

From left, Lynn Schumaker, Diane D'Amico, Michael Preston, Donna Preston and Barbara Glakas. The Preston's home on Monroe Street was given an award for this year's Dress Up Herndon for the Holidays contest.

"Dress Up Herndon for the Holidays" Winner

ArtSpace Hosts 'Touch of Red'

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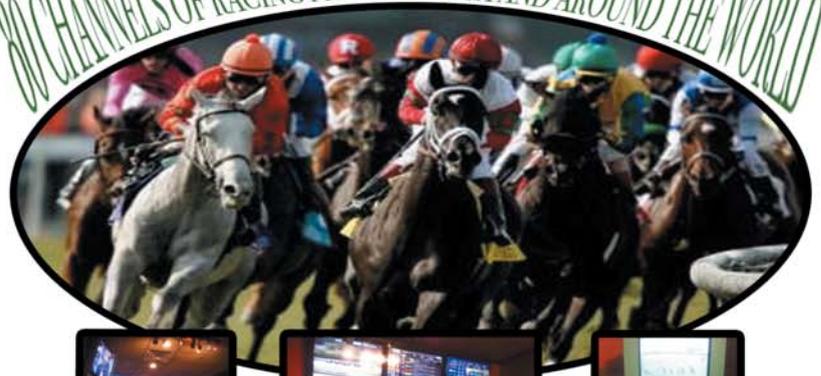
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Del. Ken Plum (D-36) confers with Del. David Bulova (D-37) during the meeting of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the Fairfax County delegation to the General Assembly on Wed. Dec. 7 at the McConnell Public Safety Transportation and Operations Center.



PHOTOS BY VICTORIA ROSS/ THE CONNECTION

Fairfax to Richmond: Do Us No Harm

Transportation funding dominates discussion.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

The message Fairfax County Board of Supervisors delivered to legislators at its annual 2012 session was summed up in four words: Do us no harm.

“Our theme is basically ‘Leave us alone,’” said Supervisor Jeff McKay (D-Lee), chairman of the board’s legislative committee. “We recognize it’s difficult this year, and we’re begging our legislators not to make it worse for Fairfax County. It doesn’t sound collaborative, but we know we lose in all the funding formulas, so we’re saying don’t make it any worse.”

The 2012 General Assembly Legislative Work Session, held at the McConnell Public Safety Transportation and Operations Center on Wednesday, Dec. 7, followed the Boards’ unanimous decision to support the 2012 legislative agenda at its regular meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 6.

The county’s legislative program outlines four priorities: education funding; transportation funding; restoring the decimated level of state funding; and enhancing local authority, giving the county the flexibility to “modernize” its local tax structure, particularly in areas such as taxation and land use.

“I know we’re speaking to the choir here,” Chairman Sharon Bulova (D-At-large) said to the mostly Democratic state legislators in the room. “But now is the time for the state to begin the process of rebuilding the funding partnership with local government, by providing adequate funding for core services and avoiding shifting additional state costs and responsibilities to localities.”

THE CONCEPT OF DEVOLUTION, or shifting responsibilities from the state to the county, was a heated topic during the three-hour session.

“Basically, devolution means we don’t have enough money to go around,” said Del. Ken Plum (D-36) “so we end up pushing it down to counties. We’re not living up to our end of the bargain.”

During the session, Fairfax County executives said two facts merge to make FY 2012 a difficult year



School Board member Ted Velkoff (D-At-large), Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville), state Sen. Dave Marsden (D-37) and Supervisor Linda Smyth (D-Providence) at the meeting.

financially: funding shortfalls exacerbated by diminishing federal stimulus dollars and the state’s declining revenue sources.

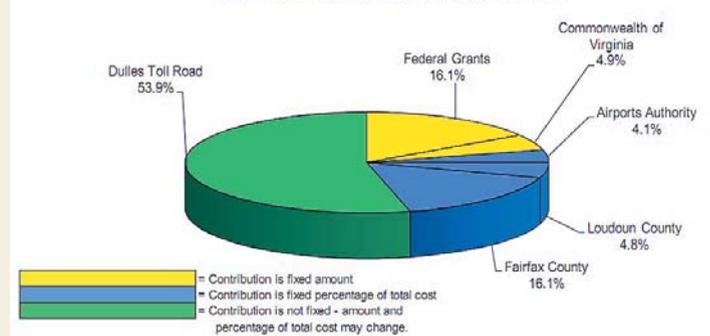
“The pie has shrunk. The money the state has been able to send us has dropped ... some of that decrease did not feel as bad because of the stimulus,” said James J. Regimbal Jr., a consultant from Fiscal Analytics who presented a fiscal forecast of state aid to Fairfax County during the session.

Regimbal said state revenues are not rebounding fast enough after the recession, which impacts core services such as education, transportation and human services. He predicted that Medicaid and Virginia Retirement System demands will continue to outstrip the state’s general fund revenue, putting pressure on state funding for other core programs.

“Without new revenues and expecting modest economic growth, the state will continue to reduce fund

SEE COUNTY, PAGE 12

Sources of Funding for Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project **
Percentage of Total Funding based on \$2.821 billion preliminary capital cost estimate for Phase 2



** Based on current agreements among the funding partners.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

The planned sources of funding for Phase Two of the Dulles Corridor Metrorail project, according to the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority.

Toll Road Updates

Airports Authority addresses Phase Two funding, Dulles Toll Road improvements.

BY ALEX McVEIGH
THE CONNECTION

The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority provided a status update Tuesday, Dec. 6 at South Lakes High School. In addition to presenting updates on several construction projects along the toll road, they also displayed updated information on costs for Phase Two of the Dulles Metrorail project, and how it would affect Dulles Toll Road users.

Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority estimates that the cost of Phase Two will be about \$2.821 billion, which is down by almost \$1 billion from estimates around this time last year.

“The \$3.8 billion number came up last year when we were operating under the idea of an underground station at Dulles Airport, and we were able to reduce that to around \$3.5 billion with preliminary engineering,” said Andrew Rountree, vice president and chief financial officer for Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority. “That still wasn’t an acceptable level for our funding partners, so we moved to an above ground station and made some other changes to get to the \$2.8 billion number.”

THE LOWER NUMBER results in the toll road contributing 53.9 percent of the \$2.821 billion, a number that stood at around 58 percent last year. Currently, the toll road commitment is about \$1.8 billion to

Phase Two.

Other funding partners have a fixed amount or percentage of the costs committed, meaning that cost changes will most directly affect the amount coming from the toll road.

For Phase Two, there is currently only \$23 million officially committed from the state of Virginia. Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority’s commitment is a fixed percentage of 4.1 percent of the whole project (currently \$228.6 million for Phase Two), Loudoun County is 4.8 percent of the project (currently \$267.6 million for Phase Two) and Fairfax County is 16.1 percent for the project (currently \$497.8 million for Phase Two). The money that comes from the toll road has no fixed percent or amount.

