soccer balls, jerseys and other items, she said. Upon his arrival, he visited with local students and got the camp started. "These were kids that were vulnerable kids, orphaned kids, and he worked with them," Murphy said.

She quoted Gundersen as having written that soccer had allowed him to forget his worries and reinvigorate himself ever since he was young. He had brought that passion, she said, along with his "kind, caring manner" to children who needed it. "I know that in the future, he's going to be able to make a difference out there."

Gundersen said the principal of the school in Eldoret had selected hardworking students to participate in his camp, creating an incentive for academic achievement. He said he had also enlisted the aid of a child psychologist to teach the children about preventing sexually transmitted diseases, an important topic in an area with a high rate of HIV and AIDS infection.

"He doesn't do it for any kind of recognition. It's just part of who he is."

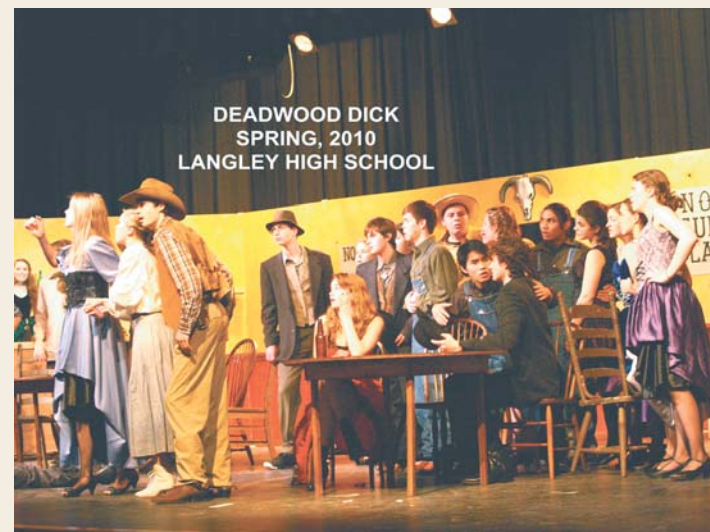
— Jill Divine, McLean High School counselor

Langley career center specialist Betty Schneider said Thomas Dee had been selected to receive the Youth Service award not because he had volunteered with Habitat for Humanity in Honduras or because he personally raised more than \$2,000 in last year's Relay for Life or because he had claimed that the experiences had changed his life. "What impressed me so much is that he truly did change

his life," Schneider said, noting that Dee was subsequently working to found the first-ever high school chapter of Students Helping Honduras and had set a fund-raising goal of \$5,000 for this year's Relay for Life. He also works at Habitat for Humanity's ReStore in Alexandria.

"He's following a passion through his actions and his deeds," she said, noting that, as a high-performing student and an athlete, Dee was not exactly vol-

SEE ROTARY, PAGE 19



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Performances are Thursday through Saturday, March 18-20, at 7:30 p.m. at Langley High School, 6520 Georgetown Pike in McLean.

Saxon Stage Presents Spring Production

The audience is invited to step back in time and visit the wild, Wild West in Langley High School's spring production, "Deadwood Dick," or "The Game of Gold," by Tom Taggart, based on the dime novels of Edward L. Wheeler.

Under the direction of Phyllis Jaffe, Deadwood Dick is a rootin', tootin', western melodrama, about a Robin Hood of the Black Hills, with heroes, villains, ladies in distress, saloon girls, cow hands and miners. The story takes place in the Old West of the 1880s and follows the adventures of the conniving villain, Back'n Red, and stalwart heroes, Ned Harris and Wild Bill Hickock. Calamity Jane's Mantrap Saloon is filled with good old-fashioned western accoutrements — saloon girls, grizzled cowboys and outlaws. Comedy, drama and mayhem ensue, with lively piano honky-tonk accompaniment, bar room brawls and the obligatory surprise ending.

The Saxon Stage actors are:

Grace Worm, Paul Goldberg, Erik Pike, Wes Brandt, Emily Mannon, Janie Yurechko, Tarun Sharma, Michael Richardson, Kelly Hubbell, Alex Lichtenstein, Jordan Moeller, Kate DaRocha, Tess Higgins, Nicole Kang, David Parker, Becca Allen, Gretchen Burke, Caroline Callahan, Jenna Dean, Lauren Fernandez, Taylor Goodson, Sarah Mendelsohn, Charline Parisot, Danielle D'Arcee, Ashley Irvin, Ashley Johnson, Shannon Keene, Morgan Ladd, Nick Calandra, Justin Cecil, Bryan Fernandez, Takuma Koide, Kevin Nejad, Brian Patterson, Chris Paul, Ryan Poyner, Arthur Richardson, Jack Sullivan, Chris Tabassi and Tu-An Troung.

Performances are Thursday through Saturday, March 18-20, at 7:30 p.m. at Langley High School, 6520 Georgetown Pike in McLean.

Tickets can be purchased, in advance, at saxonstage.com. Tickets also available at the door for \$10.



Black n' Red Calamity Jane and Ned Harris include Wes Brandt, Grace Worm and Paul Goldberg.



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Flowers adorn a picture of Shaun Farokhzad during the young Great Falls resident's funeral.

Mourning for 'Superman'

After fatal crash, friends, family recall Shaun Farokhzad, pray for Bobby Ghassemi's recovery.

BY MIKE DICICCO
THE CONNECTION

Bita Ghassemi told the hundreds of friends and family that packed the National Funeral Home in Falls Church on Thursday, March 11 that Farshud "Shaun" Farokhzad would not want them to be sad that day. "All of us know he was such a happy boy — man," she said, correcting herself. In that spirit, she shared some cheerful memories of her cousin, like the time he got her sent to the Langley High School office after she pushed him against the lockers.

When a teacher came along and chastised Ghassemi for pushing around a freshman, albeit one twice her size, Farokhzad stoked the situation, hollering in pain and saying he needed to see the nurse. "He screamed like a girl," Ghassemi said, adding that her cousin had succeeded that day in getting her — "the goody" — in trouble.

About six years later, on the morning of Sunday, March 7, just before 4:30 a.m., Farokhzad, 19, was riding shotgun as Ghassemi's brother, Babak, known as Bobby, an 18-year-old senior at Langley High School, drove a Toyota Sienna down Walker Road, less than a quarter-mile from the younger cousin's home. According to police reports, the car ran off the road to the right, overcorrected, ran off the left of the road and struck a

"And let's not forget how he fell in love — every night."

— Bita Ghassemi

tree. Police think speed may have been a factor in the accident. Shaun Farokhzad was pronounced dead at the scene, and Bobby Ghassemi, as of press time, remains in Fairfax Inova Hospital in a coma.

AT A PRAYER SERVICE on Sunday, though, Bita Ghassemi said her brother's condition had stabilized, and he was expected to recover.

She told the crowd at the funeral Thursday that she and her cousins, especially the females, had regarded Farokhzad as their "Superman," the superhero whom he had constantly invoked and whose emblem he had worn on his boxers. Now, she and her cousins all sported black T-shirts bearing the Superman logo in his memory.

He had been protective of the women in his family, to the point that if a boy handed her a program while they were at a conference together, Farokhzad didn't like that boy, wanted to know who he was and warned her not to be seen with him again. She was the youngest girl in the family, she said, "But it didn't matter if we were 10 years older than him, he

would protect you like you had no brother and no father."

