

Oak Hill ❖ Herndon **CONNECTION**

Kevin Mason helps his son Tommy, 4, down the slide at Arrowbrook Park Saturday. The 23-acre park features a lighted, artificial turf athletic field, a basketball court, two lighted tennis courts, a playground, a picnic pavilion and the Fairfax County Park Authority's first bocce court.

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Every year between Christmas and New Year's, The Oak Hill/Herndon Connection turns its pages over to the contributions of local students. We are seeking artwork, photography, poetry, opinions, short stories and reflections. We welcome contributions from public schools, private schools and students who are home schooled.

E-mail to: herndon@connectionnews.com, or mail (.jpg and text files on disc only) by Dec. 1, to 1606 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314. Please be sure to include the student's name, age, grade, school and town of residence along with each submission. For information, call 703-778-9410.

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Representatives from Fairfax County, the Town of Herndon, the Arrowbrook Management Corporation and youth athletic groups cut the ribbon at Arrowbrook Park Saturday. The 23-acre park will be focal point of a mixed-use development at the site of the old Arrowhead Farm, at the corner of Sunrise Valley Drive and Centreville Road.

PHOTOS BY
ALEX McVEIGH/
THE CONNECTION



New Place to Park

Ribbon cut on 23-acre Arrowbrook Park.

BY ALEX McVEIGH
THE CONNECTION

Community leaders gathered Saturday to cut the ribbon on Arrowbrook Park, whose deluxe facilities will serve youth sports organizations and other residents of Herndon and Reston.

Located at the intersection of Sunrise Valley Drive and Centreville Road — the site of the former Arrowhead Farm — the park features a lighted, artificial turf athletic field, a basketball court, two lighted tennis courts, a playground, a picnic pavilion and the Fairfax County Park Authority's first bocce court.

THE 23-ACRE PARK is part of the planned Arrowbrook Centre, which will be home to offices, restaurants, retail, hotels and over a million square feet of residential space.

It was sponsored through a public-private partnership between the Park Authority and the Arrowbrook Management Corporation, which county officials say they hope is a model for future such partnerships.

"As Fairfax County continues to grow, we need to continue to come up with creative ways to integrate developments like Arrowbrook into the community and work hand in hand with our developers who are building and re-building Fairfax County," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova. "This is a demonstration of a new relationship that county government will have with our developers, working in collaboration to make parks and public facilities happen."

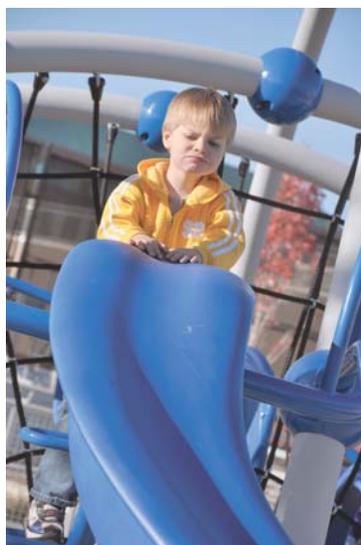
Supervisor Cathy Hudgins (D-Hunter Mill) called it an "example of how we want to continue our development in Fairfax County, that is, meeting the needs that developers bring to the community and integrating the amenities needed to support it."

While everyone was all smiles Saturday, the process of building the park wasn't always an easy one.

After the owners died in 1995, the owners of the trust that held the property discovered that the land had been identified as a location for a park.

"I can't say in all honesty that we didn't ask Cathy Hudgins to lift what we felt was an oppressive burden from our backs, but Cathy ... along with her planning commissioner Frank de la Fe, were able to convince us of the wisdom of incorporating a park into our development plan," said Jeffrey Fairfield, co-manager of Arrowbrook Centre. "I have to say, they were right and we were wrong. Because what we see before us embodies the principle that the public good and private gain are not only compatible, but can be synergistic."

In addition to the level of cooperation between the county and the developers, Bulova said she hopes that the park sets a precedent for the way open space is planned, not as an afterthought, but as the centerpiece.



Tommy Mason, 4, surveys the slide at the Arrowbrook Park playground before going for a ride. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held at the 23-acre park Saturday.

THE FIELD will be used by athletic organizations from Herndon and Reston, particularly the soccer groups, which are made up of thousands of players on hundreds of teams with ages ranging from under five to 19.

"Everyone is itching to get out on these turf fields," said Steven Guyer, a board member of Herndon Youth Soccer. "For the Park Authority and Arrowbrook to work together says a lot about their dedication to the kids, and we look forward to many years of playing here."

Rick Uhrig, president of Reston Soccer, added, "as I'm standing here today, looking out over the field, I'm just thinking what a great time all the players are going to have once we get out here."

Herndon Mayor Steve DeBenedittis said he was glad the park is so close to the Town of Herndon.

"I'm very pleased they decided to build the Arrowbrook Park in the Herndon area," DeBenedittis said.

"Herndon residents are known for their community involvement and for their participation and enjoyment of recreation and outdoor activities."

Hal and Ruth Launders purchased the land after World War II, and established it as Arrowhead Farm, where they raised Angus cattle. The pavilion located next to the athletic field is named Launders Pavilion in their honor.

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE



PHOTO BY ALEX McVEIGH/THE CONNECTION

The country store at Fryling Pan Farm Park, will be open for children Christmas shopping Dec. 4, where volunteers will help children pick out and wrap presents for everyone on their list.

Christmas on the Farm

Fryling Pan Farm Park hosts children's Christmas shopping Dec. 4.

BY ALEX McVEIGH
THE CONNECTION

Fryling Pan Farm Park is trying to help the youngest shoppers avoid some of the traditional shopping pitfalls while helping them get gifts for everyone on their lists.

The annual Christmas at the Farm event will be Dec. 4 and children's shopping will start at 12:30 p.m.

"Kids come with their shopping list, and the volunteers will help them find items appropriate for everyone on their list," said Tawny Hammond, park manager. "Their parents can give them a budget, and we'll make sure their gifts come in under budget."

Volunteers will also be available to help wrap the presents, making it a one-stop shop for children to get their shopping done.

"We'll have hayrides, the farm

will be decorated for Christmas, the country store will be open, and I'm told Santa Claus might even make an appearance for a photo or two," said Bill Bouie, chairman of the Fairfax County Park Authority Board.

Gifts offered for the children's holiday shopping include honey from the farm's beehives, as well as gifts for farm, gardening and history enthusiasts.

Park Historian Yvonne Johnson says volunteers are key to this event, as well as most of the events that happen at the farm.

