

Oak Hill ❖ Herndon  
**CONNECTION**

# Herndon Hosts MLK Day of Service

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Ava Zelensky, 9, ties together a fleece blanket that will go to a child in the hospital during Volunteer Fairfax's family volunteer day Monday, Jan. 16 at the Herndon Senior Center.

## Mayoral Race Gets Started

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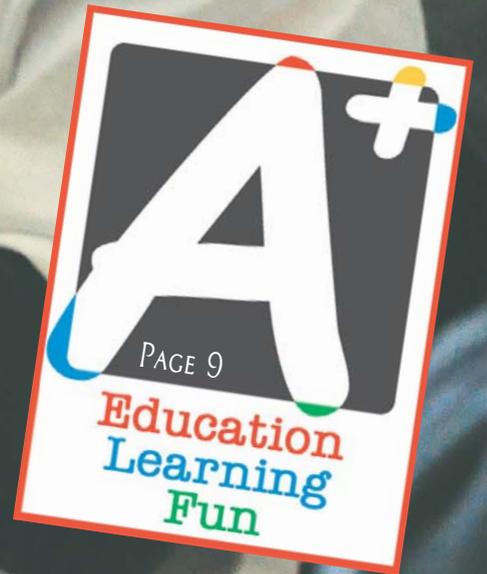


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Vice Mayor Lisa Merkel announced Monday that she will run for mayor in the town's May 1 election.

## Mayoral Race Gets Started

BY ALEX McVEIGH  
THE CONNECTION

Herndon's current Vice Mayor Lisa Merkel has announced she will run for mayor in the town's upcoming election. Merkel, who has lived in Herndon since 2002, was elected to her first council term in 2010.

"As Mayor, I will continue to focus on the critical issues I have advocated for as Vice Mayor, issues that will move Herndon forward," she said in a statement Monday. "These include implementing the Town's Economic Development initiative, planning appropriately for the diverse needs of both the Metro Station Area and our downtown, while maintaining town services and safety in our neighborhoods."

Merkel was a teacher in Fairfax County for eight years and has served on several committees regarding development for Dulles Rail, as well as being involved early on with downtown redevelopment.

Current Mayor Steve DeBenedittis also announced Monday that he will not seek reelection to a fourth term. He was elected in 2006, and has lived in Herndon since 1968.

"When I first ran for Mayor in 2006 I had no political resume. I ran because Herndon was facing serious problems and I felt that it was important for citizens to get involved in saving the character and fiscal stability of Herndon, where I grew up and am now raising my own family," he said. "It is now my time to move on, and let others work to improve our community."

The election for mayor and the six-member council will take place May 1. More information is available at [www.herndon-va.gov](http://www.herndon-va.gov).

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From left, Gillian Tweddle Nickson, 9 and Isabella Acosta, 9, make a fleece dog toy at the Herndon Senior Center Monday, Jan. 16 as part of Volunteer Fairfax's family volunteer day.



PHOTOS BY ALEX McVEIGH/THE CONNECTION

## Herndon's MLK Day of Service

Hundreds gather to serve at Senior Center.

BY ALEX McVEIGH  
THE CONNECTION

During the 2010 holiday season, Karen Bender of Herndon felt a little overwhelmed. Her family celebrates both Christmas and Hanukah, and she felt like they went through an entire month of getting presents.

"We felt like it was too much, a whole month of receiving gifts, and I thought it was important to show my son that it's just as important to give back," she said. "We wanted to find opportunities that weren't just picking up trash or something like that, but something that would create a positive feeling when it comes to giving back."

**"We're so excited to be a part of something like this"**

— Jacqueline Allen

Bender and her family decided to attend Volunteer Fairfax's Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service at the Herndon Senior Center last year, and they returned again this year.

"I found it hard to find events that the whole family could participate in, but this is a great one," she said. "It's just a great opportunity for children who constantly receive to feel the need to give back, and have fun doing it."

**MORE THAN 100 VOLUNTEERS** came to the center during the day Monday, choosing to spend their holiday working on various projects for people in need. Volunteers made fleece blankets and bracelets for children in hospitals, as well as toys for local rescue shelter dogs.

For Connor Tweddle, 12, making the chew toys for dogs was just the latest occasion to help out his favorite cause.

"I love doing things to help dogs all year round, I even asked for donations to animal shelters for my birthday," he said. "There's no such thing as a bad dog, people just train and



From left, Jacqueline Allen and her husband Hervey tie together blankets for hospitalized children Monday, Jan. 16 as part of Volunteer Fairfax's family volunteer day

treat them bad."

His friend Sean Lasik, 12, participated in the event last year, and said he enjoys any activity to help dogs.

"I like helping train dogs to be better to not jump on people, and making toys for them to play with is part of that," he said.

Jacqueline Allen and her husband Hervey of Woodbridge, came with their group, the Transfiguration Christian Fellowship Ministries, based in Ashburn. Both are also National Guard members.

