

Dog Park Regulars

PET CONNECTION, PAGE 6

It is clear that Roger Flagg loves his dog Mason, a Great Pyrenees/Golden retriever mix. Flagg adopted Mason as a puppy from the Alexandria Animal Shelter. The two come to the South Run dog park daily, because it is the closest dog park to their Fairfax Station home.

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PHOTO BY DEB COBB / THE CONNECTION

Cleaning Up Watershed

NEWS, PAGE 4

Friendly Competition

SPORTS, PAGE 14

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PET CONNECTION



Bogey, the red and white border collie driving, is the Burke Lake Golf Course dog, mascot and goose chaser. He works with Alex Jensen, left, and Ray Cooksey, employees of the Golf Course. 'He's good with Frisbees, good with kids, good with seniors. Although he's had no formal goose herding training, he's a natural,' says Cooksey.

Big Dog Water

With its own canine mascot, Burke Lake Park is a magnet for dogwalkers and their dogs.

Susan Scanlon of Fairfax Station brings her dogs to Burke Lake Park every day. She is pictured with her cocker spaniel, Daisy, left, and her Cavalier King Charles spaniel, Angel. Although getting the dogs was spur-of-the moment, an 'I can't resist that face' moment, Scanlon says, 'they are like replacements for our kids now that they are out of the house.' She and her husband play with the dogs, talk about the dogs and the dogs cause fewer problems than children, she jokes.



Minna Pehkonen and Connie Soria, right, came to Burke Lake Park to give their dogs some exercise. Soria's dog Totus, a lemon beagle, is in front on right. She is dog sitting her friend's Jack Russell terrier Coco, in rear. Nikolas Cardinas Pehkonen is holding his dog Snowflake.



Becky, Nicholas, and Frank Raiti thought the recent break in oppressive heat provided a great excuse to come to Burke Lake Park from their home in Manassas for a nice walk and ride with their golden retriever Molly. Molly is always ready for a walk, and provides the boys with a ready playmate. In a house full of men, 'Molly is my daughter,' says Becky Raiti.

PHOTOS BY DEB COBB



At the July 14 meeting of the Mason Neck Lion's Club, Dave Collyer, left, the LCAC Raffle grand prize winner, presented Andrea Cochran Tracey, LCAC development director, with a plaque commemorating the donation of the grand prize back to LCAC.

Re-Gift Earns \$3K for LCAC

Imagine winning \$3,000 in gift cards to Wegmans grocery store and donating it all back to charity? Dave Collyer, a Lorton resident and treasurer of the Mason Neck Lion's Club, did exactly that. At the Lorton Fourth of July parade on Saturday, July 3, U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11) drew Collyer's prize winning ticket out of the pile of tickets for the Lorton Community Action Center's fund-raising raffle. Collyer was hard at work over at the Lion's Club tent when someone alerted him that he had won.

"The Lion's Club purchased some raffle tickets as did several other members in addition to myself," Collyer said. "We agreed that if one of us won, we would donate it back to LCAC to support their good work."

The raffle raises funds to support LCAC, a local nonprofit human services organization. LCAC has provided food, clothing, emergency assistance and community outreach programs to the citizens of Lorton Virginia and the surrounding Southern Fairfax County area for 35 years.

Norman J. Cole Wastewater Treatment Plant Recognized

Norman J. Cole Wastewater Treatment facility in Lorton recently received a Platinum Peak Performance Award from the National Association of Clean Water Agencies. The award was given to only nine municipal water treatment plants across the nation.

The plant removes between 99 percent and 99.5 percent of pollutants from 45 million gallons of wastewater daily. The plant's achievement helps protect the water quality of the county's streams and watersheds, as well as the Chesapeake Bay.

SEE NEWS BRIEFS, PAGE 16



Attendees line up at tables during the breakout session to offer comment.

Cleaning Up Pohick Creek

Fairfax County seeks input on Pohick watershed management plan.

BY JUSTIN FANIZZI
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County takes great pride in creating a bustling, urban environment while maintaining and conserving its pristine natural features. However, as the county expanded, physical growth outpaced even the most sincere conservation efforts and its waterways paid dearly.

Seeking to reverse decades of stream degradation, the county has proposed a 25-year plan to rehabilitate all 13 of its watersheds. The latest round of these plans included a comprehensive strategy to revive the Pohick Creek Watershed, which was reviewed and commented on by more than 25 area residents at a community forum Tuesday, July 27.

"These plans didn't come together by accident," said Fred Rose, chief of the Watershed Planning and Assessment Branch of the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services. "Over the last 10 years, we've had an increased effort to protect our streams, and this is the result of those efforts."

The meeting, which was staged at Sangster Elementary School in Springfield, gave local residents a look at the plans for Pohick Creek and allowed them to provide input on the plans. The creek begins near George Mason University and flows through Lake Mercer, Lake Barton, Woodglan Lake, Lake Royal, Lake Braddock, Burke Lake and Huntsman

Lake before ending at Gunston Cove. Rose kicked the meeting off by giving a detailed history of the project from its inception to its current state. Rose said that the first efforts to address the problems within the county's streams took place from 1999 to 2001 when the county drafted the "Stream Protection Strategy," which assessed the quality of the streams to see if there were any issues. According to Rose, the study found that 70 percent of area streams were impaired.

Immediately after receiving the results, Rose said, the county sent staff out to walk all 800 miles of the county's streams and creeks to document every physical problem they observed from eroded banks to manmade obstructions. Seeing a plethora of problems existed to address, the county launched the Watershed Planning Process, a comprehensive, concerted effort to develop real solutions.

"When we found that 70 percent of our streams were impaired, we knew the next logical step was to develop a plan to correct these problems," Rose said.

In 2007, the first set of plans were completed and released, however, due to the cost of repairing more than a dozen wa-

tersheds, this round included blueprints for only half of the county's watersheds. The second half of the county, including Pohick Creek Watershed, was addressed in the second round of reports, released in 2008. Currently, the first round is being implemented, and according to Rose, the county hopes that the second round of plans will be finalized by the end of the year.

"The [second round of] plans are viewed as a dynamic process," Rose said. "It's not a static thing. It's

SEE PLAN, PAGE 16

"It's a 25-year vision of what we think is a reasonable approach to the problem."

— Fred Rose, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services



Paige Rathburn with her cock-a-poo Mosby.

Dog of a Different Color

On a visit to our friend's house, my daughter noticed their beautiful English setters. They were spotted gray and white and my children played with the dogs all afternoon. Evidently, during the course of the day, my child noticed the setters' paws and saw how their pads on their feet matched their coats. Once back at our house, my daughter was playing with our dog, Mosby, a 5-year-old cock-a-

poo. Mosby is buff color with hairy feet, with black pads on his paws. That evening, my daughter got quiet and I could tell she was trying to figure something out. Then she asked the question that made me smile, "When do we need to change Mosby's pads on his paws, and when we do, can we get the multi-colored pads like our friends?"

