

Springfield CONNECTION

Franconia ❖ Kingstowne ❖ Newington

Meet Lucky

PET CONNECTION, PAGE 3

This is Lucky, a Beagle/Basset hound mix who is a frequent visitor to the dog park. He was rescued 10 years ago by Nora Field and Bruce Dire. Though he came from an abusive past, he has a happy life now at home with four cats.



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PHOTO BY DEB COBB/THE CONNECTION

PET CONNECTION

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PHOTO BY JUSTIN FANIZZI/THE CONNECTION

The cell tower, if installed, would be located next to the tennis courts.

Poor Reception

Orange Hunt Swim Club, neighbors at odds over proposed cell phone tower.

BY JUSTIN FANIZZI
THE CONNECTION

As available land becomes scarcer in the area, large companies and small neighborhood organizations alike are busy trying to find ways to maximize its value. In the Orange Hunt, however, both the large conglomerate and the small community club have found a way to benefit.

The Orange Hunt Swim and Tennis Club, located at 8600 Bridle Wood Drive in the Orange Hunt neighborhood, is nearing an agreement with cellular phone service provider T-Mobile to install a cell phone tower on club property. The tower, while is welcomed by swim club members as a much-needed additional revenue stream, has nearby residents concerned.

"This is something that will keep our pool solvent," said swim club president Dave Sheridan. "It's an opportunity for capital improvements."

According to Sheridan, T-Mobile initially approached the club more than 2-1/2 years ago with the idea to build a tower on the club's property. The company needed a spot to place its tower to better serve their area customers and determined that the Orange Hunt area would be best suited for one. The club, Sheridan said, was willing to listen to T-Mobile's pitch because of its need to generate more income.

The club, according to Sheridan, is at 60 percent membership capacity, but generates approximately 90 percent of its revenue

from member dues. Last year, club treasurer Holly Rennert said that the club's revenue was \$139,000 with expenses totaling \$130,000. However, \$12,400 was also spent paying off a loan the club received nearly four years ago, resulting in a net loss of \$3,400. An additional \$4,000 was spent repairing damage to the pavilion caused by the two massive winter storms in February, and while that cost will be tallied into this year's figure, all overages are paid from a club savings account, which is in danger of depletion.

"We have \$20,000 in savings," Sheridan said. "It is subject to depletion in the next few years without another revenue source. This year is projected to be a break-even year and next year we will be using some of our savings due to the loan pay-off."

So, facing a funding shortage, the agreement with T-Mobile turned out

to be the club's best option. The proposed unipole tower would be 110 feet tall and would be installed near the tennis shed with a fence surrounding it. The club, Sheridan said, would receive \$2,000 when lease to the club's property is signed and a payment of \$1,400 per month with a 3 percent increase per year. T-Mobile is also soliciting other carriers to use the two, which would create an additional \$500 per month with a 3 percent increase per year for the club. In total, a tower used solely by T-Mobile would generate revenue equivalent to 48 memberships, with each additional carrier

"This is an opportunity for capital improvements."

— Dave Sheridan,
Orange Hunt Swim and
Tennis Club

SEE OPPOSITION, PAGE 12

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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.



Kevin Diamond lives across the street from South Run District Park and brings his dog Ranger, a chocolate Labrador retriever twice a week to the dog park. 'He's my best friend. He's been with me since I was 13,' says Diamond.



Katie Kight 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. 'Within two hours, I decided I couldn't let him go,' says Kight.

At right, 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.'

The Regulars

Springfield dog owners make visit to South Run Dog Park a daily habit.

Although half of the benches and much of the shade is cut off by a construction fence, the South Run Dog Park offers dogs and their companions a chance for socialization and socializing.

PHOTOS BY DEB COBB



Joseph Long is at the dog park with his surrogate dog Blaze, a Doberman pinscher mix. Long is staying with friends in Springfield, waiting to close on a house in New Jersey.



Jennifer Ralsten, far left, and Betty Morales are regulars at the South Run Dog Park. Morales has been coming to the park just about every night for 4-1/2 years with her dogs. Sitting next to Morales are Whitney Bishop and her mother Heidi. They try to come together when Whitney is back from school. Some of the dogs pictured are, from left, on bench, Gracie, a Louisiana Catahoula leopard dog, and Rusty, a lab mix, both came with Morales, who is holding the collar of her third dog, Kaylee, a Border collie mix. Whitney Bishop is holding the collar of her dog Izzie, a red Border collie mix. The other three dogs came over to see who was hiding the treat

Police Seize More Than 100 Pounds of Marijuana

Fairfax County Police seized approximately 115 pounds of marijuana during a highway interdiction operation on Wednesday, July 21.

According to the Fairfax County Police Department, two officers participating in the operation stopped an 18-wheeler for an equipment violation around 6:30 p.m. on Interstate 495 near Van Dorn Street. An investigation revealed the marijuana in the truck's attached trailer.

"The highway interdiction team is specifically trained to look for narcotics during traffic stops and even spent a week training with the DEA," said Officer Tawny Wright. "They spotted the 18-wheeler because of the equipment violation, but are trained to dig deeper and obtained a consent search and found the drugs."