Rountree said that the \$2.821 billion assumes that Fairfax and Loudoun Counties will be successful in securing approximately \$317 million in funding for the Route 28 Metrorail station and five parking garages. It does not take into account \$150 million that may be provided from the state to pay interest on Dulles Toll Road revenue bonds.

“Virginia has said that the biggest impact of the project will be the prices of tolls, so they would like to use the \$150 million to buy down the debt from the tolls,” he said. “Our scheduled toll increases are only what will be needed to service the debt, we know that no one likes to see them increase, but

SEE MWAA, PAGE 7

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NEWS

The Medvene house on Grace Street was awarded the "Wow House" in this year's Dress Up Herndon for the Holidays contest.



PHOTOS BY
ALEX McVEIGH/
THE CONNECTION

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Herndon Dresses Up for Holidays

Eight houses recognized for holiday decorations.

BY ALEX McVEIGH
THE CONNECTION

Six members of Herndon's Cultivating Communities Initiative gathered Monday night to explore the best holiday decorations in Herndon for the town's annual Dress Up Herndon for the Holidays contest. The members traveled around town to see which houses truly represented the holiday spirit in lights, music and other decorations.

The group chose eight homes, and added a sign recognizing them as winners to their front yard, as well as several honorable mentions.

The home of David Sinclair on Monroe Street won for its large display of lights, as well as several inflatable Christmas displays that featured holiday music.

Sinclair described his décor as "a Griswold theme," in reference to the family from the National Lampoon film series. The bright colors and playing music weren't the only requirements for winners, but judge Diane D'Amico said those kind of displays are her favorite.

"I grew up thinking Christmas decorations were supposed to be tacky, my dad would put a nativity scene up with penguins right next to it," she said with a laugh.

The home of Mark, Laura and their children Jake, Max, Sam and Ben Medvene on Grace Street featured colored lights across both levels of the house, and an inflatable Santa's sleigh on the roof. But while they won the prize for



From left, Diane D'Amico and Barbara Glakas of Herndon's Cultivating Community initiative award Brush Strokes on Pine Street with the business award in the annual Dress Up Herndon for the Holidays Contest Monday, Dec. 12.

the exterior decorations, that's not the extent of the family's holiday spirit.

"My wife Laura collects Santas, we've got them everywhere in here," said Mark Medvene. "To say we feel the holiday spirit is an understatement."

Other houses were awarded for having more of a classic feel. One house on Spring Street was decorated in mostly white lights and featured a pure white Christmas tree visible from one of the first floor windows.

"The house looks great, such a classic look," said Barbara Glakas, one of the judges.

Some winners were awarded reluctantly, like the Prestons of Monroe Street. D'Amico said owner Michael Preston always has great displays, but they're often hard to find.

"He used to live on the other side of Monroe Street and always had great displays, but wouldn't turn them on because he didn't want to win," she said. "But we got them this year."



This townhouse on Park Street was recognized for its colored lights display Monday, Dec. 12 for the annual Dress Up Herndon for the Holidays contest.

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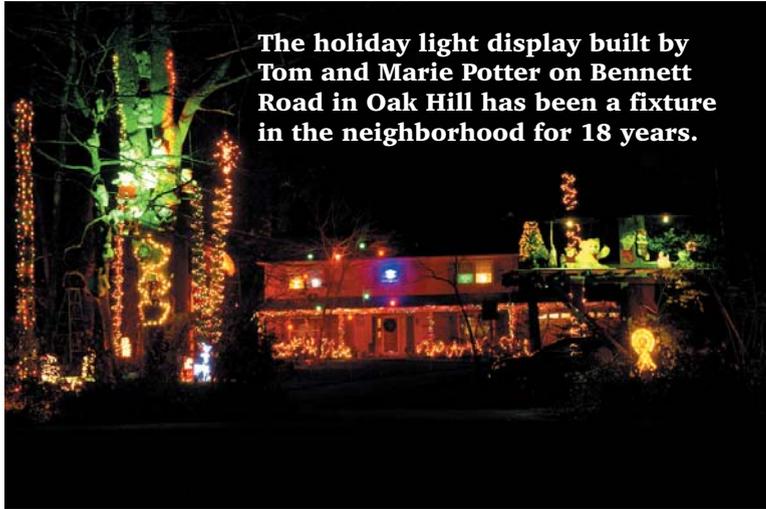
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NEWS



The holiday light display built by Tom and Marie Potter on Bennett Road in Oak Hill has been a fixture in the neighborhood for 18 years.

'Wonderland' on Bennett Road

Starting the second week in October, Tom Potter begins the process of transforming his yard on Bennett Road in Oak Hill from "woods" to "woodland wonderland," setting up an elaborate display including a running train 12 feet off the ground, lights, flying

snowmen, and a hand-made German-style Christmas pyramid. The Weihnachtspyramid, as it is called in German, is a tiered, wood carousel larger than a garden shed. Potter and his wife, Marie Potter, started their tradition 18 years ago, and it has grown each year.

A larger-than-life Christmas pyramid is one of the features of the large holiday lights display that Tom and Marie Potter set up in their yard each December. This structure was built entirely by Tom Potter, "every nut and bolt." It took two years to build, and was a labor of love for Tom Potter, who was inspired during a trip to Germany 23 years ago. The structure is more than 10 feet tall and is a three-level carousel and moving blades.



PHOTOS BY DEB COBB/THE CONNECTION



Tom Potter, of Oak Hill, leans on the front of the Christmas pyramid he built by hand and has on display in his front yard on Bennett road. "We have kids who grew up with his lights and they're now bringing their kids to see the lights," says Marie Potter.

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Five Suggestions for the New School Board

Half of the School Board members are new.

On Monday, Dec. 19, the newly elected members of the Fairfax County School Board will be sworn in, marking the largest number of new members at one time in memory.

The change on the board comes from open seats with previous members deciding not to run. Fully half of the board will be new members, although most are also familiar faces.

But it was apparent from the election that voters were motivated by the school board races, turning out to have their say. It's a mistake to view the election as a vote of approval for all current policies or as a repudiation of particular policies. The level of interest and controversy indicates that it's a great moment for the new board to engage the public.

The fact that 70 percent of voters supported the school bond for county schools shows that county residents understand the importance of quality schools.

The school board consists of three at large

members who represent the entire county, plus nine district members. Each voter had the opportunity to vote for four, three at large and one for their district.

Iryong Moon is the one incumbent remaining at large; Ryan McElveen and Ted Velkoff will join the board at large. District members are: Megan McLaughlin, Braddock; Janie Strauss, Dranesville; Pat Hynes, Hunter Mill; Tammy Kaufax, Lee; Sandy Evans, Mason; Dan Storck, Mount Vernon; Patty Reed, Providence; Elizabeth Schultz, Springfield, and Kathy Smith, Sully. Moon, Strauss, Evans, Storck, Reed and Smith are returning members.

It's important to respect the dedication and motivation of school board members. It's hard to understand why anyone would want these jobs. The hours are never ending. The pay is symbolic. Few decisions will come without acrimony from some quarters. These are people who really are dedicated to service.

