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Clifton native Tess Reichlen enjoys the choreography of Coffee in The Nutcracker.

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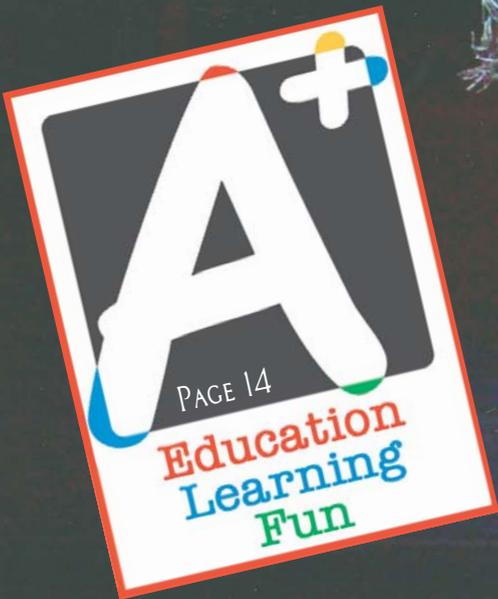


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DECEMBER 15-21, 2011

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## HOLIDAY GUIDE

# The Art of Appreciation

Teaching children to have an attitude of gratitude during the holidays.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

From Christmas lists to piles of presents under the tree, the last thing on a child's mind during the holiday season might be expressing appreciation. In fact, mental health experts say, it is one of the hardest concepts to teach children.

Dr. Todd Kashdan, Ph.D., professor of psychology at George Mason University, has studied the link between gratitude and happiness and says that people who are grateful tend to be less depressed and anxious.

"When people are mindfully recognizing and appreciating the benefits they receive from other people, positive events linger longer, [and] it is enhancing and strengthening those relationships. There is a strong link between being a grateful person and having the experience of gratitude and having more happiness in your life," said Kashdan, who is also the author of "Designing Positive Psychology" (Oxford University Press) and "Curious? Discover the Missing Ingredient to a Fulfilling Life."

During the season of giving, Kashdan and other mental health professionals offer tips for parents for teaching gratitude to children.

Children often hand their parents lengthy Christmas lists. Experts say it is difficult for children to feel grateful when their every wish is granted.

"Allow them to [identify] certain things on the list that might be most important to them," said Annette Kielkopf, a marriage and family therapist based in McLean. "[Say to them] 'If Santa isn't able to bring you everything on the list, what would that be like for you?' And talk with them about how to cope and allow them to appreciate the smaller things. What you're trying to do is teach coping skills. You're teaching them how to accept a disappointment and find a diamond in the rough."

**RAISING GRATEFUL CHILDREN** requires that parents model the behavior.

"As parents, talk about things that you're grateful for and not strictly material things. That sets a good example so children don't only hear you complaining or nagging them. Kids really do notice what their parents and the significant people in their lives talk about," said Karen Prince, MSW, LCSW-C, a Kensington-based clinical social worker who specializes in treating children with anxiety and depression.

Kashdan says parents should encourage children to elaborate on why they like a particular gift.

"Spelling out what makes [a gift] a good thing for them gets them to bookmark and underline it in their brain," he said. "You want them to elaborate on it and what they are going to do with it. Having them say thank you without an elaboration is just one more thing that [their] parents are telling them to do."

This strategy works even when children receive gifts that they don't like.



**Dr. Todd Kashdan, Ph.D. professor of psychology at George Mason University has studied the link between gratitude and happiness and says that people who are grateful tend to be less depressed and anxious.**

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



**Giving a child everything on their Christmas list could make it difficult for them to feel grateful. McLean-based therapist Annette Kielkopf says rather than granting a child's every gift wish, parents could ask children to identify the items on the list that are most important.**

"Sometimes it is difficult [for children] to receive a present that they don't like," said Kielkopf. "Take the gift and notice and recognize the good things about it. Maybe it is your child's favorite color. It is good to have discussions about gift-giving so that it doesn't become about the gift; it becomes about the gesture."

"I'm forever hearing kids in my office saying to their parents, 'But everybody in my class has an iPad.' And these are kids who are like 8, 9 and 10. The grass always looks greener on the other side. So the idea is to focus on what you

have and what you need. It is a good lesson for kids to learn early on," said Prince.

**KASHDAN BELIEVES** that one of the things that makes children grateful is taking inventory of their day.

"One of the things that we do at my house is, at the end of the day, we ask our 4-year-old twins, 'What was the high point of your day? What was the best thing that happened to you today?' You can make sure that the positive things that happened to them as a result of other people stick out more," said Kashdan.

## HOLIDAY CALENDAR

### THURSDAY/DEC. 15

**"A Christmas Carol."** Lazy Susan Dinner Theatre, 10712 Richmond Hwy, Lorton. Doors open 6 p.m., performance at 8 p.m. 703-550-7384 or [www.lazysusan.com](http://www.lazysusan.com).

### FRIDAY/DEC. 16

**"A Christmas Carol."** Lazy Susan Dinner Theatre, 10712 Richmond Hwy, Lorton. Doors open 6 p.m., performance at 8 p.m. 703-550-7384 or [www.lazysusan.com](http://www.lazysusan.com).

### SATURDAY/DEC. 17

**Breakfast With Santa.** 8-11 a.m. Workhouse Art Center, Bldg. W-3, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Gingerbread pancakes, hot chocolate, coffee and juices. Includes a performance of Studio 3's "Schoolhouse Rock Live!" \$17-\$24. Reservations recommended. [www.WorkhouseArts.org](http://www.WorkhouseArts.org).

**"A Christmas Carol."** Lazy Susan Dinner Theatre, 10712 Richmond Hwy, Lorton. Doors open 6 p.m., performance at 8:30 p.m. 703-550-7384 or [www.lazysusan.com](http://www.lazysusan.com).

**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](http://www.gmu.edu).

**Holiday Concert.** 4 p.m. Kenmore Middle School Concert Hall, 200 South Carlin Springs Road, Arlington. Featuring Encore Chorale, a choral program for older adults; soprano Elizabeth Kluegel and the Jubilation Ringers of Messiah Methodist Church, Springfield. Directed by Robert Rudolph. <http://encorecreativity.org>.

**United States Army Chorus Holiday Concert.** 5 p.m. Westwood Baptist Church, 8200 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Free. 703-451-5120.

### SUNDAY/DEC. 18

**Christmas Cantata.** 8:45 a.m. and 11 a.m. Jubilee Christian Center, 4650 Shirley Gate Road, Fairfax. The Music Department will perform the Christmas Cantata, "Joy to the World." 703-383-1170 or [www.jccag.org](http://www.jccag.org).

