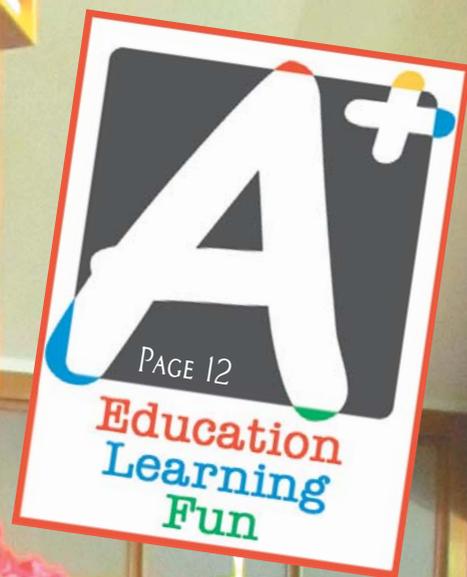


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Making Beautiful Music

NEWS, PAGE 16



Robert Rudolph, Messiah Methodist's music director, said he is still learning all of the functions of the church's new organ, which features 96 pipe voices and 112 "stops" that create various sounds from a flute to harpsichord and piano. "I am definitely looking forward to weddings," he said.

Fairfax to
Richmond:
Do Us No Harm

NEWS, PAGE 3

Enjoy Christmas
In Historic Style

NEWS, PAGE 11

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ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 10 ❖ SPORTS, PAGE 14 ❖ CLASSIFIED, PAGE 17

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NEWS

MWAA Resists New Members

U.S. Rep. Frank Wolf 'extremely disappointed.'

By NICHOLAS HORROCK
THE CONNECTION

The Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority apparently never tires of resisting U.S. Rep. Frank Wolf and other Virginia officials from gaining more control of the authority's operations and its handling of the Dulles Rail project.

After President Obama signed into law a measure that increases Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority's membership from 13 to 17 members and called for an additional two Virginia members, Airports Authority Chairman Charles D. Snelling, wrote to Wolf that the authority did not plan to immediately abide by the law.

"Soon after the enactment of this legislation, the Airports Authority retained outside legal counsel to provide an independent legal opinion on the implementation of the legislation and, more specifically, on whether the changes made by the legislation

were operative upon enactment or require an amendment to the MWAA compact in order to become operative," Snelling said.

The authority engaged Jenner & Block, one of the nation's best known and most expensive law firms, to examine the constitutionality of the law. In 22 pages of legal dissertation, the firm said it might be unconstitutional but the issue would likely have to be settled in a federal court.

Robert Yingling, a public affairs spokesperson for Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority, said he could not report on how much this legal opinion cost public funds because the bill for the work had not been submitted.

According to Snelling, the Jenner & Block opinion found that the "new legislation is not operable until the Commonwealth of Virginia and the District of Columbia approve changes to the governing MWAA compact. Accordingly, it is the opinion of our outside counsel that the legislation is best understood as authorizing

Virginia and the District of Columbia to amend the MWAA compact, and not unilaterally bringing about that amendment itself."

He said Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority would not permit any new members appointed under the law to "participate in board duties until changes are made to governing MWAA compact."

Wolf said he was "extremely disappointed" that the Airports Authority "is choosing to fight bipartisan changes contained in Public Law 112-55." Wolf said the "intent of Congress could not be more clear" and there was "no need for MWAA to go the expense of hiring outside counsel." Wolf said he has asked the U.S. Transportation Department's Inspector General to find out who ordered the report and what it cost.

The role of board members acting out after expiration of their term arose when a member whose term had expired was allowed several years ago to vote from house arrest in the Ivory Coast.

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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

SEE COUNTY, PAGE 9



PHOTOS BY ANIVA 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.

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—John Ruskin

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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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NEWS

Girls on the Run

Sangster Elementary joins the movement.

BY SARA LEPLEY
EDITOR OF WSHS NEWSPAPER

The elementary and middle school-aged girls are about to do something that would challenge most adults — run a 5K, on an early Sunday morning to boot. Yet they are dancing and giggling in anticipation, because they are all ready to achieve their goals.