"We just couldn't do what we do without our volunteers, we see as many as 120 of them throughout the course of the year, and they do everything from hayrides to teaching children about the farm," she said.

More information about the children's Christmas shopping can be found at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/fpp.

"Kids come with their shopping list, and the volunteers will help them find items appropriate for everyone on their list."

— Tawny Hammond, park manager

HERNDON TOWN'S HOLIDAYS

Celebrate the Holidays with neighbors and friends in the Town of Herndon at the following events, held throughout the town during December. For more information, visit www.herndon-va.gov.

TOWNE SQUARE SINGERS HOLIDAY CONCERT

Friday, Dec. 3 and Saturday, Dec. 4, 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, Dec. 5, 2 p.m. Holiday songs from the past and contemporary classics. Elden Street Players' Industrial Strength Theatre, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. \$12. 703.787-7300. www.herndon-va.gov

HOLIDAY HOMES TOUR OF HERNDON

Saturday, Dec. 4, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Tour Herndon homes decorated for the holidays. Tickets available at Herndon Dulles Visitors' Center, 717 Lynn Street, and Herndon Florist, 716 Lynn Street, Herndon. \$15 in advance, \$20 day of event. 703-HERNDON (437-6366).

WONDER OF THE NUTCRACKER/WINTER OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, Dec. 4, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. The Classical Ballet Theatre presents a reading of "The Nutcracker." Crafts and refreshments. Herndon Fortnightly Library, 768 Center Street, Herndon. Free. 703-437-8855 www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library

HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING & SING-ALONG

Saturday, Dec. 4, 5 p.m. – 6 p.m. Carols, tree lighting and a visit from Santa. Corner of Lynn and Elden Streets, Herndon. Free. 571-323-5301. www.dullesregionalchamber.org

HERNDON HOLIDAY ARTS & CRAFT SHOW

Sunday, Dec. 5, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. More than 100 arts and craft vendors offer gifts, decorations and handmade items. Herndon Community Center, 814 Ferndale Ave., Herndon. Free. 703-787-7300. www.herndon-va.gov

HOLIDAY RECEPTION AT ARTSPACE

Sunday, Dec. 5, 5-7 p.m. Enjoy seasonal music and meet artists and poets participating in the "International Pen and Brush" exhibition. ArtSpace, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Free. 703-956-6590. www.artspaceherndon.org

HOLIDAY MODEL TRAIN SHOW

Saturday, Dec. 11, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 12, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. ArtSpace Herndon, 750-A Center Street, Herndon. W&OD caboose and Herndon Depot Museum also open for tours (Saturday only). Free. 703-956-6590.

DRESS UP HERNDON FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Monday, Dec. 13, 6 p.m.-8 p.m. Judging. Neighborhood Decoration Contest throughout Herndon. Home decorations judged in traditional, whimsical, lights categories and more. Free. 703-435-6800 X2084. www.herndon-va.gov

SANTA'S WORKSHOP

Saturday, Dec. 18, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Holiday fun includes a visit with Santa, crafts and lunch. Register by Dec. 13. Herndon Community Center, 814 Ferndale Ave., Herndon. \$7 per child, \$3 per adult (if eating lunch) 703-787-7300. www.herndon-va.gov

HOLIDAY YOUTH MUSICAL CAFÉ

Saturday, Dec. 18, 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. An afternoon of holiday singing and musical presentations by local youth. ArtSpace, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Free. 703-956-6590. www.artspaceherndon.org

NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATIONS AT ARTSPACE

Friday, Dec. 31, 9 p.m. – 10 p.m. — Bonfire, family-friendly and alcohol free. Free. 10 p.m. – 1 a.m. Musical Café featuring Al Robertson and Friends, midnight champagne toast. Tickets: \$45/person, \$50/person after Dec. 13. ArtSpace, 750 Center Street, Herndon. 703-956-6590. www.artspaceherndon.org

SCHOOL NOTES

Nine Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) choral students have been accepted into National American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) Children's and Middle School Choirs. Members of these ensembles, chosen from over 4,000 applicants from around the United States, will rehearse and perform in conjunction with the National ACDA Conference scheduled for March 9-12, 2011 in Chicago.

FCPS students accepted into the ACDA choirs are:

❖ Carson Middle School: Starr Baker, Brigid Doebrich, Kristina Rofail, and

Lyric Venable for the Children's Honor Choir; Michael Mason for the Middle School-Junior High Honor Choir. Amy Moir is the chorus director at Carson.

❖ Franklin Middle School: Jake Fries, Troy Fries, and Connor Golden for the Middle School-Junior High Honor Choir. Lorraine Neill is the chorus director at Franklin.

❖ Oakton High School: Thomas Hinds for the Middle School-Junior High Honor Choir. Tiffany Powell is the chorus director at Oakton.

More information is available at www.acda.org

NEWS

Veterans Honored

BY SEAN McCALLEY
THE CONNECTION

Del. Tom Rust (R-86) led a solemn recognition of the sacrifices given by Herndon's veterans on Nov. 11. His speech, given on the lawn of the Herndon Town Green, was heard by a silent group of veterans, families and other local citizens to honor the service their neighbors provided during their lives.

"You've given up part of your lives for people like me," Rust said. "Because of our veterans, the present exists."

American Legion Post 184, Herndon's local Wayne M. Kidwell Post, held the annual Veteran's Day observance.

The speech was given on a day of near-perfect weather. The small crowd that had gathered to hear the delegate's speech was quiet and reflective, affirming the key points of the speech with nods and brief applause.

"They have made our future safe. They inspire the future," Rust added.

Quoting revolutionary leaders like Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson, Rust's speech centered around one central theme: veterans must be honored, for they sought to defend the noble ideas on which the country is founded.

"Every veteran that has died for this just cause has made it stronger for his sacrifice."

Along with Herndon veteran David Kirby, Rust laid honorary wreaths upon the Town Green monument as the benediction was read.

"No general who ever lived, no king who ever reigned... commanded a finer force," said Rust.

Kirby then listed many of the restaurants that were offering free food and drink to celebrate Veteran's Day.

"Take a veteran out to eat today. Perhaps for a free Bloomin' Onion at the Outback Steakhouse," chuckled Kirby.

"No general who ever lived, no king who ever reigned... commanded a finer force."

—Del. Tom Rust (R-86)



Veteran David Kirby remarks on the solemnity of Veteran's Day.



WWII and Korea Veteran John Denoyer and Ann Csonka commemorate Veteran's Day.



Dalton and Tively Chester receive merit badges during the commemoration

PHOTOS BY
SEAN McCALLEY/
THE CONNECTION

VIEWPOINTS

"It's the perfect time to think about the country, and that means thinking about cooperating together. But make sure you also show veterans the honor and respect they deserve."

