

Performing Nationally

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Jehshua Karunakaran, of Reston, will perform *Danse Espangole* on *From the Top*, a National Public Radio program featuring young musicians.

Fairfax to Richmond:
Do Us No Harm

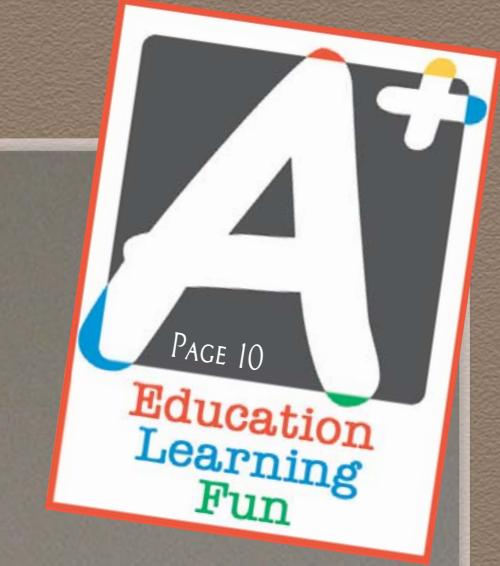
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DECEMBER 14-20, 2011

Police Seek
Suspects In
Reston
Homicide

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NEWS

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



RESTON CONNECTION EDITOR KEMAL KURSPAHIC
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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.

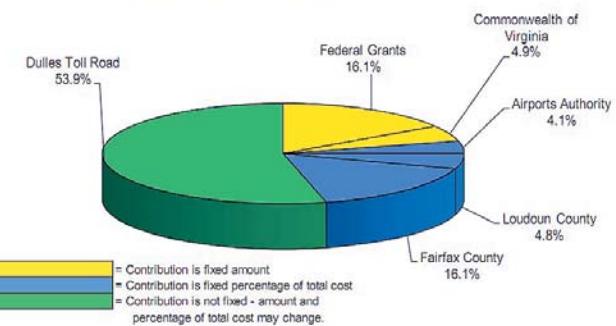
Regimbal said state revenues are not rebounding fast enough after the recession, which impacts core services such as education, transportation and human services. He predicted that Medicaid and Virginia Retirement System demands will continue to outstrip the state's general fund revenue, putting pressure 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 11

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.

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

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Toll Road Updates

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

BY ALEX MCVEIGH
THE CONNECTION

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.

"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."

"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 5

NEWS

Performing Nationally

17-year-old Reston resident to appear on NPR's From the Top.

BY AMIEE FREEMAN
THE CONNECTION

Seventeen-year-old Reston resident, Jehshua Karunakaran, will appear on *From the Top*, a National Public Radio program featuring young classical musicians. The program will air locally on Classical WETA, 90.9, on Dec. 18 at 6 p.m.; it will air nationally the week of Dec. 12.

Karunakaran is no stranger to performing. He began studying the violin when he was 6 years old. He said that he originally

wanted to learn to play the guitar. His mother convinced him that if he learned to play the violin, he could then go on to play any instrument. The following year, Karunakaran began to study piano.

Since those early days, Karunakaran has won awards and acclaim almost too extensive to list. In 2006 he won second prize at the American Fine Arts Festival, in 2008 he won first place at the Asian American Music Society's International Competition, in 2009 he won first place in the Advanced Division of the Washington Performing Arts Society's Feder Strings Competition. He has also performed extensively locally.



Jehshua Karunakaran, accompanied by program host Chris O'Riley, will perform *Danse Espangole* on *From the Top*, a National Public Radio program featuring young musicians. The performance will air locally on Classical WETA 90.9 on Dec. 18 at 6 p.m.

host Chris O'Riley on piano. Karunakaran said he chose the piece for its passion. "The piece is full of drama and passion. It will be very exciting for a radio audience. It's a great piece to see performed, but it will be equally wonderful to hear. It's a fast piece and I like fast pieces."

For the past three years, Karunakaran has been studying violin with Lewis Kaplan at the Juilliard Pre-College Division in New York City. Karunakaran's parents, or as Karunakaran says his "very long-suffering, patient parents," drive him to New York every Saturday for his lessons which begin at 9:30 a.m. and continue until 7 p.m. The course of study necessitates that the family leaves Reston at 4:30 a.m. and does not return home until after midnight.