Alexis Javier Paz, 38 and Felix V. Rodriguez, 45, both of Miami, Fla., were each charged with transporting controlled substances into the Commonwealth and possession of marijuana with the intent to distribute. Paz was additionally charged with possession of cocaine.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Crime Solvers by phone at 1-866-411-TIPS/8477, e-mail at www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org or text "TIP187" plus your message to CRIMES/274637 or call Fairfax County Police at 703-691-2131.

Police Arrest Abduction, Sexual Assault Suspect

A 27-year-old Falls Church man was charged Monday, July 26 with abduction and sexual assault, among other offenses against a 17-year-old girl he met on the Internet.



POLICE PHOTO

Rony Herrera Deleon

According to the Fairfax County Police Department, the victim met the suspect, Rony Herrera Deleon of the 6700 block of Barrett Road on "MySpace" and arranged to meet him for dinner and a movie on Saturday, July 24.

Deleon allegedly abducted the teen when they met and sexually assaulted her. The victim was transported to a local hospital where she was treated for non life-threatening injuries. Deleon was charged with abduction, rape, object sexual penetration and malicious wounding.

Anyone with information, or who may have had similar contact with Deleon is asked to contact Crime Solvers by phone at 1-866-411-TIPS/8477, e-mail at www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org or text "TIP187" plus your message to CRIMES/274637 or call Fairfax County Police at 703-691-2131.

'Purr-sey Shore' Arrives At Animal Shelter

The cats of the 'Purr-sey Shore' will be in residence at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter from now through Saturday, July 31. The Kit-uation, Kitty-D, J-Meow and the notorious Snoo-Kitty will make special appearances and be available for adoption during the week.

Visit the cast of "cat-acters" through Friday, from 12-6:30 p.m., and Saturday, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. As part of the shelter's special ExtravaCATza! adoption event, cats and kittens adopted from the shelter will receive a free spay or neuter. The shelter is at 4500 West Ox Road in Fairfax. For more information, call 703-830-1100.



PHOTO BY JUSTIN FANIZZI/THE CONNECTION

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



From top left, Jerry and Luci Rodgers of Burke with Boudreaux, 12-year-old domestic long Hair; Disney, 6-year-old Dalmatian; and Gumbo, 12-year-old domestic short hair.

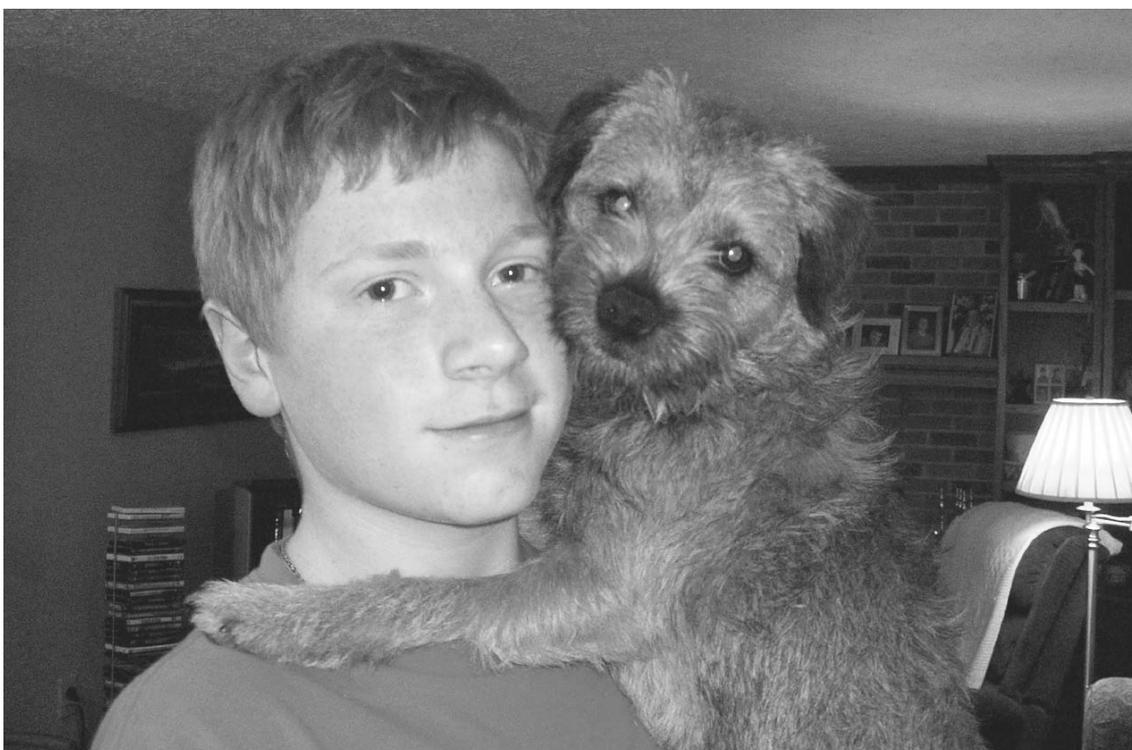
Life Lessons from Pets

As the proud owner of three pets, I am entertained daily by their animal antics. I have the constant clowning of my Dalmatian, Disney, and the sibling rivalry of kitten littermates, Gumbo and Boudreaux. These furry friends provide me with more than just companionship though.