"We're so excited to be a part of something like this," Jacqueline Allen said. "We've done things like Walk for the Cure and collecting food for local shelters, we're just grateful for any chance to show our commitment to the community around us, not just inside the church."

The Herndon Senior Center was one of three locations that Volunteer Fairfax had going throughout the day. Volunteers also gathered in Alexandria and Fairfax, with more than 1,000 participating.

"The Senior Center came to us and volunteered their space, and it's a great space to host an event like this, very versatile," said Phoebe Bicknell, agency relations coordinator for Volunteer Fairfax. "We reach out to local groups and PTAs, and since we had a great response last year, we're back. I've already seen a lot of 'repeat customers' from last year."

**MORE INFORMATION** on Volunteer Fairfax, which connects volunteers from around the county, can be found at [www.volunteerfairfax.org](http://www.volunteerfairfax.org).



PHOTO BY ALEX McVEIGH/THE CONNECTION

Jack Potter, president of the Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority, speaks to members of the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce Wednesday, Jan. 11.

## Chamber Hosts MWAA President

Jack Potter provides update on Dulles Metrorail.

BY ALEX McVEIGH  
THE CONNECTION

The Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce hosted Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority President Jack Potter at their newsmaker luncheon Wednesday, Jan. 11. Potter, who was selected as president last June, served as Postmaster General from June 2001 to December 2010.

Potter's main priority was providing an update on the status of Dulles Metrorail.

"The station at Wiehle Avenue is taking shape, the plan right now is that in 2013 we'll be able to complete Phase One," he said. "We're about 60 percent finished in terms of construction."

He also said the tunnel through Tysons Corner was complete, and they're ready to start the next step, which is laying rail through it.

"For Phase Two, we're in the process of preliminary engineering, which should be done at the end of February, when we'll see what construction companies are interested," he said. "After the project is submitted to MWAA for approval, including cost estimates ... Loudoun County and Fairfax County will have a 90-day review period, where they will decide to go along with the project or stop the project."

Frances Craig, president and CEO of Unanet Technologies, said she was interested in Potter's presentation because she believes rail is vital to the

area's future.

"If you go to any major city in the world, Rome, Paris, London, San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, Boston, you can fly in and take rail to the center of the city," she said. "That's what I want to happen here, so we're very supportive."

Potter also provided a brief update on the state of the airports, including an expanded international arrivals section. He said while airplane revenues stayed stable in 2011, airlines are changing the way they do business.

"Airlines have moved from a strategy where they have to be in every market, to where they're very much focused on profitability. They've kept a tight cap on passenger growth, and we're seeing a downsizing of aircraft," he said. "The bottom line is, while the industry has been stable, it does have its challenges, and it's meeting those challenges by downsizing and for us that's problematic. As an airport, we make money when people fly."

Kirk Forman, chair of the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce, said he believes Potter's experience makes him an ideal person to help complete Dulles Metrorail.

"Having managed an organization with more than 500,000 employees as Postmaster General, his work to enhance the workplace environment has contributed to record levels of safety and employee satisfaction," he said.

More information on the chamber is available at [www.dullesregionalchamber.org](http://www.dullesregionalchamber.org).

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## NEWS

# Legislators Host Town Hall

**Sen. Herring and Del. Rust share session priorities.**

BY ALEX McVEIGH  
 THE CONNECTION

Sen. Mark Herring (D-33) and Del. Tom Rust (R-86) hosted a town hall meeting at the Herndon Town Council chambers Saturday, Jan. 14 to speak with constituents about the upcoming General Assembly session.

“You see the governor’s budget now, but don’t panic about getting less money or get excited about getting more money,” Rust said. “The final budget won’t come out until the last day or two of the session, which will be in late March.” Rust did say he hoped to get one item put back in the budget that was taken out.

“The governor has taken out of the budget, what we call ‘the cost to compete,’ which gives extra money to Northern Virginia, primarily for teachers and public safety personnel,” he said. “I’m going to try and get that money, which is about \$33, \$34 million, back.”

Herring said the Northern Virginia delegation plans to fight for more education dollars in this area.

“I was concerned when the governor reached his budget that a lot of the items reduced the money for education, so one of my initiatives will be to try and reverse those,” Herring said.

Another of his education plans called for additional money for career and technical schools.

“I’m a big supporter of higher education, but colleges and universities are not for everyone,” he said. “We need to make sure that the kids who are graduating from high school and not going on to college are fully prepared to enter the workforce in a trade or other type of vocation.”

Charlie McPherson of Herndon said he was glad to hear both officials speak about the importance of education funding.

“I know it might sound like we’re the spoiled people up here in Northern Virginia always asking for more education money, and I know the southern Virginia economies aren’t as well off as we are, but that doesn’t mean we should suffer for it,” he said. “In fact, the way we avoid that sort of misfortune is to make sure we continue to provide a good education, which will continue to attract businesses, which in turn will generate more revenue. It sounds like both Mark and Tom know that, which is good to hear.”