Prior to Juillard, Karunakaran studied for six years with Olga Khroulevitch at the Levine School of Music in Washington. Khroulevitch described Karunakaran as a serious student who practices as much as possible. She also said that he has tremendous "insight into music that keeps the audiences on the edge of their seats."

"He tries to find sound and phrasing that is different from how others perform the piece," Khroulevitch said. "He definitely puts his individual mark on a performance. He is a very powerful performer."

IN ADDITION to his accomplishments in the musical world, Karunakaran has made great strides in his academic studies. Just after his 15th birthday, Karunakaran graduated from high school. He recently completed his associate's degree at Northern Virginia Community College and is applying to four-year colleges in hopes of pursuing a dual degree in music and neuroscience.

He is also currently participating in an internship at National Institutes of Health in the study of treatment for Parkinson's disease. He said that he believes there is some definite overlap between music and science and hopes to pursue the use of music as a possible therapy.

"There is the problem of time and it is a juggling act. But I love science and I love studying," said Karunakaran.

"He tries to find sound and phrasing that is different from how others perform the piece,"

— Olga Khroulevitch, Levine School of Music

which was taped before a live audience at the National Gallery of Art on Oct. 16, will be his first national level exposure.

In speaking about the *From the Top* performance, Karunakaran said it was very different from what he anticipated. "I am used to rehearsing with the accompanist prior to the performance, doing the performance and that being the end of it. The *From the Top* staff went to great lengths to ensure our comfort and to make the experience fun."

THE DAY AFTER the performance, Karunakaran and the other young performers went to a Washington school to work with school children and to share their musical experience with them. Karunakaran said he greatly enjoyed this aspect of the experience.

Karunakaran will be performing *Danse Espangole* from Manuel de Falla's "La Vida Breve." He is accompanied by *From the Top*

Police Seek Suspects In Reston Homicide

Shooting occurred at around 4:15 p.m. Monday, on Cameron Crescent Drive.

BY ALEX MCVEIGH
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County Police are looking for at least three suspects in the shooting homicide of Colvin Morris, 34, of Richmond Highway in Alexandria. Morris was found by police on the 1500 block of Cameron Crescent Drive with "trauma to the upper body" at around 4:15 p.m. Monday, Dec. 12.

Morris, who was found outside an apartment building, was pronounced dead upon arrival at a local hospital.

Police spent much of the evening of Dec. 12 searching for the three suspects on foot around Cameron Crescent Drive, which is just east of the Lake Anne Plaza. Pfc. Bud

Walker of the Reston District Station said that the U.S. Park Police also brought a helicopter to assist in the search.

"They were flying low over the area and also up and down a few major roads in the area," Walker said.

He also said that while the suspects are still at large, the police are working off of "good leads" and are confident about finding the suspects, perhaps later Tuesday or Wednesday.

"We also have confidence that our investigation has established the sequence of events that occurred, and that we feel that this was not a random act," Walker said. "We do not feel there is a public safety risk."

This was the ninth homicide in Fairfax County this year.

WEEK IN RESTON

Good Beginning Collects Winter Gear

Good Beginnings School will collect warm hats, scarves and gloves for at-risk Native American teens in the Rosebud Reservation in Mission, South Dakota.

Items may be dropped off through Dec. 21, at Good Beginnings School, 11501 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston. Call 703-758-8811.

Police Target Alcohol Violations

In an effort to keep December 2011 a safe and festive month for all, Fairfax County Police are stepping up alcohol enforcement efforts with extra DWI patrols, sobriety checkpoints and underage alcohol stings. Last December (2010), Fairfax County Police made 317 DWI arrests. Of those 252 were men; 65 were women.

Police urge residents to make their travel plans in advance of holiday parties by designating a sober driver as drunk driving continues to be a serious roadway danger. According to recently compiled Fairfax County data, there have been 546 alcohol-related crashes through October 2011, out of a total of 8,214. In 2010, out of 10,471 crashes, 730 of them involved alcohol.

In addition to targeted patrols, DWI checkpoints netted 46 impaired drivers in 2010. Motorists should expect to encounter checkpoints across Fairfax County this month as they are an additional deterrent and educational tool.