They help me strive to be a better person. Each of them serves as a guide in how to navigate through life's challenges and enjoy the ride in the meantime. Disney, who finds pleasure in the simple things like a walk or a belly rub, reminds me not to rush through

life and miss the experience. Gumbo, the grumpy cat, teaches me that a fussy disposition causes you to miss opportunities to love and be loved. Boudreaux, who has successfully battled against liver disease for the last three years, has taught me to have courage of heart in all situations and persevere no matter what the obstacle. Although these are all valuable life lessons, perhaps the greatest lesson that all pets can teach their humans is to be a perfect example of unconditional love.

— HOLLY RODGERS OF SPRINGFIELD



Matt Ahola and pet Ollie from Springfield



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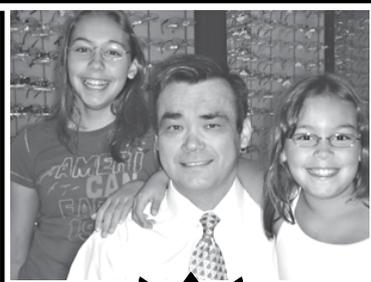
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OPINION

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

LETTERS

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

More to It

To the Editor:

I sure am disappointed in what's going on at Lake Accotink. I do think there is more of a story to be had, and some investigative journalism needed. We've just ended a period of lake restoration where the lake was dredged at great expense without draining it. It didn't work. It cost millions more to do the dredging without draining the lake, and now not even two years later they've drained the lake anyway, and there is no work being done to deepen the lake. Because we already paid for that — but we didn't get it.

How about a follow up?

Wade Corder
Springfield

Memories

Reading the recent article, "The Bigger They Are ..." [Connection, July 2-28, 2010], I'm surprised there was no mention of the previous tenant of that building, a movie theater known locally as the "Springfield Rocking Chair Theater." It was known well around the Franconia-Springfield area. One night in particular, in the summer of 1979, I sat in that theater for a midnight movie viewing of Led Zeppelin's "The Song Remains the Same." The movie was starting late so at one point, the whole theater was chanting "We want Zeppelin, we want Zeppelin." People were smoking cigarettes

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THE CONNECTION

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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 6

(you could in those days), beer cans were rolling down the middle aisle, and long hair and blue jean cut-offs were the height of fashion.

Aaah, the memories.

Mike Salmon
Lorton

Thanking the Community

To the Editor:

I am woefully late in expressing my thanks to our community and to Burke Nursery Garden Centre. The Lake Braddock Crew Team organizes a plant sale each April to help defray the costs of a team sport that does not receive financial support from Fairfax County Public Schools. We've held the plant sale at Lake Braddock in past years, but this spring we made the move to hold the sale at Burke Nursery. The staff and owner of Burke Nursery have faithfully supported our team for many years, and we are grateful for their effort and friendship.

Our community is due a huge thanks for the hundreds of neighbors and friends who come out each year to make their spring plant purchases with us. Because of your generosity, we are able to supply our team of more than 90 rowers, both young men and women, with proper equipment and coaching. Our season begins with winter conditioning in November, and on-the-water training begins in late February through May, six days a week. We are proud to report that many of our teammates have gone on to row at the collegiate level, some securing athletic scholarships.

From all of us at Bruin Crew, thank you, residents of Burke and beyond, for choosing to support our team each year. And, our sincere and heartfelt gratitude to Burke Nursery and Garden Centre for your continued partnership and for backing an activity that keeps young adults engaged, active, and healthy.

Margi Flynn
Plant Sale Coordinator 2010
Lake Braddock Crew
www.bruincrew.com

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 pri-

vate-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.

Mr. Fimian's opponent, U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11), has laudably 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 and consistently sides with ordinary Americans instead of greedy CEOs in corner offices. I applaud the passage of this sensible legislation.

Donna Forsman
Annandale

Good Beginning

To the Editor:

As the newly elected President of the Fairfax County Federation of Teachers, I have appreciated the efforts of the Fairfax County School Board over the past few months to address the issue of employee compensation.

The School Board's written commitment to direct the superintendent to develop an FY 2012 Proposed Budget that includes employee compensation increases for FCPS staff and to commit itself to compensation increases for FY 2012 displays a willingness to prioritize salary and benefit issues for the workforce.

In addition, the School Board recently passed the VRS Resolution, which absolves the burden (for new hires) of additional employee contributions for retirement.

This is a promising sign, considering FCPS' freezing of all employee salaries over the past two years. It is encouraging that the Board has identified that compensation is critical in maintaining a quality workforce and employee morale, which ultimately creates the greatest impact on student learning and achievement.

Once again, I am grateful for the promise made by the entire School Board to address the compensation issue, and look forward to supporting them in the upcoming year to secure the funding needed to meet our deserving employees' needs.