We had to break the news to her that although it would be cool and stylish, Mosby would not like it if we switch out the black pads for the calico pads.



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 **PET CONNECTION**



Amanda Post of Lorton brings her 18 month-old Puggle (Pug/Beagle mix) Diesel to the South Run dog park two or three times a week. He's her buddy. She picked him out of a litter in Ohio because he was the wildest puppy of the lot, climbing over all the puppies. 'He loves attention, is very people friendly and a very good-natured dog. He's part of the family now,' says Post.



Katie Kight loves dogs. When she couldn't have a dog in her apartment, she volunteered with Lab Rescue of the LRCP so she could have contact with dogs. Then, she moved into a new apartment that allowed pets, and within a month she volunteered to foster a dog. She calls it a 'failed foster.' The dog was supposed to stay the weekend, and now, 18 months later, Hurley is an integral part of her life.



Nora Field and Bruce Dire with their dog Lucky, a Beagle/Basset Hound mix. 'He has the best personality, loves pets, people, squirrels, even the cats sleep with him.' Field and Dire rescued him 10 years ago, and though they had to work through some issues with him, he now has a very happy life.

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PET CONNECTION



Tank and Bruno

We adopted Tank, left, and his brother Bruno, right, from Animal Allies last month. After a rocky start, they are loving life in our home. They are handsome Maine-coon mix kittens born in a tree stump in Woodstock. Their mother was killed by a wild animal and a foster mom took them in and nursed them through the next month of their life. They were given to a wonderful foster mom with Animal Allies to find them a good home. We lost our beloved 21-year-old kitty "Pinhead" back in October, 2009. It was time to bring some joy back into our lives. I have to say, they are both affectionate, fun to watch and just a delight.

Best of Friends



Megan Palmer and her 10-year-old dog Ranger.



This is a picture of my basset hound Morticia. Morticia has a hobby. She cruises around my pool, looking for frogs, the bigger, the better. When she finds one, she 'fishes' it out. She is very gentle, and never kills the frog. She brings it over to the lawn, and tries to make it hop, and then she chases it back into the pool, and it all starts over again. In this picture you can see the back legs of the frog, hanging out of her basset mouth. — Judy Trenck of Fairfax Station



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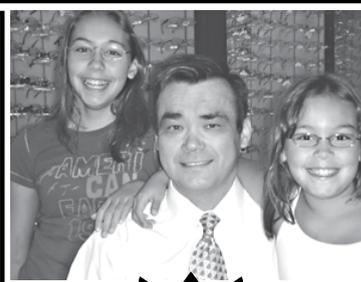
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Political Pets Fairfax County Chairwoman Sharon Bulova (D- At-large) called her cat Winston 'the love of our lives.' She picked him out at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter two years ago.



Springfield School Board member Liz Bradsher sits with dog McKenzie, a Pembroke Corgi.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Many Options Available for Finding a Pet

Pet Adoption is easy at county shelter.

BY COLIN DAILED
THE CONNECTION

When no one is watching, A046268 lies there with her fellow felines at Fairfax County Pet Shelter, just another former stray cat waiting for someone who wants a furry edition to the family. But then two little girls walk in with their father, bright eyed and bushy tailed, scampering around to every cat in sight, hoping they'd soon be able to call one of them their own.

"Daddy, can we get a cat?" asks the youngest as she tugs her father's hand with both of hers, peering up at him with pleading brown eyes. Her father smiles down at her, adoption literature in his free hand, as if to say "Oh, sure. Why not?"

The little girl's head turns and she sees A046268's small square glass home. Lexi, a 2-month-old gray kitten with dark gray, tiger-like stripes across her side and down her legs looks up, no longer just a number. She's like a pint-sized, quick bundle of dark cotton as she bounds up to get a better look at her new friend, and paws at the glass as if to say "Hi." Lexi's deep blue eyes shine with a playfulness only kittens and puppies possess, and her tiny head is on a swivel as she follows the girl's every move.

The two enjoy each other's company for awhile. Despite posted warnings not to do so, the girl sticks her index finger through one of the six glass holes in Lexi's home,

and is greeted by a tiny, wet tongue. But, despite the chemistry, adoption can't happen right then. Adopting a pet is a process, and the Fairfax County Pet Shelter makes sure everyone has gone through it before they can bring home a furry friend.

First things first; stop in for a visit. The shelter has dogs, cats, guinea pigs, rabbits, birds, reptiles and a few other potential pets for would-be adopters to check out.

Once you've found an animal you think you might like, the shelter asks that you bring the pet number — posted on the outside of their corral — to the front and fill out a visitors pass. The visitors pass allows you to take the animal out of its cage and play around with him/her for awhile. According to Michelle Hankins, the Fairfax County Pet Shelter community outreach manager, it's important for both you and any pets you already have to spend some time with your potential adoptee to make sure everyone gets along. While you're at the counter, you can also ask for some notes on your animal of choice. Lexi's notes said she was playful, yet shy, and would "follow you from room to room just to see what you're up to."

So, is everyone happy? Great. Now it's time to revisit the front desk to fill out an adoption application and a surgery consent form. The adoption application asks you to list everything from your name to the kind of home you live in to who will be responsible for feeding the pet. They want to make sure everything is in place before they en-

Humane Society of Fairfax protects county's animal community.

The Humane Society of Fairfax County, Inc. began as a small community effort to advocate for animals both domestic and wild, but over the last 45 years, has become a symbol for second chances.

Established in 1965, the Humane Society of Fairfax County, Inc. was formed by concerned citizens as a non-profit organization to rescue and protect animals from abuse, neglect, abandonment, and cruelty. The organization started with just a handful of volunteers and one small building, but today has more than 100 who tirelessly perform community outreach and has two buildings and a 13-acre farm to call home.

The society's volunteers educate the public about animal care, provide information on state and county laws, foster parenting for our animals awaiting adoption and lead numerous public programs. The society also devotes much of its time to coordinating with rural shelters that have high euthanasia rates to transfer pets to society facilities to ensure to animal's survival.

Adopting an Animal

Dogs can be adopted from the Humane Society at any time. The society's website, www.hsfc.org, has a listing for every dog up for adoption. Click on applications, fill out the dog adoption application and fax it to the society's administrative offices at 703-935-8225 or e-mail it to pets@hsfc.org.

After the application is received, a society representative will make contact as soon as possible to determine if the dog is a suitable match for the prospective owner. Once matched, the applicant will go to the society's farm in Centreville to meet and play with the dog. This is followed by a home visit, and if approved after that, the new owner can return to the farm and pick up the animal. The cost for adopting a dog is \$250, which covers spaying or neutering and all relevant immunizations.

A listing of available cats can also be found on the Web site, but to see the animal, the prospective owner must attend a scheduled adoption event. At the event, an application can be submitted and a society representative will determine if the applicant is suitable for ownership. The cost to adopt a cat is \$125.