— **Ann Csonka, wife of veteran John Denoyer, Herndon**

"The best thing is probably be with your family. It's a more spiritual kind of day, and that's how you should feel when you remember the

vets that gave their lives."
— **Matthew Kirby, student, Herndon**

"Just go up to a family member or friend you know and show your appreciation to that specific veteran with a hug."

— **Robert S. Thompson, United States Navy Veteran, Herndon**

"The best way to commemorate Veteran's Day? Somber thought. Reflection."

— **John Denoyer,**

World War II and Korea Army Veteran, Herndon

"Recognize that people have sacrificed huge parts of their lives for the future of this country. Have that in mind when you honor them today."

— **Carl Silverstein, United States Army Veteran, Herndon**

"Talk to a vet. Give them a big 'thank you.'"

— **Del. Tom Rust (R-86), Herndon**

BULLETIN BOARD

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

THURSDAY/NOV. 18

Greater Reston Newcomers and Neighbors Club. 10 am. in St. John Neumann Church, 11900 Lawyers Road, Reston. Photographer Jan Bender will demonstrate use of a view camera, sheet film and darkroom printing. Refreshments served. Free. 703-437-6866.

Dulles Corridor Advisory Committee. 9:30 a.m. Crowne Plaza Tysons Corner Executive Conference and Training Center, 8201 Greensboro Drive, McLean.

Updates on the status of Dulles Corridor finances and improvements, the construction and financing of the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project, and an update on a proposed Dulles Toll Road noise policy. www.mwaa.com/tollroad/2471.htm.

MOMS Club of Herndon Monthly Meeting. 10 a.m. at Trinity Presbyterian Church, 651 Dranesville Road, Herndon. With speaker Reina Weiner, author of Strong from the Start: Raising Confident and Resilient Kids. Children are welcome. herndon_moms_info@yahoo.com.

FRIDAY/NOV. 19
Republican Club of Greater

Reston Meeting. 7 p.m. Hunters Woods Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. 703-829-5384.

SATURDAY/NOV. 20

Fairfax Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Information Session. 11 a.m. at the Lake Anne Reston Community Center, 1609-A Washington Plaza, Reston. Learn more about advocating for abused or neglected children. 703-273-3526, x22 or ekosarin@casafairfax.org.

SUNDAY, NOV. 21
Chanukah Boutique. 9 a.m.-2 p.m.,

Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation, 1441 Wiehle Avenue, 703-437-7733. Purchase all your Chanukah needs this weekend. Menorahs, dreidels, gift wrap, even nut free chocolate gelt. Also, featuring outside vendors with handmade gifts and artwork.

MONDAY/NOV. 22

NARFE Dulles Chapter 1241 Luncheon Meeting. 11:30 a.m. Amphora Diner, 1151 Elden St., Herndon. \$17. Virginia Commonwealth Delegate Tom Rust on Virginia Commonwealth House Bill (HB) 514, and Tina Gum, Ombudsman for the Fairfax County

Code Services Permits Branch. 703-435-3523.

Preparing for Rail in the Dulles Corridor. 8 a.m. National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation, 2201 Cooperative Way, Herndon. With Hunter Mill District Supervisor Catherine M. Hudgins, Virginia House of Delegates Member Kenneth R. Plum, Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project Executive Director Patrick Nowakowski, GMU Center for Regional Analysis Deputy Director John McClain, Comstock Partners Chief Financial Officer Beau Schwiekert, and Dulles Corridor Rail Association President Patricia Nicoson. www.dullescorridorrail.com.

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OPINION

Give Locally

Local charities report record numbers of Northern Virginia families seeking emergency help.

The number of people applying for food stamps and seeking help from food banks has more than doubled in the last few years in Northern Virginia.

This year, 800 families registered for the LINK Thanksgiving food and used coat distribution. That includes 1,774 adults and 2,130 children, an increase from 2009 of almost 400 individuals.

This incredible need is repeated in small and large organizations around Northern Virginia.

Food For Others served 11,900 households and 42,000 individuals in the last year, and despite many donations, the organization is having trouble keeping food on the shelves for the needy. A few weeks ago, Washington Irving Middle School collected 3,000 pounds of food for the organization, Peter Spain, an organizer at Food for Others, told reporter Julia O'Donoghue.

"But most of that food is gone now. ... We had 132 families come in on Friday," he said.

Much of the burden of helping these families has fallen on small organizations with no paid staff, interfaith groups, churches, volunteers. Organizations like SHARE of McLean and LINK depend on volunteers and contributions to try to meet the expanding need for food and warm clothes on a daily basis.

Where to Give

Reston Interfaith,
11150 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 210, Reston
Serving Reston and Herndon
571-323-9555
www.restoninterfaith.org

SHARE of McLean seeks donations of grocery, Target, Sears, Best Buy and Bed, Bath & Beyond gift cards for volunteers to fulfill a client's personally expressed "Wish." Email Sharewishes@gmail.com to get a wish to fulfill. To volunteer or with questions, email Shareholiday@gmail.com. Gift Cards and "Wishes" can be dropped off at SHARE, c/o McLean Baptist Church, 1367 Chain Bridge Rd. on Wednesdays and Saturdays (except Thanksgiving week) between 9:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Checks and gift cards can be sent to: Holiday Celebration, Share, Inc. PO Box 210, McLean, VA 22101
703-284-2179
www.SHAREofMcLean.org

LINK, serving Herndon, Chantilly, Loudoun and more, needs contributions of food, coats and holiday toys for children, plus volunteers. Email Lisa Lombardozi at LisaLombo@signaturecos.com. (703) 437-1776
www.linkagainsthunger.org

Herndon-Reston FISH (For Immediate Sympathetic Help), 703-391-0105

Food for Others
2938 Prosperity Avenue, Fairfax, 22031
703-207-9173

Northern Virginia Family Service,
Oakton, 703-385-3267

Our Daily Bread,
10777 Main Street #320, Fairfax, 703-273-8829

Shelter House, www.shelterhouse.org, operates two homeless shelters in Fairfax County, in Centreville and Seven Corners. 571-522-6800

Committee for Helping Others (CHO),
Vienna, 703-281-7614

Beyond that, organizations stretch to provide the basics for a holiday meal for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners and the hope of presents for many children who might otherwise not receive a single holiday gift.

There are many ways to give, with some local charities connecting the donor to a specific family to provide a holiday food basket and

fulfill some wishes for gifts. Many organizations encourage the donation of gift cards. Every local group seeking to help the needy right now is facing extra demand and needs both volunteer and financial help.