Herring also said he plans to make sure the “state steps up” when it comes to Metrorail funding.



PHOTO BY ALEX McVEIGH/THE CONNECTION

**From left, Sen. Mark Herring (D-33) and Del. Tom Rust (R-86) speak to constituents about their priorities for the General Assembly session Saturday, Jan. 14 in Herndon.**

**“I was concerned when the governor reached his budget that a lot of the items reduced the money for education, so one of my initiatives will be to try and reverse those”**

— Sen. Mark Herring (D-33)

“The governor’s announcement that he would ask for \$150 million toward Phase Two of the project is a welcome first step, but it’s not enough. This is a project of regional, state and national significance,” he said. “The governor previously said he would ask for \$500 million to go to the Hampton Roads Bridge tunnel project to help keep tolls down. He’s asked for \$400 million to go to a public-private partnership on Route 460 in Tidewater, also to keep tolls down to a reasonable level. I think if they can find \$900 million to go to two projects in Hampton Roads area, Virginia can do more than \$150 million to keep tolls down in Northern Virginia, so I’ve asked that the number be \$500 million.”

**HERNDON COUNCILMEMBER** Bill Tirrell said he appreciated the legislators’ efforts to keep tolls down.

“I think everyone who uses the toll road appreciates that,” he said. “I think all of our legislators have been pretty pro-active in encouraging the state along. Congressman [Frank] Wolf (R-10) has been a dynamo in getting money on the Phase One side. We really encourage that, because as a toll player, I’m really not looking forward to some of the estimates out there.”

More information on Herring can be found at [www.markherring.org](http://www.markherring.org), and Rust can be found at [www.tomrust.org](http://www.tomrust.org).

## Building on Pro-business Culture

**New industry sectors are critical to Fairfax County's continued economic success.**

BY SHARON BULOVA  
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



**Sharon Bulova**

critical element in the county becoming the economic engine of the Washington area as well as the Commonwealth of Virginia. And, of course, the commercialization of government technology, including the Internet, has also helped create businesses and jobs in

Fairfax County.

We are proud that 66 of the nation's 100 largest government contractors have a presence in the county, including 22 that are based here. Government contractors employ Fairfax County residents and perform some of the most vital tasks required by the nation.

Of course, no community can sustain itself over time unless it has a diverse economy. Fairfax County will continue to foster the business-friendly climate that has attracted so many corporate relocations in the last several years, and we will continue to welcome government contractors to our community. But, we also will redouble our efforts to attract companies from a wide array of appropriate industry sectors to diversify our economic base.

The county, working through the Economic Development Authority, has in recent years landed the headquarters of high-profile large employers that are helping us diversify our economy. Volkswagen Group of America and Hilton Worldwide give us important inroads in the automotive and hospitality industries, for example. Most recently Bechtel, one of the largest engineering and construction companies in the world, announced it would relocate its global operations headquarters to Fairfax County. That is the kind of progress that the county can build upon for future economic success.

In my inaugural speech, I also referred to a business owner who moved his IT firm to the county. He told me how much he liked the mood here and that he wanted to be in a place where people enjoy what they do and are "charged up" about their work and their community. Our corporate leaders, like our residents, appreciate that, during these challenging times, Fairfax County has developed and improved on our pro-business culture. That will continue to be important in these difficult times as we look for new opportunities to improve the economic stability of the county in 2012 and beyond.

*Sharon Bulova chairs the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.*

**I**n the speech I gave Dec. 13 as I was sworn in as chairman of the Board of Supervisors, I quoted Albert Einstein, who said, "In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity." The continuing economic problems that afflict the nation, and the federal budget cuts that could take effect soon, provide Fairfax County an opportunity to continue the significant and diversified economic development successes of the past several years.

Fairfax County is fortunate to be at the doorstep of the nation's capital. Our proximity to Washington has made us a natural base for companies that want to do business with the federal government, and our ability to attract and retain government contractors has been a

### COMMENTARY

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Playing by Rules

To the Editor:

Much has been said in recent days about the Republican Presidential primary ballot and the news that only Mitt Romney and Ron Paul have been certified to be placed on the ballot by the State Board of Elections for the March 6 primary election.

To understand what happened, the process must first be understood. State law is very clear that to be certified, a candidate must obtain on petitions the signatures of 10,000 qualified voters in Virginia with at least 400 in each congressional district.

Again, by the law the state political parties are required to examine the submitted petitions, verify that the minimum threshold is met and issue certifications for those who meet these requirements. The process is well defined in the Code of Virginia and all of the Republican candidates were made aware of these requirements which, incidentally, have been in place for a number of years.

The real question now is why did the results turn out as they did? Some have suggested that the State Board of Elections and Republican Party manipulated things to produce these results. From the understanding which I obtained from news reports, two candidates (Romney and Paul)

submitted petitions and met the 10,000 valid signatures requirement and two other candidates (Gingrich and Perry) submitted petitions but "did not come close to the 10,000 valid signature threshold," to quote from a statement provided on the website of the Republican Party of Virginia.