**"A Christmas Carol."** 1 p.m. Lazy Susan Dinner Theatre, 10712 Richmond Hwy, Lorton. 703-550-7384 or [www.lazysusan.com](http://www.lazysusan.com).

### MONDAY/DEC. 19

**Santa at the Alexandria Gazette.** 2-4 p.m. Connection Newspapers, 1610 King St., Alexandria. Children of all ages are invited to visit with Santa on the front porch of the Alexandria Gazette. Cameras and pets welcome. [pfriedrich@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:pfriedrich@connectionnewspapers.com).

### TUESDAY/DEC. 20

**"A Christmas Carol."** Lazy Susan Dinner Theatre, 10712 Richmond Hwy, Lorton. Doors open 6 p.m., performance at 8 p.m. 703-550-7384 or [www.lazysusan.com](http://www.lazysusan.com).

# NEWS

State senators George Barker (D-39) and Richard Saslaw (D-35) and Del. Barbara Comstock (R-34) listen as state Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34) addresses local officials 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

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PHOTOS BY AVIVA KURASH

Students from Congregation Adat Reyim’s confirmation and post-confirmation classes helped Georgetown Cupcake package and prepare to ship 10,000 cupcakes to troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.

## Operation Cupcake

Congregation Adat Reyim’s Confirmation Class takes part in a good deed.

BY ANDREA E. FEIGENBAUM

On Sunday, Dec. 12, 17 students from Congregation Adat Reyim’s confirmation and post-confirmation classes took part in a mitzvah (good deed). Led by Rabbi Bruce Aft and accompanied by three parent volunteers, the students were part of a team that helped Georgetown Cupcake package and prepare to ship 10,000 cupcakes to American troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. This is the second year that Georgetown Cupcake has done Operation Cupcake.

It was a life-changing experience for many of the students as they worked as a team in an assembly line to get these treats ready to make their trek to Andrews Air Force Base and then overseas. Katherine Kallinis, one of the sisters who co-founded Georgetown Cupcake, took time away from her baking for an inspirational talk with the students. She told them that it is hard for us to understand just how important a taste from home is to the soldiers.

Rabbi Aft first met Katherine when she was preparing to convert to Judaism prior to her recent marriage. At the time he served on the Rabbinic Court that welcomed her to the Jewish faith. He asked her how her business would be

impacted by her being Jewish. She responded by telling him about the many acts of tzedakah (act of charity) that her company did. When learning of Operation Cupcake, Rabbi Aft immediately asked if there would be an opportunity for his confirmation class students to help with this.

The students participated in a multi-step assembly line process that included everything from building the boxes to packaging the cupcakes. The students worked so efficiently that they were asked to slow down as there wasn’t any more room for the boxes. It was a win-win as Georgetown Cupcake got some help and the students got so much more out of it.

The students got to meet a successful female entrepreneur, learn about corporate giving and participate in community service, and help the troops while forming a deeper bond with each other. The special cupcake they each got for helping...that was just icing on the cake.



Lia Meinstein, with other students from Congregation Adat Reyim’s confirmation and post-confirmation classes, helped Georgetown Cupcake package and prepare to ship 10,000 cupcakes to troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.

# Enjoy Christmas in Historic Style

## Gunston Hall provides a Plantation Christmas.

George Mason would have approved. On a cool, crisp night with a full moon on the Potomac River, Gunston Hall, the ancestral home of one of the nation's founding fathers, welcomed approximately 500 visitors for the annual Plantation Christmas celebration.

The event included horse-drawn carriage rides, a sing-along around a roaring bonfire, hearth cooks preparing venison, macaroni and cheese and a frothy syllabub, an



Byer collectibles are featured in Gunston Hall's gift shop.

18th century dessert of cream whipped with brandy.

George Mason's mansion came alive with period vignettes, as reenactors portrayed family members and visitors celebrating the season.

Throughout the holiday season, modern visitors to the plantation will find rooms still set for in the style of an authentic 18th-century holiday party.

"Christmas celebrations during that time period were not as elaborate as the ones we have today, with all of the decorations and sparkle but they were quietly beautiful," said Susan Blankenship, development coordinator at Gunston Hall.

She said guided tours of the mansion provide insight into George Mason's contributions to the founding of our country, interpret the many Mason objects displayed in the rooms, and give a glimpse of what the family may have experienced during the winter months. The grounds feature vistas of open fields and the Potomac.

"Guests are welcome to explore the grounds at their leisure, which feature 550 acres of woodland and marked walking paths, some leading to stunning river overlooks," Blankenship said.

In addition to the home, the Gunston Hall Museum Shop features tasteful gifts appropriate for all ages, including Byer collect-



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

## Gunston Hall Hours and Admission

Guided tours are offered daily every half-hour between 9:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. except on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Grounds close at 6 p.m.

- ❖ Adults - \$9
- ❖ Seniors (60 and above) - \$8
- ❖ Children 6 - 18 - \$5
- ❖ Children under 6 - Free
- ❖ Friends of Gunston Hall - Free

For more information on tours at Gunston Hall, visit [www.gunstonhall.org](http://www.gunstonhall.org)

**Gunston Hall, George Mason's estate in Mason Neck, offers visitors a glimpse of Christmas in the 1700s.**

ible figures and accessories, such as carolers, sleighs, lamps and snowy trees.

"New this season is a commissioned Byer George Mason collectible, which features George holding a copy of his Virginia Dec-

laration of Rights. Gunston Hall ornaments, realistic stuffed animals, cards, and seasonal jewelry are also popular items," Blankenship said.

—VICTORIA ROSS



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## Teeth Whitening...What You Should Know.



With the holidays around the corner, everyone seems to be coming in to whiten their teeth for their picture perfect moments. So before you start using whitening products that you may be completely unfamiliar with, you may want to read this article.

If you want to whiten your teeth, the best place to start is with a healthy mouth. Tooth decay, sensitive or cracked teeth, infections or periodontal (gum) problems should be diagnosed and treated before any teeth whitening procedure. Otherwise, you could experience discomfort. If using the right products, the whitening process is safe; however, it can aggravate existing problems.

Rather than heading to the local cosmetic counter or shopping mall in search of teeth whiteners, start with a dental check up. This way, we can diagnose the cause of discoloration—injury, stains from food or tobacco, antibiotic treatment and so on. Whitening products only work on natural tooth enamel, not on crowns, veneers, bonding materials or tooth colored fillings. Does this mean if you have any of the above mentioned conditions you are stuck with yellow teeth? Absolutely not! The diagnosis is important; from there, we can determine whether whitening will work for you and which product will suit you best; otherwise you could be wasting time and money!