That said, we offer a few suggestions, some very general, some very specific, for the new board as it steps up to serve.

1) On with the campaign. Begin with a listening tour. Hold some full-board listening sessions around the county. Hold some regional listening sessions in schools and parents' liv-

ing rooms. Listen in small groups and individually. Invite teachers and administrators to come out on tour with you. Don't forget to listen to teachers as well as students, parents, administrators and more.

2) Fix large classes. You don't have to reduce the "average" class size. But do something about every class of 30 students or more. It's the exceptionally large classes where students don't even fit in the room that drive parents wild. It doesn't matter if it's a classroom of poor students or wealthy students or something in between, really large classes are not appropriate.

3) Are surveillance cameras really the best use of scarce dollars? No matter what the current board decides to do later this week (likely vote on Dec. 15 after Connection deadline), set the decision aside until after the listening tour.

4) Don't wait for a state law. Instruct administrators to call parents to be present if they plan to question a student about behavior that could result in serious disciplinary measures or legal action.

5) Celebrate the specific and varied successes in Fairfax County Public Schools.

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

EDITORIAL

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Opposing Views: Plum Was Right

To the Editor:

In the Dec. 7-13 issue, reader Rita M. Dunaway criticized Del. Ken Plum's Commentary on the Virginia legislature's recently introduced bill that attempts to define "personhood" as occurring at the time of "conception" ["A Common Sense Measure," Reston Connection, Dec. 7-13]. Del. Plum had a nuanced commentary on the measure. In contrast, Ms. Dunaway disregards the facts to say that the bill "is a common sense measure that recognizes the scientific fact that life begins at conception." In reality, the fact is that science reaches no conclusion or consensus on the time at which life begins. All science can do is to state what occurs at different times along a continuum. At the time of conception, there is certainly more potential for a human being, but this potential only sometimes results in a human

being. For example, there are studies showing that 30 to 50 percent of conceptions never proceed past the first trimester and, overall, two-thirds are spontaneously aborted by nature.

Belief as to when life begins is a matter of philosophic, religious, or legal opinion. But, as with science, none of those reach any consensus as to when life begins. Indeed, society as a whole reaches no consensus. If Ms. Dunaway wants to have her own opinion about when life begins, she should at least know the facts.

People who are against the right of a woman to choose to have an abortion (presumably Ms. Dunaway is included in this group) must claim that fetuses (the earlier the better) are human beings because, otherwise, they really have no case against abortion. But their view should be looked at in terms of the facts, not disinformation like that given by Ms. Dunaway. The rights of women are at stake.

Del. Plum listed some of the questions that should be looked at. But the basic fact is that only some people believe that life begins at conception. The introduction of the "personhood" bill is an embarrassment to Virginia. Mississippi voters recently made the right choice to vote down a measure similar to the one introduced in Virginia. The Virginia General Assembly should quash this bill as soon as possible.

Michael Shaw
Reston

Plum Was Wrong

To the Editor:

I just received the Nov. 30-Dec. 6 issue of the McLean Connection. This is usually a pleasant, respectable presentation of events — especially those involving youth of the community — and avoids issues of poor opinion. Due to that image, I was very disappointed to see the opinion/article by a Del.

Kenneth Plum (D-36) complaining about the wise and healthy stand for the protection of the life of the unborn ["Personhood Bill Introduced"]. I hope his last statement is correct, and that the passage of this Republican bill to save and value each life "...may influence political direction for the year." The definition of a civilized society involves the protection of life — particularly the weakest and most vulnerable of that society. Those societies that don't respect all life should be defined as dangerously anti-social. If the weak in a society are not protected, no one is safe. I am surprised to see an elder man such as Mr. Plum with such poor judgment. Anyway, I hope such ideas will never again have space in our local paper, which is known for well-presented reporting of local events. I really appreciate your good work and that of the staff.

Amanda Kelley
McLean

BULLETIN BOARD

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

THURSDAY/DEC. 15

MOMS Club of Herndon. 10 a.m. Trinity Presbyterian Church, 651 Dranesville Road, Herndon. Baking secrets and holiday tips. Children's craft. Pre-school discussion and brochures from local schools

available.
www.momsclubofherndon.org.

FRIDAY/DEC. 16

Friday Forum Business Networking. 7:30 a.m. Sheraton Reston Hotel Syrah Restaurant, 11810 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston. Business professionals focused on generating business for members through qualified referrals. New group being formed. Meeting free

and open to all, breakfast available for purchase. Meetings every Friday. 703-802-0334.

MONDAY/DEC. 19

Reston Chorale New Member Auditions. 7:30 p.m. Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. www.restonchorale.org or 703-834-0079..

THURSDAY/DEC. 22

Lupus Support Group. 12 p.m. at Reston Hospital Center, The West Wing, 1850 Town Center Parkway, Reston. Lh@ascendcomm.com or www.lupusgw.org.

Alzheimer's Association Memory Care Support Group. 11 a.m. Great Falls Assisted Living, 1121 Reston Avenue, Herndon. Facilitated by a geriatric care counselor. Free. www.greatfallsassistedliving.com or 703-421-0690.



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Supporting the School

On Dec. 2, Langley Real Estate in Herndon donated a total of \$1,000 to Potomac Falls High School. Pictured are Chris Bass, Broker/Owner of Langley Real Estate and Principal Janice Koslowski from Potomac Falls High School. Koslowski has indicated that the funds will be spent on various clubs and activities geared towards student involvement in the community.

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MWAA Presents Toll Road Update

FROM PAGE 3

that's the plan."

Tolls at the mainline plaza, located between the Beltway and Route 7 exits, will rise to \$1.50 starting Jan. 1, which is a scheduled increase. The tolls at all exits will remain at 75 cents for the near future.

Rob Yingling of Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority said that they are anticipating the results of a consultant's study to determine future toll rates by "early next year."

The Airport Authority is also in the process of building connecting ramps to and from the Beltway and the Beltway HOT lanes in order to ease the burden of drivers who are often forced to cross many lanes of traffic over short distances.

"When we did our accident surveys, that interchange of the Dulles Toll Road and Airport Access Road and the Beltway has the highest accident rate, and a big part of that is that people coming from the Airport Access Road have to cross six, seven lanes to get to 495," said Stephan Smith, deputy vice president for engineering for Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority. "Building ramps to separate airport traffic from other eastbound traffic is our highest priority. That way people won't have to cross any lanes until they're well away from the merge area."

THE TWO RAMPS currently un-

der construction will connect the Airport Access Road directly with the Beltway in both directions. Smith estimated they would be completed before the HOT lanes, "probably around late summer 2012."

A third ramp has been proposed to connect drivers going south on the Beltway to the Airport Access Road without having to merge across the Dulles Toll Road before getting to the mainline plaza.

The interchange improvements are only part of Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority's ongoing projects for the Dulles Toll Road, which also includes replacement of toll revenue equipment cables, westbound lane pavement repairs and noise wall replacement and repair.