Other animals, such as horses, rabbits, birds, guinea pigs and more can also be adopted in a similar fashion through the society, and cost \$350, \$60, \$35-\$50 and \$25, respectively.

trust you with a new family member.

According to Hankins, the surgery consent form is necessary because all adopted pets must be either spayed or neutered be-

fore they are sent to a new home. Additional optional surgeries include a mini/full blood

SEE ADOPTIONS, PAGE 10

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PET CONNECTION

Dog Parks

Talk of the Town



Photo by Deb Cobb/The Connection

Roxy, a Greater Swiss Mountain Dog, gives a high-5 for a treat from companion Agnes Vanek, while Vanek keeps the other pups who would also like a treat at bay at the Reston Dog Park.

A BARON CAMERON
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B BLAKE LANE
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C CHANDON
900 Palmer Drive, Herndon
Established: January 4, 2003
Capacity: 42 dogs
Sponsor: Herndon Dogs, Inc.



Photo by Chloe Mulliner/The Connection

Olivia Wagner and her dogs Zena and Zoey spend time at the South Run dog park.



Dogs are free to run around and play at the fenced-in South Run dog park.



Ari Alvarez of Alexandria brought her 5-months-old Presley the Pug, right, to the Herndon Dog Park on a puppy date.

Photos by Deb Cobb/The Connection



Kathy Hale, a Herndon resident, is pictured at the Herndon Dog Park with two of her dogs — and the pug Presley hoping for a treat — her 9-year-old black border collie mix Rosie, far right, and her 5-year-old beagle/pug mix, Carly.

D GRIST MILL
4710 Mt. Vernon Memorial Hwy, Alexandria
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E QUINN FARM
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Sponsor: CentrevilleDogs

F MASON DISTRICT
Intersection of Alpine Drive and Pinecrest Parkway, Annandale
Established: June 2002
Capacity: 62 dogs
Sponsor: Mason District Dog Opportunity Group

G SOUTH RUN
7550 Reservation Drive, Springfield
Established: December 2001
Capacity: 85 dogs
Sponsor: Lorton Dogs, Inc.

H TOWN OF VIENNA VIENNA DOG PARK
700 Courthouse Road
www.viennadogs.org

This new off-leash dog park is situated in Moorefield Park. The fenced 90 x 150 area is shaded with on-site water. Owners and dogs must follow posted rules and regulations. Dogs must be licensed by the Town of Vienna or Fairfax County. The park is open from dawn to dusk. Please respect others by following the posted rules and picking up after your dog. To find out more about the Vienna Dog Park. Open: Daylight to Dusk.

Fairfax County Park Authority has always welcomed leashed dogs in all of its parks. Now, well-mannered canines can enjoy a good run or a friendly romp in one of 8 dog parks - fenced areas where unleashed dogs can have free play. Additional off-leash dog areas are in the planning stage. See <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/wp-offleash.htm> for more.

All of the dog parks are public/private partnerships, developed in cooperation with sponsoring organizations of pet owners. The sponsors are the agency's liaison between users and local residents, Animal Control and the Police Department. They monitor and clean up the facilities, publicize dog park rules and regulations, and report maintenance needs to the Park Authority.

The hours of operation of all off-leash dog areas are dawn to dusk, unless posted otherwise.

All dogs four months of age or older must be licensed. Licenses are good for one year and must be purchased by January 31st.

1. The off-leash dog area is for dogs, their handlers and those accompanying them. No other use is allowed.
2. All dogs must be legally licensed and vaccinated, and shall wear a visible dog license.
3. Dogs under 4 months of age and female dogs in heat are prohibited.
4. Dogs must be on leash when entering and exiting the off-leash dog area.
5. Dogs must be under the control of their handler and in view of their handler at all times.
6. Spiked collars are prohibited.
7. Children 8 years and under are not allowed in the off-leash dog area; children ages 9 - 15 years must be accompanied by an adult.
8. Handlers must be 16 years of age or older.
9. Handlers must have possession of the dog leash at all times.
10. Handler is limited to a maximum of two dogs.
11. Handlers must "scoop the poop" and fill any holes dug by dogs under their control.
12. Food and drinks in glass containers are prohibited; training treats are allowed.
13. Dogs must be removed from the off-leash dog area at the first sign of aggression.
14. No animals other than dogs shall be permitted in the area.
15. Handlers are responsible for any injuries caused by the dog(s) under their control.
16. Users of the facility do so at their own risk. Neither Fairfax County nor the Fairfax County Park Authority shall be liable for any injury or damage caused by any dog in the off-leash area.



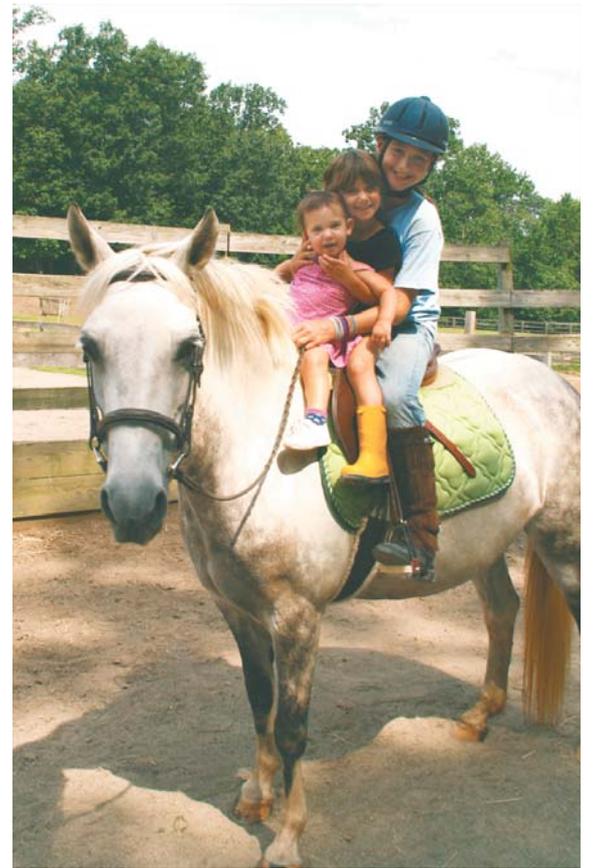
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 **PET CONNECTION**



Aiden, 5, and Claire Shirkey, 4, of Fairfax Station with Siamese cats Luther, 10, Thai, 6 months, and Felix, 2.



Aimee, an 8-year-old Connemara/paint cross with Abigail Wojcik, 11; Amelia Wojcik, 4; and Camille Wojcik, 1, in Fairfax Station.