— MARY KIMM,
MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

LINK Needs Volunteers, Goods to Help Needy

LISA LOMBARDOZZI

This year a record number of 800 families already have registered for the LINK Thanksgiving food and used coat distribution on Saturday, Nov. 20.

These families comprise 1,774 adults and 2,130 children for a total of 3,904 needy people. We will need food donations and used winter coats and clothing for these families.

This is an increase from 2009 of almost 400 individuals. LINK Board members voted to increase the total number of families being helped this year due to the high demand from school counselors. With the many blessings that LINK has experienced throughout the year, the Board felt that extending the number of families was important this year.

The big push now will be to get food donations, winter coats and clothing, and volunteers. There is still a big need for volunteers on Friday, Nov. 19 from 9 a.m. - 8 p.m. and Saturday, Nov. 20 from 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Volunteers would be sorting

food, assisting clients, restocking tables and delivering food to homebound clients. Volunteers can send an email to Diana@hamiltongroup.com. For questions regarding the program or to volunteer to coordinate a food drive/coat drive or toy drive (for the December program), contact Lisa Lombardozi at LisaLombo@signaturecos.com.

Established in 1972, LINK is one of the legacy "all volunteer" emergency support organizations in Northern Virginia. LINK provides emergency food assistance by request on a daily basis and distributes holiday food baskets for Thanksgiving and Christmas. The organization comprises 18 member churches (consisting of Baptist, Brethren, and Catholic, Episcopal, Fellowship, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and non-denominational churches) in Herndon, Chantilly, Sterling, Potomac Falls and Ashburn united in a common cause to provide food, grocery gift certificates and financial assistance to qualified people in need 52 weeks a year.

LINK retains no paid employees.

Volunteers do all the work, and most goods are received from local donations. This past year LINK spent less than \$4,000 on operating expenses (insurance, electricity, water, telephone, audit expense, mailbox & safe deposit rents, etc.). Similar to the Gospel story of the loaves and fish, LINK touched the lives of people 6,000 times with an annual budget of less than \$50,000.

Our motivations are rooted in spirit, mercy and responsibility to others. LINK is a powerful opportunity to serve God, model Jesus' teaching and to provide an example to others that they can participate too. Through our hard work and commitment LINK members donate thousands of volunteer hours each year in supporting needy people. LINK volunteers supply an added measure of determination, skill and teamwork and provide enhanced community awareness to those local people living in their time of greatest need.

Lisa Lombardozi is the LINK Holiday Basket Project Manager and a resident of Herndon.

OBITUARY

Dorothy K. Westbrook, 69, Dies

Dorothy Westbrook, 69, of Sterling died on Thursday, Nov. 11, 2010 at her residence. Devoted daughter of Elizabeth P. Ward of Sterling, loving mother of Joe Michael Ward (Tamara) of Pike Road, Ala., Kimberly A. James (Tyron) of Sterling, Tammy Westbrook of Silver Spring, Md., Shari Westbrook and Harold Westbrook of Sterling. She is also survived by six grandchildren, three great-grandchildren and a host of other relatives and friends. She is preceded in death by her father Joe L. Ward and sister, Barbara Ann Davis.

Viewing will be held on Friday, Nov. 19, 2010 from 9 a.m. until time of service 11 a.m. at Oak Grove Baptist Church, 22870 Dominion Lane in Sterling. Interment Oak Grove Baptist Church Cemetery in Sterling. Arrangements by Lyles Funeral Service.

THE CONNECTION

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Michele Bevington (second from left) with (from left) friend Barbara Kutner; her daughter, Lauren Bevington; and her mother, Colette Bollens, at the woman's club event.



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/ THE CONNECTION

'The Power of One'

Freedom Petals brings smiles to injured soldiers.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

For 25 years, Franklin Farm's Michele Bevington was a cartographer and program manager for the federal government. But after retiring in 2009, her life headed in a whole, new direction – and now, through flowers, she's bringing joy each day to injured and recuperating service members.

She discussed her business, Freedom Petals, at a recent meeting of the Western Fairfax County Woman's Club at the Chantilly Regional Library. And the topic was in keeping with the club's theme, "The Power of One," illustrating how each person can use her own talents to make a difference for others.

"I wanted to give back to society, and I read an article in 'Southern Living' about a woman in Alabama who delivers flowers and individual Christmas trees for hospice patients," said Bevington. "So I emailed her and she called me, and I asked if she'd mentor me, and she did. She told me to get 2-liter crates from soda-bottling plants for moving the vases and to go to grocery stores and weddings to get flowers."

Bevington uses re-purposed flowers – fresh ones in good condition that other businesses have on hand, but end up not using. She and her volunteers create floral arrangements from them for soldiers who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. They then deliver the arrangements to Walter Reed Army Hospital, Fisher House and Mologne House – a 287-bed hotel for soldiers released from the hospital, and their families – at the Walter Reed complex.

Although Bevington had no background in floral arranging, she learned on the job – and her fine-arts degree helped. In January, her daughter made the nonprofit Freedom Petals' first delivery. Since then, business has blossomed. Bevington now has 70-80 volunteers and delivers some 120 arrangements a month. She received a Volunteer of the Year award

from the Fairfax County Park Authority.

"This organization is like a garden," she said. "I planted the seed, but everyone else is nurturing it – and it's grown by leaps and bounds. The power of one, for me, is the Almighty. It's also the collective power of one – my volunteers and other companies, like Trader Joe's and Herndon Flowers, that also help."

BEVINGTON BEGAN with flowers donated by the Reston Trader Joe's, and she noted how important it is to thank people for their help. "I sent Trader Joe's a thank-you note," she said. "I told them how much they'd helped [me and those receiving the bouquets] and they made a poster out of it."

Next, she approached the Adams-Green Funeral Home, asked if she could have their excess flowers and explained her project. "They were crying because of the impact it had on them," said Bevington. "They were constantly throwing flowers away and they didn't want to, so they were happy to give them to me."

Arlington Flowers also proved a valuable source. "They used to throw away their flowers because it sometimes takes three months between a military funeral service and a burial at Arlington National Cemetery," said Bevington. "So now, we get these flowers. And if I have extras, I bring them to the Embry Rucker Shelter and Sunrise Assisted Living."

She also gave kudos to Herndon Florist and its owner, Anne Harvey. "Herndon Florist has absolutely been wonderful," said Bevington. "I needed better vases, and I told them I wanted to give them all the

extra oases and huge vases I'd gotten from the funeral home that I couldn't use. And it opened up a door for [Harvey] to give back."