The other three candidates (Bachman, Santorum and Huntsman) did not submit any petitions and, therefore by default, did not meet the requirement to be certified. I am confident that the State Board of Elections and the Republican Party believe in the "rule of law." It is my opinion that they did their very best to follow the intent and spirit of the law in carrying out the proscribed process.

I believe it is regrettable that only two candidates qualified but all of the candidates knew the requirements of the law. If people have questions about the fairness of the situation, I suggest they immediately contact their Delegate and State Senator to initiate amendments to the law (Section 24.2-545 of the Code of Virginia). The law specifies the process and if you are not satisfied with the results of that process, then you should work to change the law.

**Anne Damon**  
Fairfax



PHOTO BY ROBBIE HAMMER/THE CONNECTION

#### Volunteering on MLK Day

**Talia Schmitt, 16, of Fairfax, helps Tyler Prevett, of Vienna, and his children James, 5, and Jessie, 3, make compost boxes on the campus of George Mason University on Monday morning. Talia was volunteering for Volunteer Fairfax's third annual Family Volunteer Day in celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.**

## Find a Friend... Be a Friend!

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# COMMUNITY Elden Street Players Garner 22 WATCH Award Nominations

**"Ain't Misbehavin'"** of Alexandria leads with 11 nods.

BY JEANNE THEISSMANN  
THE CONNECTION

The Elden Street Players garnered 22 nominations as the Washington Area Theatre Community Honors announced the nominees for the 2012 WATCH Awards Jan. 15 at the Birchmere Music Hall in Alexandria.

Last year's production of "Ain't Misbehavin'" garnered 11 nominations including Outstanding Musical. Outstanding Play nominee "A Mid-Summer Night's Dream" earned seven nods while "Thrill Me" walked away with three and "Frozen" with one nomination.

Richelle "Rikki" Howie, who did double duty as director and performer in "Ain't Misbehavin'," was nominated for Outstanding Direction of a Musical as well as Outstanding Featured Actress in a Musical for her role as Charlayne Woodward. Howie's co-stars Michelle Harmon and Jade Jones were also nominated in the Outstanding Featured Actress category.

Adam Downs, one of the finest actors in the region, was nominated as Outstanding Lead Actor in a Play for his role as Ralph in "Frozen." He was also recognized in the Outstanding Featured Actor in a Play category for his work in "Noises Off" at The Little Theatre

of Alexandria. Joining Downs as a multiple WATCH Award-nominee is Jaclyn Young, who earned an Outstanding Featured Actress in a Play nod for her role in the ESP production of "A Mid-Summer Night's Dream," an Outstanding Featured Actress in a Musical nomination for "Hairspray" at The Little Theatre of Alexandria and Outstanding Hair Design in a Musical and Outstanding Makeup Design in a Musical in the Reston Community Players production of "The Drowsy Chaperone."

Evan Hoffman garnered dual nominations for "A Mid-Summer Night's Dream," getting nods for Outstanding Direction of Play and Outstanding Set Decoration of a Play.

Nominees were selected from 127 productions that were adjudicated at 32 community theatre



Chris Prince, Rikki Howie, Jade Jones, Michelle Harmon and Patrick Doneghy in "Ain't Misbehavin'."

companies. In each of 38 categories, five nominees (more in case of a tie) were selected based on the average scores of eight judges.

Winners will be announced at the WATCH Awards ceremony March 11 at The Birchmere Music Hall.