The design for noise wall repairs was completed in November, construction is expected to start in the spring of 2012 and is expected to be complete by summer 2012. Design for replacement of several noise walls is expected to be complete this month, with construction starting in spring 2012 and finishing by fall 2012.

Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority also announced that an assessment of Dulles Toll Road facilities is complete. Toll-booth repair and rehabilitation, guardrail replacement, improved lighting, enhanced E-Z Pass throughput at the mainline plaza, bridge rehabilitation and landscaping projects are also completed.



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Students from the Montessori Peace School in Herndon sing holiday songs at the Herndon Harbor House Monday, Dec. 12, in what has become one of the school's annual traditions.

Students Carol at Senior Center

Montessori Peace School students visit Harbor House.

By ALEX McVEIGH
THE CONNECTION

Students age 2 to 6 from Montessori Peace School made their second annual trip to Herndon's Harbor House to spread some holiday cheer to senior citizens at the center. The school, which opened last year, has made the trip a tradition, with students and faculty walking from Harding Hall to the center.

"We love being a part of this community, singing our songs and spreading a message of peace," said school co-founder Sageet Khalsa. "Our students use their songs and smiles to share our message."

The students were greeted by an audience of more than a dozen seniors in one of the center's community rooms. They gathered in a circle and performed holiday classics such as "Jingle Bells," "Jingle Bell Rock," and "Peace Like a River," which Khalsa says is the school's theme.

Sofia Mutarelli, 5, said she liked singing "Jingle Bells" best. "I like it because we can hold bells and give them to other people so they can join us," she said.

Her twin brother Brogan said his favorite part was walking the half-mile along the W and OD Trail to the center, holding hands with a buddy of course.



Montessori Peace School co-founder Sageet Khalsa leads students from the school in singing holiday songs at the Harbor House senior center in Herndon Monday, Dec. 12.

PHOTOS BY
ALEX McVEIGH/
THE CONNECTION

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.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 14

Moscow Ballet's Great Russian Nutcracker. 7:30 p.m. George Mason University Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Tickets \$28-\$122, available at www.ticketmaster.com or 703-573-SEAT.

Winter Band Concert. 7 p.m. South Lakes High School, 11400 South Lakes Drive, Reston. Free. 703-715-4500.

THURSDAY/DEC. 15

"A Man, His Wife and His Hat." 7:30 p.m. Greater Reston Arts Center, 12001 Market St., Suite 103, Reston. Hub Theatre staged reading. Free and open to the public. 703-476-4500 or www.restonarts.org.

Sesame Street Live: Elmo Makes Music. 7 p.m. George Mason University Patriot Center, 4500 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. Elmo, Abby Cadabby, Big Bird and more take to the stage to share their love of music. Tickets \$15-\$75, available at www.ticketmaster.com or 703-573-SEAT.

Baby Steps Storytime. 10:30 a.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Interactive storytime. Age 12-23 months with adult. 703-689-2700.

One-on-One Computer Tutoring. 2 p.m. Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Learn the basics of the Internet, Word and Excel. Call for an appointment. Adults. 703-242-4020.

Book Discussion. 7 p.m. Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Where I'm Calling From by Raymond Carver. Adults. 703-242-4020.

E-book /E-Reader Instruction. 7:30 p.m. Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Learn about library eBooks and how to access them with your compatible device. Call for an appointment. Adults. 703-242-4020.

FRIDAY/DEC. 16

Sesame Street Live: Elmo Makes Music. 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. George Mason University Patriot Center, 4500 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. Elmo, Abby Cadabby, Big Bird and more take to the stage to share their love of music. Tickets \$15-\$75, available at www.ticketmaster.com or 703-573-SEAT.

Candle Making. 7 p.m. Walker Nature Education Center, 11450 Glade Drive, Reston. Learn where wax comes from and discover how candles are made. Dip a pair of candles and decorate a pillar candle with natural materials. All supplies provided. For age 5-12 with adult. \$5 child RA members, \$8 child non-members. Reserve at 476-9689 or naturecenter@reston.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 17

Santa's Workshop. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Herndon Community Center, 814 Ferndale Ave., Herndon. Holiday fun with a visit with Santa, crafts and lunch. Register by Dec. 12. \$7 child, \$3 adults. 703-787-7300 or www.herndon-va.gov.

Sesame Street Live: Elmo Makes Music. 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. George Mason University Patriot Center, 4500 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. Elmo, Abby Cadabby, Big Bird and more take to the stage to share their love of music. Tickets \$15-\$75, available at www.ticketmaster.com or 703-573-SEAT.

Christmas in Cape Breton. 8 p.m. George Mason University's Center for the Arts Concert Hall, 4400 University

Drive, Fairfax. Cape Breton fiddler Natalie MacMaster performs traditional and contemporary Celtic melodies and Christmas carols. \$25-\$50. www.gmu.edu.

SUNDAY/DEC. 18

Mariachi Los Camperos de Nati Cano: Fiesta Navidad. 4 p.m. George Mason University's Center for the Arts Concert Hall, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Fiesta Navidad mixes traditional Mexican and American holiday songs with dancing, authentic, costumes and an audience sing-along. \$23-\$46. www.gmu.edu.

Sesame Street Live: Elmo Makes Music. 1 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. George Mason University Patriot Center, 4500 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. Elmo, Abby Cadabby, Big Bird and more take to the stage to share their love of music. Tickets \$15-\$75, available at www.ticketmaster.com or 703-573-SEAT.

MONDAY/DEC. 19

Frying Pan Farm at Reston Regional Library. 3 p.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Meet a goat, peel apples and create a mask to celebrate the fall harvest. Age 6-11. 703-689-2700.

English Conversation. 10:30 a.m. Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. English practice for non-native speakers. Adults. 703-242-4020.

ArtSpace Herndon to Host New Year's Eve Celebration

ArtSpace, Herndon's downtown art center, opens its doors at 7 p.m. on Dec. 31 inviting the public to celebrate the holiday with the arts. While visiting the current exhibit, "A Touch of Red," visitors will be entertained with holiday music performed live in the gallery. The exhibit includes paintings, photographs, and sculpture in a juried selection of Great Falls Studio artists.

Special activities for children include Hands-On-Art led by artists and the telling of an original story about the train that once ran through Herndon's downtown.

Outside on the ArtSpace lawn, a bonfire will be lit at 9 p.m. followed by a candlelight ceremony to welcome 2012. To ward off the chill, partygoers may sip on hot cocoa and spiced cider. These family oriented activities are free and open to all. There are many family-owned restaurants within easy walking distance for dinner before or after the fine art events.

As the family activities wind down, ArtSpace reopens inside with a New Year's Eve Music Cafe for adults starting at 10:30 p.m. featuring the Al Robertson Quartet playing "unforgettable" warm jazz in the style of Nat King Cole and Frank Sinatra. Visitors may choose to watch the live proceedings from Time Square in Sapphire Gallery. The ticketed event, \$15 a person if purchased by Dec. 18, includes a festive array of hors d'oeuvres, delectable desserts, and a champagne toast. Fine wines and other beverages will be available at a cash bar throughout the evening.