Studies have shown the first thing a person notices when they meet you is your smile. Being a cosmetic dentist, I am aware of how desirable it is to have white, bright teeth and how it impacts your confidence, well being, and your entire life. By seeing a trained cosmetic dentist, you can achieve not only a whiter, more attractive smile, but one that is healthy and contributes to your overall health. For more information about whitening and to check out our holiday whitening gift ideas and specials, I encourage you to visit our website or set up a complimentary whitening consultation with our well trained and knowledgeable team. Happy Holidays!

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## NEWS



PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHAEL R. EMERY

### Scouts Sing Christmas Carols

Members of Cub Scout Pack 1860 of Union Mill Elementary sing Christmas Carols, last Thursday, Dec. 8, during a meeting of the Clifton Lions Club at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. More than 25 Cub Scouts participated. Cubmasters Martin Muradaz and Drew Conard oversaw the Scouts at the event. The Clifton Lions Club sponsors this Cub Scout pack.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Members of Troop 3393 and Sigal Construction employee are, from left: Claire Quigley, Mary Cheney, Katie Dudash, Samantha Dilbeck, Alyson Heinlein and Sarah Weyrich.

### Tour of South County Middle School

On Nov. 15, members of Girl Scout troop 3393 received a tour of the newly constructed South County Middle School thanks to Katie Dudash of Sigal Construction. The facility requires a few finishing touches but the school and planned amenities are impressive.

On his 3rd tour in Iraq in 2008, Spc. Josh Schictl was driving a Humvee which was hit by two IED's. He suffered life-threatening injuries to his face and head. Despite the quick work of medics, Spc. Schictl lost his right eye and nine teeth. Nearly all of the bones in his face were broken but were stabilized before transport to Walter Reed Medical Center. He also suffered a TBI.

Wounded warriors and their families struggle for years to recover physically, emotionally and financially from the sacrifices they make in wartime. Operation Homefront seeks to walk with them on their journey and ease the hardships they face. The DC Metro Chapter assisted Josh and Emily with transitional housing, household furnishings, holiday gifts and grocery gift cards during these difficult times.

There are many ways you can work with the DC Metro Chapter to assist local military families like Josh and Emily.

People ask us everyday how they can show their appreciation and gratitude for the sacrifices made by military families. One way you can do this is to let the DC Metro Chapter fill the gap for military families as they adjust to the 'new normal' after being deployed or wounded in combat. Send your tax deductible donation before Dec. 31st to help us meet next year's needs.

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Andrew and Cindy Bennett attended the annual Burke Historical Society Christmas party on Sunday, Dec. 10 dressed as Joshua and Huldah Coffey, relatives of Lt. Col. Silas Burke.



Sharon Bulova, Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, with husband, Lou DeFalaise, at the annual Burke Historical Society Christmas party on Sunday, Dec. 10. They are standing in front of the historic Ice House, which serves as a gift shop for the Burke Historical Society.

# The 'Burke' of Christmas Past

## Burke Historical Society hosts annual holiday party.

BY VICTORIA ROSS  
THE CONNECTION

Dressed in their holiday finest, Lt. Col. Silas Burke and his wife, Hilda Coffey Burke, opened the doors to their antebellum estate on Sunday, Dec. 10 for an old-fashioned Christmas party, complete with carolers, mistletoe, homemade egg nog and tours of their expansive home.

"This is a wonderful way to celebrate the holidays, and enjoy a taste of what it was like when Silas Burke lived in this historic home," said Suzi Fowler Neal, president of the Burke Historic Society, who greeted guests in period costume.

The Silas Burke House, built on a hill overlooking the valley of Pohick Creek in 1824, has been in Fowler Neal's family since the 1920s. She opens the home throughout the year for historical society meetings and special events.

Although the home is just off Burke Center Parkway, it's situated at the top of a steep hill and surrounded by acres of undeveloped property.

"When you stand here, you can just imagine what it was like to look out over this hill and see practically into D.C.," said Sharon Bulova, Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, who attended the party with her husband, Lou DeFalaise. "I'm a huge believer

in preserving history; it's the story of what we used to be and where we're going."

Bulova joined more than 150 guests at the annual gathering, which also served as a fundraiser for the society. Guests donated gifts food and toys for underprivileged children in the community of Woodstock, Va.

**THE BURKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**, originally founded in 1978, was inactive for several years before Fowler Neal reorganized the non-profit group two years ago. The mission of the organization is to create interest in the history of Burke, and to research, collect and preserve material and sites which are a part of Burke community's history.

The society is currently selling 2012 calendars featuring the watercolors of Robert Merchant, whose work was showcased throughout "Memories of Beautiful Burke" by local historians Nan Netherton and Ruth Preston Rose. The book is out-of-print, and Fowler Neal said the money received from the calendars will go towards republishing the book.

"We are privileged and excited to have been granted permission by Robert Merchant Jr. to use his father's work for this project," she said. "This is the first fundraiser dedicated to raising money to republish the book."

The calendar can be purchased at the Ice House Gift Shop, which also sells jams and Christmas ornaments. Located next to the Silas Burke House, the Ice House will be open on Saturday, Dec. 17, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. For multiple copies of the calendar, contact Fowler Neal at specialteas@cox.net.

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# OPINION

## Five Suggestions for the New School Board

### Half of the School Board members are new.

**O**n 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 op-

portunity 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 campaign. Begin with a listening tour. Hold some full-board listening sessions around the county. Hold some regional listening sessions in schools and parents' living 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

## Burke Centre Amtrak Signs Needed

To the Editor:

On Oct. 1, 2009, the Amtrak Lynchburg Train became the first intercity passenger train to stop at Burke in 42 years. For two years, Amtrak has refused to advertise this fact in and around the station. In June, Fairfax County agreed to request VDOT to erect free Amtrak signs along nearby roads. However, seven months later, VDOT has failed to erect even a single sign. Fairfax County needs to push VDOT to begin posting signs for the following reasons:

1. Burke Centre is a great location, centrally located in a wealthy county and having ample parking and great nearby roads.

2. Travelers flying into D.C.'s three airports from other states and countries can easily connect to this train via Metro bus or rail.

3. The station allows county residents to travel the Northeast Corridor but avoid the nation's worst traffic.

4. Even without signs, Amtrak's newest Virginia station (January 2010), has become Virginia's fastest growing station over the past nine months.

5. In November, Amtrak added free Wi-Fi for riders going north to Philadelphia, New York, or Bos-

ton or going south to Charlottesville and Lynchburg and to Roanoke and Blacksburg/VA Tech via the Smart Way Amtrak Connector Bus (July 2011).

6. The signs will encourage residents to switch to the train, reducing traffic on area and intercity roads.

7. The local business community will start posting Amtrak information on their websites, encouraging travelers to stay in the county when visiting the D.C. area, thus boosting the local economy.