## Elden Street Players Nominations

- Outstanding Direction of a Play - Evan Hoffmann - A Midsummer Night's Dream
- Outstanding Featured Actress in a Play - Jaclyn Young as "Hermia/Snout/Wall" - A Midsummer Night's Dream
- Outstanding Play - A Midsummer Night's Dream
- Outstanding Set Decoration in a Play - Evan Hoffmann - A Midsummer Night's Dream
- Outstanding Set Painting in a Play - Kate Meier & Karl Meier - A Midsummer Night's Dream
- Outstanding Sound Design in a Play - Ben Allen - A Midsummer Night's Dream
- Outstanding Stage Combat Choreography - Katherine Frattini - A Midsummer Night's Dream
- Outstanding Direction of a Musical - Richelle "Rikki" Howie - Ain't Misbehavin'
- Outstanding Musical - Ain't Misbehavin'
- Outstanding Set Construction in a Musical - James Villarrubia et al - Ain't Misbehavin'
- Outstanding Set Design in a Musical - James Villarrubia - Ain't Misbehavin'
- Outstanding Set Painting in a Musical - Cathy Rieder & James Villarrubia - Ain't Misbehavin'
- Outstanding Lead Actor in a Play - Adam Downs as "Ralph" - Frozen
- Outstanding Lead Actor in a Musical - Christopher Smith as "Nathan" - Thrill Me
- Outstanding Light Design in a Musical - Tom Epps - Thrill Me
- Outstanding Set Design in a Musical - Grant Kevin Lane - Thrill Me
- Outstanding Direction of a Musical - Michael d'Haviland - Ain't Misbehavin'
- Outstanding Musical - Ain't Misbehavin'
- Outstanding Set Construction in a Musical - James Villarrubia et al - Ain't Misbehavin'
- Outstanding Set Design in a Musical - James Villarrubia - Ain't Misbehavin'
- Outstanding Set Painting in a Musical - Cathy Rieder & James Villarrubia - Ain't Misbehavin'
- Outstanding Lead Actor in a Play - Adam Downs as "Ralph" - Frozen
- Outstanding Lead Actor in a Musical - Christopher Smith as "Nathan" - Thrill Me
- Outstanding Light Design in a Musical - Tom Epps - Thrill Me
- Outstanding Set Design in a Musical - Grant Kevin Lane - Thrill Me
- Outstanding Direction of a Musical - Richelle "Rikki" Howie - Ain't Misbehavin'
- Outstanding Musical - Ain't Misbehavin'
- Outstanding Set Construction in a Musical - James Villarrubia et al - Ain't Misbehavin'
- Outstanding Set Design in a Musical - James Villarrubia - Ain't Misbehavin'
- Outstanding Set Painting in a Musical - Cathy Rieder & James Villarrubia - Ain't Misbehavin'
- Outstanding Lead Actor in a Play - Adam Downs as "Ralph" - Frozen
- Outstanding Lead Actor in a Musical - Christopher Smith as "Nathan" - Thrill Me
- Outstanding Light Design in a Musical - Tom Epps - Thrill Me
- Outstanding Set Design in a Musical - Grant Kevin Lane - Thrill Me
- Outstanding Music Direction - J.

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

## ENTERTAINMENT

**WEDNESDAY/JAN. 18**  
**International Guitar Night.** 8 p.m.  
The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Acoustic guitarists

Adrian Legg, Lulo Reinhardt, Marco Pereira, and Brian Gore. \$25. 1-877-965-3872 or www.wolftrap.org.

## THURSDAY/JAN. 19

**Before Reston: Colonial and Early History of the Reston Area.** 7 p.m. Reston Community Center-Lake Anne, 1609 Washington Plaza, Reston. Local historian Karen Washburn and Assistant Professor Ted McCord of George Mason University with a discussion of King Charles II and the Northern Neck proprietary grants, how they limited settlement in comparison with the rest of Colonial Virginia, and how the land transferred from the Culpeper family to the Fairfax family. Free. 703-709-7700 or restonmuseum@gmail.com.

**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. Skeletons of the Feast by

Christopher Bohjalian. Adults. 703-242-4020.

**eBook/eReader 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 appointment. Adults. 703-242-4020.

**Christine Lavin.** 8 p.m. Barns at Wolf Trap, 1551 Trap Road, Vienna. Folk music. \$20. www.wolftrap.org.

**Country Rocker Rick Caballo.** 9:30 p.m. Jimmy's Old Town Tavern, 697 Spring St., Herndon. www.jimmystavern.com.

**FRIDAY/JAN. 20**  
**"Lend Me a Tenor."** 8 p.m. Reston Community Players, 266 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. Tickets \$15-\$21. 703-476-4500 or restonplayers.org.

**Red Molly.** 8 p.m. Barns at Wolf Trap, 1551 Trap Road, Vienna. Folk music. \$20. www.wolftrap.org.

**SATURDAY/JAN. 21**  
**"Lend Me a Tenor."** 8 p.m. Reston Community Players, 266 Sunset Park

## A Spirited Musical

Elden Street Players present  
**'Rooms, A Rock Romance.'**

BY DAVID SIEGEL  
THE CONNECTION

Youthful dreams and ambitions while searching for love makes for "a perfect little winter romantic musical; really an affectionate love letter to an audience," said award-winning veteran director Todd Huse of "Rooms, A Rock Romance." The next Elden Street Players offering is sweet and edgy as it tells "the tale of a relationship of two polar opposites" through music and lyrics.

With a score of rock songs and show tunes backed by a six-piece band, the musical "is not the same old rock rhythms usually heard, but a variety of musical styles," said musical director Blakeman Brophy. He will direct the band through the show's 90 minutes and a song list of nearly two dozen songs including songs that range from the tender to the punk. There is even one for a Bat Mitzvah entitled "Scottish-Jewish Princess."

The story follows a young girl singer/songwriter, who meets an equally young but less driven, isolated boy rocker. She wants to get places fast while he has his share of personal issues and addictions that can make artistic success or loving someone somewhat difficult. This leads to a spirited, "push-pull" of a bond, both creatively and romantically. The show's arc follows the couple through several years of travels together from Glasgow, Scotland to London to the New York City punk rock scene.