Adoptions

FROM PAGE 8

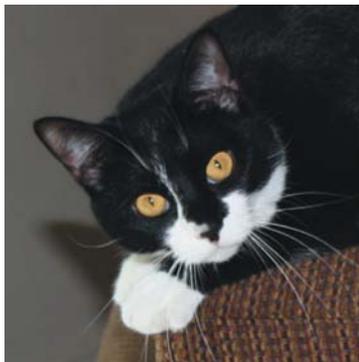
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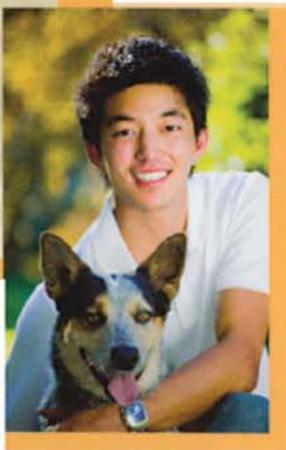
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AUGUST 12 - AUGUST 20ELMO IN GROUCHLAND (G)

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FINE ARTS

The following events and exhibits are open at the Workhouse Arts Center, which is located at 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. For more information, call 703-495-0001 or visit www.workhousearts.org.

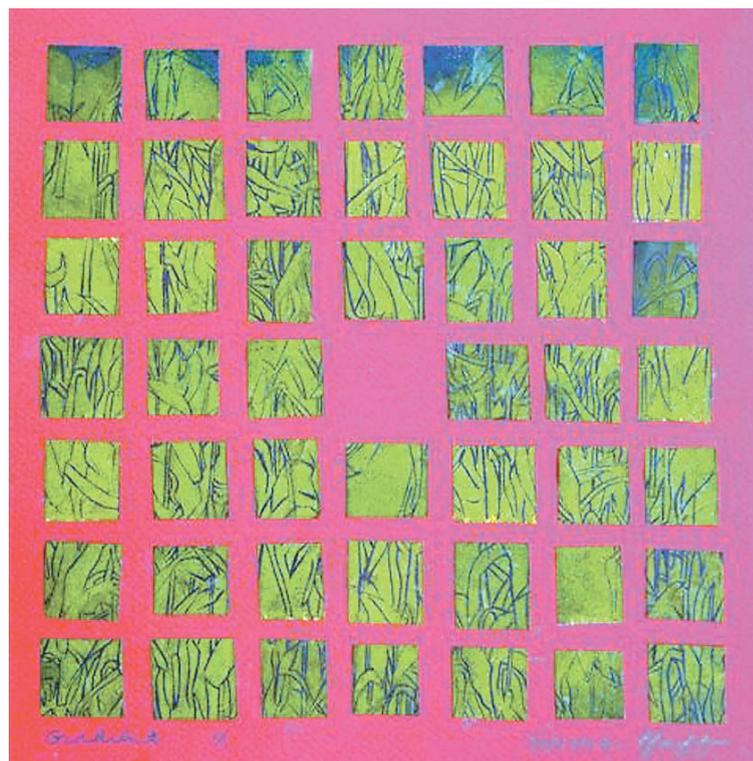
The opening reception for all studio shows and featured artists listed below take place Aug. 14, from 6-9 p.m., campus-wide in conjunction with the 2nd Saturday Art Walk.

Building W-5 Featured Exhibition: It's NOT All About ME! The 16 Building W-5 artists are exhibiting a variety of imagery and media for this show, on display from Aug. 4-29. Part of the proceeds from the sale of the art will go to "The Village of Hope" to help with Haitian relief. Hence, the title, "It's NOT All About ME!"

Building W-6 Featured Artist: Gwendolyn Bragg of Building W-5 will present the exhibition "Cool — Clear Water (colors)." Water cools and clarifies, cleanses and reflects. In the heat of the summer we seek its cooling properties.

Building W-7 Featured Artist: Amber Kendrick. An architect, designer and glass artist, Kendrick recently relocated from San Francisco. She says that while flying with the greatest of ease from a trapeze, she contemplates glass as a slow moving liquid. She applies her understanding of materials, color, design and form to warm glass for both functional and architectural applications. She is founder of Cloud Terre, llc., a multi-disciplinary art and design studio.

Building W-8 Studio Exhibition: Ceramics Resident Artists. The Ceramics Building has a regular recurring group exhibit of Ceramic Resident Artists work.



'Collage' by Norma Pfaff

Building W-9 Featured Artists: Kim Steimmuller Joy and Carol Hamilton. Joy comes from a line of artists, master masons, poets and carpenters.

In 1982, she began her stained glass adventure taking classes and then an apprenticeship. She added jewelry making to her plate in 2002 while living in Hawaii as the cost to ship glass there was so high. When Joy is at her workbench, she imagines her cousin repairing church windows, her father at work in his woodshop, her grandfather laying bricks and writing

poems late at night and her great grandfather painting a watercolor with his father, her great-great grandfather hidden in the scene.

Hamilton is a jewelry artist and instructor specializing in metal clays. Although her love is metal clays, she is a multi media artist, incorporating many mediums together to create beautiful wearable art jewelry.

Building W-10 Featured Artist: Josh Yavelberg. Yavelberg will present "Starving Artist, Please Feed," an installation/exhibition from Aug. 11 to Sept. 8.

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CALENDAR

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

THURSDAY/JULY 29

Toxin, Seelow Heights. All Ages. \$10 in Advance, \$12 Day of Show. Doors open 7 p.m. Show at 7:30 p.m. Jaxx, 6355 Rolling Road, Springfield. 703-569-5940.
Brain Benders. 2:30 p.m. John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive, Alexandria. See everyday objects through scientific eyes. Presented by Maryland Science Center. Age 6-12. 703-971-0010.

FRIDAY/JULY 30

The United States Army Band Blues Jazz Ensemble. 7:30 p.m. Lake Accotink Park: 7500 Accotink Park Road, Springfield. Free. 703-324-7469 or www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/performances.
Kingstowne Farmers Market. 4-7 p.m. at Kingstowne Town Center, 5955 Kingstowne Center, Alexandria.
The Battle of the Axes, Michael Schenker and George Lynch, Michael Schenker Group, Lynch Mob, Baby Jayne, 15 Minutes, Kat Atomic. 21 and

Up. \$27 in Advance, \$30 Day of Show. Doors open 7 p.m. Show at 7:30 p.m. Jaxx, 6355 Rolling Road, Springfield. 703-569-5940.

SATURDAY/JULY 31

Burke Farmers Market. 8 a.m.-12 p.m. at 5671 Roberts Parkway, Burke.
Living Colour on at 11:30, One Slack Mind. 21 and Up \$25 in Advance, \$28 Day of Show. Doors open 7:30 p.m. Show at 8 p.m. Jaxx, 6355 Rolling Road, Springfield. 703-569-5940.
Neighborhood Plant Clinic. 10 a.m. Kings Park Library, 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke. The Fairfax County Master Gardeners Association gives tips and strategies. Adults. 703-978-5600.

SUNDAY/AUG. 1

Lorton Farmers Market. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at 8990 Lorton Station Blvd., Lorton.

WEDNESDAY/AUG. 4

Wakefield Farmers Market. 2-6 p.m. at 8100 Braddock Road, Annandale.