On a two-week trip to Costa Rica, she said, "He literally became our mule, our human mule." She remembered him chopping wood and carrying it up the mountain, along with his own pack, which was primarily full of Chef Boyardee and other food, with just two or three pairs of clothes. He had later carried her down after she was bitten by a spider.

"And let's not forget how he fell in love — every night," she said, reciting a typical conversation: "I'm in love."

"Who is she?"

"I don't know. But she's so beautiful."

"He was a big, buff, suave boy," she said. "But he was a teddy bear. A teddy bear who screamed like a girl."

Friends and family packed the chamber where Bita Ghassemi spoke, overflowing into the hallway, and her voice was piped into sitting rooms filled with guests during the Baha'i funeral service. Farokhzad graduated from Langley High School in 2008, and his mother, Nahid Ghassemi, owns Avi Day Spa in Great Falls.

Farokhzad's half-brother, Farzin Yazdani, said his little brother's given name meant "joyful" and that he had lived up to it. "He gave of himself in a very rare way, without reservation and without hesi-

SEE FAROKHZAD, PAGE 15

General Assembly Wrap Up

The Virginia General Assembly concluded most of its 2010 legislative session March 14.

The following is a sample of bills that members of the Virginia General Assembly considered this year and information about how your local state senator and delegate voted on particular bills.

Gov. Bob McDonnell (R) still has an opportunity to veto any bill that General Assembly has passed over the next couple of weeks. Legislation that McDonnell vetoes would then require two-thirds of the votes in both branches of the General Assembly in a one-day session held April 21 in order to become law.

More information about each bill can be found on the General Assembly's Web site at <http://leg1.state.va.us>.

Concealed Guns Allowed In Bars

The Virginia General Assembly has voted in favor of allowing people to carry a concealed gun into a bar or restaurant as long they have an appropriate permit and do not consume alcohol. Current Gov. Bob McDonnell (R) has indicated he will sign the bill into law.

Sen. Chap Petersen (D-35) and Del. Mark Keam (D-34), who represent Vienna and Oakton, as well as Del. Barbara Comstock (R-34), who represents McLean and Great Falls, voted in favor of the legislation.

McLean and Great Falls Sen. Janet Howell (D-34) and McLean Del. Jim Scott (D-53) voted against the bill.

House Kills Several Bills To Ease Absentee Voting

About a half dozen bills aimed at relaxing the standards for early voting died in Virginia House of Delegates' subcommittees that review election law.

Virginia only allows residents to vote by mail or in person early if their circumstances — including having a disability or being out of town on election days — warrant a need to vote at a time other than when the polls are open.

Some would like Virginia to establish "no excuse" absentee voting, where residents would not have to provide a reason for voting before Election Day.

Law To Shield Gay Workers, Pregnant Women Fails

A House of Delegates subcommittee killed legislation that would have expanded the list of reasons people could not be discriminated against to include sexual orientation, pregnancy, medical conditions related to childbirth and pregnancy or status as a veteran. No Northern Virginia legislator was on the subcommittee that voted the bill down.

Currently, the law specifically says employers cannot discriminate because of race, color, political affiliation, age, disability, national origin or sex.

Money From HOT Lanes Tickets Will Go To Private Company

The private company that will own and operate the High Occupancy Toll [HOT] lanes being built from Springfield to Tysons Corner on the Capital Beltway will profit from those using the roadways both lawfully and unlawfully.

Transurban Group will not only collect revenue from people paying to ride in HOT lanes but also those who try to skip out on the fee and get caught. The Australian company will get to keep any of the money collected from traffic violations associated with the tolls.

SEE ASSEMBLY, PAGE 10

SCHOOLS



Molly Quigly, 3, has battled a cancerous brain tumor.

School Like a Family

Forestville Elementary Community rallies to help a little girl fight cancer.

BY KRISTINE NASH

Grateful. That is the word Kathy Quigley, assistant principal at Forestville Elementary School, uses over and over again in conversation. Her daughter, 3, has battled JPA (Juvenile Pilocytic Astrocytoma) a cancerous brain tumor.

Just over a year ago, Kathy Quigley's daughter Molly had surgery. Molly had started complaining of headaches and went to have an MRI on Jan. 29 at Inova Fairfax Hospital. By then, the family knew that something was wrong. Molly was waking up in the middle of the night with terrible headaches and was inconsolable. The MRI revealed that Molly had a tumor in her cerebellum, which was restricting the flow of spinal fluid. Molly was immediately assigned an oncology team and the next day Molly had brain surgery. Six hours later, doctors removed a tumor the size of a golf ball. Although the surgery was successful, it will be 10 years before Molly is considered cancer free. She is tested quarterly, but she is doing well.

Molly proved to be a resilient little girl. She had brain surgery on Friday. On Sunday, she was up walk-

ing around. On Monday, the family met with an occupational therapist to ensure she didn't have any balance issues, which is a common side effect. Later that day, she was released from the hospital.

"The support from the Forestville staff and families was unbelievable," said Kathy Quigley. "I was really in no shape to ask for help and very reluctant to do so. Christine Cintron started Forestville Cares. They brought meals to my family for many weeks, even once I was back at work. I was so shocked by the outpouring, as was my husband and our parents. The caring and generosity were so appreciated. Forestville feels like a family to me."

Inova Fairfax Hospital also made sure the Quigleys had a positive experience. The hospital has a Child Life Program that helps to ease anxiety and stress for children while in or visiting the hospital. Child Life specialists help with distraction and support during medical procedures and they also focus on medical and therapeutic play. They provided Molly with a set of watercolor paints. It helped her to sit up and focus. "These types of programs make an enormous difference to your experience," said Kathy Quigley. "This also brought new insight for me in how I will respond to people in need. They may be going through the most difficult moment of their life, not in a place where they may be able to ask for help. I've learned, a relatively simple gesture can make a tremendous difference. We're so grateful for all the blessings we have. This type of experience puts everything in perspective. When something goes wrong, I say to myself, 'Well it's not a brain tumor.'"

SCHOOL NOTES

Send School Notes to greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Friday.

Langley High School and Saxon Stage presents "Deadwood Dick or The Game of Gold," on March 18, 19 and 20, at 7:30 p.m., in the Langley High School Auditorium. The play by Tom Taggart is based on the dime novels of Edward L. Wheeler, and features a blood and thunder melodrama with long lost daughters, stolen gold mines, kidnapped heroines and hairbreadth escapes, saloon girls, cowhands and other outlaws.

The Marshall High School is hosting "Hope Haiti: We are the

World," a Variety show that will provide funds to aid the efforts in Haiti, on Thursday, March 18. Dinner is at 6 p.m. and performances start at 7:30 p.m. The Marshall High clubs organizing the event include International Club, National Honor Society, and the IB Student Advisory Board.

Participants in the Hub Theatre's spring break camp, March 29-April 3, for ages 7-12, will rehearse "A Thousand Cranes," by youth theatre author Katherine Schultz Miller, and perform with the cast of professional actors. 703-674-3177 for more information.