"I never expected or asked for anything from her," continued Bevington. "And now she's giving me ribbon, floral tape, flowers, and she's training me in making floral arrangements. They even put me in obituaries now, asking people – in lieu of flowers [to the family] – to send me vases."

The Girl Scouts have also done vase drives for her, and the appreciation she receives from those who've received the floral arrangements keeps her going.

"These are injured people, fighting for our freedom."

—Michele Bevington, founder, Freedom Petals

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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

Artisans Gallery Shop at ArtSpace

Sign up for a class, or visit the new Artisans Gallery Shop at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., featuring jewelry, pottery, ceramics, watercolors, paper items, cards and other artwork by local artists such as Mary Sears, Melanie Stanley and Karin Anderson (among others).

PHOTOS BY DEB COBB/THE CONNECTION



Lehanga - Indian formal wear



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Meenal's Indian Fashions boutique located in Oak Hill is a retailer of latest fashion Indian clothing and accessories, carrying an extensive selection of casual and formal Saris, Lehenga, suits, Tunic kurtis, girls' dresses, boys' and men's Kurtas, Sherwanis, Turbans and shoes. They also have fashion jewelry including bangles, necklace sets, bracelets and earrings. For an appointment call 703-318-7389 or see at www.meenalsindianfashions.com.



Bangles



A girl's Anarkali Suit and a boy's Kurta Pajama

Dance Wear at the Cinnamon Tree

The Cinnamon Tree, 1108 Herndon Parkway, specializes in a complete line of dance wear for ballet, jazz, tap, pointe, hip hop, ballroom and zumba.



Kendra Maynard, 13, a member of Community of Faith United Methodist Church, packs non-perishable food items into a box Sunday. The church runs a food pantry every week that serves 80-105 families from across western Fairfax County every week.



Scouts from Pack 1601 from Fairfax brought several hundred boxes of food to the church's food pantry last weekend.

PHOTOS BY ALEX McVEIGH/THE CONNECTION

Feeding Those In Need

Scouting for Food restocks local food pantry.

BY ALEX McVEIGH

THE CONNECTION

The food bank at the Community of Faith United Methodist Church was stocked for the holiday season last weekend, as Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts collected food across Herndon and Reston as part of the scouts' annual Scouting for Food drive.

The scouts collected more than 400 boxes of food, which will go into the food bank at the church, which serves 80-105 families per week, every Tuesday night. Families come from across western Fairfax County to the food pantry.

"Since the economy tanked, we've seen double the amount of families than we did before, and we see at least five new families per week," said Reverend Rob Vaughn, pastor at the church. "This event is where we receive most of our canned goods."

This was the first year the food items were sorted by category, which church staff believe will help them distribute the food more efficiently.

THE BOY SCOUTS dropped off plastic bags at homes throughout the area the week before and picked up the bags, which were filled with non-perishable items, and dropped them off at the church. The Cub Scouts dropped off their bags Saturday and picked them up Sunday, which they learned can yield bigger results.

"Sometimes people can forget if you wait a whole week, so the Cub Scouts have found that people remember more if they do it overnight," Vaughn said.

Volunteers from the church and the scouts helped sort the food as it came in throughout the day. They topped last year's total by around noon Saturday, and by the end of the day Sunday, they were struggling to pack the food into the church's storage areas.

"This is the first time I've been to the collection part of it, but I'm a regular Tuesday nights," said Jessica Hogg, 12, who attends Langston Hughes Middle School. "It's cool to see it from the other side."

State Delegate James LeMunyon (R-67), whose son was a member of Boy Scout Troop 158, which is based out of the church, was out helping sort boxes, and he said this is what the community does best.

"In this area, the scouts and the schools are very active and very



Volunteers at the Community of Faith United Methodist Church sort non-perishable items brought in by the annual Scouting for Food drive Sunday. The drive brought in more than 400 boxes of food, which will go to the church's food pantry.

generous when it comes to helping people," he said. "When people in this community need help, people are here to give it. There's a lot going right here today."

THE FOOD PANTRY at the Com-

munity of Faith is also supported by donations from local Starbucks, KFC, Chipotle, Panera, Cheesecake Factory and Famous Dave's locations, as well as a local Giant and Bloom. More information can be found at www.cof-umc.org.

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10:00 p.m. Festival Choral Eucharist

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ENTERTAINMENT

Send announcements to herndon@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Thursday for the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged. For additional listings, visit www.connectionnewspapers.com.

THURSDAY/NOV. 18

Terrific Twos. 10:30 a.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Storytime. Age 2 with adult. 703-689-2700.
Melissa Manchester. 8 p.m. Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1624 Trap Road, Vienna. Rock/pop. \$35. www.wolftrap.com.

FRIDAY/NOV. 19

"A Midsummer Night's Dream". 8 p.m. at George Mason University Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Shakespeare's comedy, presented by Aquila Theatre of New York City. Tickets \$17-\$34. Charge at 888-945-2468 or cfa.gmu.edu.

Opening Reception: Holiday Art Show & Sale. 6 p.m. Reston Museum, 1639 Washington Plaza, Reston. See and buy works by local artists. A portion of proceeds from sales benefits Reston Museum. 703-709-7700 or www.restonmuseum.org.

Girlyman. 7:30 p.m. Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1624 Trap Road, Vienna. Americana and vocal harmonies. \$20. www.wolftrap.com.

SATURDAY/NOV. 20

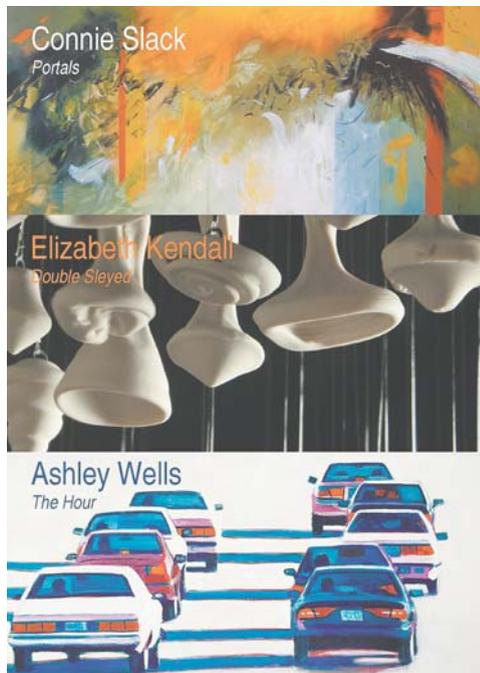
Be A Weed Warrior. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Meet at the Glade Pool Parking lot at the corner of Glade and Soapstone, Reston. Help remove English Ivy that is taking over the natural area to give

Greater Reston Arts Center, Reston Town Center, 12001 Market St. Suite #103 in Reston, will have an Artists' Talk and Reception on Saturday, Nov. 20 beginning at 5 p.m. The Focus Exhibitions are Double Sleyed with Elizabeth Kendall's ceramic sculptures and installations, Portals with Connie Slack's abstract paintings and The Hour with Ashley Wells' cityscapes.

native plants a chance to thrive. habrock@reston.org or 703-435-7986.