FRIDAY/AUG. 6

Kingstowne Farmers Market. 4-7 p.m. at Kingstowne Town Center, 5955 Kingstowne Center, Alexandria.

SATURDAY/AUG. 7

Artnotes: L'Tanya Mari. 7:30 p.m. in the Performance Tent, Workhouse Art Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Jazz vocalist. Tickets \$10-25. www.workhousearts.org.
Burke Farmers Market. 8 a.m.-12 p.m. at 5671 Roberts Parkway, Burke.

SUNDAY/AUG. 8

Stars on Sunday: Junk Food. 6 p.m. in the Performance Tent, Workhouse Art Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Rock and roll. Tickets \$8-\$12. www.workhousearts.org.
Lorton Farmers Market. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at 8990 Lorton Station Blvd., Lorton.

WEDNESDAY/AUG. 11

Wakefield Farmers Market. 2-6 p.m. at 8100 Braddock Road.

FRIDAY/AUG. 13

Kingstowne Farmers Market. 4-7 p.m. at Kingstowne Town Center, 5955 Kingstowne Center.

SATURDAY/AUG. 14

Burke Farmers Market. 8 a.m.-12 p.m. at 5671 Roberts Parkway, Burke.

OPINION

Welcome to the Pet Connection

It would be easy, based on some measures, to say that some areas love their dogs more than others, although we are quite confident that most families love their dogs and other pets in a way that defies quantification.

Nevertheless, we will point out that the City of Alexandria, with a population of more than 150,000 and more than 70,000 households, is also home to 17 different dog parks, including both fenced and unfenced areas for dogs to run free of their leashes and play with other dogs. (Nationally, 39 percent of households average 1.7 dogs, so even assuming a normal level of dog ownership in Alexandria (we suspect it exceeds national numbers), there are likely more than 46,000 dogs. That's one dog park for every 2,700.

In Fairfax County, with a population of about 1,038,000 people and more than 393,000 households, statistics would predict at least 260,000 dogs, but only eight dog parks. That's one dog park for every 32,000 dogs or so ...

In Arlington, 217,000 people live in about

103,000 households, and a statistically likely 68,000 dogs also has eight dog parks, or one dog park for about every 8,500 dogs.

In Montgomery County, Md., about 970,000 people live in about 364,000 households, and so probably about 240,000 dogs, and just five dog parks, so more than 48,000 dogs per dog park.

Fortunately, we found no evidence of overcrowded dog parks in any of our areas, just happy dogs and owners enjoying one of the amenities of this area. And lots of dog parks mean less likelihood of dog owners running their dogs off their leashes in other less appropriate parks. In fact, the growing numbers of dog parks are just one more indicator of how important pets and animals are to us.

A third of local households are likely homes to cats, with the average household with cats having 2.4 cats, but there are not cat parks ... Most "cat people" agree that cats are safer indoors, although we all know exceptions.

Of all these animals, 19 percent of dogs and 22 percent of cats are adopted from animal shelters. Most pets (75 percent of dogs, 87 percent of cats) are spayed or neutered. There are so many pets that need homes, it's a local and national crisis. If you are considering adding a pet to your family, please consider the humane society, the shelter or a rescue organization.

In the pages of our Pet Connection this week, you'll find stories of many families and their pets, plus information on how and where to adopt dogs, cats, birds, small animals and even horses that desperately need homes.

For much more information, look online at www.ConnectionNewspapers.com, and click on Pet Connection.

If you'd like to share information about other pet resources, or about your pet, we still look forward to hearing from you.

Statistics from U.S. Census and the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association 2009-2010 National Pet Owners Survey.

Keeping Our Eye On the Prize

To the Editor:

A number of community groups, newspapers and local politicians have criticized, often in strident tones, some recent decisions of the Fairfax County School Board. The decision to close Clifton Elementary School is one such example. According to the critics, members of the Board supposedly ignored the "wishes of the community," and relied too heavily on the superintendent and his professional staff. One editorial accused the Board of depriving the citizens of information, and adopting a "we know what's best" attitude. By ignoring the unprecedented amount of information the School Board makes available and the open nature of the Board's processes, the critics miss the mark.

The voters of Fairfax County elected the School Board — not single issue or self-appointed "community watchdog" groups — to exercise responsible stewardship over the education of our children. This means it is our job to work harder, study more and exercise sound judgment about what works best for all of Fairfax County and the children we serve. It means that the loudest, most persistent voices do not always carry the day, the supposed opinion of a "majority" of community members is not always right, and what may be the best decision for some community advocates is not always the best decision for all the children.

When former School Board

Chair Bob Frye used to say we must always "listen to the silence," he was reminding us to take account of the voices of those in our county who do not organize e-mail and petition drives, who do not hold mass rallies and who have never written a letter to the editor or a check to a candidate for School Board. As a result, we sometimes make decisions that, as one Clifton resident wrote to a Board member, "offend the rich and powerful." That comes with the territory.

What should not come with the territory, however, are disrespectful personal attacks on individual Board members and their integrity, whether from community members or other elected officials. And yet angry Clifton residents have sent hate mail to the homes of School Board members and called some Board members names that cannot be printed in the newspaper. One so-called community group has questioned not only the integrity of the Board, but also the competence of the superintendent and everyone who works for him. That group, which has yet to offer any support for the Board, its budget or any of its decisions, apparently believes that recent gains in student achievement all happened by magic. A member of the Virginia House of Delegates accused one School Board member of "throwing Clifton children under the bus." Still another official threatened political retaliation against a member of the School Board. We would never tolerate

this behavior from our own children. We should not tolerate it from adults.

Even though we have to make decisions about many things, the Board must always focus on one thing: student achievement. By all measures, we are succeeding.

More children are achieving greater success than ever before. Achievement gaps are steadily shrinking. In some schools they have disappeared altogether. We have achieved our successes by working together with parents, teachers, administrators, and support staff. That is how we should be working.

At the end of the day, we must make decisions that focus on supporting our mission to "inspire, enable, and empower students to meet high academic standards, lead ethical lives, and demonstrate responsible citizenship."

When we start trying to please or pander to vocal, well-organized groups of single-issue advocates, or elected officials trying to make political hay, we will have lost sight of our goal. And when some Board members and the public treat the professional staff as adversaries, not as partners, student achievement will suffer. No one can afford that.

Stuart D. Gibson
Member, Fairfax County School Board
Hunter Mill District

Tessie Wilson
Member, Fairfax County School Board
Braddock District

Lacks Faith In School Board

To the Editor:

I would like to share my thoughts regarding the Fairfax County School Board. I was at the meeting on July 7, for the vote regarding the closure of Clifton Elementary. I was a member of the large community contingent hoping the School Board would vote to keep Clifton Elementary open. The board voted against it. This letter is not sour grapes in regards to their decision. This letter is merely to share my impression of the School Board as a whole, and to comment on the way it operates.