In short, pushing Amtrak to post the signs sooner will introduce thousands of residents and visitors to the benefits of Amtrak faster.

**Daniel Peacock**

Member Virginia Association of Railway Patrons  
Manassas

## Cruelty Issue In Deer Control

To the Editor:

Forty years ago, "the deer population was a small fraction of what it is today" as Michael Valentine wrote (Letter: Deer Hunting - Hunter's View, The Connection, Dec. 7). Eighty years ago it was a thrill just to catch sight of a deer. The number of deer has grown to

its present proportions, thanks to state game agencies' responses to hunters' demands for more deer to kill. Bear in mind that before "scientific game management" was adopted by game agencies striving for the "maximum sustained yield" of this resilient species, there were a lot fewer deer. With a relatively sparse Indian population killing only as many as they thought they needed, deer populations maintained a good balance with the habitat available to them until European immigrants killed so many that deer were in danger of extinction.

The deer's natural response to this stress was to produce more young just as humans did after World War II. Remember the "baby boomers"? Bear in mind that killing bucks enables more does to survive winter conditions and give birth in the spring. In addition, the stress of being hunted increases the number of twins, and even triplets, born in the spring. By taking advantage of this situation, game management attempts to fulfill hunters' demands without imposing too heavily on the interests of farmers, orchardists, gardeners and the even more numerous automobile drivers.

Also, donating carcasses as food for underprivileged people may not be doing them a favor because lead bullets fragment into almost undetectable particles which are more likely to have a harmful ef-

fect on undernourished people.

There is also the matter of cruelty to be considered. Slightly over half the number of deer struck by arrows are never recovered. They escape their killers to hide away and die or recover enough to exist for some time with arrows sticking out of their flanks or heads. It's uncomfortable to imagine what it must be like to pass through thick growth prying at the arrow.

I don't have the perfect answer to correct what we have done wrong, but wanted to let your readers know that there is more than just a hunter's way of viewing the problem.

**Bina Robinson**

Swain, NY

## Keep Defense, Reduce Costs

To the Editor:

This country needs a defense that can protect you and me. If we cut too much, we risk not having the capability to keep us safe. Let's work to cut old systems we no longer need. Keep some of the older systems that still work in production at greatly reduced cycle costs.

**John Nicklas**

Lt. Col. USAF, Retired  
Burke

## THE CONNECTION

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# Convicted Of Conspiracy, Tax Crimes

## Fair Oaks resident secretly represented Pakistan.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**A** Fair Oaks man is facing a possible eight years behind bars after pleading guilty last week in federal court to secretly conspiring to act as an agent of the Pakistani government in the U.S., without telling federal authorities about this affiliation, as the law requires. He is Syed Ghulam Nabi Fai, 62, a U.S. citizen and resident of the Penderbrook community.

He also pleaded guilty to tax violations in connection with a decades-long scheme to conceal the transfer of at least \$3.5 million from the government of Pakistan to fund his lobbying efforts in America related to Kashmir.

Fai served as the director of the Kashmiri American Council (KAC), a non-governmental organization in Washington, D.C., that purported to be run by Kashmiris, financed by Americans and dedicated to raising the level of knowledge in the U.S. about the struggle of the Kashmiri people for self-determination. But according to court documents, the Kashmiri American Council was secretly funded by officials employed by the government of Pakistan, including the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI).

"For the last 20 years, Mr. Fai secretly took millions of dollars from Pakistani intelligence and lied about it to the U.S. government," said U.S. Attorney Neil MacBride. "As a paid operative of ISI, he did the bidding of his handlers in Pakistan while he met with U.S. elected officials, funded high-profile conferences and promoted the Kashmiri cause to decision-makers in Washington."

"Mr. Fai purposefully hid financial transactions from the U.S. government, with intentions that his scheme to fund lobbying efforts by a foreign government would go unnoticed," said FBI Assistant Director in Charge James McJunkin. "[But] the FBI will detect and defeat those who attempt to surreptitiously exert foreign influence on our government by using agents who conceal their foreign affiliation."

**ARRESTED JULY 19**, Fai appeared last Wednesday, Dec. 7, in U.S. District Court in Alexandria and entered his guilty pleas before Judge Liam O'Grady. He could now receive as much as five years in prison for the conspiracy offense, plus a possible three years incarceration for the tax violation, when he's sentenced on March 9, 2012. As part of his plea agreement, Fai will forfeit \$142,851.32 seized from him by the government in July.

"The Tax Division is committed to prosecuting any

individual who illegally uses the tax-exempt status of charitable entities to promote or conceal federal crimes," said Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General John DiCiccio.

Doing so, added IRS Special Agent in Charge Jeannine Hammett, "harms all Americans, as we all have to pay our fair share for the government services and protections that we enjoy."

Fai admitted in court that, from 1990 until about July 18 of this year, he lied to and defrauded the U.S. government. And according to court documents, Fai told FBI agents in March 2007 that he'd never met anyone who identified himself as being affiliated with the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate. Then in May 2009, he falsely denied to the IRS on a tax return for the Kashmiri American Council that the council had received any money from foreign sources in 2008.

**FURTHERMORE**, court documents state that, in April 2010, Fai sent a letter to the Justice Department claiming that the Pakistani government didn't fund the Kashmiri American Council. He also told the IRS that the council hadn't received any money from foreign sources in 2009. Again, in July 2011, Fai lied to the FBI that neither he nor the Kashmiri American Council received money from the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate or from Pakistan.

But in fact, U.S. authorities say he repeatedly submitted annual council strategy reports and budgetary requirements to Pakistani government officials for approval. In 2009, they say, these documents included his plans to "secure U.S. congressional support for U.S. action in support of Kashmiri self-determination."

Fai also admitted not telling the IRS that, from 1990 until July 18, he arranged for at least \$3.5 million to be transferred to the Kashmiri American Council from Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate and Pakistani government employees. Court documents explain that he did so via his co-defendant Zaheer Ahmad, 63, — a U.S. citizen living in Pakistan — plus middlemen (straw donors), whom Ahmad reimbursed with Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate and Pakistani-government funds for their alleged charitable — and therefore tax-deductible — "donations" to the Kashmiri American Council.

Conducting the investigation into this case were the Washington field offices of the FBI and the IRS criminal-investigation division. Prosecuting it are Assistant U.S. Attorneys Gordon Kromberg and Daniel Grooms; trial attorney John Gibbs of the Counterterrorism Section of the Justice Department's National Security Division; and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Allison Ickovic from the Justice Department's Tax Division.