Artists' Reception. 6-9 p.m. Applegate Gallery & Custom Framing, 101 Church St. N.W., Suite C, Vienna. Local artists displaying oil and watercolor paintings, mixed media collages, pastels, etchings and photography. Exhibit continues through Jan. 2. Refreshments served. info@applegateframing.com.

Junior League of Northern Virginia: The Enchanted Forest. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sheraton Reston, 11810 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston. Breakfast With Santa, Georgetown Cupcakes and Cocoa with the Snow Fairy Princess, Milk and Cookies with Santa and Gingerbread House



Workshops. Tenth Anniversary Diamond Gala with raffle, 8 p.m.-12 a.m., \$75 per person. www.jlnv.org/theenchantedforest or 703-442-4163.

Chaise Lounge. 7:30 p.m. Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 1624 Trap Road, Vienna. Local jazz collective. \$18. www.wolftrap.com.
Artists' Talk and Reception. 5 p.m. Greater Reston Arts Center, Reston Town Center, 12001 Market St. Suite #103, Reston. Double Sleyed is Elizabeth Kendall's ceramic sculptures and installations, Portals is Connie Slack's abstract paintings and The Hour is Ashley Wells' cityscapes.

SUNDAY/NOV. 21

Arts & Crafts Fair. 2-4 p.m. at Tall

Oaks Assisted Living, 12052 N. Shore Drive, Reston. Featuring local artists. Open to the community. 703-834-3630 or jjackson@talloaksal.com.

New Orleans Nights with Allen Toussaint, Nicholas Payton and the Joe Krown Trio. 7 p.m. at George Mason University Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Tickets \$22-44, \$36, youth through grade 12 half price when accompanied by an adult. Charge at 888-945-2468 or cfa.gmu.edu.

Junior League of Northern Virginia: The Enchanted Forest. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Sheraton Reston, 11810 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston. Breakfast With Santa, Georgetown Cupcakes and Cocoa with the Snow Fairy Princess, Milk and Cookies with Santa and Gingerbread House Workshops. www.jlnv.org/theenchantedforest or 703-442-4163.

MONDAY/NOV. 22

Thanksgiving Preschool Storytime. 11 a.m. Herndon Fortnightly Library, 768 Center St., Herndon. Storytime featuring songs, rhymes and stories about giving thanks. 703-437-8855. Age 2-5 with adult.

Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Explore scientific topics through activities. Age 6-8. 703-689-2700.

TUESDAY/NOV. 23

Baby Steps Storytime. 10:30 a.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Interactive storytime. Age 13-23 months with adult. 703-689-2700.

ESL Advanced. 10:30 a.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Practice

English in a group with a volunteer facilitator. Adults. 703-689-2700.

WEDNESDAY/NOV. 24

Community Interfaith Thanksgiving Eve Service. 7:30 p.m. at the United Christian Parish, 11508 North Shore Drive, Reston. Participants will include leaders of the Shoreshim Community, All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS), Washington Plaza Baptist Church, Community of All People United Church of Christ, United Christian Parish and Reston Interfaith. Virginia Delegate Ken Plum and Fairfax County Supervisor Cathy Hudgins will also take part. A social time will follow the service. 703-620-3065 or www.unitedchristianparish.org.
ESL for Jobs. 6:30 p.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. English conversation and job skills for adults. 703-689-2700.

FRIDAY/NOV. 26

Open House. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Great Falls Assisted Living, 1121 Reston Ave., Herndon. Stop in for a tour and refreshments. 703-421-0690.

SATURDAY/NOV. 27

Weekend Bluegrass Concert Series: Jimmy Gaudreau and Orrin Star. 7:30 p.m. at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 1090 Sterling Road, Herndon. Tickets \$15. 703-435-8377 or www.jimmygaudreau.com or www.orrinstar.com.
"Nutcracker Ballet." 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. at Northern Virginia Community

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 11

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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 10

College Ernst Theater, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Presented by the Classical Ballet Theatre of Northern Virginia. Tickets \$18-\$22, special pricing available for military families and Girl Scouts. www.cbntva.org or 703-471-0750.
Open House. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Great Falls Assisted Living, 1121 Reston Ave., Herndon. Stop in for a tour and refreshments. 703-421-0690.

SUNDAY/NOV. 28

"Nutcracker Ballet." 2 p.m. at Northern Virginia Community College Ernst Theater, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Presented by the Classical Ballet Theatre of Northern Virginia. \$18-\$22, special pricing available for military families and Girl Scouts. www.cbntva.org or 703-471-0750.
Open House. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Great Falls Assisted Living, 1121 Reston Ave., Herndon. Stop in for a tour and refreshments. 703-421-0690.

TUESDAY/NOV. 30

Drop-In Story Hour. 7 p.m. Herndon Fortnightly Library, 768 Center St., Herndon. Old and new picture book favorites. Age 2-5 with adult. 703-437-8855.

FRIDAY/DEC. 3

The Virginia Opera: Mozart's "Così fan Tutte." 8 p.m. at George Mason University Center For The Arts Concert Hall, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. \$48-\$98. 888-945-2468 or www.tickets.com.
Reston Chorale: The Wonder of



Jimmy Gaudreau and Orrin Star. The Weekend Bluegrass Concert Series at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 1090 Sterling Road, Herndon presents. Jimmy Gaudreau and Orrin Star, 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 27. Tickets are \$15. 703-435-8377, www.jimmygaudreau.com or www.orrinstar.com.

the Season. 7 p.m. Floris United Methodist Church, 13600 Frying Pan Road, Herndon. The Ceremony of Carols by Benjamin Britten. lindacke@verizon.net.

"Amahl and the Night Visitors." 8 p.m. at George Mason University Harris Theater, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Gian Carlo Menotti's classic story. \$20 adults, \$15 students and seniors. 888-945-2468 or cfa.gmu.edu.

George Mason University Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. With jazz pianist Cyrus Chestnut and mandolinist Mike Marshall. A pre-performance discussion, free to ticket holders, begins 45 minutes prior to the performance on the Center's Grand Tier III. Tickets \$22-\$44, available at 888-945-2468 or cfa.gmu.edu.