Girls on the Run, or GOTR, is a 10-week program that interlaces positive self-image and goal-setting with running. Every practice the girls have a lesson where they learn about understanding themselves, building healthy relationships, and giving back to the community. Then they go for a run and enjoy a healthy snack. At the end of the season, they participate in a semi-annual 5K race with their “running buddy” who might be a family member or older friend.

MORE THAN 350,000 girls in the United States and Canada, and almost 30,000 girls in Northern Virginia, have participated over the past 10 years.

This year the Northern Virginia 5K event was moved to Jiffy Lube Live in order to accommodate the growing number of participants. Almost 7,000 runners assembled at the start line, as 3,000 well-wishers, designated at different points of the 3.1 mile course in Bristow, Va., cheered them along.

The strong commitment to healthy living, physical activity, and giving back GOTR inspires,



Girls on the Run (GOTR) at the starting line on Nov. 27.

extends both on and off the track. The theme for one of Sangster Elementary School’s runners, Alyssa Maryanopolis’s 10th birthday party included a 1.7 mile fun run dubbed “the double-digit run,” homemade medals and “Lissy-aide” in honor of the birthday girl. The real magic, however, was in the gifts.

“[The girls] were asked to consider donating to GOTR in lieu of a gift,” said mother Joyce Maryanopolis.

It was Alyssa’s older sister, 13-year-old Alexandra, who planned the party and decided to use it as a way to raise money for GOTR.

“[Alyssa’s] made so many close friends who she can always trust...through this program,” said Alexandra.

Together, the girls raised \$75. Just \$70 enables one girl whose family receives Free and Reduced Lunch at school to participate in Girls on the Run.

“Our curriculum benefits all girls, and our program is one of inclusion and acceptance,” said Catherine Keightley, Executive Director of Girls on the Run of Northern Virginia. “Since our objective is to serve every girl who is interested in participating in Girls on the Run, we strive to provide financial support to families with financial need through individual donations and corporate sponsorships.”

Alyssa’s family’s desire to give back to the community is shared

with her teammates and the GOTR program. Every year, the different GOTR teams participate in community service projects. This year, however, they banded together in this season’s food drive, Girls on the Run Gives Back. The food drive raised more than 3,000 pounds of food for ACTS (Action in the Community Through Service.) Additionally, the girls understand how important money-raising for GOTR is so that everyone who wants to participate has the chance to do so. Sangster runner Danielle believes it is important to help girls afford GOTR “so they can experience the fun of a 5K.”

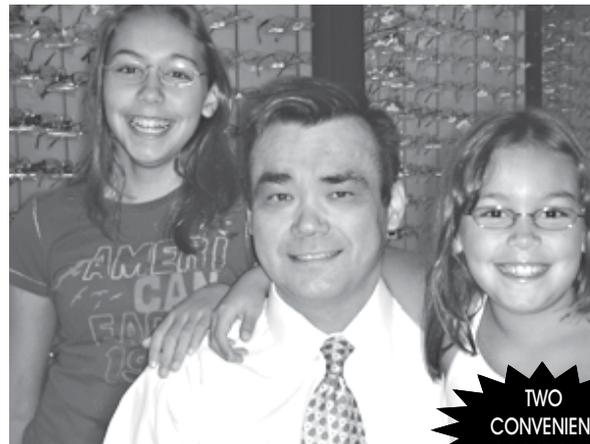
The positive impact of GOTR transcends just running. By instilling a healthy self-esteem at an early age and creating a great friend-making avenue, GOTR can be especially helpful for girls who may have fewer opportunities due to financial need. “[Everyone] deserves all these friends,” said Sangster athlete, Molly.

Elementary school can be a breeding ground for mean girls, peer-pressure and the seemingly endless need to fit in. At their practices, however, the girls are able to build healthy friendships and learn how to appreciate themselves and others.

“It’s the perfect time for girls to hear positive feedback in their lives and feel good about themselves,” said Sangster Coach Allison Latif, who is also a parent on the team.

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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; 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

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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
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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 or text "TIP187" plus your message to CRIMES/274637 or call Fairfax County Police at 703-691-2131.