### AREA ROUNDUPS

## Single Vehicle Fatal Crash

A Newington-area woman was involved in a single-vehicle, fatal crash on Saturday, Dec. 10 at approximately 2:30 p.m., Casey Noriega, 29, of 7708 Haynes Point Way, was driving a 2001 Toyota Camry. She was

driving southbound on Beulah Street approaching the intersection of Windsor Avenue, when for unknown reasons she drove off the road and struck a pole. She was transported to a local hospital where she was pronounced dead.

Neither speed nor alcohol appears to be contributing factors of the crash. The investigation con-

tinues.

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

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PHOTOS BY PAUL KOLNICK

Clifton native Tess Reichlen will dance as Coffee in the live broadcasts of The Nutcracker.

## Clifton to New York

BY JENNIFER FEDOR  
THE CONNECTION

Local fans of George Balanchine's The Nutcracker will be thrilled to see Virginia native Teresa (Tess) Reichlen perform with the New York City Ballet in the principal role of Coffee, when the holiday classic is broadcast live to local movie theaters on Dec. 13 and on television on Dec. 14. The Nutcracker premiered in 1954 and has been performed by New York City Ballet more than 2,000 times for more than 100,000 people annually. This year's show features a glowing one-ton Christmas tree that grows and elaborate costumes such as the 85-pound attire of "Mother Ginger."

**BORN IN CLIFTON**, Reichlen began dancing at age 3. "My dad always says I had really, really strong legs as a baby," she said, so it seemed natural to enroll her in dance lessons, including ballet, tap, jazz, and modern, as a young girl. She was especially attracted to ballet because it was the dance form in which she felt most comfortable; she appreciates its classicism and the challenge it affords her as a dancer. "When I was younger I'd go to the Kennedy Center a lot and

George Mason. My parents would bring me to any performances they could there," she said. She said she was enthralled by everything she saw on stage, especially the ballets.

At age 10 she began studying at the Russell School of Ballet in Chantilly. Each summer she attended programs at ballet companies around the country to acquire additional training. When she was 15, she spent a summer at the School of American Ballet, the official school of the New York City Ballet. After auditioning, she was offered a full-time slot at the school for the fall.

"It was scary moving away from home three years earlier than the typical teenager does, but I loved it," Reichlen said. Feeling different from her peers at Centreville High because of the time and energy she dedicated to dancing, she was exhilarated to meet other dancers with the same level of passion for ballet.

"The School of American Ballet is the best. They have high schools they're associated with and a dormitory. It was a good fit," Reichlen said. She went on to become an apprentice with the New York City Ballet when the company sought young dancers to perform in The Nutcracker. She was one of five girls in her class chosen by NYCB Ballet Master in Chief Peter Martins. A year later she was offered a



From a young age, Tess Reichlen has appreciated the challenge and classicism of ballet and continues to feel at home with the New York City Ballet.

## Clifton native performs in New York City Ballet's The Nutcracker.

spot as a member in the corps de ballet.

In January 2005, Reichlen was promoted to the rank of soloist. She was chosen as a Janice Levin Dancer honoree for 2004-2005, in recognition of her dancing aptitude. Reichlen advanced to the rank of a principal dancer in October 2009, having proven herself as a seasoned, established artist.

NYCB dancers work 38 weeks out of the year, according to Reichlen, with fall, winter, and spring performance seasons. During the summer the company tours domestically or internationally to Europe or Asia. The typical workday includes a company class from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. and six hours slated for rehearsals, which vary depending on a performer's current roles. Dancers have a two-hour break before evening performances.

**IN HER PRINCIPAL ROLE** as "Coffee" for the live Nutcracker broadcasts, Reichlen enjoys the blend of humor and seduction in Balanchine's choreography. "It's a really fun part to do," she said, describing her revealing costume, which includes bells and cymbals. "I can't quote directly but I believe Balanchine said this is made for all the fathers in the audience."

She has also portrayed the lead Sugar Plum Fairy for other performances of the ballet but favors the

role of Dewdrop. "That's one of my favorite roles to perform in the repertoire," Reichlen divulges. "Dewdrop just comes in and out at different times and it's kind of 'go for broke' each time, just giving it all you've got for one-minute spurts" throughout the lengthy Waltz of the Flowers interlude. Aside from The Nutcracker, Reichlen has performed in countless ballets with NYCB, naming Swan Lake and Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto #2 as some of her favorites.

Reichlen studies biology part-time at Barnard College. "I would love it if I were still dancing in 10 years," she said but takes it one day at a time and pursues other passions as well. Her parents, who still live in Virginia, "always kept me grounded. They made sure that this wasn't all I had." School was her top priority when she was younger and they encouraged other endeavors, such as soccer.

Reichlen has advice for aspiring ballerinas. "Make sure you love it because it's grueling. You have to work so hard but the rewards are pretty amazing." She cautions young girls against succumbing to unhealthy eating or distorted body image to avoid hurting their bodies. "Take care of your body. Our bodies are delicate things. We need them for the long run."

## CALENDAR

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

### THURSDAY/DEC. 15

**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.

**"A Christmas Carol."** Lazy Susan Dinner Theatre, 10712 Richmond Hwy, Lorton. Doors open 6 p.m., performance at 8 p.m. 703-550-7384 or www.lazysusan.com.

**Korpiklaani.** 6 p.m. Jaxx Nightclub, 6355 Rolling Road, Springfield. Finnish folk metal music. 703-471-7612.

**English Conversation Group.** 7 p.m. Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Practice English and improve English-speaking skills. Adults. 703-249-1520.

**Book Discussion Group.** 7:15 p.m. John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive, Alexandria. Call for title. Adults. 703-971-0010.

**Learning English.** 7 p.m. Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Conversation group for adults learning English. Adults. 703-339-4610.

**Lorton Library Book Club.** 7 p.m. Lorton Library, 9520 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Miss New India by Bharati Mukherjee. Adults. 703-339-7385.

**Springfield Writers' Group.** 7 p.m. Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce St., Springfield. Share your work, give and receive feedback in a supportive setting. Adults. 703-451-8055.

### 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.

**"A Christmas Carol."** Lazy Susan Dinner Theatre, 10712 Richmond Hwy, Lorton. Doors open 6 p.m., performance at 8 p.m. 703-550-7384 or www.lazysusan.com.

**Toot & Puddle's Friendship.** 11 a.m. Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Holly Hobby's stories about two little piglets who are best friends. Ages 3-5 years with adult. 703-249-1520.

**Holiday Fun.** 11 a.m. John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive, Alexandria. Stories and activities about the holidays. Ages 3-5 with adult. 703-971-0010.

### SATURDAY/DEC. 17

**Ballroom Social Dance.** 8 p.m. Workhouse Art Center, Workhouse Gallery, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Ballroom mini-lesson at 7:30 p.m. All skill levels welcome. \$8-\$15. www.WorkhouseArts.org.