Despite strict laws governing underage drinking, FCPD cited 246 people under age 21 with driving after illegally consuming alcohol in 2010. Through the third quarter of 2011, there were 193 youthful offenders cited.

SCHOOL NOTES

Navy Seaman Recruit **Jessica Javor** has completed U.S. Navy basic training at Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes, Ill. During the eight-week program, Javor completed a variety of training which included classroom study and practical instruction on naval customs, first aid, firefighting, water safety and survival, and shipboard and aircraft safety. An emphasis was also placed on physical fitness. The 2006 graduate of South Lakes High School is the daughter of Martha L. Gendron of Reston.

Stefanie Brown of Reston has been named to the spring 2011 dean's list at the University of South Carolina. The South Lakes High School graduate is studying music education.

Melissa Tran of Reston has been named to the 2012 Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges. Tran is majoring in quantitative economics at Providence College, Providence, R.I.

NEWS

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 Author-

ity 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 dis-

tances.

"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

MWAA. "Building ramps to separate airport traffic from other east-bound 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 under 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.

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OPINION

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 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;

EDITORIAL 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

Grand Illusion in Richmond

BY KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM
STATE DELEGATE (D-36)

Recently I performed a magic show for children at Barnes and Noble in Reston as part of a fundraiser for a local preschool. Part of the success of performing magic is dependent upon the ability of the magician to divert the attention of the audience from what is going on to the illusion of what seems to be happening.

A ballpoint pen seems to stick a hole in a dollar bill, although no hole is found when the pen is removed. The peanut butter jar and the jelly jar seem to mysteriously change places. A string of bright beads is produced from an empty container. Magic and illusion are great forms of entertainment.

Unfortunately the agenda shaping up for the 2012 General Assembly session in Richmond includes some sleight-of-hand to make the state legislature look good in the short run but could leave local governments on the losing end of the trick.

The Governor's Task Force for Local Government Mandate Review is proposing the elimination of a number of existing mandates. The Task Force is focusing on 105 education mandates and 80 local government mandates.

While many of these requirements that state government



COMMENTARY

placed on local government may have made sense at the time they were enacted, some are redundant, unnecessary, or meaningless today. A good house cleaning is always in order. Also under review by the Task Force is a possible moratorium on new state mandates to local governments. Review the report at www.dhcd.virginia.gov/GovMandateReview/default.htm.

As local governments and school boards are celebrating the elimination of some nuisance reporting requirements and pesky accountability reports, their attention will need to be shifted quickly to the other side of the stage for the grand illusion that is about to take

place.

In order to balance the state budget, the General Assembly is likely to whittle away at the schools' Standards of Quality. And for every mandate that is lifted in the state SOQs, localities will lose state aid. For a partnership that should be equal between state and local governments, a shift has already occurred with local governments picking up 60 percent of costs to the state's 40 percent. State general funding to education that in Fiscal Year 2009 was \$5.6 billion is expected to dip to \$4.9 billion in Fiscal Year 2012.

The grandest of the illusions may be the expected attempt in the 2012 session of the General Assembly to shift secondary road maintenance from state to local governments. The state would balance its transportation budget with this little trick, but local governments would be saddled with millions of dollars in expenses. For Fairfax County the cost would be in the hundreds of millions.

For taxpayers the show may even be made to look attractive in the realignment of state and local government responsibilities with counties taking care of local roads. When taxpayers check their wallets and realize they are suddenly empty from paying the additional property tax that will be required to pay for road repairs, the trick will not be nearly so entertaining.

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.

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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.

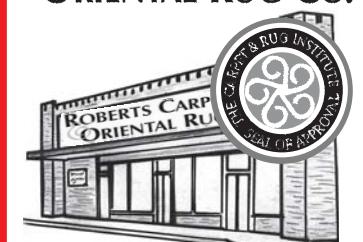


People ask us everyday how they can show their appreciation and gratitude for the sacrifices made by military families. One way you can do this is to let the DC Metro Chapter fill the gap for military families as they adjust to the 'new normal' after being deployed or wounded in combat. Send your tax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

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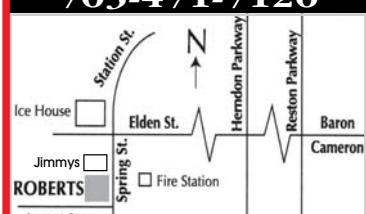
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ENTERTAINMENT

Send announcements to reston@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.