Because of limited seating, residents are encouraged to purchase tickets in advance by calling 703-956-6590 or by ordering online at www.artspaceherndon.org. Click on the link for Exhibits & Events and then scroll down to the New Year's Eve Event. ArtSpace is located at 750 Center Street next to the municipal parking lot with lots of free public parking.

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Getting into 'Right Fit' Private School

Experts explain how to navigate admissions process for area's most elite schools.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Each year, parents who opt out of their neighborhood public school in favor of an independent school must sift through the long list of the Washington area's independent schools to find one that meets the needs of their child.

They must then navigate the lengthy application required by most schools, and hope that their efforts are deft enough to gain acceptance in a competitive environment. Some schools report receiving as many as nine applications for each available slot.

Even for prospective pre-kindergarten students, the independent school admissions process often includes a written application, admissions tests, parent statements, student interviews, parent interviews, playdates, school visits, transcripts and teacher recommendations.

"What we're trying to do is get a whole picture of a child and look at information from a variety of different sources," said Christina Tait, director of admission and financial aid at The Langley School in McLean.

THE APPLICATION PACKETS provide insight for both the school and the applicants. "We have a fairly detailed process so that we get to know the girls and they get to know us," said Pilar Cabeza de Vaca, head of the Madeira School in McLean. "Our goal is to find girls who are the right fit for our school and for whom our school is the right fit."

The role of each component of the application varies depending on the age of the applicant. "The admission [process] for young children is especially complex and difficult because we have to use both explicit and intuitive measures because we have less data," said Diane Dunning, director of admission and financial aid at St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School in Alexandria. "If you were looking at a ninth grade [admissions] folder, you would have eight years of report cards and maybe four years of standardized testing. You are also able to interview [older applicants] in a different way than when you are interacting with the young children."

Why is so much probing necessary?

"Schools are looking for consis-



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MADEIRA SCHOOL

The Madeira volleyball team recently won the Independent Student League title.

tency in grades, attitude, testing and recommendations," said Lindsay White, educational consultant with the School Counseling Group in Washington, D.C. "[For example] If there is a huge difference between a [teacher] recommendation and what they are seeing on the grades, that is going to be a red flag."

Most schools want prospective applicants to spend time on campus. "The [school] visit is important to us. It gives the boy and his family a chance to experience the Heights first hand," said Richard Moss, director of admission at the Heights School in Potomac, Md. "On the flip side, it gives us a chance to really get to know the boy. How is he interacting with his peers? Is he friendly? Is he courteous? Does he have a good, firm handshake? Does he look the teachers in the eye when he greets them in the morning?"

Most applications ask parents to answer questions describing their children. Here are two questions from the Langley School's application: What do you believe is your role as a parent in your child's education? What qualities do you consider to be most

"Our goal is to find girls who are the right fit for our school and for whom our school is the right fit."

— Pilar Cabeza de Vaca, head of the Madeira School in McLean

important for your child's education?

Consultants say schools look at the way parents answer questions. "There are a lot of parents who regurgitate the school's mission statement and all the language that is used on the school's website. Schools can see right through that," said educational consultant Clare Anderson, of Chevy Chase, Md. "They want to know that the family is in line with how [the school] works with students and [their] approach to education."

Schools also pay attention to a parent's evaluation of their child. "Red flags go up when everything is just perfect and they've never encountered a setback or difficulty," said Anderson. "[Schools] are looking for honest, candid responses. Obviously parents are going to frame it in a positive light, as they should."

Most schools require admissions tests. Depending on the age and grade of the child, these tests include the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI-III), Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) and the Secondary School Admission Test for (SSAT).

"Testing often creates the most anxiety," said Dunning, of St. Stephen's & St. Agnes.

THE TESTS are used differently depending on the age of the applicant. "Tests for [young children] are used as standardized tools to give an overall picture of a child's learning profile. These are not predictors for academic

success. They give broad overviews of how a child learns," said Anderson. Tests given to middle and high school applicants are more meaningful. "Those tests measure how well your child has done with the information he or she has learned in school. If they see an eighth grader who has only average grades, but remarkable SSATs, they are going to ask, 'Is this an underachiever? Why is this child not excelling in the classroom?'"

Should children prepare for tests? When it comes to young children, most consultants say no. "It is unethical and makes your test scores invalid," said Anderson. "You are going to shoot yourself in the foot [if you prep your young child]. Your child will be the first to announce it either in the tester's office or at the school on the playdate. Then the scores are invalid."

The scenario is different for those applying for slots in middle and upper school. "I've had students who've taken [admissions tests] without prep, and then I worked with them and their scores [went] up considerably," said Christa Abbott, an Arlington-based independent test prep tutor.

Anderson agrees. "Just like you preheat your oven, you've got to get your child ready for the test. Just knowing the format of the test can really help," said Anderson. "But I caution parents about [taking expensive test prep classes]. There has to be a primary concern that something is going to get in the way of your child being able to show what he or she knows."

Some parents hire educational consultants like White or Anderson, hoping to get a competitive advantage. Consultants say their role is to guide families through the process. "The number one mistake that I think parents make is thinking that hiring an educational consultant is going to give them an advantage at a very competitive school," said Mark Sklarow, executive director of the Independent Educational Consultants Association in Fairfax. "That is just not the way the system works. Consultants don't have a secret handshake that they can use with an admissions director to help get a student in. The reason you hire an educational consultant is to find a good fit between a student's needs and a school's strengths. A consultant's role is to [identify] a school where a child is going to thrive."

So what can parents do to make sure their child's application shines in a pool overflowing with many attractive applicants?

"It is always nice to think about what is special about your child," said White. "What is the one special strength or talent your child might have, whether it be academics or an extracurricular interest? What is the potential for your child to contribute to the school?"

Anderson says she encourages parents to view admissions procedures as multi-pronged. "My hope is to help parents understand the process and see that there really is a method and [schools] are looking to get the best from your child."



St. Stephen's & St. Agnes Upper School students Isabella Norton, Leah Joseph, and Ulises Giacomani with Upper School Science Teacher Julie Krane.



Guests browse the pieces at Herndon ArtSpace's "A Touch of Red" exhibit during the artists' reception Wednesday, Dec. 7. The exhibit features 28 artists from Great Falls Studios who work in a variety of media.

Artists Present 'Touch of Red'

ArtSpace in Herndon hosts Great Falls Studios artists exhibit.

BY ALEX McVEIGH
THE CONNECTION

Great Falls Studios and Herndon ArtSpace will combine efforts for the next month, as ArtSpace hosts "A Touch of Red" exhibit until Jan. 8. The exhibit features 28 artists from Great Falls Studios.

"We're excited, it's our first group exhibit, and this a fantastic gallery space," said Cindy Griselda, a quilter who also chaired the show. "As a group, we tried to make sure we represented as many mediums as possible, and the artists were really excited for that."