Steven L. Greenburg, President
Fairfax County Federation of Teachers

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SPRINGFIELD CONNECTION ♦ JULY 29 - AUGUST 4, 2010 ♦ 7



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.

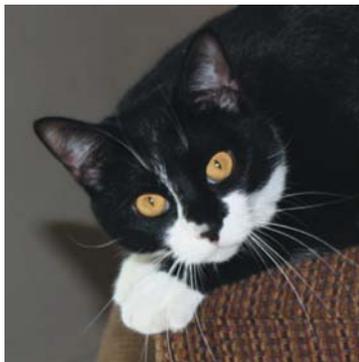


Supervisor Patrick Herrity (R-Springfield) poses with his wife Nancy, son Sean, daughter Valeria and family dog Keswick, a 12-year-old Labrador retriever.

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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
11300 Baron Cameron Avenue, Reston
Established: September 2001
Capacity: 40 dogs
Special Features: Water supply and separate area for small dogs (under 25 lbs.)
Sponsor: RestonDogs, Inc.

B BLAKE LANE
10033 Blake Lane, Oakton
Established: June 2000
Capacity: 25 dogs
Sponsor: OaktonDogs, Inc.

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
Established: April 2006
Capacity: 64 dogs
Special Features: Interior space is one acre of bluestone dust surface. Clean and dry.
Sponsor: Mt. Vernon Dog Opportunity Group

E QUINN FARM
15150 Old Lee Rd., Chantilly
Established: March 2006
Capacity: 90 dogs (80 large/10 small)
Special Features: Separate area for small dogs (under 25 lbs.)
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.



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 partici-



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.

pating 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 tal-

ents.

"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 ability," 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 doubleheader 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

SEE A LITTLE, PAGE 14

VIEWPOINTS

What do you like about rec sports?



"I like the sportsmanship. I love a little bit of competition. Competition is good."

— **Mary Alexandre, 42, Alexandria, indoor soccer**



"[It feels like] you're trying out [for a softball team] every time. Your reputation is on the line."

— **Tom Tudor, 64, Fairfax, softball**

— JON ROETMAN

SPORTS



PHOTO BY RICK BODDIE

Springfield Post 176 put a late season 13-game win streak together that extended into last week's District 17 tournament.

District Champs Again

Springfield Post 176 defeats top seed Vienna in finals.

BY RICH SANDERS
THE CONNECTION

Championship baseball teams know how to play from behind. That is certainly the case with the Springfield Post 176 American Legion squad, which rallied from an early four-run deficit and defeated Vienna Post 180 by a score of 13-6, in the playback championship game of the District 17 (Northern Virginia) tournament Friday night, July 23 at Waters Field in Vienna.

The win gave Springfield the District 17 title for the eighth time in the 21 years it has been under Manager Al Vaxmonsky. On seven other occasions, Vaxmonsky's Post 176 team made it to the tournament finals before losing.

Playing in the District 17 championship game seems to be a fairly regular scenario for Springfield. That, in fact, has been the case in 15 of the past 21 years.

"It was a huge win for us," said Springfield Post 176 pitcher Brennan Miller, who was a huge factor in his team's tournament success. "We've really come together as a team."

With the District 17 crown under its belt, Springfield opened up play at the eight-team, double-elimination American Legion Virginia State tournament this past Monday, July 26 with a game at tourney host Danville Post 325. (See story page 15).

AT LAST WEEK'S DISTRICT 17 tournament, Springfield (20-8 season record), the eight-team tournament's No. 2 seed, received a first round tournament bye before winning games over Falls Church Post 130 on Monday and top-seed Vienna on Tuesday to reach the finals.

There, in the championship round, Post 176 again met Vienna, which had reached the finals with a

loser's bracket playoff win on Wednesday. Going into the finals, Springfield had the upper hand, having yet to lose in the tournament while Vienna had one loss. That meant that, in the championship round, Post 180 would have to beat Springfield twice in order to win the title of the double elimination tourney. Springfield only needed one win, either on Thursday or on Friday.

As it turned out, Vienna defeated Springfield, 9-8, in Thursday's game at Waters Field to force a final game showdown on Friday.

Springfield had nearly overcome an 8-2 deficit in Thursday's loss. It had rallied to tie the game at 8-8 before Vienna scored a run in the bottom of the eighth inning to regain the lead at 9-8. Springfield was not able to score in the ninth and Vienna, with the victory, forced the finals playback the following evening.

One of the highlights of the Thursday night loss for Springfield was a home run over the left center field fence off the bat of Miller. Springfield, however, came up just short in the game. The loss snapped a 13-game Springfield win streak.

In Friday's playback game for the league title, Springfield did not panic after Vienna tallied five runs in the bottom of the first inning to take a 5-1 lead.

Springfield starting pitcher Matt Keen had struggled in that first inning but came back strong over the next five innings, allowing no runs and no hits from the second through sixth innings.