Members of the South Lakes High School Marching Band perform in the annual Reston Holiday Parade Friday, Nov. 25. The band will perform in Winter Concert this Wednesday, Dec. 14

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 mixed 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.

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.

TUESDAY/DEC. 19

"Nutmegger." 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Northern Virginia Community College Annandale, Ernst Community Cultural Center Theater, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Performed by the Virginia Ballet Company and School. \$30 adults, \$20 children, students and seniors. www.virginiaballetcompany.org or 703-249-8227.

New Year's Eve Celebration at ArtSpace. ArtSpace, 750 Center St., Herndon. 703-956-6590 or www.artspaceherndon.org.

♦7-9 p.m. Hands-on-art activities for children and youth, storytelling, and great art. Free.

♦9-10 p.m. Bonfire, family-friendly and alcohol free. Free.

♦10:30 p.m.-12:30 a.m. Musical Cafe with live music, desserts, and midnight champagne toast. Tickets \$15-\$20.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 20

"Nutmegger." 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Northern Virginia Community College Annandale, Ernst Community Cultural Center Theater, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Performed by the Virginia Ballet Company and School. \$30 adults, \$20 children, students and seniors. www.virginiaballetcompany.org or 703-249-8227.

Drop-In Storytime. 11 a.m. Herndon Fortnightly Library, 768 Center St., Herndon. Old and new picture book favorites. Age 3-5 with adult. 703-437-8855.

Small Wonders. 10:30 a.m. Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Short stories. Age 3-12 months with adult. 703-242-4020.

TUESDAY/JAN. 1

New Year's Day 5K. 10 a.m. Start and finish at Reston Town Center. Presented by Potomac River Running. Cash awards, food and prizes following the race. Register at potomacriverrunning.com or 703-689-0999.

SATURDAY/JAN. 7

Reston Contra Dance. 8 p.m. Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Music by the June Apple Band. Beginners' workshop 7:15 p.m. Partner not required. Admission \$9. anote20@gmail.com

THURSDAY/DEC. 29

"Nutmegger." 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Northern Virginia Community College Annandale, Ernst Community

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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.

FRIDAY/FEB. 10

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.

FRIDAY/MARCH 9

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.

FRIDAY/APRIL 13

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.

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Candidacy Forms and other election information can be found online at www.reston.org.

Residential property owners and renters are eligible to run for a seat and vote in the election.

Details or Questions:
Cate Fulkerston cate@reston.org or 703-435-6512.

Reston Association

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-



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



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

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.”

NEWS

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 reston@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.

Adult Sunday school will be held 9:30 a.m. Sundays at the Washington Plaza Baptist Church at Lake Anne Village Center. The group is studying the Gospel of Mark. Services follow at 11 a.m.

HAVEN of Northern Virginia offers a variety of free bereavement support groups, meeting on a weekly

basis. Contact 703-941-7000 or www.havenofnova.org for schedules and registration information.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington and the Jewish Outreach Institute offer the Mothers/Parents Circle, an umbrella of free educational events and resources. Jewish rituals, ethics and the creation of a Jewish home, regular meetings and group Shabbats and holidays. Participants include Sha're Shalom, Congregation Beth Emeth, Temple Rodef Shalom and the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia. ShalomDC.org.

The Bahai community of McLean holds a weekly fireside, a meeting of discussion, devotion and fellowship, at 7500 Box Elder Court in McLean, at 8 p.m. every Friday. An opportunity to learn about the Bahai faith. 703-556-3400.

Epiphany United Methodist Preschool, 1014 Country Club Drive, N.E. in Vienna, is now enrolling 3-4-year-old students for the 2010/2011 school year. Contact 703-938-2391 or www.epiphanypreschool.com.

The Rohr Jewish Learning Institute (JLI) will present "Fascinating Facts: Exploring the Myths and Mysteries of Judaism." The six-session course will commence during the week of Nov. 6. Rabbi Leibel Fajnland of Chabad of Reston-Herndon will conduct the six

course sessions at 7:30-9 p.m. on Monday nights at Chabad Aleph Center. 718 Lynn Street, Herndon. 703-476-1829 or www.myJLI.com.