Huse described the show as "a great little musical that too few have yet seen or heard. It is a

## Where and When

"Rooms, A Rock Romance" presented by the Elden Street Players, Industrial Strength Theatre, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. Performances Jan. 27-Feb. 18. Fridays & Saturdays 8 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 5 at 3 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 12 at 7 p.m. and Thursday, Feb. 16 at 8 p.m. Tickets \$23. 703-481-5930 or logon: www.eldentreetplayers.thundertix.com.

Drive, Herndon. Tickets \$15-\$21. 703-476-4500 or restonplayers.org.

**2012 Lunar New Year Blessing Ceremony.** 3:30 p.m. The Washington DC Chapter of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, 1516 Moorings Drive, Reston. Celebrate the Lunar New Year and a red envelope blessings from Tzu Chi's founder Dharma Master Cheng Yen, and entertainment by the students of the DC Tzu Chi Academy. 703-707-8606.

**Tom Chapin.** 7:30 p.m. Barns at Wolf Trap, 1551 Trap Road, Vienna. Singer/songwriter. \$22. www.wolftrap.org.



Michael J. Perez (left with guitar) and Kate Roehr (right).

rare find... unusual in that it is mostly sung, with less spoken dialogue than is often the norm for a musical." The music and lyrics for "Rooms, A Rock Romance" were written by Paul Scott Goodman who collaborated with his wife Miriam Goodman in co-writing the book.

The two-actor show features newcomer Kate Roehr as the young woman who feels askew and dreams of "bringing the future faster." She doesn't quite yet "understand what life means beyond that things are just not coming fast enough" as she chases after life full speed according to Roehr. But she does know that songs shape her life.

Michael J. Perez is the male lead. While his character is an edgy rocker he described the show as "a very down-to-earth musical" about two people journeying toward love and success through any number of trials as they move well beyond just sitting in a room feeling alone.

www.wolftrap.org.

www.restonarts.org.

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Janet Hu competes in the 200-free event during Oakton's victory over Chantilly.



PHOTOS BY KATIE PIERCE

Philip Hu took first place in both the 100-back and fly events.

## Oakton Out-touches Chantilly in Concorde Swim Meet

### Win and Loss for Flint Hill Swimming.

BY KATIE PIERCE  
SPECIAL TO THE CONNECTION

**O**akton High School's varsity swim and dive teams took to the water against Chantilly High School on Friday night, Jan. 6 at Oak Marr Recreation Center. Oakton's boys and girls fought to the finish, and held tight to their undefeated record this season. The boys won 160-155, and the girls won 177-135.

Oakton dive had another week of great performances, led by Joe LeBerre's first place.

The meet continued with close swims across the board. The little victories, such

as Cougar swimmers finishing sixth place rather than seventh, or fourth place rather than fifth, were the meet details which helped both Oakton teams win.

"It was a really close meet - closer than we had anticipated, but we pulled through in the end," said Stephanie Hallock, one of the Oakton team captains. "If we keep up the hard work, there's a definite possibility of an undefeated season and a shot for the state title."

Philip Hu placed first in both of his individual events - 100-yard butterfly and 100-backstroke. Conor Murphy placed first in the 50-freestyle and was second in the 100-freestyle. Ryan Santoro finished first in 100-breaststroke and second in 50-freestyle.

Janet Hu placed first in both the 200-freestyle and 100-butterfly. Laura Branton finished first in both the 50-freestyle and in 100-freestyle.

### OAKTON SWEEPS ROBINSON

Oakton, in its most recent meet last Friday night, went head to head with Robinson Secondary for the second time this season at Cub Run Recreation Center. Oakton's boys and girls both had a strong meet, staying undefeated. The boys won 202-113, and the girls won 192 - 123.

The meet started off with Senior Recognition Night. Dr. Banbury, the Oakton High Principal, and Pat Full, Oakton's Athletic Director, were on deck to pay tribute to the Cougar team's 20 graduating seniors.

Cheryl Meltz, head dive coach, shared her thoughts on the night.

"We got to pay tribute to our 20 wonderful senior swimmers and divers who have done so much for our team over the last four years," said Meltz. "We will definitely miss their contributions to the team after they graduate. We are excited to have both our

boys' and girls' teams undefeated going into our last dual meet. We are hoping to finish up the season undefeated in our last dual meet next weekend and then look forward to an amazing championship season."

Oakton dive had another week of strong performances off the board, as Joe LeBerre took second for the boys.

Philip Hu placed first in both 200-freestyle and 500-freestyle. Carter Sharer also took first in two events - 200-individual medley and 100-butterfly. Conor Murphy finished first in 100-backstroke and second in 50-freestyle.

Janet Hu finished first in 200-individual medley and 100-freestyle. Julia Capobianco placed first in 100-butterfly and 100-backstroke.

Oakton will return to the pool for the last meet of the regular season at 8:30 pm Friday, Jan. 20, against Robinson Secondary at Audrey Moore.