Reston Chorale: The Wonder of the Season. 7 p.m. Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. The Ceremony of Carols by Benjamin Britten. lindacke@verizon.net.

SATURDAY/DEC. 4

Turtle Island String Quartet. 8 p.m.

FAITH NOTES

Faith Notes are for announcements and events in the faith community, including special holiday services. Send to herndon@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Thursday.

Minister Regina Boyd, M.Div. will lead an Advent Discussion Group on Nov. 16, Nov. 30, Dec. 4 and Dec. 14 at 7 p.m. at Panera Bread, 460 Elden St., Herndon. The topic will be "Locating Our Theological World in Preparation for the Coming Christ." Contact 703-758-0527 or capucc21@gmail.com.

St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, 432 Van Buren St. in Herndon, presents "Journey to Adulthood", a comprehensive Christian Education for youth in grades 6-12. It uses Bible study, prayer, rites of passage, outreach ministries and

both serious and playful activities to underscore its core message that adulthood must be earned.

Bright Pond Bible Study presents their 12th year of Bible study, a non-denominational group of women searching the Bible for God's truth. Meeting at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 1133 Reston Ave. in Herndon, starting 9:30 a.m. Sept. 22. bpbiblestudy@aol.com.

Floris United Methodist Church, 13600 Frying Pan Road in Herndon, holds worship services at 8 a.m., 9:15 a.m., 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Sundays with a Latino service on Saturdays at 7 p.m. 703-793-0026 or www.florisumc.org.

Hope Fellowship Church will temporarily be meeting at Woody's Golf

Range, 11801 Leesburg Pike, Herndon. Sunday Worship Services for this new Southern Baptist church are at 10:45 a.m. The public is invited to join a growing Bible believing, multi-ethnic/multi-cultural congregation, with Bible-based sermons and uplifting music. 703-599-3527 or www.hopefellowshipchurchloudoun.org.

Knitters needed the first and third Wednesdays of the month, at 7 p.m., at **St. Timothy's Episcopal Church,** 432 Van Buren St., Herndon. The church's Shawl Ministry is offering free knitting instruction while providing shawls, blankets and other knitted items for people in need. No cost and yarn can be provided. E-mail shawl@saint-timothys.org or visit the Pastoral Care page at www.saint-timothys.org.

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The South Lakes defense shut down the Majors and earned a playoff shutout. South Lakes players trailing the play here are Dylan Clark (88) and Garrett Davis (32).



PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Darius Smith of South Lakes scores a touchdown in the win over Mount Vernon.

Seahawks Overwhelm Majors in Football Playoff Opener

Unbeaten Stone Bridge is next for coach Hill's South Lakes team.

BY RICH SANDERS
THE CONNECTION

The South Lakes High football team proved to be in prime playoff form last Friday night when it overwhelmed the Mount Vernon Majors, 39-0, in a first round Div. 5 Northern Region postseason contest last Friday night in Reston.

"We are very pleased with our performance in the Mount Vernon game," said South Lakes coach Andy Hill, completing his first season at the helm of the program. "For us to host a home playoff game was a great step for our program and our seniors, and winning that game was almost essential to continue moving in the right direction."

The win improved the Seahawks' record to 8-3 on the season and advanced them to a semifinals game this Friday night against region power Stone Bridge (11-0), the unbeaten defending Div. 5 region champion. The Bulldogs, the top seeded team in the eight-team Div. 5 playoff format, overwhelmed No. 8 Stuart, 55-0, in their playoff opener last Friday.

South Lakes, the No. 4-seed, will be playing Stone Bridge, a perennial district and region force, for the second time in three weeks when the two Liberty District squads face off in Ashburn in Friday's round of four meeting. The Bulldogs defeated visiting South Lakes convincingly, 49-13, on Nov. 5 in a week nine game of the regular season schedule.

"Our win [over Mount Vernon] sets up a rematch with Stone Bridge," said Hill. "Without a doubt, Stone Bridge is one of the best teams in the state, and it is because of this that it gives us a very special opportunity to play them. We need to put forth a great effort, get some breaks that bounce our way, and take advantage of the opportunities that come throughout the course of the game. We don't have to play perfect, we just have to play with great effort. If we play with great effort, then even if the final score isn't what we want it to be, we can end the 2010 season with no regrets. However, if we play with great effort, I think there's a good chance that we can be competitive in the game, and if we have a chance at the end to win, I think we have the playmakers and the experience to take advantage of that opportunity."

In facing Stone Bridge, South Lakes will be going up against one of the region's top running backs in Marcus Harris, who accumulated 162 yards and three scores in the Bulldogs' playoff win over the Raiders of Stuart (National District) last week.

Stone Bridge's only close game this season came in week one when it won at Westfield High, 7-3. Westfield, a member of the Concorde District, lost a Div. 6 first round game at Chantilly last week, 7-0. Against the best competition the Liberty District had to offer, the Bulldogs won handily over Langley, 50-10, McLean, 38-0, and the Seahawks during the final three weeks of the regular season. Madison played Stone

Bridge the closest in district play, falling 28-10 in a Liberty District game on Oct. 15.

THE SEAHAWKS have re-gained the form which saw them begin the season with four straight wins before they leveled off with two losses over a three-week period to slip to 5-2. Since a 24-12 district loss at Fairfax on Oct. 15, Hill's squad has won three of four games, the lone setback coming against the Stone Bridge outfit.

"Our win [over Mount Vernon] sets up a rematch with Stone Bridge."

— South Lakes coach Andy Hill

South Lakes will need to play a complete game at a high level if it hopes to upset the Bulldogs, who are coached by Mickey Thompson. The Seahawks certainly got an impressive playoff tune-up in the win over the Majors, jumping out to a 20-0 halftime lead and carrying a 33-0 advantage into the final quarter. The Seahawks rushed for over 200 yards on the night, led by sophomore running back Ray Terry's 134 yards on 16 carries. Darius Smith, South Lakes' 'Mr. Everything,' who excels as a receiver/running back on offense, a member of the secondary on defense and as one of the region's best special teams returners, ran for a 74-yard scoring run on his lone carry of the night. He scored another touchdown on a 45-yard punt return in the first quarter.

Meanwhile, sophomore quarterback Rashaan Jones continued a marvelous first season as South Lakes' starting varsity sig-

nal caller by tossing three touchdown passes, including scoring strikes of 10 and 13 yards to wide receiver Sean Price, and running for another score. Jones' fourth quarter 40-yard touchdown pass to junior Stan Lindsay capped the night's highlight play reel for the home team.