Hope Fellowship Church will temporarily be meeting at Woody's Golf Range, 11801 Leesburg Pike, Herndon. Sunday Worship Services for the Southern Baptist church are at 10:45 a.m. The public is invited to join a Bible believing, multi-ethnic/multi-cultural congregation, with Bible-based sermons and uplifting music. 703-599-3527 or www.hopefellowshipchurchloudoun.org.

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

Nondenominational **Christian businessmen** meet for prayer, Biblical discussion and fellowship 7 p.m. Fridays at Anita's, 1051 Elden St., Herndon and 12 p.m. Thursdays at 555 Grove St., Suite 200, Herndon. Call 703-795-1257.

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NEWS

Armstrong Wins Golden Apple

Armstrong Elementary School was one of 18 schools to receive a Golden Apple Wellness Award, the highest level of the Fairfax County Public Schools Wellness Award. This award is given to a school based upon its implementation of the wellness policy adopted by the Fairfax County School Board to promote school-wide health and contribute to the reduction of childhood obesity.

This is the second consecutive year Armstrong Elementary received this top award. An award ceremony took place to honor those schools for their efforts to promote wellness in their school and community.



From left: Dr. Jack Dale, FCPS Superintendent; Ken Junge, Armstrong Assistant Principal; Shamarlas G. Allens, Armstrong Principal; Megan Counts, Armstrong Assistant Principal; Rob Kloehn, Armstrong P.E. teacher; Mike Tyrell, Armstrong Wellness Committee Chairperson; Melanie Mulcahy, Armstrong PTA President; and Janie Strauss, Chairman, FCPS School Board.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 6

sus 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 Intro-

duced"]. 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

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SPORTS

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.

Buonkong 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 girl's 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

RESTON CONNECTION SPORTS EDITOR RICH SANDERS
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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 Munoz 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.

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.

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
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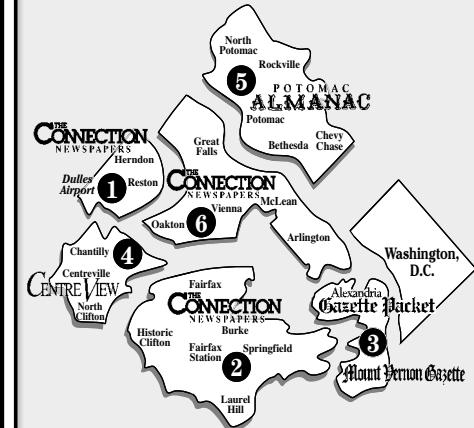
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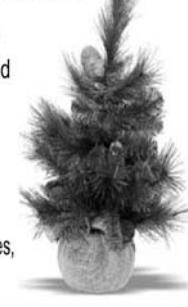
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MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY

Again this year Floris United Methodist Church will give away its entire Christmas Eve offering. It's a tough time to give away the offering, but Christmas is calling us to make a difference in the world. Maybe it's calling you too.

Support Local Schools:

During the 2010-2011 academic school year, 2,274 homeless students were identified by Fairfax County Public Schools and more than 45,000 students were on the free and reduced lunch program. Children living in poverty face daily challenges that impact their education. Floris United Methodist Church partners with local schools to provide weekend meals, support to families and faculty, and academic enrichment programs that help children succeed.

Support Local Needs:

Non-profits and county service organizations are seeing a dramatic rise in the need for assistance. Between 2000 and 2009, the number of individuals below the poverty line in Fairfax County increased 33%. The Connections for Hope center in Herndon was established on the principle that non-profits can serve needs in the community more effectively and efficiently if they work in a shared space. Agencies at Connections for Hope provide homelessness prevention, homework assistance, health care for children, and a wide array of other essential services.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR LIFE

Light a candle in the darkness. Sing "Silent Night."
Join us this Christmas Eve:

Christmas Eve Eve (December 23): 7:30 PM

Christmas Eve (December 24):

Preschool Service: 3 PM

Other services at 5, 7, 9 & 11 PM



www.florisumc.org/christmas