The following Great Falls residents have been named to the fall 2009 dean's

list at Virginia Tech at Blacksburg: **Rebeka L. Badila, Charles J. Baker, Kevin J. Barbera, Brian T. Benjamin, Julia A. Benjamin, Holly H. Berkley, William M. Buenzle, Brett J. Burnette, Michael P. Bylund, Nicholas M. Cafferky, Emily J. Canis, Paul B. Caron, Victoria R. Cheshire, Arjun H. Chopra, Elizabeth A. Davis, Kenley A. Eaglestone and Farrah M. Goal.**

The following Great Falls residents have been named to the fall 2009 dean's list at Virginia Tech at

SEE SCHOOL NOTES, PAGE 7



PHOTO BY HAROLD BONACQUIST

Langley High Senior Receives Scholarship Grant

Kate DaRocha, a senior at Langley High School, receives a scholarship grant from Ken Perkowski, president of the Vienna Theatre Company. The Board of Directors for the VTC honored DaRocha for her work in their recent production of 'Colder Than Here,' in which she played Jenna. DaRocha is planning to study acting in college. The scholarship was made possible by a grant from the Vienna Light Opera Company, which recently disbanded and awarded some of their remaining assets to the VTC. The company is celebrating its 35th season this year and will be presenting a 'Revue of Rodgers and Hammerstein' music opening April 23.



Great Falls Elementary Celebrates Girls' Day

First graders in the Japanese Immersion Program at Great Falls Elementary School celebrated Girls' Day (also known as Dolls' Day) with volunteers from the Washington Tokyo Women's Club on March 5.

The Washington Tokyo Women's volunteers brought a set

of dolls to display and some typical food for the Girls Day (Dolls' Day) called Hinamatsuri. The children had Rice Crispy treats and made the Emperor and the Empress with Origami to display. The children also took some pictures with the face cut out boards of the Emperor and Empress.



SCHOOLS

Spelling Bee Champion

Abby Jackson wins at Great Falls Elementary.

On Feb. 25, Great Falls Elementary School hosted its second Scripps National Spelling Bee. Children from the fourth through sixth grades were invited to compete in classroom spelling bees, the first and second place winners from each classroom then qualified for the school-wide spelling bee competition.

The outstanding participants included Jessica York, Sophia Divone, Thompson Brownlee, Shayan Sanjideh, Chris Obolensky, Michael Casey, Mason Matay, Seena Kooshki, Melody Stone, Samantha Masino, Brady Richardson, Erin Murray, Will Broeckaert, Tasmia Haq, David Song, Peter Bui,

Fionntan Thinnes, Abby Jackson, Regan Herberg, McKenna Day, Caroline Bryan, Jack O'Donnell, Caroline Wildman and Srujan Koneru.

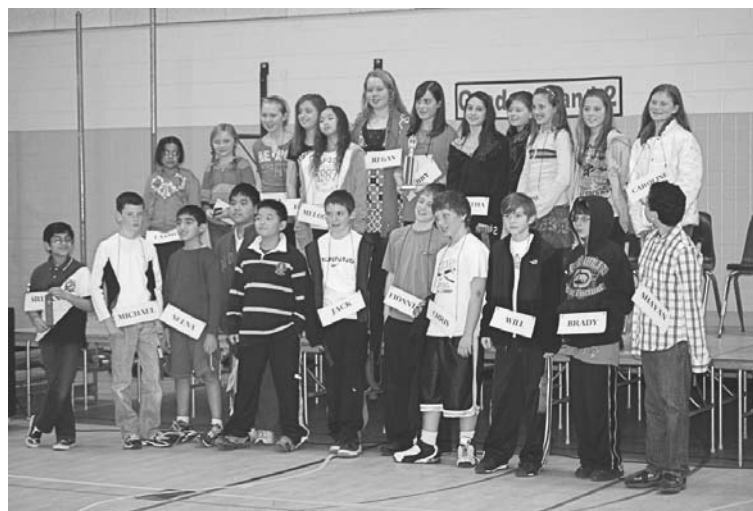
Each student stood in front of the large audience and one by one spelled challenging words such as centipede, applause, casserole, scholarship and omniscient! After an hour and a half of nail biting competition there were only two contestants left standing, Abby Jackson and Erin Murray.

The girls rallied back and forth for first place but, once again, reigning champion, Abby Jackson took home the gold, winning top place in the second Great Falls Elementary School Spelling Bee. Abby, the school wide winner in 2008, successfully spelled the word "parable" to defeat her classmate and end the competition.

Abby Jackson advanced to the Fairfax County Spelling Bee.



From left, fifth grader Erin Murray and spelling bee winner Abby Jackson.



All of the Great Falls Elementary's Scripps Spelling Bee contestants.

SCHOOL NOTES

FROM PAGE 6

Blacksburg: **Lily E. Goodson**, **Stephanie A. Hintz**, **Johanna L. Hsu**, **Emily Y. Khan**, **Kohl K. Kianpour**, **Erik J. Kiffe**, **Skye W. Lu**, **Thomas C. Montague**, **Matthew S. Ning**, **Caitlin E. Perna**, **Michael V. Rapp**, **Mitchell K. Ruloff**, **Lawrence K. Satterfield**, **Walter S. Scheib**, **Raumi N. Sidki**, **Tara Talaie** and **Andrew W. Watson**.

Adrienne Marie De Santis of Great Falls was named to the fall 2009 dean's list at Miami University of Oxford, Ohio.

The following Great Falls residents received degrees from Virginia Tech in Blacksburg at the Dec. 2009 graduation: **Kevin Barbera**, bachelor of science in business magna cum laude in finance; **Nathan Carlos**, bachelor of science in aerospace engineering; **Young Cho**,

bachelor of science in business in accounting and information systems; **Amelia Davis**, bachelor of science in engineering science and mechanics; **Shaoyen Jeng**, bachelor of science in business in management; **Jesse Nelson**, bachelor of science in civil engineering; **Ryan Nikkhoo**, bachelor of arts magna cum laude in political science; and **Diane Wong**, bachelor of science in business in management.

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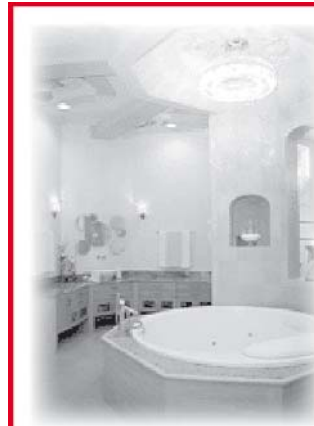
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OPINION

The Transportation Fix

No help on congestion just a small part of spreading pain from budget.

The Virginia General Assembly has adjourned.

If for some reason your attention lapsed between the campaign for Governor (Gov. Bob McDonnell took office just two months ago) and now, you might expect a transportation plan as one of the outcomes of this assembly session.

Here is the transportation relief proposed and passed and likely to be signed: the maximum speed limit on some roads will increase to 70 miles-per-hour.

This seems like it might violate equal protection standards, since there are very few hours of the day on any Northern Virginia's roads that getting above 55 is possible. Heck, most of us are really happy if traffic on the Beltway or 66 or 95 or Toll Road moves along at 30 mph without frequent stops.

So in other parts of the state not dominated by congestion, vehicles will be moving faster.