**Date Night: Chef's Table.** 8 p.m. Workhouse Art Center, Vulcan Gallery, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Easy but impressive cooking techniques. \$30 per person, \$60 couple. Reservations required at www.WorkhouseArts.org.

**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.

**Oldies but Goodies Cocker Spaniel Rescue Adoption Event.** 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Hybla Valley Petsmart, 7690 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Adoption show and fundraiser. Pet pictures with Santa, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. www.cockerspanielrescue.com.

**"A Christmas Carol."** Lazy Susan Dinner Theatre, 10712 Richmond Hwy, Lorton. Doors open 6 p.m., performance at 8:30 p.m. 703-550-7384 or www.lazysusan.com.

**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.

**Santa's Workshop.** 10 a.m. Franconia United Methodist Church, 6037 Franconia Road, Alexandria. "Present-making" crafts for age 3-4th grade. \$5. Supplies, snack and lunch included. Register at 703-971-5151 or www.franconiaumc.org.

**United States Army Chorus Holiday Concert.** 5 p.m. Westwood Baptist Church, 8200 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Free. 703-451-5120.

**Bob Brown Puppets.** 2 p.m. Lorton Library, 9520 Richmond Highway, Lorton. The Snow Show. All ages. Register at 703-339-7385.

### SUNDAY/DEC. 18

**Franconia Winds Christmas Concert.** 11 a.m. Franconia United Methodist Church, 6037 Franconia Road, Alexandria. 703-971-5151 or www.franconiaumc.org.

**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.

**"A Christmas Carol."** 1 p.m. Lazy Susan Dinner Theatre, 10712 Richmond Hwy, Lorton. 703-550-7384 or www.lazysusan.com.

**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.

### MONDAY/DEC. 19

**All About Me!** 10:30 a.m. Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Stories and songs that celebrate being special. Age 12-23 months with adult. 703-339-4610.

**Hidden Pond Monday: Animal Tracker.** 2:30 p.m. Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce St., Springfield. Discover different ways to study local animal species by learning how to track them through the evidence they leave behind. 703-451-8055.

### TUESDAY/DEC. 20

**Classics Book Club.** 7 p.m. Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce St., Springfield. The Book of Job (The Bible). Adults. 703-451-8055.

**English Conversation Group.** 7 p.m. Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce St., Springfield. Practice and improve your English. Adults. 703-451-8055.

**"A Christmas Carol."** Lazy Susan Dinner Theatre, 10712 Richmond Hwy, Lorton. Doors open 6 p.m., performance at 8 p.m. 703-550-7384 or www.lazysusan.com.

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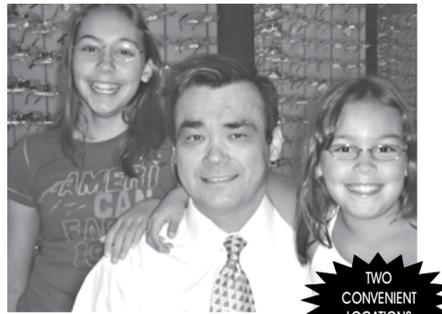
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# Stallions' Remarkable Season Ends With Loss to Phoebus

South County football, in state title game, gives powerful Phantoms all they can handle.

BY RICH SANDERS  
THE CONNECTION

South County's dramatic turnaround football season came to a frustrating end last Saturday afternoon in Charlottesville. The Stallions, participating in their first-ever state title contest, played an uncharacteristically mistake-prone game against perennial state power Phoebus High of Hampton and lost 20-10. The state AAA Div. 5 championship game took place on a brilliant late fall day on the natural turf field at the University of Virginia's Scott Stadium.

Perhaps the toughest aspect of the defeat for South County, which entering the contest had won 11 straight games following an 0-3 start to the season, was that the Stallions, despite five turnovers, were still in position of upsetting a Phoebus program going for its fourth consecutive state crown.

In the end, Phoebus, from the Eastern Region, staved off a South County second half threat and built on its established dynasty of success. But the Stallions, despite falling just short in the final game, made their adoring fans and veteran head coach Gerry Pannoni proud.

"You start the season 0-3 and come back all the way to the [state] championship game, that's quite an achievement," said Pannoni, the first year Stallions coach who, over a long head coaching career in the Northern Region, has also led programs at Robert E. Lee, W.T. Woodson, and Centreville High Schools. "They certainly earned being here and can certainly hold their heads high."

**A WEEK EARLIER**, South County played a near perfect game in a 38-22 state semifinals home win over Hanover High (Central Region). That game, in which the Stallions committed no turnovers, was perhaps the peak of efficiency for a sizzling hot squad which, following that win, was averaging a 23-point margin of victory over its four postseason opponents.

But that did not continue against the Phantoms, who took advantage of four first half turnovers in taking a 10-0 lead. Pannoni said his team was not overwhelmed by the magnitude of the championship game.

"I think we were prepared for the atmosphere," he said. "Today we just turned the ball over."

Twice over the final six minutes of the second quarter, South County, trailing 10-0, turned the ball over fairly deep in Phoebus territory — the first at the Phantoms' 20 yard line and the second at its opponents' 19.

Even so, South County kept putting the pressure on Phoebus. On its last possession of the first half, the Stallions, starting from the Phoebus 46 yard line following a Phantom punt, moved the ball all the way down



Peter Basnight broke free for a 42-yard run in the fourth quarter.

to the eight yard line over eight plays.

The drive stalled on the ninth play when the Stallions could not convert a third-and-two running play. Nevertheless, South County got onto the scoreboard when senior kicker Michael Ferguson, who a week earlier had caught three touchdown passes from his wide receiver position, connected on a 28-yard field goal to get South County within 10-3 with 1 minute, 12 seconds remaining in the half.

"We were fortunate to be down just seven at halftime," said Pannoni, relieved the Stallions were within striking range despite the turnovers. "We could have been down a lot."

**WITH SOME MOMENTUM** following the late first half field goal, South County was a renewed team to start the second half.

Phoebus was forced to punt after three plays to begin the third quarter and South County began its first possession of the half at its own 37. From there, the Stallions put together their finest drive of the game — 63-yards over 11 plays — with the touchdown coming on a two-yard run off the left side by Peter Basnight (game-high 110 yards on 16 carries), who burst through the line before lunging forward and falling into the end zone. Ferguson, with quarterback Shane Foley holding, converted the extra point kick and the game was tied at 10 with 6:34 left in the quarter.

"We were confident in our defense and that if we could get stops, we could turn the game around," said South County running back Andrew Rector (18 carries, 74 yards).