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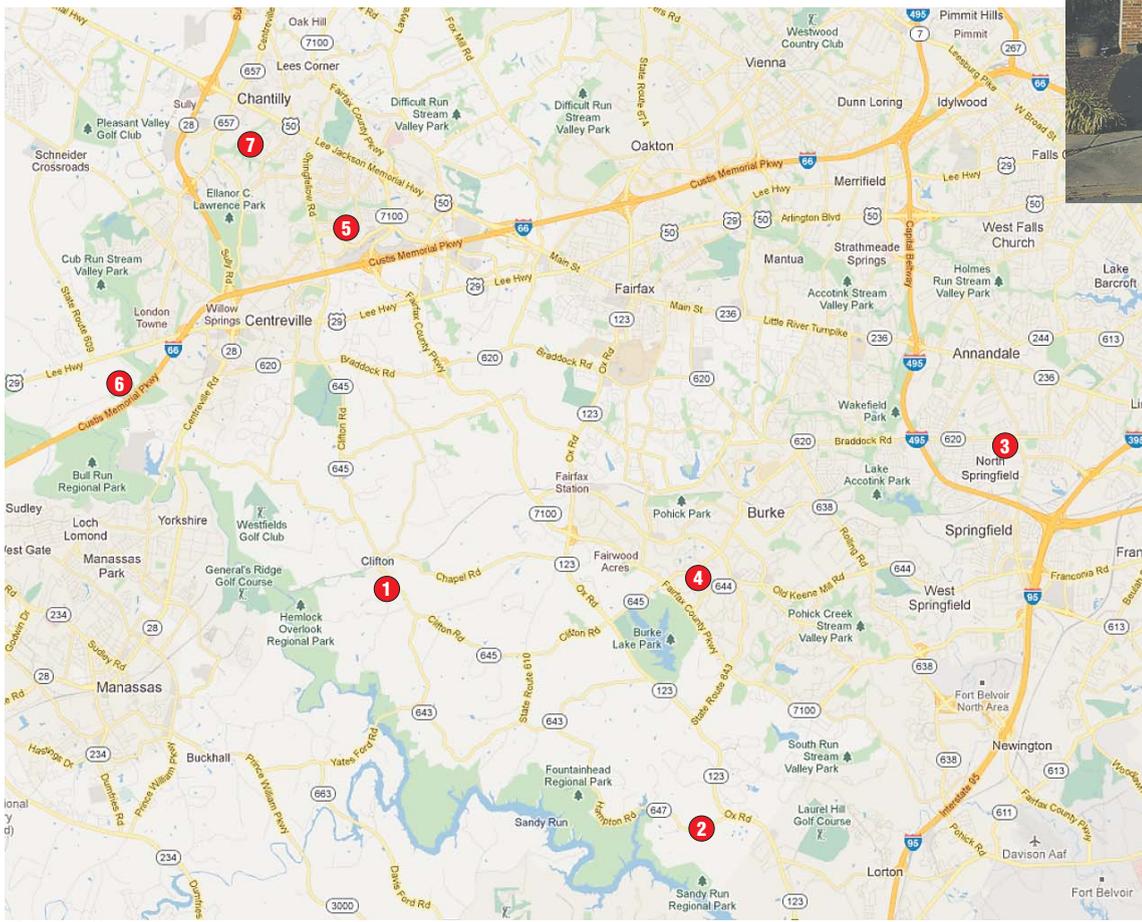
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7104 GRANBERRY WAY	4	4	1		NORTH SPRINGFIELD	\$855,000	Detached	0.43	22151	GRANBERRY ESTATES	10/31/11
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13035 RED ADMIRAL PL	4	4	1		FAIRFAX	\$642,500	Detached	0.11	22033	WILLOW OAKS AT FAIR LKS	10/12/11
15066 BROWN POST LN	4	3	1		CENTREVILLE	\$615,000	Detached	0.64	20121	GATE POST ESTATES	10/14/11
4303 WOODWARD CT	4	3	1		CHANTILLY	\$590,000	Detached	0.28	20151	WAVERLY CROSSING	10/19/11

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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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THE CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS



PHOTOS BY PAUL KOZLIK



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 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

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 *Tschaikovsky 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.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 21

Learning English. 10:15 a.m. Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Conversation group for adults learning English. Adults. 703-339-4610.