## Additional Manpower Boosts Herndon High Wrestling

### Hornets have good showing over break at Loudoun Holiday meet.

BY RICH SANDERS  
THE CONNECTION

**O**ne year has made a positive difference for the Herndon High wrestling team. Last winter, the Hornets had a skeleton line-up with just five varsity team members. This season that has all changed as Herndon has enough personnel to fill out each weight class in competitions. Wins have been hard to come by, but at least Herndon is able to compete at all of the weight classes.

"Last season we were forfeiting the rest of the weight [divisions]," said veteran Herndon High head coach Mike Gonzales. "This year we have been able to field a whole team. We've been placing more wrestlers at tournaments as well."

Herndon's top wrestlers have been Gabe Pike (126 pounds), Jared Nielsen (106),

Bassam Estwani (152), Sean Pike (132), and Andrew Healy (220).

Gabe Pike, a senior, has qualified for the postseason Northern Region tournament in each of his previous three years and earned a region place finish last year as a junior. He is currently ranked in the region.

Nielsen, meanwhile, is a returning Concorde District place finisher.

Healy has been a pleasant surprise this season and is currently undefeated in the district. He won his weight class at a holiday tournament and made the finals of another tournament.

"Our expectations are for everyone to qualify for the regional tournament and win a match at regionals," said Gonzales, whose team was 1-8 going into this week's action. "We'll be in good shape next year as we're only losing four varsity starters."

**HERNDON'S** lone win thus far came in a non-district home dual match versus Falls Church High on Dec. 21. The Hornets won that day by a score of 48-26. Herndon had seven pin winners versus the Jaguars. Those pin wins came from: Alex Palomo (heavyweight), Healy (220 weight class), Khaled Moustafa (182), William Mejia (152), Gabe Pike (126), Chris Gaffney (112), and Yusuf Ahmed (113).

Other wins by Herndon wrestlers versus Falls Church came from Estwani (160), 7-2 decision; and Nielsen (106) by a 6-1 score.

Back on Dec. 10, Herndon, in a tri-meet at Dominion High School (Dulles District) in Sterling, gave the home team Titans a good showing in a 45-36 loss. Pin victories for Herndon against Dominion came from Estwani (152), Sean Pike (132), Gabe Pike (126), and Dante Walker (120).

Later that day, versus Freedom High, an-

other school from the Dulles District, the Hornets lost by a close, 40-39 score. Herndon winners in that dual meet were Healy (pin at 220), Moustafa (pin at 182), John Shull (pin at 145), Abe Shull (pin at 138), Sean Pike (7-1 win at 132), Gabe Pike (pin at 126), and Walker (pin at 120).

Over the winter Christmas break, Herndon competed at the Loudoun Holiday Tournament at Stone Bridge High School in Ashburn. Herndon individual champions at the tournament were Healy at 220-division and Sean Pike at 132 weight class. Moustafa earned a second place finish at 182 and Hornet third place finishers were Mac Emery at 190, Gaffney at 120, and Yusuf Ahmed at 106. Walker was a fourth place finisher at 120.

Herndon was scheduled to compete in a district tri-meet competition earlier this week at Westfield High School on Tuesday, Jan. 17. The Hornets' next home match will be next Wednesday, Jan. 25 versus district opponent Centreville.

# The Yoga Generation

Yoga credited with relieving stress, boosting self-esteem and improving grades in children.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

**H**annah Ticardi deals with the pressure of competitive soccer games or rigorous science classes by striking a pose. The 16-year-old Vienna student usually prefers downward facing dog or cobra.

"It is really important to have a stress reliever, and yoga is really good for that," said Ticardi who is an 11th-grade student at James Madison High School in Vienna.

Katherine Harris, who has practiced yoga since middle school, agrees. "What I like best about yoga is the feeling I have after class where I feel like I'm floating," said Harris, a high school junior who takes classes at Sun and Moon Yoga Studio in Arlington.

Ticardi and Harris are part of a generation of children who are growing up with yoga, the practice impacting their lives from in utero through high school. Most studios now offer prenatal classes as well as instruction for toddlers, elementary, middle and high school students.

"When I visit my prenatal students in the hospital after they have their baby, I can pick up the newborn child and they almost always take a deep breath and say 'om,'" joked Luann Fulbright of Dream Yoga Studio and Wellness Center in McLean.

Aficionados, educators and researchers credit the discipline for addressing issues ranging from self-control to self-awareness. A study conducted by researchers at the California State University, Los Angeles' College of Education showed that regular yoga practice boosted students' self-esteem and improved their physical health, behavior and academic performance.

"It is amazing to watch what happens with these children. Their focus and concentration is improved," said Dawn Curtis, owner of East Meets West Yoga Center in Vienna.

Classes are structured to appeal to children at each age group. "For smaller children, everything is done on a theme. Sometimes classes are themed around the holidays or seasons or animals or stories," said Curtis.