Meanwhile, the Springfield offense got Post 176 back into the game. Perhaps the biggest hit came in the middle innings when Miller, who went 3-for-4 from the No. 2 position of the Springfield line-up, belted a ball to the base of the left center field fence for a two-run double that gave Springfield the lead at 7-6. The next batter, Joe Townsend, followed that up with a first-pitch, towering two-run homer over the left center field fence to make the score 9-6 Springfield. Townsend finished the night 4-for-6 with three RBIs.

Springfield broke the game open in the seventh inning. Jake Boswell and Miller both reached on bunt singles to start off the top of the seventh. Later in

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PET CONNECTION



Gigi, Sweetie and Wally of Springfield rest on a hay bale after a long day's work cutting hay, chasing deer and swimming in the Cacapon River.

Nothing is politically right which is morally wrong.
—Daniel O'Connell

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Opposition To Cell Tower Plan

FROM PAGE 2

equating to 17 more. Currently, the club has 300. While the club is eager to enter the agreement, some Orange Hunt residents are unhappy with the idea of a cell tower being installed in their community. Mark Sieracki, a nine-year Orange Hunt resident, said that he and many other residents are concerned about the tower for several reasons, namely the health risks and potential property value loss. Sieracki said that many area residents are concerned that having a cell tower so close to children swimming and to surrounding homes that prolonged exposure to cell phone waves may cause cancer. He acknowledged that there have been no definitive studies linking cell phone towers to cancer, but cited an American Cancer Society study that says that the industry is too young for comprehensive studies to be completed.

"There's no one that can say with 100 percent certainty that [cell phone towers] are not bad," Sieracki said. "I'm not interested in being a guinea pig for T-Mobile or anyone else."

Another concern, Sieracki said, is that a tower would have a negative impact on the property values of the homes closest to the tower. Sieracki, like several others opposed to the agreement, said that they would have never moved into their homes if the tower was there when they bought them. This potential pitfall, Sieracki and others said, is even more troubling, because most of the members of the club do not live in the surrounding houses and will see no negative effects.

"The majority of the people in the division do not even live near the pool," said Geneva Webster, who has lived in Orange Hunt for 35 years. "So it's not in

their backyard, and they're making a lot of money off of it."

The main issue Sieracki and others have, however, is that, according to them, the Board of Directors of the Swim Club never approached the community for its input. According to Sieracki, T-Mobile approached the club more than five years ago with a similar offer, but was turned down by the community as a whole, and Sieracki and others opposing it want a similar chance to discuss it. Sieracki said that the community would have donated money for needed pool repairs in they were simply asked, but instead said that the club is looking for a "quick-fix."

"The real issue I have is that the pool has never really come to the community for assistance to take care of repairs or whatever," Sieracki said. "They look at this as a quick-fix, an easy answer to their problems."

ACCORDING TO Sheridan, he would not approve the deal until an attorney for the club reviews the lease agreement, and even if he does so, the county's Department of Planning and Zoning still has to approve not only the agreement, but the installation plans as well. As of press time, Sieracki said that he and other Orange Hunt residents are engaging in dialogue with the zoning and real estate departments to figure out how to prevent the tower's construction. If the county approves it, however, public hearings will take place within six months and work could begin by spring 2011.

"This issue has divided the neighborhood, or at least driven a wedge in it," Sieracki said. "There's plenty of solutions to fix what's wrong with these pools and we just want to bring it before the community."

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LITERARY ARTS

Space Cowboy Takes Flight

Springfield resident John M. Whalen pens first novel.

BY ARIELLE RETTING
THE CONNECTION

On a humid afternoon in Philadelphia, John M. Whalen is in a race against time to make it back before 5 p.m. Successfully making the trip home from school, the 10-year-old plops down on his living room floor, turning the knobs on his 12-inch black and white TV. As the classical music plays from his loudspeakers, he places his cowboy hat on his head and picks up his toy raygun. His eyes are fixated on one thing only: Flash Gordon.

But that was decades ago; a time before special effects, color TVs and endless re-runs of "Law & Order." A time where serials, westerns and science fiction ruled and children still had to use their imaginations. After all, at age 10, everything looks real.

Now it's 2010 and Whalen is all grown up. Even though time passed, his age is the only thing that changed. That bright-eyed boy sitting Indian-style on his living room floor watching Flash Gordon and reading Tarzan after school might not be a child anymore, but he still has the same sense of imagination and craving for adventure.

On June 28, Whalen hit a major milestone in his lifetime, one that exceeded his articles in major publications, praise from congressmen and friendships with famous authors. He finally published his first book: "Jack Brand," a space western that has been years in the making.

The book follows Jack Brand, an ex-lawman in search of redemption on an adventure to find his kidnapped sister Terry. It takes place on the planet Tulon, a now desolate planet that has been exploited by Earth for its resources. During his 12-chapter journey, Brand meets "a lot of exotic characters" and potentially the woman of his dreams. Pill Hill Press, a new independent publisher that concentrates on speculative fiction, accepted "Jack Brand" within nine days and published it within 30.

But Whalen's first novel didn't just come out of thin air. It's been a progression through time, with every experience leading up to his passion. It all started when he began imitating the elements of Flash Gordon, Tarzan and old westerns into his own writing.