Teddy's Ready. 10:30 a.m. Lorton Library, 9520 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Stories about bears. Age 3-5 with adult. 703-339-7385.

Fun with Ones. 10:30 a.m. Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce St., Springfield. Books, songs and rhymes. Age 1 with adult. 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.

THURSDAY/DEC. 22

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.

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

"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.

FRIDAY/DEC. 23

"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.

SUNDAY/DEC. 25

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

TUESDAY/DEC. 27

Writers Peer Review Group. 7 p.m. Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Submit up to 25 double-spaced pages to kingstownelibrarywriters@yahoo.com by the 15th of the month. Adults. 703-339-4610.

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.

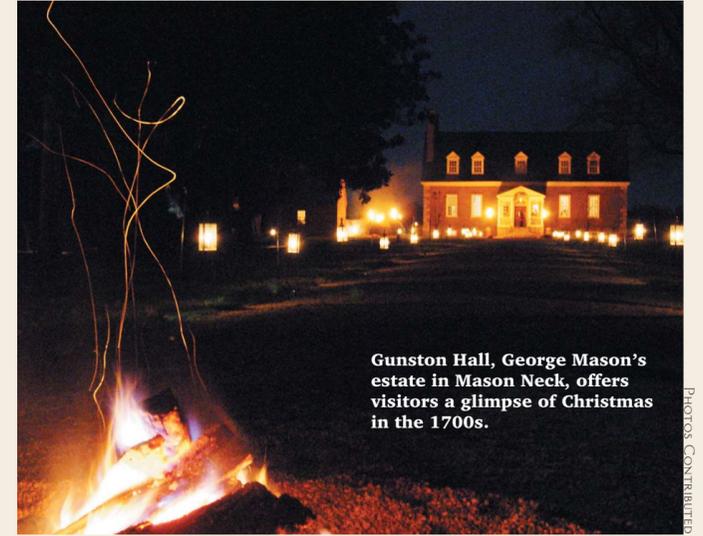
WEDNESDAY/DEC. 28

Learning English. 10:15 a.m. Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Conversation group for adults learning English. Adults. 703-339-4610.

Travel Club. 1 p.m. Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce St., Springfield. Bring lunch and enjoy a lively discussion. Adults. 703-451-8055.

The Magic of a Book with Magician Mike Rose. 2:30 p.m. Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce St., Springfield. Magician Mike Rose shares magic tricks from a 100-year-old book given to him by his grandfather. 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.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

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

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 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

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



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

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

—VICTORIA ROSS

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



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

"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."

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MADEIRA SCHOOL

NEWS

Officer Eddy Azcarate with the Franconia District Station accepts food donations from Greenspring Associate Executive Director Lynn Keefe. Nearly 2,000 pounds of food donations were collected for the "Fill the Wagon Food Drive" held at Greenspring Retirement Community last week.



PHOTO BY JESSICA MCKAY

Franconia Police Launch 'Fill the Wagon' Campaign

Greenspring residents donate 2,000 pounds of food.

One of the police "wagons" that Springfield residents usually see patrolling the streets will be used for something a little different this holiday season.

According to Officer Eddy Azcarate, the wagon is used primarily to transport prisoners to the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center. "However, this holiday season, our goal is to 'fill the wagon' full of non-perishable food items to be delivered to local food banks and churches," he said.

"Police officers are members of the public; both at work and at home," said Captain Shawn Bennett, Franconia Police District Commander. "Officers are quick to recognize that not every call for service needs

to end in an arrest. Many problems can be resolved by giving to those in need. This effort allows our officers to lend a helping hand to their fellow citizens."

The Franconia District Station is accepting donations from now until Monday, Dec. 20. Residents can deliver donations to the Franconia District Station lobby at 6121 Franconia Road.

"We will also be taking the wagon around town to local grocery stores and businesses to collect food donations, so be on the look-out for the police wagon in your community," Azcarate said.