"Offensively, I thought we did a nice job," said Hill. "Darius Smith proved again to be a multi-faceted weapon as he scored a touchdown on a punt return as well as a 75-yard run on the first play of the third quarter. Sean Price scored on two touchdown passes, and Rashaan Jones had a quiet night statistically, but was effective in throwing and running the football as he tossed three touchdown passes and ran for another score. Our offensive line was solid, not allowing any sacks against a bigger defensive line that featured one of the best defensive ends that we've faced all year."

The run-oriented Mount Vernon offense was held to less than 100 yards rushing by the South Lakes' defense. Dennis Mensah was the Majors' top ball carrier with 48 yards. The visitors managed just 27 yards through the air as two Mount Vernon quarterbacks combined to go 3-for-12.

"I thought our defense played extremely well, as they have any time we put up a shutout, but they were dominant at times," said Hill. "Mount Vernon came in with a very good running attack and a decent passing game that could keep us off-balance. Our success came in our disciplined aggressiveness. Garrett Davis, Deon King, and Dylan Clark all had big games, and a lot of the opportunities that spilled to them were because of their teammates' commitment to execute their assignments. When everybody does their own job, not worrying about anything else, we tend to play well."

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I Could Care Not At All



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

To finish the emotional arc begun three weeks ago in this space with the column titled, "I Could Care Less," and continuing in last week's column, "I Could Care More," I present a more definitive synopsis of my feelings as a stage IV lung cancer patient/survivor-hopefully-to-be. (Curious. At what point does a cancer patient officially become a "cancer survivor"?)

As difficult as it is now to do something I don't want to do (that "something" being "something" that somebody else wants me to do), it's incredibly more difficult to get me to care about whatever that "something" is that I haven't done. Not that I feel as if I only have a few days/months yet to live (hardly) and as a result, am doing exactly what I want without regard to anybody else's requests/opinions/feelings. But if I don't feel like doing "something," there's an awfully loud "Why should I? I have terminal cancer" voice in my head supporting every self-serving decision I make.

I mean, what is it that someone else can say or do that trumps/takes precedence over my being diagnosed with lung cancer at age 55? I'm already an endangered species; what exactly/how exactly does one penalize me given my health-related-victim-of-circumstances status? As Curly Howard of The Three Stooges said - in a completely different context - while admiring himself in the mirror: "I'm too young to die, too handsome. Well, too young, anyway." So am I, too young. Ergo my general/overall demeanor: empowered. If you don't like it or like my answer, what are you going to do that hasn't already been done: send me to bed without my supper (or a reasonable facsimile thereof)? I'm already in bed, but unfortunately not a bed of my own making since I never smoked cigarettes. And according to my oncologist, only five percent of lung cancer patients are non-smokers. Lucky me.

I'm not invoking "Woe is me" or "Why me?" here. I've never gone there and I never will. However, I will admit to maybe being given a bad hand/undeserved hand, a hand, though, with which I will live - and fight - as long as I can. And as long as I have two good hands, which I still do (the neuropathy has only affected my feet, fortunately), I will continue to write about what I feel and feel whatever I want.

And what I feel - under my less than ideal and anticipated health circumstances is, a sense of entitlement. And by "entitlement," I don't mean everyone bowing at my feet or accommodating/understanding my every move/emotion. Not at all. What I mean exactly is: it's my life/premature death and I'm going to live it how I see fit. I realize there may be consequences to my actions, but given the cancer-diagnosed consequences to my previous non-actions (life-long non-smoker; social non-drinker; minimal recreational drug user, especially over the past 34 years since I graduated college), I feel it's my decision, my right, my privilege; and there's not too much that anybody can do about it.

I apologize in advance for my behavior. I still don't see my attitude changing though. In fact, it may get worse the closer I get to the end of my original 13-months-to-two-year time line. I suppose it could change, if my diagnosis/prognosis changes. If not, I still have hope, and when there's hope, I can cope.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

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FROM PAGE 7

“One week, I got a card from a Pfc. Francisco,” said Bevington. “I’d left him flowers and a card while he wasn’t in his room, and he thanked me. The Soldier-Family Assistance Center at Walter Reed also sent me a thank-you note for ‘the outpouring of affection for our soldiers [that’s] helping in their recuperation and rehabilitation.’”

Even Rep. Frank Wolf (R-10th) sent Bevington a note, thanking her for all she does and telling her what a “tremendous difference” she’s making in the wounded soldiers’ lives.

Out of all her volunteers, she has a core of 12-13 – including her mother, daughter and best friend – who do the bulk of the work. “Usually, we bring 25 arrangements at a time to the hospital. But sometimes, they’ll let me know they need twice that amount – and that means there are more wounded warriors. These are injured people, fighting for our freedom – and many of them are young, just kids.”

All together, the volunteers put in some 770 hours a month, for an average of 100 volunteer hours a person, each month. Indeed, in Freedom Petals’ first seven months of operation, the group made some 1,000 floral arrangements, with 80 percent of them going to Mologne House.

Still, Bevington continually needs the raw materials that comprise each arrangement. Besides fresh flowers and vases, she also needs florist’s tape, ribbon and tiny American flags – which she attaches to every arrangement with a pick and a ribbon. Also needed are silk flowers and ballpoint pens. “I make

silk-flower pens for the nurses stations,” said Bevington. “The nurses love them.”

TOPPING HER WISH LIST, though, is a three-door, walk-in florist’s cooler. “I either need to buy one or get it donated,” she said. “That way, I can keep the flowers at the correct temperature. I condition all the arrangements for two weeks, like a florist would do, and keep like flowers together; then we make them into new arrangements.”

And of course, Bevington always needs lots of help making them. “You don’t need flower-arranging experience to help,” she said. “There are jobs for everyone,” she said. “Everyone’s welcome – the more, the merrier.”

She finds satisfaction in “the smiles, the stories the soldiers tell and the moms who thank us” for remembering their loved ones in such a special way. “It’s wonderful to know about the healing these flowers bring,” said Bevington. “There’s a magic to flowers that you can’t put into words.”

FREEDOM PETALS uses about 120 vases/month for the flower arrangements. Anyone with spare vases to donate may call Barbara Levermann at 703-631-7830. Freedom Petals is also taking donations to purchase a florist cooler. Anyone interested in volunteering time or materials may e-mail Bevington at michelebev@gmail.com. To learn more about her organization, see <http://freedompetals.blogspot.com>. For more information about Western Fairfax County Woman’s Club, call Levermann or Jackie Ware at 703-378-8551.



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Michele Bevington talks about her nonprofit organization, Freedom Petals.

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