ArtSpace was able to organize the pieces according to a few different themes. One wall was the "water wall," featuring aquatically themed paintings. Another section, the "fun room," featured more abstract works and sculpture.

"The New Day," an acrylic painting by Mary Ellen Mogee, is a white canvas mostly taken up by a large red circle, while photographer Walt Lawrence's "Cold and Gray" features a stark gray landscape with only a touch of red, a bird on a swing set.

"I was very pleased to get into this exhibit, Great Falls Studios and ArtSpace both have a reputation

for high quality shows," said Mogee, who has been a Studios member for about nine months.

The simplicity of the theme allowed for a variety of pieces. ArtSpace's Les Zidel said that was their hope for the exhibit.

"We've got the holidays coming up, so red is appropriate, but it's not too restrictive," he said. "We're always trying to touch base with local artists, and host exhibits with a lot of artists, and this fits both. It's been a long time coming."

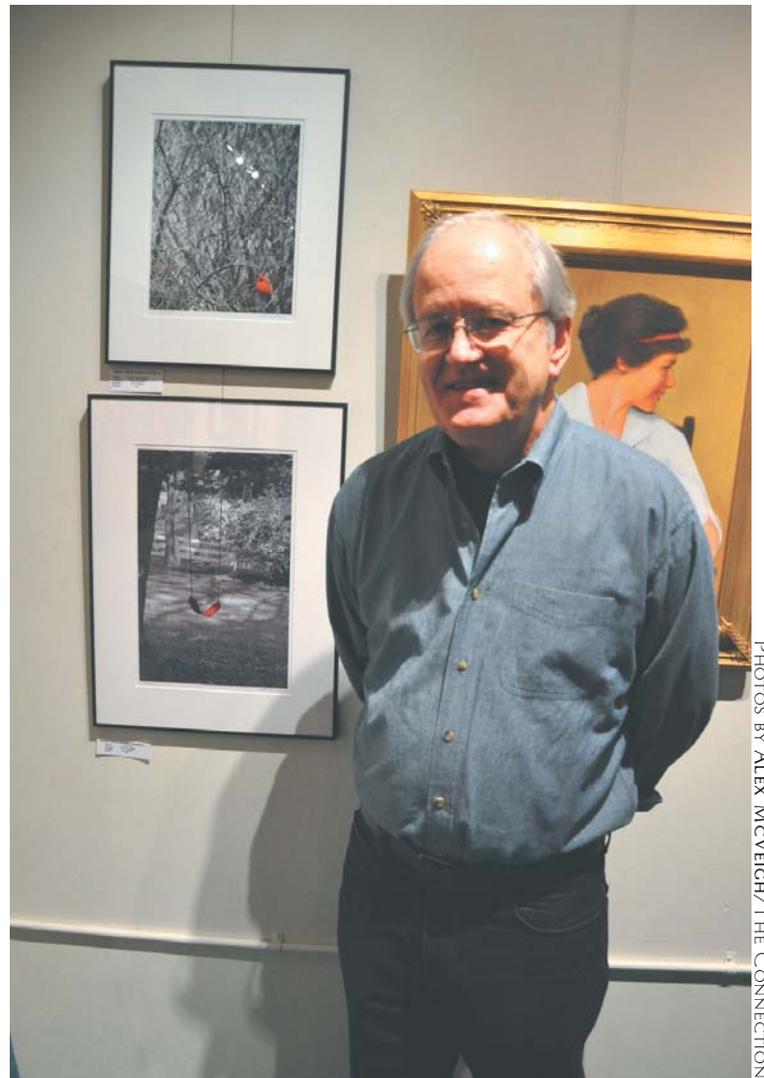
Griselda said the artists also enjoyed having such latitude with the theme.

"We had quite a lively discussion about what 'A Touch of Red' meant to all of us, we knew it gave us a lot to work with," she said.

Shane McIntire of Herndon, who often stops by ArtSpace with her children after visits to the nearby Fortnightly Library, said the show was one of the best ones she's seen at ArtSpace.

"I really like how it's sort of a statement by all these artists on what the 'A Touch of Red' means to them. They're such creative people, you know they're going to give it their best when given a challenge, and they certainly did here," she said. "The fact that it was simply a color that united this piece really tied it together from a visual standpoint when you take in the room as a whole."

Great Falls Studios is a collective of artists who live or work in Great Falls, and can be found at www.greatfallsstudios.com. ArtSpace is located at 750 Center Street in Herndon, and can be found at www.artspaceherndon.org.



PHOTOS BY ALEX McVEIGH/THE CONNECTION

Photographer Walt Lawrence at the Herndon ArtSpace Exhibit "A Touch of Red," next to photos "Waiting," (bottom) and "Cold and Gray" (top). The exhibit features 28 artists from Great Falls Studios, and is open until Jan. 8.



From left, Melanie Staley, Mary Ellen Mogee and Marie Wright at the artists' reception for the "A Touch of Red" exhibit at Herndon ArtSpace Dec. 7. Mogee, who mostly paints in acrylic, was featured in the show, one of 28 artists from Great Falls Studio.



Guests explore the "fun room" section of the "A Touch of Red" exhibit at Herndon ArtSpace, which features 28 artists from Great Falls Studios.

County Sends 'Hands Off' Message to General Assembly

FROM PAGE 3

ing for locally-administered, but required programs in the 2012-14 budget. The Governor is going to have to balance the budget. Think about what he might do," Regimbal said.

County Executive Anthony Griffin said Fairfax County's budgetary shortfall is expected to be about \$114 million in Fiscal Year 2013, and the county is taking several steps — including looking at fee increases and analyzing agency cuts of up to 5 percent — to bridge the financial gap.

"Quite frankly, we're running out of places to make reductions. This is a struggle now, and it's going to continue to be a struggle for my successor," Griffin said, alluding to his retirement in April 2012.

Griffin said there was some good

news. Job growth in Northern Virginia has continued to grow each month since April 2010, and Fairfax County's unemployment rate remains stable at 4.6 percent (which is about 28,000 unemployed residents), compared to 6.4 percent across the state and 9 percent in the nation.

ALTHOUGH GOVERNOR Robert McDonnell (R) has not yet proposed specific road devolution legislation, House Republicans have been looking at ways to shift spiraling road-maintenance responsibilities back to localities for several years.

Fairfax County leaders have been unequivocal in their opposition to any prospect of road devolution, saying it's tantamount to an unfunded mandate that would force the County to increase property taxes.

"It's a major concern for anyone who cares about transportation, but frankly anyone who cares about anything else localities have to keep up because all those elements would be affected," said McKay. "My greatest fear is that [with road devolution] we would be pitting roads against schools and public safety."

Tom Biesiadny, director of Fairfax County's Department of Transportation, estimated that Fairfax County would have to make a one-time investment of up to \$208 million to take local control of local roads, which would mean a property tax increase of about \$479 for the average household.

He said that localities that maintain their own roads typically spend about 25 percent more than what the state allocates. For example, he noted that in Fiscal Year 2010, Arlington spent \$18 million, while the state spent \$15 million.