I was embarrassed that the School Board is made up of elected officials, and that we have ourselves to blame for their position. I am appalled that they have the power to dictate our children's educational future. It was obvious from the start that the School Board has been split into two separate factions, each with different agendas. The blatant disrespect that was shown by Chairwoman Kathy Smith (Sully), Vice Chairman Brad Center (Lee) and School Board members Liz Bradsher (Springfield), Tessie Wilson (Braddock) and Stuart Gibson (Hunter Mill), when hearing arguments that differed from their own, was ridiculous. Bradsher and Smith did enough eye-rolling and heavy sighing to do a teenaged girl justice. Gibson and Center were

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 15

THE CONNECTION

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For Love of the Game

Rec sports provide competition, fitness, friendship.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

Tom Tudor stands in the batter's box at Braddock Park's field No. 5 in Clifton on a warm Monday evening. The game is slow pitch softball and the 64-year-old Fairfax resident isn't interested in anything other than delivering a hit.

Facing a two-strike count, Tudor lets the pitcher's offering fall to the ground. It's not to his liking. But the home plate umpire has a different view, and rings Tudor up with a called third strike.

Tudor doesn't think the pitch was legal, stating the pitcher was too far behind the rubber upon delivery. He argues his case with the umpire, but to no avail. Moments later, Tudor reminds the umpire of his frustration from the dugout.

After the game, won handily by Tudor's Solid Gold squad, the second baseman is all smiles as he shares stories. But when he and his teammates are on the field, it's all business. Tudor said Solid Gold has been one of the best teams in the Fairfax Adult Softball league for the last 10 years and they intend to keep it that way.

"Some of the teams don't even want to play you because it is just total recreation for them," Tudor said. "I always play on something to better myself. [It feels like I'm] trying out every time. Your reputation is on the line. [If] you have a bad night: I struck out watching the ball tonight and I'll hear about that for two months now. You now it's coming."

People have several reasons for participating in recreational sports. Some approach events looking to have fun, while others see activities as a means to staying in shape. In Tudor's case, it's all about competing and testing his skills against others.

Tudor started playing rec softball in 1969 after returning from his second tour of duty in Vietnam. He had played basketball and baseball at James Madison High School in Vienna, and received a partial scholarship for basketball at Old Dominion University, but nothing became of it. After returning from Vietnam, rec sports gave him an outlet for his competitiveness and athletic talents.

"It really got into my blood," he said.

Tudor plays with several teams, and has competed for top-flight national teams from Florida and California. His Solid Gold squad, which includes W.T. Woodson head softball coach Bob Coleman, competes in Division I of the FAS senior (50 and over) league. Solid Gold is listed on the FAS website with a 7-0 record through July 27, having outscored its opponents 136-65.

"We built this team on chemistry and abil-

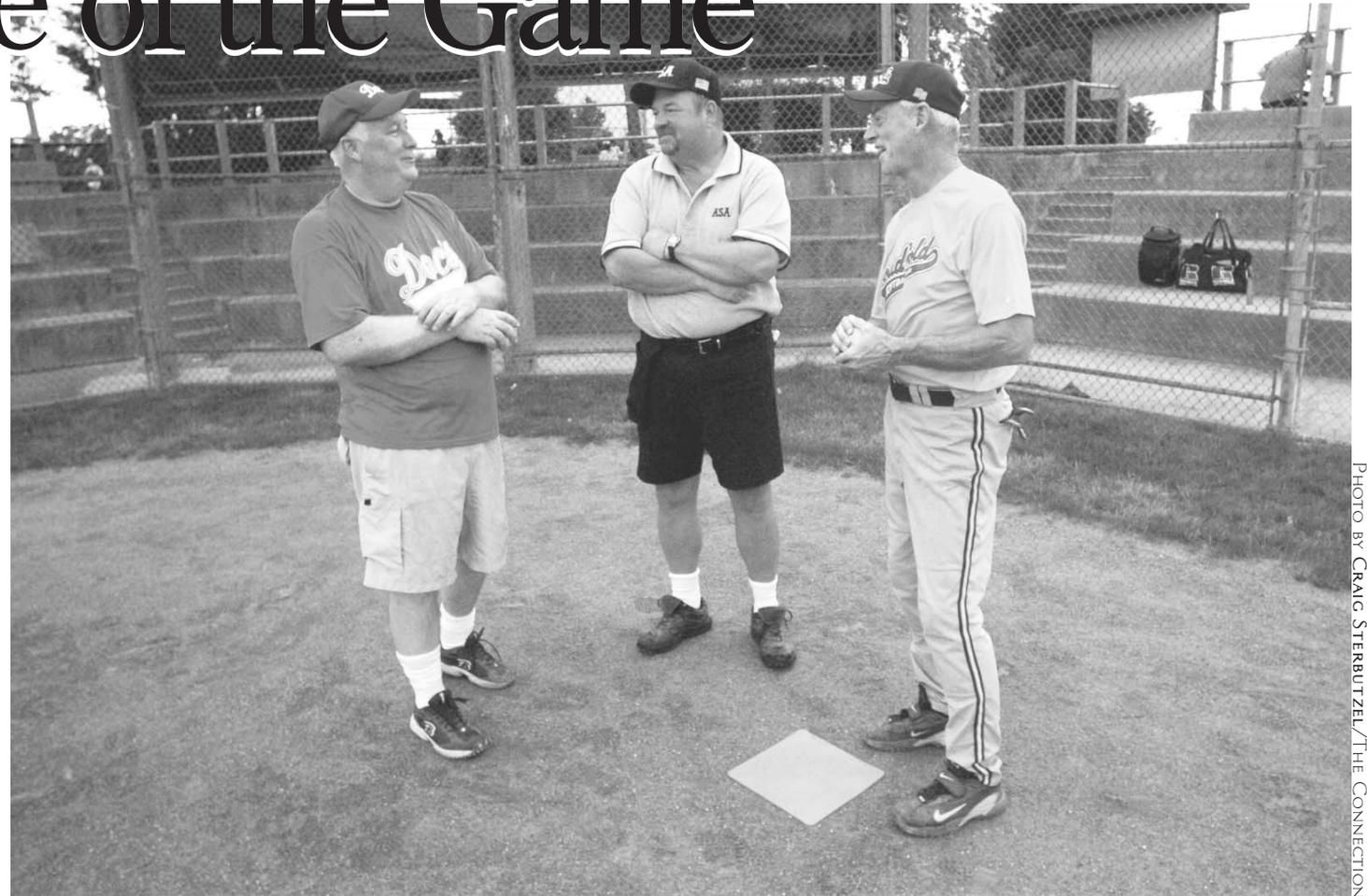


PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

The Fairfax Adult Softball league offers an opportunity to compete for a wide range of age groups and ability levels.

ity," Tudor said. "Chemistry is No. 1, to tell you the truth. There's a lot of guys that wanted to play on this team and we've been the No. 1 team for 10 years."