In Northern Virginia, there will be even less money for even fewer efforts at relieving congestion.

The governor's commitment to fixing transportation, the center of his campaign that boosted him to an election victory even in Fairfax County (not Arlington or Alexandria) turned out to be far weaker than his commitment to eschew any new forms of revenue that might be needed to pay for such a fix.

Seriously, the Governor made no major proposal to the General Assembly on transportation.

Many, many people will face hardships that the rest of us can barely imagine because of the greatly pared down budget just passed in the General Assembly, especially people with disabilities of all kinds, working poor families, people who need mental health care, people who are struggling with addictions, families who can't afford health insurance whose incomes are just enough to keep them from getting assistance, etc.

Localities will press to raise property taxes so they can buffer some of the cuts to education, health care and the safety net passed along from the state.

Parents and students and teachers will feel the pain as school districts struggle to adjust priorities in ways that won't sit well.

And everyone who needs to get anywhere will sit in traffic, wait longer for buses, pay more for rides on public transportation of all kinds.

But don't forget that if you are lucky enough to drive through some of rural Virginia on an interstate, you'll probably get to go 70 miles-per-hour. That should compensate for some of the pain.

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— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

National Health Care Bill Threatens State Budget

BY BARBARA COMSTOCK
STATE DEL (R-34)



I want to share a letter that I recently coordinated with a majority of members of the Virginia House of Delegates (56). It was sent to our Virginia Congressional delegation and details our opposition to the national health care bill and how it would harm our state budget. This bill is expected to be voted on in Congress later this week.

Dear Virginia Congressional Delegation:

We write to let you know of our views on the health care bill pending before Congress. We join the American people in opposing this latest trillion dollar health care proposal on policy grounds as well as the procedural approach being considered.

This bill, with its 10 years of tax increases (approximately half a trillion dollars) and 10 years of Medicare cuts (another half a trillion dollars) only pays for six years of spending! The Senate Budget Committee chairman, Kent Conrad, said that this is a Ponzi scheme that would make Bernie Madoff proud. Madoff financing schemes certainly are not the Virginia way. The real cost of the bill — which is estimated at \$2.3 trillion — is simply unsustainable for

strapped state budgets, families, and businesses. We can do far better for much less. That is why we are writing to urge that this plan be scrapped entirely in favor of a truly bipartisan approach that addresses the problems step by step.

Over the past year, the American people and our fellow Virginians have spoken loud and clear. They want us to start over and work on a plan that lowers the cost of health care without expanding the role of government, and without raising taxes or cutting Medicare. Virginians do not want us to foist the increased costs on our state budget with unfunded mandates and in turn overwhelm states with skyrocketing Medicaid costs that will crowd out any future spending for K-12 education, higher education, roads and bridges, and other state priority needs.

We fear that many in Washington are not listening to our citizens, our state legislators or our Governor. We are in the process of completing very difficult state budget negotiations in Virginia. We have had to cut over \$4 billion to balance our budget. But these cuts would pale in comparison to the kind of cuts we would have to

implement if this health care bill were to be passed and place new job killing taxes on our families and businesses at just the wrong time.

Medicare, right now, has a \$38 trillion unfunded liability. Nationally, Medicaid is growing at 21 percent each year, suffocating states' budgets and adding trillions in obligations that we have no possible way to pay for — particularly with the job killing taxes on families and small businesses also embedded in the bill.

There are bipartisan ideas that could form the basis of the kind of step-by-step reform Americans really want and reforms that we in the states could add to and build upon to expand access while getting overall costs under control.

Virginians don't want a one-party bill forced through an illegitimate process with backroom deals. Our fellow Virginians are already appalled about "the Cornhusker Kickback" and "the Louisiana Purchase." But using the reconciliation process now to jam this health care plan through would be the worst outrage of all. Using reconciliation to fundamentally change the health care of every American and one-sixth of the economy would be one of the biggest power grabs in legislative history.

In the past, bills that impact huge numbers of our citizens and

one-sixth of our economy have been passed by working together and gaining majorities on areas we can agree on. Medicare and Medicaid were created with the support of about half the members of the minority party. The Voting Rights Act passed with 30 Republican and 47 Democrat votes. Only six senators voted against the Social Security Act. Only eight voted against No Child Left Behind or the Americans with Disabilities Act. Only 12 members voted against the Welfare Reform Act. (And we would note that the Welfare Reform Act came after many states provided excellent experiments and demonstrations of how to reform our welfare system. And the national Welfare Reform Act was not a one size fits all bill, such as this health care bill, but instead it continued to allow for creative state initiatives.)

The choice for the Virginia delegation is clear. Vote with Virginians against this bill.

You can also view this letter online at <http://www.delegatecomstock.com/blog/read.aspx?id=108>

Write

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To have community events listed in the Connection, send to greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Friday.

FRIDAY/MARCH 19

Vienna Tysons Regional Chamber of Commerce Brown Bag University. 12 p.m. at Fairfax County Economic Development Authority, 8300 Boone Blvd., Suite 450, Vienna. Mark Cohen on 'The Importance of Coordinating Estate Planning with Financial Planning.' www.vtrcc.org.

SATURDAY/MARCH 20

Marshall High School Boosters Club Mulch Sale, Saturday-Sunday, at 7731 Leesburg Pike,

Falls Church. To pre-order or for free home delivery, fill out the order form at www.gcmhsboosters.org, or stop by and purchase mulch at \$4.50 a bag. Contact Sandy MacDonnell at www.gcmhsboosters.org.

Reston-Herndon AAUW Annual Luncheon and Business Meeting. 11:30 a.m. at Café Montmartre by Lake Anne. Kimberly Bohince, an AAUW Fellow currently studying at George Mason University, will speak of her Peace Corps experiences working with women leaders and HIV-positive women in sub-Saharan Africa. Open

to the public. \$16. Reserve at 703-759-5543.

MONDAY/MARCH 22

McLean & Great Falls Celebrate Virginia. 5:30 p.m. at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The organization is currently planning the McLean Centennial Celebration for June 26, and is seeking photographs, toys, clothing and other memorabilia circa 1910 for display purposes. To lend items, contact Page Shelp at 703-450-3918. Carole Herrick, 703-356-8223.



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ASSEMBLY WRAP UP

FROM PAGE 5

Arlington County Del. Adam Ebbin (D-39) introduced legislation this year that would have altered this arrangement, sending all money collected from HOT lane violations to the state coffers instead of Transurban. But the Virginia House of Delegates' transportation committee voted to kill the legislation.

McLean and Great Falls Del. Barbara Comstock (R-34), as a mem-

ber of the transportation committee, voted against Ebbin's proposal.

Schools Could Start Before Labor Day

The Fairfax County School Board will now have a good chance of being able to start the school year prior to Labor Day.

Every Northern Virginia legislator voted to pass a bill that allows the Virginia Board of Education to grant waivers for an earlier school year start if the school district's students have missed eight days of school in one year due to inclement weather at any time during the past decade.

This year all Northern Virginia school districts missed approximately 15 days of school due to snowfall, meaning they would all qualify for a waiver should the

state education board grant them.

Several local school districts have been lobbying for such an exception for years, saying students are put at a disadvantage for Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate exams – which take place on same days nationwide – because Virginia schools start weeks later than those in other states.