"I've been [writing] since I was a kid," Whalen said. "I remember when I was 10-years old, I wrote adventure stories."

Whalen took his writing out of his home and brought it to school, writing several plays in high school that the drama department put on. His passion for writing stuck with him through college, where he did some creative writing in his free time. But Whalen ended his love affair with fiction and settled into reality. He dropped out of college after three years and "did just about everything you can think of for a while," from cleaning sewer pipes to

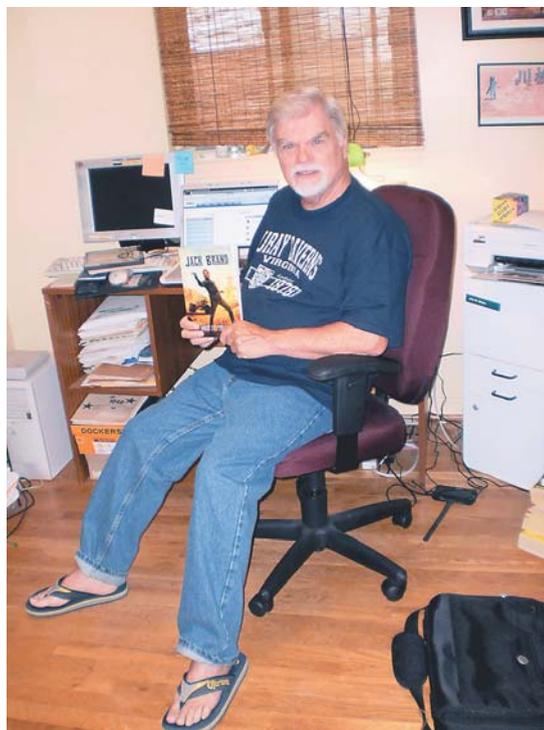


PHOTO BY ARIELLE RETTING/THE CONNECTION

Finished product in hand, John M. Whalen poses in his home office, where he does most of his writing.

selling shoes.

Finally Whalen settled in Springfield. Putting his education to good use, he landed his first real job as a consumer safety reporter with the Bureau of National Affairs in Washington, D.C. It wasn't the most exciting job, but it paid the bills.

A few years later, Whalen re-ignited his creative spark. He began doing freelance work in his spare time, landing articles in newspapers like The Washington Post and The Washington Times and magazines such as FilmFax, Outre and Mystery Scene on topics such as travel, film and fiction pieces. But the stories that grabbed the most attention were his appreciation pieces on his role models, most notably an article on Hollywood screenwriter Stirling Silliphant that appeared in The Washington Post.

"It was really weird. Here, I am doing boring product safety work

for BNA and going to congressional hearings and then when I'm at home I'm writing this fantastic stuff about Hollywood screenwriters," Whalen said.

Whalen wasn't the only one who thought it was fantastic. His piece on Silliphant grabbed the attention of David Morrell, the author of "First Blood" and the creator of the Rambo book series, who was a friend of Silliphant's. The two began a friendship over the phone and through e-mail and discussed their work.

"It was like a beam of light, helping me realize what I had to do as a writer," Whalen said.

As his body of work grew, so did his imagination, with works ranging in a variety of genres such as sword and sorcery, westerns and science fiction. In addition to his articles, Whalen has written around 25 short stories, most of which have been published.

"The stuff that I write, I don't follow a formula," Whalen said. "I don't think you'll find anything quite

SEE SPRINGFIELD WRITER, PAGE 14

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Kingstowne/Alexandria

1927 Duffield La.....	\$549,000	Sun 1-4.....	Jackie Kirch.....	Classic.....	703-887-7861
5619 Tower Hill Cir.....	\$749,500	Sat 1-4.....	Kim McClary.....	Long & Foster.....	703-929-8425
902 Emerald Dr.....	\$1,465,000	Sun 1-4.....	Greg & Joni Koons.....	Weichert.....	703-209-7277

Annandale

7450 Covent Wood Ct.....	\$369,900	Sun 1-4.....	Christine Oberhelman.....	Weichert.....	703-941-0100
4309 Guinea Rd.....	\$466,900	Sun 1-4.....	Ricardo Bolanos.....	Solutions.....	703-750-1450

Lorton

6900 Hamilton Ct.....	\$350,000	Sat 1-4.....	Karl Acorda.....	Long & Foster.....	703-961-2483
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Clifton

5589 Rockpointe Dr.....	\$649,000	Sun 1-4.....	Ron Fowler.....	Weichert.....	703-691-0555
7421 Clifton Quarry Dr.....	\$885,000	Sun 1-4.....	Lisa Clayborne.....	Long & Foster.....	703-631-3200
12208 Clifton Spring Dr.....	\$949,500	Sun 1-4.....	Deborah Gorham.....	Long & Foster.....	703-581-9005
13304 Ivakota Farm Rd.....	\$1,195,000	Sun 1-4.....	Lisa Clayborne.....	Long & Foster.....	703-631-3200
7615 Kincheloe Rd.....	\$2,200,000	Sun 2-5.....	Claudette Schwartz.....	Weichert.....	703-760-8880