"Counties in Northern Virginia already spend millions of dollars a year to mitigate the effects of state underfunding of road construction, which has created some of the worst traffic in the nation,"

Biesiadny said.

Bulova added that if counties are required to maintain their secondary roads, the resulting disparity in road conditions will affect Virginia's ability to attract business.

During the roundtable discussion, Del. Mark Sickles (D-43) agreed the county's roads are in terrible shape.

"At some point we have to act," he said, suggesting a referendum asking voters to decide whether to increase certain taxes, similar to a 2002 failed referendum on the sales tax, in order to pay for transportation costs.

State Sen. Richard Saslaw (D-35) told the elected officials not to "punt the damn ball."

"I can tell you this: It ain't gonna happen with my vote ... I will not ever, ever, ever, if I have anything to say about it, allow taxes to be put to a referendum. That's what the voters elected you to do. If they don't like what you did, they will show you the door the next election. We have no business putting revenue-raising measures to a referendum. Plain and simple."

Supervisor John Cook (R-

Braddock) said he thought road devolution was viable if done correctly.

"It's not going to be pain-free, but there are ways to do it," Cook said. "If we're going to have the responsibility, we ought to own the streets. And if we're going to own them ... we ought to have the mechanisms to raise the money we need to raise," Cook said.

"Would you be supportive of raising taxes to do it?" Bulova asked. Cook did not respond.

ON THURSDAY, DEC. 8, the Governor outlined his transportation policy and funding plans for the upcoming 2012 General Assembly session. Speaking to more than 700 industry and transportation agency professionals during the 2011 Governor's Transportation Conference in Norfolk, McDonnell called for changes in laws governing the allocation of future surpluses to transportation, dedicating portions of revenue growth attributable to transportation infrastructure projects to transportation and increasing the portion of sales tax dedicated to transportation.

Several legislators, including state Senators Chap Petersen (D-34), Dave Marsden (D-37), Janet Howell (D-32) and Del. Ken Plum said they will hold Governor McDonnell to his promise of a dedicated source of revenue for a transportation bond package passed last session.

"There's a fundamental disconnect," Marsden said. "Any transportation solution is not acceptable if it doesn't come with money ... What we were promised was a funding stream and not the transfer of responsibility to localities. I think we need to let the governor know this is not acceptable."

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.

Community of Faith United Methodist Church, 13224 Franklin Farm Road in Herndon, will hold a Longest Night Service of healing, hope and encouragement on Monday, Dec. 19 at 7:30 p.m. In a time when everyone else seems merry, if you have experienced loss during the year or just had a difficult year, come and seek the hope that God offers us. www.cof-umc.org.

St. Anne's Episcopal Church, 1700 Wainwright Drive in Reston, holds Sunday services at 7:45 a.m., 9 a.m., 11:15 a.m. and contemporary service at 5 p.m. Nursery, Sunday School and Adult Education available. Morning Prayer on Monday at 9:30, Holy Eucharist Wednesday at 8:15 a.m. 703-437-6530 or www.stannes-reston.org.

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SPORTS ROUNDUPS

4 Star Tennis Academy in Merrifield, a fixture in the Fairfax County community since 1973, was recently certified as a United States Tennis Association (USTA) Training Center. Over the years, 4 Star has helped develop numerous collegiate and professional players in the Northern Region. Khamp Bounkong, the Director of Business Development for 4 Star Tennis Academy, said lots of positive pressures come along with the status of being associated with the USTA.

Bounkong can be reached at Khamp@KBSportsMgmt.com.

Fire and Ice 16U, a competitive girls travel softball team, is looking for a pitcher, catcher, infielder and an outfielder/utility player to join its team for winter training and for the 2012 season. For more information or to set up a personal tryout, contact John Mehalic at 703-969-7310 or go to mehcrew@aol.com.

Northern Region cross country standouts Sophie Chase (Lake Braddock Secondary), Ahmed Bile (Annandale High), and Sean McGorty (Chantilly High) each had solid showings at last Saturday's Foot Locker Cross Country National Championships in San Diego.

Chase, a junior at Lake Braddock, finished 11th place overall among a field of 40 girls' runners. She timed at 17 minutes, 45 seconds.

In the boys' race, McGorty and Bile finished 10th and 12th place, respectively, with times of 15:28 and 15:30.

Racing conditions were clear and sunny skies with a temperature in the mid-60s. The Nationals event took place at Morley Field, Balboa Park in San Diego.

Pohanka Acura and Chantilly High School are once again teaming up to host one of the top holiday basketball tournaments in the Washington, D.C. area — the 19th Annual Pohanka Chantilly Holiday Classic (boys' and girls'), set to take place Dec. 27-29 at Chantilly High School.

This year's showcase will feature 16 schools from Northern Virginia, Virginia Beach, Maryland, and Washington, D.C. in a three-day chase for the title.

On the boys' side, the defending champion Chantilly Chargers feature an up tempo style of play with senior Brady Caslavka, freshmen Tyler Femi and Dylan Madawo, and 6-foot-10-inch center Aaron Rodenas. The Chargers are looking to defend their tournament championship from 2010 and will be going for their fourth crown in five years.

The girls' tournament will also feature an exciting array of teams, including Georgetown Visitation, Langley, Mills Godwin, and Deep Run (Glen Allen, Va.). Georgetown Visitation, a private school member of the Independent School League, is traditionally one of the top teams in the area and returns to defend its 2010 championship. Kate Gillespie, last year's tournament MVP, returns for Visitation this year.

Admission is \$6 for an all-day pass and \$15 for a 3-day pass. Concessions will be



Coleman Johnson (center), a resident of Oak Hill and a senior at Paul VI Catholic High School in Fairfax, recently signed a national letter of intent to play men's basketball at Fairfield University (Conn.). A forward, Johnson serves as a team captain for both the Panthers as well as his AAU team, Team Takeover. Johnson was named Paul VI's co-MVP last year as a junior and was named Third Team All-WCAC. He is an altar boy and volunteers with Study Buddies, Special Olympics and community basketball clinics. Here, Coleman is pictured with his parents, Cintia and Lamont Johnson, of Oak Hill.

open and feature many of the area's local restaurant menu items. Chantilly High students with their high school ID's or any Chantilly Youth Association (CYA) basketball players, under the age of 12 and wearing their team uniform shirt, will get a \$3 discount if they are with a paying adult.

The first day (Tuesday, Dec. 27) schedule of games is as follows: Georgetown Visitation versus Langley (girls' game, 9 a.m.); Deep Run versus Thomas Jefferson (girls' game, 10:45 a.m.); Mills Godwin versus Robinson (girls' game, 12:45 p.m.); Mills Godwin versus Mountain View (boys' game, 2:15 p.m.); Wilson versus Forest Park (boys'

game, 4 p.m.); Green Run versus South County (boys' game, 5:45); George Mason versus Chantilly (girls' game, 7 p.m.); and Stuart versus Chantilly (boys' game, 9 p.m.).