The Virginia tourism industry – including theme parks like Kings Dominion – has successfully

fought the similar bill in the past, saying that Labor Day weekend business for the industry would drop off if school started earlier.

Assembly Approves New Specialty License Plates

The Virginia General Assembly voted to approve six new specialty license plates, including one bearing a "TRUST WOMEN/RESPECT CHOICE" slogan whose proceeds would go to Virginia's local chapter of Planned Parenthood, which provides family planning services including abortions.

The other license plates include a "Virginia Kids Eat Free" license plate that supports a state fund providing food to children from local income families; a plate honoring the "Professor Garfield Foundation" connected with the Virginia Department of Education; a "Buy Local" license plate that supports the Retail Alliance Foundation in Virginia; a plate support the Virginia Recycling Association and a plate for fans of the Washington Capitals professional ice hockey team, which benefits the team charities.

McLean and Great Falls Sen. Janet Howell (D-32) proposed the pro-choice plate, partially in response to the passing of anti-abortion license plate last year that benefits pregnancy crisis organizations that don't offer information about abortion.

Vienna and Oakton Del. Mark Keam (D-35), McLean and Great Falls Del. Barbara Comstock (R-34) and McLean Del. Jim Scott (D-53) also voted for the new license plates.

Internet Sales Tax Failed

A Virginia House of Delegates subcommittee voted down a bill that would have applied the commonwealth's sales tax to internet businesses which have \$10,000 worth of transactions or more in the commonwealth.

The Senate voted in favor of the legislation by a 28 to 12 margin, with McLean and Great Falls Sen. Janet Howell (D-32) supporting the bill and Vienna Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34) voting against the sales tax expansion.

The delegate subcommittee used a "voice vote" to kill the legislation so there is no official record of who did or did not support the legislation, though Vienna Del. Mark Keam (D-35) is a subcommittee member.

Save Your Library!



Proposed Cuts to Fairfax County Public Library will:

- Close all the libraries two mornings and two evenings a week
- Eliminate weekend telephone and reference service and library programs
- Slash information assistance and computer/Wi-Fi access for students, job seekers, ESL patrons and others
- Eliminate outreach services for the disabled, homebound and senior center residents
- Reduce services for children and teens
- Cut the library budget by nearly 1/3 over two years
- Make per resident library spending for Fairfax County the lowest in the DC Metro area

Help Save Library Services

Sign our petition at <http://tiny.cc/fcpl>

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- **Chairman, At-Large** — Sharon Bulova 703-324-2321 chairman@fairfaxcounty.gov
- **Braddock** — John C. Cook 703-425-9300 braddock@fairfaxcounty.gov
- **Dranesville** — John W. Foust 703-356-0551 dranesville@fairfaxcounty.gov
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- **Sully** — Michael R. Frey 703-814-7100 sully@fairfaxcounty.gov

Residents of Fairfax City contact the Mayor and City Council mayor&council@fairfaxva.gov

Friends of Fairfax County Public Libraries

SCHOOLS



PHOTOS BY JENNA PUGRANT/THE CONNECTION



Physical education instructor Paul O'Connor, seated, and other teachers of Longfellow Middle School agreed to let students shave their heads if the students reached their fund-raising goals. Meredith Bullard, an English teacher and Student Council advisor, helped organize the fund-raiser, and eighth grader Trevor Scanlon was selected to shave O'Connor's head.

Adam Cheney, a civics teacher at Longfellow Middle School, agreed to have his head shaved if the students raised enough money during their Haiti fund-raiser. Eighth grader Michael Sander was chosen to shave Cheney's head at the Hair Shaving Assembly on March 10.

Going Bald for a Cause

Longfellow Middle School teachers and students raise \$6,000 for Haiti.

BY JENNA PUGRANT
THE CONNECTION

At the end of the last class of the day on Wednesday, March 10, a voice came on over the PA system at Longfellow Middle School: "Students, please report to Gym 1 for the Hair Shaving Assembly." The gym grew more crowded as seventh and eighth graders trickled in to see their physical education teacher Paul O'Connor and civics teacher Adam Cheney sitting on a bench in the middle of the gym next to two electric shavers. The assembly was to honor the students in the attendance for helping Longfellow Middle School raise nearly \$6,000 for Haiti relief and allowed them to enjoy the benefits of their hard work — to see their teachers have their heads shaved by their fellow classmates.

In an effort to provide incentive for the students of Longfellow to raise money for Haiti, six teachers agreed to have their hair shaved off if the students raised \$8,000 for Haiti. "A lot of kids were writing in to their principal suggesting ideas and asking what they could do to help with the Haiti crisis," said Meredith Bullard, an English teacher and Student Council faculty facilitator who helped organize the event. "Mr. O'Connor, a health and physical education instructor, suggested that teachers provide incentive for students to raise money by having a

team of teachers offer their hair to the cause."

Students could pay \$5 for a raffle ticket that would enter his or her name in a drawing and if their name was chosen, that student would have the opportunity to shave one of their teacher's heads. Six teachers, including two women, originally signed up to have their heads shaved if the students reached their goal, but due to the break in school from the February snowstorms, the students raised just under \$6,000. Two teachers, however, continued to stay committed to the cause despite the gap between the money raised and the school's original goal and one teacher, the journalism instructor Andrea Duggan, cut her previously long hair short to honor the student's efforts. Eighth graders Trevor Scanlon and Michael Sander were the students selected from the raffle to shave O'Connor and Cheney's heads.

"This was a good way to get us involved," said seventh grader Carly Richardson. "It makes the fund raising more directly relevant to the students here and encourage us to raise money for a cause that really needs it."

After the head shaving assembly, Cheney said, "This event provided great incentive for students of this age group to raise money for a cause. Despite the fact that I have a semi-uneven haircut right now, everybody wins from this situation. The students who came to watch the event had a good time, the students who didn't come to the event still get to have a good time hearing about the event, and we raised a ton of money for a great cause."

O'Connor, the teacher who came up with the whole idea and had his head shaved, said after the event, "The people of Haiti need our help. Hair grows back. It was the least I could do."

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Supervisors Set Ceiling For Property Tax Rate, Consider Car Tax

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has set upper threshold of \$1.12 per \$100 of assessed property value for the 2010 property tax rate, which would lead to a tax increase of approximately \$100 to the average county homeowner if adopted.

During the same biweekly meeting March 9, the supervisors also voted to consider a new vehicle registration license fee of \$33.

Eight of the county board members, all of the Democrats and Republican Michael Frey (Sully), supported the two actions. Supervisors Patrick Herrity (R-Springfield) and John Cook (R-Braddock) voted against advertising the higher property tax rate or the new vehicle registration fee.

"In 2000, our average [property] tax bill was \$2,407 and we had a great county then. By 2007, our tax bills had more than doubled," said Herrity.

"We were a great county in 2000 and we need to give our citizens some relief," he said.

FAIRFAX SUPERVISORS are hardly bound to vote for a property tax rate of \$1.12 or a \$33 vehicle fee simply by supporting their public advertisement.

The action only set "the ceiling" for the local property tax rate and vehicle fee. In other words, the supervisors are unable to raise the property tax rate higher than \$1.12 when they adopt the 2011 budget April 27.