"You'll see in the late innings every once in a while [when] we're down and we haven't been playing well, somebody will come in and say, 'Hey, let's take it up a notch. Let's go,'" said Tudor. "Everybody just comes together and they do the job."

While Tudor and his teammates are focused when it comes to softball, there's also room for fun. On Sunday mornings, members of Solid Gold get together for batting practice, something that Tudor said he enjoys.

"I look forward to that more than anything else," he said. "You play a double-header out here, you might get eight swings, unless you take some batting practice. Out there, we'll hit 100 balls on Sunday. We really do like the sport and try to be good at it."

FAS also offers men's and co-ed divisions, among others.

Mary Alexandre tries to make it to the gym a minimum of three times per week. Fitness is important to the 42-year-old married mother of two, who hardly looks her age.

Along with going to the gym, Alexandre enjoys playing soccer. The Alexandria native played on the Groveton High School team and took part in intramural soccer at Old Dominion. These days, Alexandre plays indoor soccer at the Fairfax Sportsplex in Springfield, which not only helps keep her in shape, but also adds an athletic element she craves.

"I love a little competition — competition

is good," Alexandre said. "The challenge is great."

Alexandre plays for the team "Lazy Fox" in a lower-division 6-on-6 co-ed league. The Sportsplex also offers 5-on-5 leagues, men's leagues, women's leagues and youth travel teams. On a muggy Friday night, Alexandre finished with a hat trick in a losing effort, scoring a pair of left-footed goals while adding a third on a right-footed flick. Despite the loss, the team was in good spirits after the contest, hanging around and drinking beer. While the desire to win is present, there isn't a post-loss tension that can come with a competitive bunch.

"It's a great way to stay in shape and still have some competitive fun," said Joe Alexandre, Mary's husband and teammate. "Even between the men, during rec soccer, you just don't go as far physically. You're a little more careful on your tackles and your steals and your pushing with everyone. It's more of a light-hearted soccer."

Joe Alexandre, 42, said he feels no awkwardness in terms of competing against women. Mary Alexandre, on the other hand, sees competing against men as a challenge.

"When you add guys into the mix, it adds another element," she said. "It changes the game only because you can play aggressive [with] body contact [against] another woman, but when you've got a guy on you that's another 50 [to] 70 pounds [heavier] than you, it makes it a little more challenging."

What is she thinking when chasing down a ball in the corner against a male opponent?

"I'm expecting to get bumped," she said. "So you know what? You just tighten your core and you stand your ground and that's the best thing you can do. If you go in there a little lackluster, you can expect to get nailed."

"I always play on something to better myself."

— Tom Tudor

Rules for co-ed 6-on-6 state two women must be on the field at all times.

Mary Alexandre also said she enjoys the structured environment of a rec league.

"Pick-up soccer, you can end up with 20-on-20 or 25-on-25 and it is just madness trying to pass and play together," she said. "My son has a big group of friends and our parents and their parents play together. It's pure chaos. This is way more organized, way more structured. You've got enough playing time [and] there's enough space to create some strategy and some passes to create a play."

Along with providing a structured environment, 28-year-old Jack Fan said the Arlington Athletic & Social League provides a place to meet new people. Fan, the AASL's sports and program coordinator, said with the Washington, D.C. metro area being such a transient location, rec sports provide a place to get connected with those who share common interests.

"We cater to a lot of different types of

SEE A LITTLE, PAGE 14

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 13

little better with their own facial expressions. I felt they expressed contempt and disdain, while listening to opposing points of view, rather than demonstrating an open mind or willingness compromise. Their treatment of fellow board members was unbelievably unprofessional and rude.

School Board member Martina Hone (At-large) argued passionately in defense of Clifton Elementary. She was repeatedly shot down, and at one point was refused the opportunity to speak by Smith. School Board members James Raney (At-large) and Ilyong Moon (At-large) also attempted to speak on behalf of Clifton Elementary. They were interrupted several times, and chastened to stay on topic, yet Bradsher was permitted time to read an e-mail regarding the safety of the water of Clifton Elementary. This is merely one example of how some members of the School Board deliberately undermine another. I do not trust these people to decide my son's future. I do not want my son's education to be charted by people with grudges to carry and axes to grind. After watching them in action, I have no faith in the Fairfax County School Board.

The School Board had the opportunity to compromise with the Clifton community, when Hone made a motion to delay a definitive course of action until 2013. Considering that a report confirming the safety and viability of the Clifton Elementary well system came in minutes before the School Board meeting began, this seemed like a sensible option. It would also have allowed time for a boundary study to determine which school(s) the 369 Clifton students would be attending in the event of their school's closure. As it stands, I have no idea where my son will

be attending school, after next year. More importantly, neither does my son. There are 369 kids in limbo right now, with no plan in place and an uncertain future.

Karyn Zambrano-Clifton
Clifton

Wall Street Reform Bill

To the Editor:

The Wall Street reform bill that was passed by the U.S. Senate on July 15 will protect consumers and investors by eliminating deceptive and unethical Wall Street business practices. This and other "Main Street" benefits will undoubtedly inspire confidence in the economy and encourage the growth of private-sector jobs and small businesses.

Eleventh District congressional candidate Keith Fimian (R) refused to heed Republican moderates and publicly shouted down the bill. He opposes a bill that will end taxpayer-funded bailouts, demand a high level of transparency and accountability for the benefit of ordinary Americans and help prevent another economic meltdown. Mr. Fimian's rejection of this bill is effectively a rejection of working Americans.

Fimian's opponent, U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11), has taken the side of working Americans. Unlike Mr. Fimian, Connolly realizes that Wall Street's corporations — not American taxpayers — must bear the burden of responsibility for their failures. I am thankful that Connolly voted for this reform.

Donna Forsman
Annandale



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Call Specific Agents to Confirm Dates & Times.

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 13304 Ivakota Farm Rd. \$1,195,000 Sun 1-4 Lisa Clayborne Long & Foster 703-631-3200
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Plan In Works To Clean Up Pohick Creek

FROM PAGE 4

a 25-year vision of what we think is a reasonable approach to the problem.”

Project Manager Shannon Curtis then followed Rose to give the audience a more in-depth look at why a Watershed Plan was needed in the first place. Curtis, also a member of the county’s Stormwater Planning Division, explained that the plan primarily focuses on stormwater management, as that is the cause of nearly all 13 watershed’s problems. Curtis said that every time it rains, the water soaks up any chemicals or debris on the ground and eventually makes its way into Pohick Creek.

As the county developed, however, it increased the amount of pollutants entering the creek as more fertilizer was being used on lawns and gasoline and oil in cars, among many other sources. These pollutants, he said, not only damage the water quality in the area, affecting wildlife and drinking water, they harm the Chesapeake Bay as well because the water from Pohick Creek ultimately ends up there.