South County's defense, up to that point, was outstanding. Phoebus' 10 points, all coming in the first quarter, had come on short drives (starting on the 17 and 25 yard lines) following South County turnovers. The Phantoms managed just 77 total yards and four first downs in the first half.

"Our defense is great," said South County senior linebacker Timmy Hunt, a Stallion team captain who recovered a second quarter fumble. "We all gang tackled and were putting hits on their running back and quarterback."

Pannoni has been proud of South County's defensive play throughout the season and credited defensive coordinator Adam Neff with guiding that part of the team.

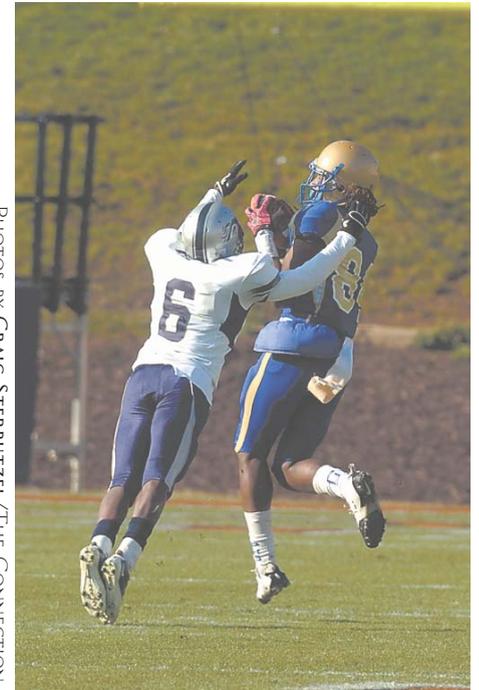
"He's done an amazing job of putting kids in the right spots this season," said Pannoni, of his assistant.

**THE PHOEBUS OFFENSE**, which averaged 32 points per game during the regular season, was bound to break through eventually. And after South County tied the game at 10-10, the Phantoms answered on the fourth play of their following possession with perhaps the game's biggest play. On a first down play from midfield, Phoebus quarterback Eric Enderson (8 of 16, 177 yards) dropped back and threw the ball downfield. Romond Deloatch, Phoebus' 6-foot-4-inch playmaker senior receiver who was running a post pattern down the middle of the field, went up and, with a defender right on him, caught the ball at the 17-yard line. He broke a tackle just as he was making the catch and ran into the end zone. The extra point kick made it 17-10 Phoebus with 4:39 left in the third quarter.

So, moments after South County had gotten back into the game, Phoebus had broken the tie with the big scoring play. The Phantoms would never lose the lead thereafter.

"No. 84 [Deloatch] was the difference in the game," said Pannoni. "When you're 6-4 or 6-5 and can go up and get the ball, you have the advantage."

Later, in the fourth quarter, Phoebus, still ahead 17-10, drove from its own 29 to the South County 25. But the Stallions' defense



PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Phoebus receiver Romond Deloatch makes a great catch on this touchdown play despite good coverage defense by South County's Marcus Thomas.

came up with a big play when a hard defensive hit popped the ball out of running back Tony Pittman's hands. South County junior linebacker Oren Burks recovered for the Stallions, ending the Phoebus threat.

Moments later, Basnight, South County's hard-running back, broke free off the left side for a 42 yard gain to the Phoebus 31 yard line. However, the Stallions' drive stalled from there and they had to punt.

Phoebus would then put together a controversial scoring drive (see related story at [www.connectionnewspapers.com](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com) and search Stallions) which would result in a field goal and effectively put the game away.

It was a stinging loss and all kinds of emotions were released by the South County players in the game's final seconds as well as in the aftermath during postgame ceremonies. But the sharp pain of the title game setback could hardly diminish what South County, which finished with an overall 11-4 record, accomplished this season simply by getting to the state championship game after beginning the season 0-3 in coach Pannoni's first season at the helm.

"In our first three games, things were kind of tough," said South County senior Devin Vandyke, a team captain and all-around stellar player for the Stallions this season. "All we wanted to do [after three straight losses] was to win a game. As the season progressed, we really felt we could be a state championship team. I had a great feeling we could get to UVA stadium [for the state finals] if we believed in ourselves."

Rector, the team's star running back, summed up the feelings of teammates, coaches, and Stallion fans best.

"Our team has big heart and I'm proud of what we did this year," he said.

# 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."

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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

**E**ach 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 Giacoman with Upper School Science Teacher Julie Krane.**

# Celebrating Arts in January

## What's on exhibit at Workhouse Arts Center?

**T**he artists of Building W-5 present the exhibition "Shelter" from Jan. 11 – Feb. 5, 2012. Building W-5 is a haven for artistic discovery for 12 artists. In this group show, their expression of "Shelter" is conveyed on canvas or paper. The public is invited to join the community of artists by contributing hats, gloves and breakfast cereal to benefit neighbors served through Lorton Community Action Center: offerings may be brought to Building W-5 during the "Shelter" exhibit.

**BUILDING W-6** featured artist, Marilyn Harrington presents the show, "Layers - an exploration of the interactions of weaving and dyeing."

"For me, art is about exploration. Not only exploration of new fibers, new ways of combining yarns into cloth, or new ways of combining colors, but exploration of myself and my connection to color and texture. I've never been happy confining myself to one technique or

media, but rather prefer to move from one to another," Harrington says in her artist's statement.

Building W-7 presents works created by all the artists throughout the month. Building W-8 Studio Exhibition: Ceramics Resident Artists — a recurring exhibit of functional and sculptural works by Ceramic Resident Artists can be seen in Ceramics Building W-8 throughout the month.

**THE NEWEST ADDITION** to building W-9, Sarah Sertic started out in the arts at an early age. She started attending classes at the Corcoran College of Art and Design at age 13 in their summer arts program for middle school and high school students.

She developed her skills in the fundamentals of art, but found that she was enthralled with the photographic process from her first film camera class at the Corcoran at the age of 14. She did not learn about eco-friendly photography techniques until she started to attend school once more

in 2010.

At the Art Institute of Washington then subsequently Northern Virginia Community College she cultivated her love for all things photographic. She found that through different printing practices especially eco-friendly printing she could attain those goals she first sought after in high school.

Sertic now strives to be able to take that dedication to the environment and apply it to everyday business practices. She has created a paper free office that digitally services all customers in all aspects of her photographic business.

She uses only Hahnemeule Fine Arts Prints made from Bamboo, a sustainable paper pulp source with highly renewable properties.

At this present show for Jan. 14, Sertic will be displaying art from her American City Ruins. The theme of these works revolves around the beauty of America in its reclaiming of buildings back to nature.