Burke

5803 Shana Pl.....	\$369,900	Sun 1-4.....	Tom Christensen.....	Long & Foster.....	571-261-1400
5408 Mount Greenwich Ct.....	\$579,777	Sun 1-4.....	Bev Tull.....	RE/MAX.....	703-963-0163

Fairfax

5526 RIDGETON HILL CT.....	\$322,000	Sun 1-5.....	Thomas Hennerty.....	NetRealtyNow.com..	(703) 286-7253
4034 BROADWIRE DR.....	\$419,900	Sat/Sun 11-7.....	Kim Rosewall.....	Jobin Realty.....	(703) 433-0600
3517 BARKLEY DR.....	\$599,950	Sun 1-4.....	Monroe Thomas.....	Long & Foster.....	(703) 938-4200
3775 Center Way.....	\$789,000	Sat 1-4.....	Dorian Ritchie.....	Century 21.....	571-299-9793

Centreville

6085 Netherton Street.....	\$199,900	Sun 1-4.....	Spencer Marker.....	Long & Foster.....	(703) 830-6123
6799 STONE MAPLE TER.....	\$254,900	Sat/Sun 2-4.....	Kim Kroner.....	Keller Williams.....	(800) 961-1328

To add your Realtor represented Open House to these weekly listings, please call Erin Peck at 703-778-9449 or E-Mail the info to epeck@connectionnewspapers.com All listings due by Tuesday at 3 pm.

LITERARY ARTS

Springfield Writer Pens First Novel: 'Jack Brand'

FROM PAGE 13

like [it] out on the market, because even though it's categorized as sci-fi, there are a lot of human elements to it."

His love of different genres paired with his vivid imagination didn't just create the short story and novel about "Jack Brand," but helped him to merge his two passions into the space western genre. Brand's character first appeared in one of Whalen's short stories published in Ray Gun Revival, and he decided to continue the series by writing his first book.

"Space westerns don't get much better than his," said Pill Hill Press editor-in-chief Jessy Marie Roberts, who edited Whalen's book.

Although "Jack Brand" was just released, he's already at work on a sword and sorcery book. Like "Jack Brand," the book is also a continuation of one of Whalen's short stories published in "Flashing Swords" webzine and is loosely based on "Brothers of the Spear," two comic book characters from the 1950s.

Whalen is currently working from his home office in Springfield. In his spare time he plays piano and guitar and spends time with his family, especially his wife Susy Whalen. He is planning a book signing at the Borders in Springfield, but for now "Jack Brand" is only available online through Amazon and Barnes & Noble for \$15.99.

With no signing bonus, advance from the publisher or huge profit margin, Whalen said he isn't doing this for the money. He's doing this because all this time later it's still his passion, and he's doing it all "just for fun."

No matter the age, he'll still be that 10-year-old boy sitting in front of the TV set watching "Flash Gordon" with his cowboy hat on his head and a raygun in his hand.

"It isn't surprising that all this time later things haven't changed that much," Whalen said.

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.

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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 entrust 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 before they are sent to a new home. Additional optional surgeries include a mini/full blood screening, a microchip implant so your pet

can be easily found if it scampers off or a laser surgery that's used in place of the spay/neuter, and is thought to be less invasive and allow for quicker healing.

NEITHER FORM takes long to fill out, and both can be approved just minutes after you put the pen down. But in order to complete the process, you have to bring proof of home ownership or that you're legitimately renting a home, a photo ID, and information on all pets you currently own such as vaccination information, and that all dogs you own are current on county licensing.

If your new buddy already had spay/neutering, you can take him/her home that day. If not, a surgery will be scheduled right there and will likely take place within the week. The pet fee for a cat is only \$30, but the spay/neuter fee for felines is \$100, \$170 for dogs.

Once the money is paid, pets are sent off to Deepwood Veterinary Clinic for the procedure, and can be picked up there once they've recuperated.

Lexi recuperated on July 20, and the kitten with the mouse-like meow was picked up by her new family later that day.

AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

Return to Championship Form

FROM PAGE 11

the inning, Nick Digby sent a hard groundball triple down the third base line that scored three runs.

Springfield had taken control.

"Once we got the lead we were not going to give it up," said Miller.

Keen, who threw 128 pitches over 6-1/3 innings, earned the win. Miller was outstanding in relief, allowing no runs and one hit over 2-1/3 innings to keep Vienna's bats silent late in the game.

"I knew I had Brennan in my hip pocket [for relief]," said Vaxmonsky. "I knew Matt was spent [by the seventh inning]."

Miller said he had told Vaxmonsky he could pitch in relief if needed, despite having thrown 140 pitches three days earlier in his team's second round 5-3 win over Vienna.

"It was our last game [of the District 17 season], and I told my coach I was ready to go," said Miller. "I kind of knew how to throw to [Vienna]. I pitched against them two times last year [as well as earlier in the week]. After a start I can usually throw again after a day or two."