“Stormwater management is at the heart is the Watershed Management Plan,” Curtis said. “We have roof tops, large roadways, parking lots, swimming pools and more that

don’t allow water to go straight into the ground. This development means more runoff, so what we’re trying to do it make up for a lot of lost time of not managing our runoff well.”

Laura Chap and Terry Suehr, representatives from PBS&J, the planning and design firm that the county is working with on the project, took over for Curtis to explain exactly what measures would be taken to fix the watershed. Since there are nearly 10,000 projects to be completed across the county, Chap and Suehr could only detail what measures would be taken as opposed to specific fixes for specific locations in the Pohick Creek Watershed.

“Pohick Creek is a largely developed watershed, so there aren’t many changes to the watershed, but there are some,” Chap said.

Suehr said that most of the changes slated for the watershed revolve around planning development, which primarily entails a move to high-intensity commercial areas from low intensity. As a result, the plans focus on making new development more environmentally friendly, such as using pervious pavement for parking lots that allows rain to be absorbed and filtered instead of running off. In addition, she said that new

structures may be equipped with flat roofs that have plants on it that filter sediment from rain water before it drains to the ground.

THE REMAINING fixes focus on providing a more natural fix than a manmade one. Suehr said that forestation would be added to the streams in the watershed, and that outfalls would be added to storm drains to slow the flow of stormwater, which when too violent erodes the stream banks. Other fixes include bioretention ponds that have filtering plants, putting filters in storm drains and increased street sweeping and dumpsite removal.

“The county currently uses wet and dry retention ponds, but as time goes on, we realize that it’s best to replicate nature,” Suehr said.

The meeting concluded with breakout sessions where the residents went to tables designated by geographic area and meet with a county staff member to find out the exact work being done in their neighborhoods and offer comment for public record. These comments, Curtis said, will be collected until Aug. 27 and from there, will be evaluated by the Watershed Planning team and incorporated into the plan. Curtis said

Learn More

Go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/watersheds/pohickcreek_docs.htm for a complete copy of the Pohick Creek Watershed Management Plan, which includes an online form to submit comment on the site.

that the next step would then be to finalize a plan for the Pohick Creek Watershed, present it to the Board of Supervisors, and if they adopt it, work should begin by the end of the year.

While the public comments focused mainly on funding, most of the concerns were squashed when Curtis explained that not only is a portion of the county’s \$20 million stormwater management fund being used, but that federal grant money is also available. Furthermore, Curtis explained that the projects are being implemented based on priority, and therefore, will not be completed all at once, but rather over time.

“I came here tonight because I wanted to know about funding and where all this money is coming from,” said Orange Hunt resident Charla Quimby. “Now, we’re just focused on how we can help.”

A Little Friendly Competition

FROM PAGE 14

people,” he said. “The primary demographic that we try to cater to are the young professionals who are looking for a place where their friends can always meet up. The second type of people this league is for is newcomers.”

The AASL offers softball, volleyball, dodgeball, flag football, bowling, basketball, kickball inner tube water polo, cornhole and broomball. Fan said softball is the league’s most popular sport, with 80 teams competing. Kickball and volleyball also see a high turnout. Fan said the league offers competitive and social divisions, with some sports — including softball, kickball, dodgeball and bowling — often acting as precursors to another kind of fun.

“Sports is just kind of an excuse to come and hang out at a bar,” Fan said.

Reston native Anne Nichols, 21, plays for a social league softball team despite having no experience. She joked that she plays catcher to avoid being involved in the action.

“It just seemed like a fun opportunity,” said Nichols,

a student at Wake Forest, “even though I’m really miserable and I’ve never played before.”

Nichols’ boyfriend’s sister, Katie Flynn, started the team. Flynn, a 27-year-old Reston native, played softball at South Lakes High School and Seton Hall University. While Nichols is a newcomer along for some fun, the rest of the team has a different approach.

“As a team, we’re outrageously competitive to a point where it’s embarrassing and awkward for everybody,” Flynn said. “We run up the score, which is improper. [There is] anger when somebody botches a play, even when we’re up by a considerable amount.”

While Nichols and Flynn are on a team because they know the same people, Fan said some of the best friendships are made from teams composed of strangers. Fan, a Dallas native and Washington, D.C. resident, said he met his future roommates after being placed on a random kickball team.

“I always tell people to come check it out,” he said. “If you have nothing else better to do, let us know, especially if it’s early in the season. We can help you out.”

NEWS BRIEFS

FROM PAGE 4

peake Bay.

The plant is the largest advanced wastewater treatment plant in Virginia. Nearly half of the 100 million gallons per day of wastewater generated in the county are treated at the plant. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and is designed to treat 67 million gallons of wastewater per day.

Two-Alarm Townhouse Fire

A two-alarm fire in Lorton Saturday, July 24 damaged three townhouses and resulted in \$220,000 worth of damage.

According to the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, units responded to a townhouse fire at approximately 3 a.m. at 8501 Golden Ridge Court. Firefighters saw heavy fire and smoke coming from an end unit townhouse upon arrival. Due to heavy fire and the potential for spreading to adjacent townhouses, a second alarm was struck bringing over 60 firefighters to the scene. The fire was brought under control in approximately 20 minutes.

The fire extended to the townhouse at 8503 Golden Ridge Court, causing considerable fire damage and the townhouse at 8505 Golden Ridge Court received water and smoke damage. The occupant from 8501 Golden Ridge Court was transported to the Washington Hospital Burn Center for non-life threatening injuries. The townhouse at 8501 Golden Ridge Court was a complete loss and the cause of the fire remains under investigation.

Town Council Meeting

The next meeting of the Clifton Town Council is Tuesday, Aug. 3, at 7:30 p.m., in the Clifton Town Meeting Hall, 12641 Chapel Road in Clifton.

FAITH NOTES

St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, 5800 Backlick Road, Springfield is hosting “Galactic Blast” Vacation Bible School on July 25-30, from 5:30-8 p.m. For age 3-rising sixth graders. Free, includes dinner. 703-451-4331.

Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, 8336 Carrleigh Parkway, Springfield, is hosting a free Sunday Sundae Summer Movie Supper on Sunday, July

25, at 4 p.m. There will be a light supper, The Disney movie “Cars” and a sundae bar with all the toppings. ejdowning@cox.net.

Congregation Adat Reyim, 6500 Westbury Oaks Court, Springfield, offers several events open to the public in August. Contact adatreyim.org or 703-569-7577.

❖ **Shabbat Wine and Cheese Reception**. Friday, Aug. 6, at 7 p.m. Enjoy an array of fine cheeses, Kosher wine

and other Shabbat fare, and stay for Shabbat services at 8 p.m. We welcome new and current members, and individuals and families who are looking for a new synagogue experience.

❖ **Preschool and Religious School Open Houses**. Sunday, Aug. 8, at 11 a.m.-1 p.m., and on Monday, Aug. 16, at 5:30-7:30 p.m. Join us for refreshments and learn about Adat Reyim’s preschool and religious school programs.

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