For updated bracket information throughout the tournament call the Chantilly High sports hotline at 703-448-4909 or go to chantillysports.org.

Oakton High graduate Christine Tran, a current member of the University of Mary Washington (Fredericksburg) women's volleyball team, contributed 21 digs for the Eagles in a five-set loss to Stevenson University on Oct. 22. Mary Washington, with



The Madeira High girls' volleyball team won the Virginia state private school championship by defeating Liberty Christian Academy in the finals. Pictured, left to right, are: seniors Claire Karakozoff, Nicole O'Donnell, Bre Atkinson, and Catherine Humphrey. The seniors led Madeira to its first state championship in history. O'Donnell (setter) and Atkinson were selected to the all-tournament team, with Atkinson earning MVP honors. Also selected to the all-tournament team was sophomore middle hitter Paige Humphrey.

the setback, fell to 15-13 overall and 4-3 in Capital Athletic Conference.

Both the Flint Hill School men's and women's swim teams won their winter season openers against Georgetown Day this past week, by scores of 107-43 and 92-65, respectively. Double-event winners for Flint Hill included Rob Ikeda, Rachel Swarts and Natalie Brendsel. Single event winners included Jonah Chang, Allison Kennedy, Zach Thornburg, Sam Shorris, Brian DeMocker, Aaron Frederick, and Alana Suter.

Pro boxer Jimmy Lange, a Great Falls resident, will return to the Patriot Center on Saturday, Feb. 11, 2012 for another world-class fight card featuring top area boxers. Considered one of the mid-Atlantic region's premier boxing showcases, the event is scheduled to host three world championship title fights, headlined by junior middleweight Jimmy Lange's first title defense of his World Boxing Union (WBU) 154-pound championship belt. His opponent has not yet been determined.

Lange (37-4-2, 25 knockouts), who has headlined all 13 previous Patriot Center boxing shows since returning from his participation on 'The Contender' TV series, captured the WBU title last September by knocking Raul Munez down three times en route to his 25th victory by knockout. The Great Falls fighter continues to draw large, enthusiastic crowds from across the region while advancing the ranks in the junior middleweight division.

The Feb. 11 boxing card will include: Michelle Garland Nelson (5-0-1) of Ashburn in a World International Boxing Association middleweight championship; Zain 'Tiger' Shah (6-0) of Chantilly, who will meet Tony Jeter (12-2-1) of Stevensville, Md. in a six-round middleweight contest; and undefeated, rising welterweight prospect Todd 'White Lightning' Wilson (11-0) of Fairfax.

Doors will open at 6 p.m., with the first fight scheduled to begin at 7. Tickets will be available for purchase through all Ticketmaster outlets, including the Patriot Center box office and by phone at 703-573-SEAT.

The Langley Saxons' ice hockey team defeated Herndon, 10-0, in a recent district contest, which took place in Reston. Before an enthusiastic crowd of more than 100, all three lines of the Saxons' squad racked up points against a much thinner Herndon bench. Drew Schneider led the Langley pack with a hat trick (3 goals), and goals were also scored by: Kevin Diner (2), Evan Sterling, Atte Happonen, Colin Framinan, Lizzy Weingast, and Zach Shames. Mikey Adams had four assists on the night, while seven other Langley skaters — Framinan (2), Shames, Schneider, Happonen, Peter Nam, Derick Paxton, and Colin Dibble — contributed assists to the rapid fire scoring effort. The Herndon goalie defended 25 shots from Langley, while Saxon goalie Ryan Framinan stopped 10 Herndon shots and recorded his first shut-out of the season.

Abstract or Intact



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

How does one not become consumed with something that is all-consuming? Moreover, how does that same one take certain information in stride that potentially is anything but stride-worthy? And if one were not to be all-consumed by the information that, disturbing as it was, was in fact taken in stride, how does that one not feel guilty and/or responsible about neglecting to act – if there was even anything to be done about the unsettling news that may have spawned this initial paragraph?

I don't. I can't. I won't. Somehow. Not that I received any news of late that was particularly jarring or life-abbreviating but, as a terminal patient, so far as I know (and how far do I really know, since I've never been a terminal patient before), information that is not positive is negative (almost by definition) and the fine line of life upon which I straddle every minute of every day becomes that much more difficult to sustain, especially if the negative begins to overtake the positive. I have equated the sensation to taking the first few curious steps across a newly frozen pond – in winter, each step more precarious than the last, waiting for the cracking – or not, and the associated fear. You want to go forward, but not at your own peril. Yet going backward seems equally ill-advised. I mean, you've been there and done that. Backwards represents the past. Forward represents the future. Personally, I don't want to live in the past. I want to live in the present/future. Receiving results which prevent you from going forward – which may stop you in your tracks, are not so much safe as they are insecure. For me, it's all about momentum. I don't want to lose what progress I've gained, nor do I want to retrace my steps. However, survival may be about knowing when to redirect those energies/treatment, to rest and/or retreat (to fight another day) and to work with your body, not against it.

But who knows? For a terminal patient, changes in anything are disproportionately significant. It could mean anything. It could mean nothing. Objectivity disappears the day your oncologist tells you have an incurable disease. Accordingly, it's extremely difficult to shrug off any abnormal medical findings. How do I not think that the beginning of the end starts at the end of the beginning? The point at which my body begins to weaken and reveal indicators that reflect a body in distress and one whose underlying diagnosis is starting to assert itself and break down all the barriers that have been constructed (metaphorically speaking) over the previous 34 months?

In summary, how do I interpret change? For the better? The worse? Meaningful? Meaningless? As a cancer patient who has now outlived his original prognosis ("13 months to two years") by a rather significant amount of time, how do I remain objective about lab work, urine specimens, diagnostic scans, etc.? I can't. However, worrying about any or all of it likely produces no real tangible benefit either, whereas not worrying about it, not stressing about it might, anecdotally speaking, anyway. Unfortunately, worrying and stressing are not simply emotions I can switch off, especially when you're consumed by a terminal disease, whether figuratively or worse, literally.

Diagnosis to date, my cancer-related problems have been figurative, mostly. Nevertheless, it's difficult to not react negatively when results are changing right before your eyes, literally. Yet somehow, I have to. If I don't, I'll likely make matters worse. And given my underlying stage IV lung-cancer diagnosis, I probably don't need to go out of my way to cause any more trouble. It's already found me.

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

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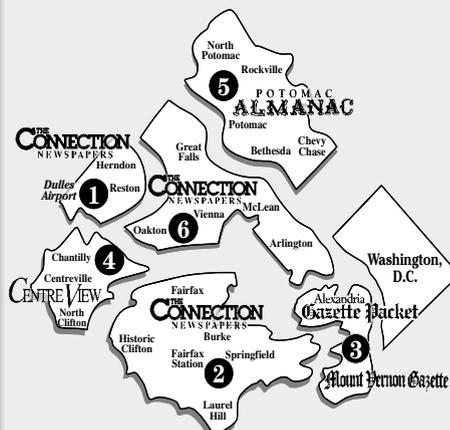
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