— VICTORIA ROSS

Adopt a Shelter Animal

The Fairfax County Animal Shelter has launched "Operation Empty Cage" as part of its "Home 4 the Holidays" adoption push. One goal is to empty the shelter's cages by finding a home for each animal available for adoption.

As part of this event, the shelter — at 4500 West Ox Road in Fairfax — will offer free spay/neuter for the first 100 dogs and cats adopted until Dec. 31. Animals available for adoption at the shelter may be seen Tuesdays through Fridays, noon-7 p.m., and Saturdays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. For more information, call 703-830-1100.

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Lake Braddock Outlasts Robinson in OT Thriller

Snow scores 28 for Bruins, Pillow tallies 25 for Rams.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

When the Lake Braddock boys basketball team embarked on an 11-0 run late in the third quarter, Robinson senior Robert Pillow shot the Rams back into the game.

When the Bruins held a 66-63 lead in the closing seconds of regulation, Pillow was there to knock down a clutch 3-pointer and force overtime.

But when Pillow fouled out with 1:17 remaining in the extra period, there was nobody left to save the Rams.

With three Robinson starters fouled out, the Bruins held on for a 77-75 overtime victory on Dec. 9 at Lake Braddock Secondary School. With rival student sections creating an electric atmosphere, the Bruins overcame a six-point fourth quarter deficit to earn their second win of the young season.

"Lake Braddock and Robinson share the same kind of kid. It was just a great game between two rivals that really should be in the same district with each other," Lake Braddock head coach Brian Metress said. "Our guys know all the [Robinson] guys. I would say 'Who's got No. 21? Who's got 23?' They call them by name. They're calling them by their first name and I'm calling them by their number and their hair and stuff like that.

"Our guys, they didn't want to lose to them."

LAKE BRADDOCK SENIOR Tyler Snow led all scorers with 28 points. The 6-foot-5 forward scored four of the Bruins' final five points in overtime.

After the game, Lake Braddock fans rushed the court in celebration.

"I was at the bottom of that thing, getting my body broken up," Snow said with a laugh. "It felt good."

While Snow led Lake Braddock to victory, Pillow kept Robinson alive until fouling out. The Rams guard scored a team-high 25 points and knocked down seven 3-pointers. With Lake Braddock leading 47-42 — thanks to an 11-0 run — late in the third quarter, Pillow buried a 3-pointer in the final seconds of the period and another from behind the arc to open the fourth quarter. With Robinson down three in the closing seconds of regulation, Pillow knocked down a 3-pointer off a designed play to force overtime.

"Pillow is a really good player," Metress said. "Every shot he hit, we were on him."

ROBINSON HEAD COACH Brian Nelson said he wasn't pleased with the Rams' effort.

"We didn't play well. We didn't play Robinson bas-



Lake Braddock's Tyler Snow, left, jumps against Robinson's Robert Pillow during the Bruins' overtime win on Dec. 9 at Lake Braddock.

ketball," Nelson said. "We were way too frantic, we lost our composure, we turned the ball over too much, we missed a lot of defensive assignments [and] we gave them a lot of easy baskets. All due credit to their kids, they did a great job, they made the plays they needed to make to win that game, but we didn't do our job on our end. If not for Rob Pillow hitting some huge shots in the fourth quarter, that game never goes to overtime.

"As a team, collectively, we didn't do our jobs tonight."

Senior guard/forward Tristian Crenshaw scored 19 points for Robinson and junior guard Nate Hackett finished with 15. Crenshaw, Hackett and Pillow each fouled out.

"It hurts," Pillow said. "It's devastating because we gave that game away."

Senior guard Brendan McHale, Lake Braddock's only returning starter, scored 16 points. Senior center Christian McKenrick scored 14 points for the Bruins and senior guard Dylan

O'Connor added 12.

"I thought we could have [given up] at the end of the third, I thought we could have [given up] at the end of the half, I thought we could have [given up] at the end of regulation," Metress said. "We're a pretty gritty group. We play pretty hard."