American City Ruins will high-



Searching by Denise Shamoun Phalan

light such places as Eastern State Penitentiary, Belle Isle in Richmond, Va. and the Workhouse. Sertic hopes to display the beauty of this natural reclamation of manmade objects.

Sertic is available for mentoring in photographic technique, printing and editing processes by appointment. Call 703-380-5905 or email sarah@tribalspiderarts.net for scheduling various types of photographic projects.

Building W-10 presents Multiple Media, artworks by all the artists in Building W-10, from Jan. 11 to Feb 4, 2012.

**KAREN HUTCHISON AND**

**MIKE MINNERY** are the Featured Associate Artists for the month of January. Their work can be viewed in the Vulcan Gallery, located in Gallery W-16. Hutchison presents the exhibition "Wintry Interlude" during the month of January.

Minnery was born and raised in Northern Virginia. He currently lives in Stafford with his wife and two little girls. He has been creating art for his friends and family for years, but only began making it available to the public last year. He works exclusively in metal, usually aluminum or stainless steel. He takes pride in creating art that is as durable as it is beautiful.




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## FAITH

**Robert Rudolph, Messiah Methodist's music director, conducts the Messiah Orchestra during one of the church's recent concerts. The orchestra plays hymns, solo orchestral works and accompanies choir anthems.**



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



**Robert Rudolph, Messiah Methodist's music director, conducts the Messiah Orchestra at Messiah United Methodist Church in Springfield.**

# Making Beautiful Music

**Messiah United Methodist home to largest digital organ in North America.**

BY VICTORIA ROSS  
THE CONNECTION

**M**ore than a year ago, Robert Rudolph, music director of Messiah United Methodist Church in Springfield, began the search for a custom-built organ that would reinvigorate the music program at the 2,500-member church.

Built in 1965, the church had a solid but dated music program when Rudolph became the music director two years ago.

"The physical instruments had aged," Rudolph said, "and we needed to make the music relevant to this diverse congregation. More than two-thirds of our congregation could not hear our old organ, which doesn't encourage singing during our services."

Passionate about music, Rudolph had doubled the size of the music ministry, from 200 to 400 people, by encouraging "anyone and everyone to participate," and including a vast array of Christian music, from traditional hymns to Christian rock. He currently oversees 15 active choirs for parishioners of all ages – from the Messiah Orchestra Project to Joyful Noise and the Cherub Choir for three and four-year-olds.

"We wanted to make the music ministry relevant for older folks, young families, teens and children. Once that happened, and we got people involved, we realized we didn't have the instrument for the sanctuary," he said.

**AFTER TOURING** several companies in the United States, Rudolph visited The Johannus Company in Amsterdam, and found exactly what he was looking for. Located in a soaring neo-classical building, Johannus employs a team of designers, musicians and audio-technical specialists who create custom-designed organs that can be found in churches, cathedrals and concert halls all over the world.

Although the price was steep – about \$425,000 – church members wanted something that would support the thriving music ministry and last for years. The 5,000-pound organ is the largest Monarke in North America, Rudolph said.

"Our new organ is an important investment in our music ministry both to enhance our worship and as the foundation instrument for our vocal and instrumental choirs," said Rev. Ralph Rowley, Messiah's senior pastor. "Messiah has long had a reputation for excellence in our music ministry as evidenced by our recent presentation of Handel's Messiah, which featured four soloists from the Washington National Opera, a professional orchestra, and a festival choir of 100 voices drawn from our church and the greater Springfield community."

"It's amazing to hear the sound now," said parishioner Steve Severt. "The sound is so full and robust compared to what it used to be. There's an incredible energy in here now when everyone is singing."

The new organ can provide accompaniment for a soloist or a choir of 100, and the variety of sounds include such instruments as flute, gospel organ, tuba and trumpet.

"It's also capable of meditative music or a large, brassy heralding sound which announces the resurrection of Jesus on Easter morning," Rudolph said. "The singing of this instrument radiates throughout the entire sanctuary. It doesn't matter where you sit now, you will hear it," Rudolph said. "This is way beyond our expectations. It's a tremendous joy for us."

The organ has 78 channels that play through the 225 speakers located all over the sanctuary. In the overhead cases above the altar are the great, swell, orchestral and pedal divisions. In the faux pipe case work beside the pulpit is the choir division. In the cupola, high in the ceiling, is the ethereal division. In the back of the room are two faux pipe cases that are the solo division.

"In the pit, located to the right of the pulpit, live the brains of the organ and two 850-watt sub-woofers that you will most certainly feel, especially when we play the Cathedral music."

"I am definitely looking forward to weddings," Rudolph said, smiling.

**MESSIAH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH** is located at 6215 Rolling Road in Springfield. For more information on upcoming concerts and services at the church, go to [www.messiahumc.org](http://www.messiahumc.org). To donate to the organ fund, which is funded entirely through private contributions, contact Rudolph at 703.569.9862 or email him at [rrudolph@messiahumc.org](mailto:rrudolph@messiahumc.org).



**Workers from The Johannus Company in Amsterdam install the 5,000-pound Monarke organ last summer at Messiah United Methodist Church in Springfield.**



**Members of the Messiah Project, a multi-faceted music program for vocalists, instrumentalists, dancers and stage crews. Directed by Robert Rudolph, they will lead the 7 p.m. Christmas Eve service.**

**The custom-designed 5,000-pound Monarke organ features 96 pipe voices and 112 "stops" that create various sounds from a flute to harpsichord and piano.**

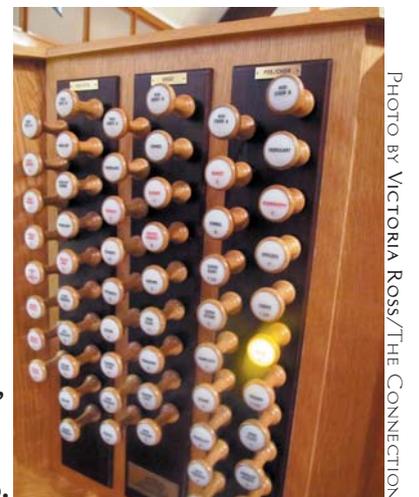


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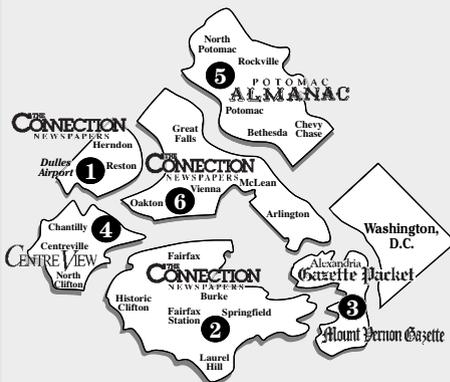


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