VAXMONSKY said both of the championship round games against Vienna were similar in that Springfield fell way behind early in both. Post 176 could not get the victory on Thursday but it did on Friday with everything on the line.

"It was an exact replica of the previous night," said the Springfield skipper. "We had been down on Thursday and fought back to tie it up at 8-8 and then lost."

When Springfield, in Friday's playback for the league title, fell behind early again, he recalled say-

ing, "Oh boy, here we go again."

But assistant coach Len Yankosky had encouraging words.

"He said, 'Hey, there's plenty of baseball to play. Let's see how things unfold.' Then over the next couple of innings we got some hits. Our guys realized from the night before how we could come back and could have won that game. We knew we could come back again [on Friday]."

Springfield, in fact, exploded for 13 runs to wipe out Vienna's early 5-1 lead in the title game.

"We knew we were going to come back," said Townsend, Springfield's No. 3 hitter. "We score a lot of runs."

Both Keen and Miller had played significant pitching roles earlier in the week in Springfield's first two tournament games. Keen, in a first round 21-9 win over Falls Church at Hayfield Secondary School, went the distance in a slaughter-rule shortened contest. He threw 120 pitches that night.

On the following night, Miller took the hill against Vienna at Waters Field. In a 5-3 Springfield win that sent Vienna into the loser's bracket and advanced Springfield to the finals, Miller went the complete nine innings, throwing 140 pitches and striking out 14 to just one walk.

"He was huge the entire tournament," said Vaxmonsky, who said Miller utilized his outstanding curve and slider pitches in Friday's finals against Vienna.

Townsend said Springfield's pitching and timely hitting were huge factors in capturing the District 17 crown.

"Pitching was probably our biggest key and we were getting big hits," he said.

Post 176 Falls in State Opener

The Springfield Post 176 American Legion baseball team, in a game that began on Tuesday night at 10:50 p.m. due to a long rain delay, lost its first round Virginia State playoff game to Danville Post 325 by a 6-4 score. The first round postseason affair lasted close to three hours and did not end until 1:45 a.m.

The Springfield versus Danville game was the final of four state playoff games played at the same site on Tuesday. According to Springfield Manager Al Vaxmonsky, American Legion tournament officials were determined to get all four games completed. Rain interrupted the third game of the day. As a result, the fourth game between Springfield and Danville did not get started until the late hour.

Springfield, despite the loss, is still alive in the eight-team, double-elimination tournament and was scheduled to play its second game on Wednesday, technically later the same day in which Post 176's first game ended, at 1 p.m. versus Chesapeake Post 280. Springfield had to win that game in order to remain alive in the tournament.

In the loss to Danville, Springfield was limited to six hits for the game. Post 176 trailed 6-0 at one point before rallying to get within 6-4 in the seventh inning. The team threatened to score more runs in both the eighth and ninth innings, but could not get any closer.

Joe Townsend had a double and a triple, while knocking in a run for Springfield. The other base hits for Post 176 came from Peter Hornig, Brennan Miller, Clinton Jones and John Ponton.

Matt Keen, Springfield's starting pitcher, took the loss. He pitched four innings, allowing five runs (four earned) and nine hits. Reliever Sean Ruggles, in four innings of work, allowed no runs and just one hit.

On Monday night, Springfield attended the annual pre-American Legion tournament banquet. The event, catered by Outback Steakhouse, was attended by coaches and players from all eight teams and was held at the Danville Post 325 headquarters. The special guest speaker was Ferrum College head baseball coach Darren Hodges.

— RICH SANDERS

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 10

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.”

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 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. “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.”

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 Supperx 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.

Interested in the Catholic Faith? **St. Leo the Great Catholic Church** is having an inquiry meeting on Wednesday, Aug. 11, at 7:30 p.m., for those interested in learning more about Catholicism.

The meetings are held in the St. John Room of the Parish Center, 3700 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. carolynsmith.stleos@gmail.com or 703-273-5369.

Franconia United Methodist Church, 6037 Franconia Road, Alexandria, welcomes the community to several events this summer. Contact 703-971-5151 or admin@franconiaumc.org.

Cranford UMC, 9912 Old Colchester Road, Lorton, summer hours take effect Sunday July 4-Labor Day. Church begins at 10 a.m. Vacation Bible School will continue on Aug. 1, 15 and 29. 703-339-5382 or www.cranfordumc.org.

Messiah United Methodist Church, 6215 Rolling Road in Springfield, will begin GriefShare, a free, church-sponsored support group 7:15 p.m. Wednesdays through Oct. 6. The focus is on Christ-centered healing through small group interaction. Recovering from the death of a spouse, a close family member, or a special friend, takes time. Child care is available upon request. 703-455-2344.

One God Ministry Church, 4280/4282 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax, has launched a new Web site with news, events, training, conferences, fellowship programs and more. Sunday School is at 10 a.m., Sunday Worship Service at 11 a.m., and Wednesday Prayer Service at 7 p.m. Women, Men, and Youth Bible Studies are on the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. One God Ministry has ministries for youth, men, women, couples, music and singles. 703-591-6161.

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