Fairfax County Executive Anthony Griffin has actually suggested that the supervisors only raise the property tax rate from

\$1.04 per \$100 of assess value to \$1.09 per \$100 of assessed value. If the supervisors take Griffin's suggestion, the average county property tax bill will actually decline by \$48.55.

Even though he recommended a tax break, Griffin also suggested the supervisors advertise the tax rate at \$1.12, leaving the county board flexibility to fund most of the Fairfax County Public Schools budget proposal if it desired.

The Fairfax County School Board has asked the county for \$81.9 million in additional funding for next year, which equates to an approximately four or five-cent increase in the property tax rate, according to county figures.

THE COUNTY executive also pushed for the new vehicle registration fee, one of very few options for new taxes or revenue the Fairfax has open to them. Virginia controls many taxes itself – income, retail sales, cigarettes and alcohol – leaving Fairfax to rely heavily on local property taxes to balance the local budget.

But a new vehicle registration fee for just one car would almost eat up any tax relief gained through Griffin's proposal for the property rate. Herrity said the vehicle registration fee also cannot be deducted from federal tax bills.

"That is still coming from people's pocket books," said Herrity, who is also running for U.S. Congress in Virginia's 11th congressional district.

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NEWS

Farokhzad Remembered

FROM PAGE 5

tation," Yazdani said. "He always put the needs of strangers before his own," he said, adding that Farokhzad had been "pure of heart to the point that it took people off-guard." He said his brother had never arrived at his house without gifts for his children, whom he had enjoyed playing with.

"The measure of a human being is how they treat others. He was the best of us," Yazdani said.

AFTER THE CEREMONY, Arya Farahvashi, a friend, remembered how Farokhzad used to race down the stairs to greet him whenever he visited. "He poured out his love for everyone. He never had anything bad to say about anybody," he said. The most important lesson he would take from his friend's death, he said, was "to love other people like him, be generous like him and be pure of heart."

"If you said, let's go do something, he was the first person to say yes," said Farokhzad's cousin, Omid Eghaneyan, adding that his cousin was also known to be the one to suggest adventures. "It would be December and he'd say, 'Let's go to the pool,' and we'd do it and we'd jump in."

"He was very respectful and polite," said Mary Knight, who had taught Farokhzad in World History in 10th grade at Langley High School. "He was always kind of happy-go-lucky, so he was always pleasant," she said, adding that she had sometimes needed to remind Farokhzad to stay on task. She said he had struggled a bit in school but never let it bother him and regularly came to see her for help after school. "Even after I had him, he would see me in the hall and say hi and chat with me," Knight said.

Cathy Kirdasi said she had fully approved of her son, Jad, hanging out with Farokhzad. "He always wanted to succeed and work out and be strong, which is kind of cute for a teenager," she said, remembering that when she offered him breakfast after he stayed at the house one night, he had declined, saying he had brought his own fruits. "He always wanted to be healthy," she said.

After graduating in 2008, Farokhzad had enrolled in Northern Virginia Community College, and his uncle, Farzad Ghassemi, said he had recently been accepted by the Air Force Academy, where

SEE COMMUNITY, PAGE 23

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NEWS



PHOTO BY NANCY DELISO

Geese in Flood at Riverbend Park

This photo was taken on Monday, March 15, from the boat launch area at Riverbend Park.

Colonial Farm Spring Clean-Up

The Claude Moore Colonial Farm Spring Clean-Up is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, March 20-21, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at The Claude Moore Colonial Farm, 6310 Georgetown Pike in McLean.

On this 18th century Virginia farm, fields and trails need to be cleared, fences rebuilt, and wood moved and stacked. Behind the

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21 Announcements

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Effective March 29th, cable channel Fox Reality will cease to operate and will become Nat Geo Wild. Like Fox Reality, Nat Geo Wild will be carried on the same channel (219) in the Digital Variety Pak. Nat Geo Wild is dedicated to bringing audiences extraordinary stories of the natural world and the amazing animals that inhabit it. Through unique, powerful experiences and unparalleled imagery, viewers will get closer to animals and nature than ever before.



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21 Announcements

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NEWS

Rotary Presents Youth Service Awards

FROM PAGE 3

unteering in order to fill his free time.

DEROSE asked Dee to tell the crowd about a man named José, with whom he had worked in Honduras. Dee recalled working shoulder-to-shoulder with people who earned \$1.50 an hour or less. One of them, a man named José, had asked him if he could take him back to the United States. "And I had to say no, and that was pretty powerful," he said. Asked about his 24-hour walk at the Relay for Life event, Dee said the walk was fun, "like the party after the game."

"A 24-hour walk is like a party to him," DeRose said.

Madeira School Headmistress Betsy Griffith said service was a requirement at her girls' boarding school in McLean. But, introducing student Madeline Parks, she said, "Maddie Parks grew up in a household where I think service was served in her milk." She noted that Parks had done missionary work through her church group in two foreign countries and five underserved areas of the U.S. Griffith said she had hardly turned off the television after the initial reports of the earthquake in Haiti when she received an e-mail from Parks saying the school needed to organize a relief effort.

"I admire her, as a teacher, because she's training younger children to do this work," Griffith said. Among Parks' local efforts are teaching middle school students to take on service projects, organizing students to shovel snow from the sidewalks and driveways of elderly neighbors, and working at an inner-city ministry and an organization that provides transitional housing. Also, Griffith said, Parks established a student position at the school for uniting various student service efforts.

By keeping charitable initiatives at the school from competing with each other, Parks said, "It sort of makes it possible for the whole school to come behind a single event." For as long as she could remember, she said, her parents had taken her with them to do charity work like delivering food to the homeless. "One of our family mottos is, 'We are blessed to be a blessing,'" she said.

ASKED about her work in Guatemala and South Africa, Parks recalled hiking to a remote Guatemalan village to bring school supplies and play with the children. "It was interesting how they didn't even have a mirror. They didn't even know what they looked like," she said. In South Africa, she said, she and her group had walked the streets with a translator, talking to locals and going to their homes to provide whatever help they needed.

McLean High School counselor Jill Divine said what made student Young Joon Cho stand out to her was his work with special-education students and the fact that he had started some of those projects himself. Cho founded the PARTnership organization, which provides tutoring, mentoring, athletic projects and other

services to students with intellectual disabilities, and he also gives English instructional assistance and vocational education to students with intellectual disabilities at his school, coached two basketball teams for the Special Olympics, volunteers with the McLean TOP Soccer program for children with intellectual disabilities, and spent two summers working with an elementary school student and a high school student, both autistic, through the Buddy Program. Cho also ran therapy sessions and recreational activities for 12 children with autism and Downs syndrome through the county's Therapeutic Recreation Service.

Divine said Cho had even recruited students from outside McLean High School to work with the school's students with intellectual disabilities. "He doesn't do it for any kind of recognition. It's just part of who he is," she said.

DeRose asked Cho why he had started working with special-education students his sophomore year with little previous experience, and Cho said he'd had plenty of experience with his autistic younger brother. When the family moved to the country from Korea three years ago, he said, it had been difficult for his brother to adjust, and he had thought that working with special-education students would help his brother, he said. After two years, he founded PARTnership to get more general-education students involved.