Edison sophomore Brock Jacobson, right, placed second in the 132-pound bracket at the Northern Region Classic on Dec. 10 at Fairfax High School.

Jacobson Fighting Uphill Battle

Edison sophomore facing stiff competition.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

As a 119-pound freshman last season, Edison's Brock Jacobson had the talent and work ethic to win a National District championship and finish runner-up at the Northern Region tournament. He was a skilled youngster on a veteran Eagles squad that won its fourth team district title in five tries.

Ten months later, Jacobson and the Edison wrestling team are in a season of transition. Jacobson is a 132-pound sophomore trying to take his ability to the next level by facing stiff competition, while the Eagles lost nine seniors and now have a lineup that includes nine sophomores and one freshman. Jacobson and his teammates figure to take their lumps this season, hoping the experience will help in the future.

EDISON COMPETED in the Northern Region Classic on Dec. 9-10 at Fairfax High School. On Saturday, Jacobson finished runner-up in the 132-pound bracket, losing to Wakefield senior Henry Majano in the championship match. Majano, the defending state runner-up, won 3-2.

"Majano is an experienced wrestler who has won at the highest levels," Edison head coach Scott Racek said. "We were just trying to keep it close and hopefully try to get some-

thing in the third period. His defense was just too tough. That last minute, he fought off every attempt we had."

The loss dropped Jacobson's record to 7-4, but competing against a grappler who is two years older and finished 43-1 last season is part of Jacobson's plan for improvement.

"It's tough to lose," he said, "but then again, you're facing the better wrestlers and that's just going to help you."

Racek said Jacobson can handle the lumps he'll take this season.

"He's had enough success that his ego doesn't need to be satisfied by winning all the time," Racek said. "... He would rather come in sixth at a really tough tournament than come in first at a weak tournament. His maturity level is way beyond of that of just a sophomore in high school."

EDISON FINISHED 15th with a score of 81 at the Northern Region Classic. The Eagles were second among National District teams, ahead of Yorktown (23rd) and Wakefield (28th) and behind Washington-Lee (14th). Fauquier won the tournament with a score of 226, followed by Annandale (177.5), Lake Braddock (156) and South County (149).

Baden James was the only other Edison grappler to finish in the top eight of his respective weight class, placing seventh in the 160-pound bracket.

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.

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.

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.

"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.

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.

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

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.

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

More 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.

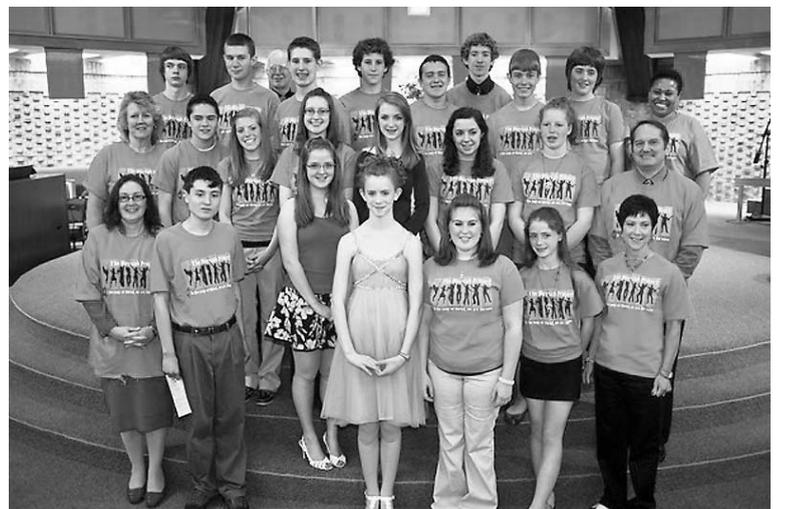
"In the pit, located to the right of the pulpit, live the brains of the organ and two 850-watt sub-woofers that you will most certainly feel, especially when we play the Cathedral music."

"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. 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.



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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NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

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Snookah, LLC trading as Snookah, 7104 Brookfield Plaza, Springfield, VA 22150. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL for a Wine and Beer on Premises, Mixed Beverage on Premise license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Qamar U. Zaman President
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