Cho is also one of three chapter presidents for the Korean Heritage Foundation, and DeRose noted that both he and McLean High School's other honoree, Abigail Dean, were listed as presidents of the district Rotary Interact committee. DeRose said the club hoped to see more of them in the future. Cho is president of the committee this year, and Dean was its president last year.

Divine said the two best words to describe Dean were "infectious enthusiasm."

"She has so much joy in her heart for everyone else," Divine said, noting that Dean, too, had founded service groups and carried out her work at the same time that she excelled in school, dance and music.

Asked about her efforts to raise money for Haiti following the January earthquakes, Dean said she and other students had conducted pizza sales and organized demonstrations of shelter boxes in order to solicit donations. She is currently organizing a walk-a-thon to raise more money.

She said the "D" in STAND, the student anti-genocide coalition she helped to found, originally stood for "Darfur," but the group now raised awareness of violence in the Congo and elsewhere. Dean said she had led a relatively sheltered life and had been left aghast by a unit on genocide early in her high school days, which taught about the Holocaust and the slaughter in Rwanda. "And then, finding out it's happening now? Why aren't we doing something? Why don't people know?" she said.

Dean also has done mission work in Appalachia and Alaska and chaired and produced a school talent show that raised money for St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

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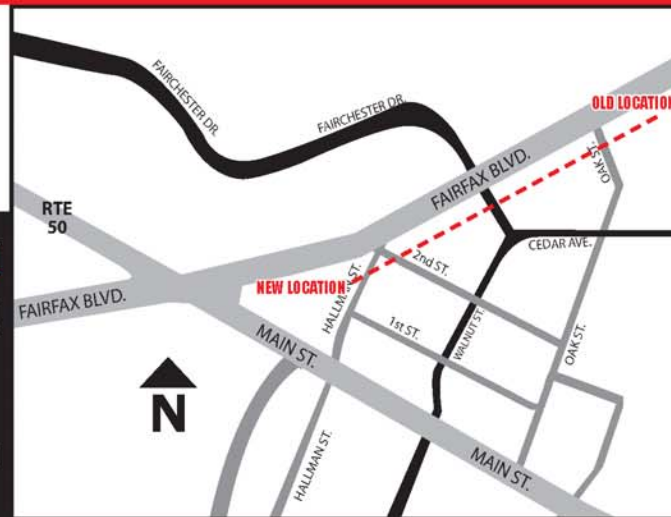
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Young artists in action at the Great Falls School of Art. Pictured, from left, are Natalie Volpicelli, Nicole Hottle and Sammi Shames.

Great Falls School of Art Offers Spring Classes

Registration is ongoing for spring classes and workshops at the Great Falls School of Art.

"A number of courses will continue to build skills over a series of five to nine weekly sessions," said art school director Terri Parent. "In addition, we've added 'stand-alone' workshops on Saturday mornings to focus on a specific technique or medium, such as composition or color, or painting outdoors. Our hope is that this expanded format will make it easier for students of all ages to make time for art in their schedules."

Consistent with this approach, the school has planned a two-day plein air workshop to be led by Art League of Alexandria instructor and guest artist Sara Linda Poly. "Rivers, Waters, Woodlands," will meet April 16 and 17 at River Bend Park and will focus on subject matter selection, value, light patterns, composition, color, paint application and atmospheric perspective. Students may be beginners to advanced in plein air painting. Class size is limited to the first 20 registrants.

For those who prefer evening hours, artisan jeweler and teacher JJ Singh will discuss her design process and current collections during a special Thursday evening class in April. Also in April, the art school will launch ArtPartners, a series of free Wednesday evening networking meetings for art enthusiasts, students, teachers and collectors.

"We've not only expanded our format, we've expanded our focus," Parent said. In addition to oil painting, drawing and watercolor, instruction will be offered in jewelry making from metal clay, flower arranging, color mixing, photography and cartooning. Also new for spring, the portraits of John Singer Sargent will be the subject of the first in a series of courses that will combine painting and art history to explore the lives and techniques of the masters.

For a complete spring course bulletin, teacher profiles and registration information, visit www.greatfallsfoundationforarts.org.

Great Falls School of Art is located at 1144-D Walker Road.



Natalie Volpicelli receives encouragement from teacher Adrienne Kralick.

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SPORTS

McLean's Katie Hansan (Langley High graduate) is a member of the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) women's basketball team. Hansan, a sophomore guard, has played in 23 games for the Engineers this season. She has six assists and three steals while averaging 7.7 minutes per contest. Hansan is part of an RPI squad (17-10) which recently captured the Liberty League title to earn a berth at the NCAA Division 3 women's basketball tournament for the first time since 2001 and just the second time in the program's history. The Engineers were scheduled to meet the University of Southern Maine in a first round NCAA tournament contest on the campus of Amherst College (Mass.)

Northern Virginia Senior Softball (nvss.org) is seeking players for both men's (50-over) and women's (40-over) leagues. Participants will enjoy the fun, fitness and fellowship that's a part of slow pitch softball. Double-header games will be played on Tuesday and Thursday mornings on Fairfax County fields. The spring/summer season will run from April 13 through Aug. 12. NVSS fields 26 teams, organized into three skill-level conferences. Players are assigned to teams based on their skill assessment (not a try-out). NVSS runs an Indoor Conditioning Program through April 8. The Esprit de Corps Tournament is offered for members who served in the military. For more information on NVSS, contact Dave at 703-524-5576 or Paul at 703-323-7878.

The NOVA Youth Flag Football League is currently conducting online registration for its Seventh Annual NFL Youth Flag Football Summer camps. Camp sessions, open to children ages 6-12, will be June 28-July 2, and Aug. 9-13, from 9 a.m.-12 noon. Campers can choose to attend one or both sessions. For more detailed information or to register, visit novaflag.com.

The Madeira women's swim and dive team, coached by Rod Montrie, competed at the Virginia State Independent Schools' Championships postseason event on Feb. 19-20 at the George Mason University Freedom Aquatic Center in Manassas. Madeira, which finished a strong 5-2 over the regular season, finished sixth overall at the state meet. Madeira athletes qualified for the finals in 11 of the 12 events. Four Madeira girls were named to the VSIS All-State team. Those girls were Maddie Alagia, Ann

Griffin, Brittney Jansen and Christa Ann Saunders.

Following are Madeira results from the state meet: 200-yard medley relay team of Christa Ann Saunders, Ann Griffin, Brittney Jansen, Maddie Alagia (third place); Maddie Alagia (11th in 200-IM); Brittney Jansen (sixth in 50-free, fifth in 100-free); Christa Ann Saunders (third in 100-back, fifth in 100-fly); Tessa Newland (sixth in dive); Debbie Druckerman (13th in dive); Grace Johnson (16th in 100-free); Maddie Alagia (third in 500-free); 200-free relay team of Ann Griffin, Grace Johnson, Rachel Tang, Megan Basel (12th place); Ann Griffin (13th in 100-breast-stroke); 400-freestyle relay team of Brittney Jansen, Grace Johnson, Maddie Alagia, Christa Ann Saunders (sixth).

The Langley High ice hockey club finished its regular season with an 8-1-1 record following an impressive 10-0 Senior Night win over Loudoun County High School on Feb. 12. With the victory, Langley clinched the Northern Virginia Scholastic Hockey League (VSHL) North Division Conference title. Langley has now won the division championship three out of the last four years. Langley celebrated the Senior Night win with big games from 12th graders Todd Hatfield (3 goals), John Mensing (2 goals), Will Derryberry (2 goals), Jon-Marc Diner (2 goals) and John Labelle (1 goal). Freshman Evan Sterling also had a strong game and scored a hat trick. Junior goaltender Brendan Mullen was awarded the 'hard hat' after the game by his teammates as the hardest working player of the game. He made numerous spectacular saves during the game to preserve the shutout.

The Northern Virginia Nereids Synchronized Swimming Club will conduct its fifth annual Introductory Clinic on Saturday, March 20 at Audrey Moore Recreation Center in Annandale. Nereids coaches and athletes will introduce girls ages 7 to 15 to the graceful, powerful Olympic sport of synchronized swimming.

Receive a "synchro" noseclip and embroidered patch keepsake. For details, visit nvsynchro.com or e-mail tell_me_more@nvsynchro.com.

Langley High graduate Morgan Danner, a sophomore member of the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (Troy, N.Y.) women's indoor track and field team, was named a Women's Track and Field Performer of the Week as a result of her strong showing at the Liberty League champion-



One of the highlights for the Langley High boys' varsity basketball team this past season was winning the Liberty District tournament for the third straight year. The finals win came over the Marshall Statesmen. From there, the Saxons went on to compete at the Northern Region playoffs where they advanced all the way to the championship game before losing to Chantilly. Langley's season ended with a state AAA playoff loss to Patrick Henry of Roanoke. The state playoff appearance was the



The Langley High girls' freshmen basketball team went undefeated this past season with a perfect 13-0 record. The Saxons are coached by Ken Savittiere.

ships. At the postseason meet, Danner finished third or better in all four events she competed in. She won her second straight indoor pole vault title with a height of 3.05 meters and also claimed victory in the long jump with a distance of 5.22 meters. The McLean resident also finished third in the triple jump (10.22) and helped the 4x200 relay team to a second place finish. It was the second Field Performer of the Week honor for Danner, who was also recognized with the same award on Feb. 1.

Bennett Standiford of Great Falls is a starting defenseman on the Trinity College

(Conn.) men's lacrosse team this spring. A senior defender and three-year letterman, Standiford was part of a 2008 Trinity team, under coach Jim Finlay, that advanced to the New England Small College Athletic Conference semifinals. In high school, Standiford was a Langley High lacrosse starter under coach Earl Brewer.

The Fairfax County Athletic Council and the Development of Community and Recreation Services announced the winners of the 2009 Champion of Character Awards. Winners were selected based on their contributions to youth sports in Fairfax County and their service in pursu-

ing victory with honor. A coach, parent and two athletes were chosen from each magistrate district. The awards were presented at a ceremony last fall, Oct. 6, 2009, at the Fairfax County Government Center. Members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the Athletic Council presented the awards.

The Dranesville District winners were: Maggie Natal, Female Athlete, Great Falls Little League Softball; Nick Fouty, Male Athlete, Great Falls Lacrosse Association; Mario Guillen, Coach, McLean Youth Soccer; Jim Long, Coach, Great Falls Lacrosse Association; and Neal Falkenberry, Parent, Great Falls Little League Softball.

Community Prays for Ghassemi's Recovery

FROM PAGE 15

He wanted to study engineering. He said it was not the allure of adventure but rather the spirit of service that had drawn his nephew to the Air Force. "Because of his faith and his upbringing, he wanted to serve humanity and make a contribution to the betterment of the world," he said.

At home, he said, Farokhzad was known to drive his grandmother to doctor's appointments, openly aspiring to be her best grandson, and also had helped the neighbors with shoveling snow or other chores. "He had a big heart," Farzad Ghassemi said. "That's what we all remember from him — his smile and his big heart."

He said the family was only sur-

viving the ordeal because of support from friends, the community and each other.

AT THE PRAYER SERVICE for his other nephew on Sunday afternoon, March 14 at Inova Fairfax Hospital, Farzad Ghassemi told the 300 people or so who rotated in and out, "We've been so blessed with the love and kindness everybody has shown us I don't know what to say. I'm speechless."

"It warms my heart to see how many people have loved and have prayed for Bobby," said Bobby Ghassemi's mother, Marjan. "I didn't know he was so popular." She noted that a Facebook page set up to encourage her son's recovery had received 1,900 visitors. "Wow," she said.

In addition to his family, Marjan Ghassemi said, the "three musketeers" who were her son's best friends had visited the hospital every night since the accident.

"He's a really good friend," Darvish Goode, one of the trio, said after the service.

"Nothing ever makes him said," Max Bress said, noting that Bobby Ghassemi could always calm him down when he overreacted.

The boys knew Ghassemi from class and the football and soccer teams. He had just made the varsity soccer team. "He tried out every year for soccer until he made it this year," Bress said.

"Even though, during the football season, he never played, he still showed up for every practice," said Yusef Kaddissi. While others



PHOTO BY MIKE DICICCO/THE CONNECTION

Bobby Ghassemi's sister, Bitra, and mother, Marjan, thank the crowd that gathered at Fairfax Hospital to pray for the Langley senior's recovery Sunday afternoon.

had expressed doubts that he would make the varsity football team, Ghassemi had worked out every day until he made the team this year, Kaddissi said.

Ghassemi's father, Parviz, said he hoped some changes would come from the accident, noting that Great Falls was full of winding, narrow roads and that the police had stopped the boys for speeding not long before the accident.

If it had been procedure to follow young people after stopping them, the crash could have been avoided he said. Most of all, he asked that the community pray for his son's recovery.

Bitra Ghassemi gave the crowd this update about her brother. "He is stable," she said. "He is very young. He will be healing soon, fast — as long as I don't go in there, apparently."

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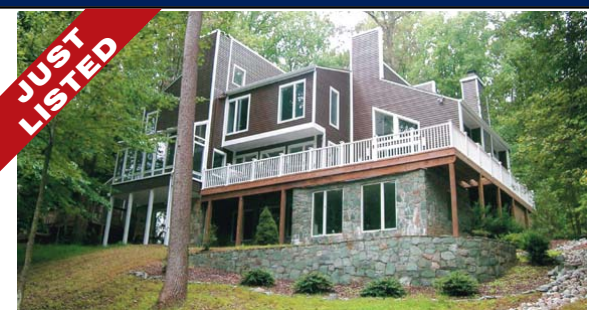
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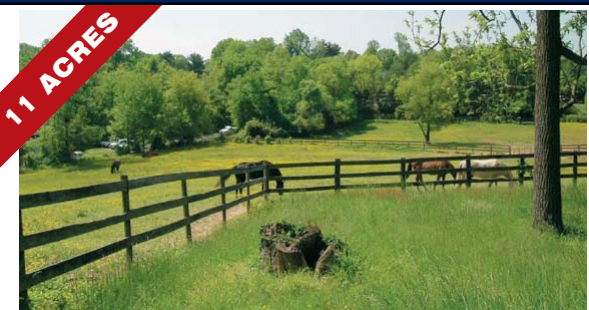
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