Teachers keep students engaged by using age-appropriate language



PHOTO BY JIM VECCHIONE

**Yoga students, including Maya Ettleson (center) practice a downward dog tunnel at Budding Yogis studio. Experts say yoga is good exercise for children.**

and adapting traditional yoga poses for children. "We learn poses that relate to nature or animals," said Cynthia Maltenfort, an instructor at Sun and Moon Yoga in Fairfax. "There is a lot of interaction and developing a connection with themselves and with each other. We start to address feelings and emotions." Many yoga studios also host yoga summer camps and yoga birthday parties. There is also yoga for families. "Family yoga classes give parents and children a chance to be together in a supportive, non-threatening, non-hierarchical way," said Fulbright. "They can just interact and enjoy each other without the parents having to discipline. There's lots of laughter and lots of fun. You build a stronger, healthier connection with your child."

**SOME LOCAL SCHOOL** officials have embraced yoga for children. Potomac Elementary School students are offered yoga classes from instructors at Village Yoga in Potomac.

"I believe that exercise and relaxation techniques should start at a very early age," said Linda Goldberg, principal of Potomac Elementary School. "Children will enjoy exercise throughout their lifetime when they experience pleasurable learning when they are young."

"I have some teachers who, when the class is getting too busy, say to the students, 'Stand up and everybody take some deep breaths,' and they do a yoga position, sometimes just to calm children down," said Marjorie Myers, Ed.D., principal, Francis Scott Key Elementary School in Arlington. "We have an after-school yoga class that the parents put together,

and there is a family yoga night where parents come in with their children and everybody does yoga together. One of the pluses is that these activities have demystified yoga for the children."

**YOGA HAS BEEN** criticized for having religious overtones. "We often 'om'" at the end of class ... We also say namaste. While the words aren't religious, they can be construed that way," said Linda Feldman, director of Budding Yogis, a studio that caters solely to children. "I tell our teacher trainees that if they're in a public school scenario or where there are concerns over religion, they can use a word other than om or namaste."

As with any physical activity, injury is possible, but preventable. "Sometimes [children's] muscles haven't yet developed to hold things where they need to be, so we have to be strict with them in making sure their alignment is proper," said Margolis.

While many doctors agree that yoga is a healthy practice, they say the benefits children get from yoga can also be found just as effectively elsewhere. "The good thing is that there [are] a variety of cost-efficient and simple ways for children and teens to relax and unwind," said Kristin Anderson, M.D., M.P.H., family and preventive medicine physician for Molina Healthcare, Community Health Care Network clinic in Reston. "Going on walks as a family can also help everyone get the exercise they need as well as spend quality time together while they de-stress. This can help kids and their parents improve posture, relieve anxiety, practice deeper breathing, build lungs and stretch muscles."



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# Left To My Own Devices



By **KENNETH B. LOURIE**

And a lot of good it's doing me. I may be able to do what I want, but I don't really have a clue as to what it is I want to do – or can do. What I am referring to, specifically, are the various electrical “chargers” we now have in our house: for cell phones (smart and stupid), Bluetooth, Kindle, miscellaneous computers (laptop, tablet), etc.; they're almost as much of a nuisance as the stink bugs which every day it seems, still manage to find ways to get into the house. To me, all the cords look alike and, to compound the problem, most of the devices are plugged into the same outlet – for semi-convenience sake. As a result of this convergence, determining – without bending over, which male goes into which female (euphemistically speaking) is becoming increasingly more challenging – and frustrating.

Not that we're splitting the atom here, but more and more, part of our daily routine involves recharging devices and matching up those same devices with their respective male/female counterparts. It's a process that, though not particularly complicated, is nonetheless becoming anything but routine. To further complicate this technological two-step (or three- or four-step – for me), is the fact that the cords are all the same color. In addition to appearing relatively similar, some even fit multiple devices; although not always recharging as we anticipate, leading to a false sense of power security. “Universal” it's not. Moreover, since the cords are generally confined to one electrical outlet (to avoid multiple-outlet clutter), they're often tangled up in black (their color) and not so easily retrieved. To find the matching cord and then to extricate it from its electrical connection on the first attempt without further ado, is much easier said than actually done.

It's almost as if we need a confined, pantry-like area in-home in which to store and stow all the chargers; labeled and slotted on specific shelves. Presently, in my home anyway, when connecting or disconnecting any of these devices/cords, a “tip-toe through the tulips” it's not; it's more like a minefield. If an accidental step or grab is made, there won't be any explosions or loss of life (for perspective), but there still might be some screaming and/or loss of important assets with significant replacement cost to follow. Not to mention data lost – potentially, and lifestyle and/or work complications that together might cause an emotional upheaval the likes of which you've been anticipating and dreading since this 24/7 accessibility/timeline took over and made us all victims of our own electronic devices. Hal from “2001 Space Odyssey” it's not, but we're getting there.

I wish I could suggest an alternative or devise some sort of preemptive pursuit to prevent this inevitable meltdown of man and/or machinery. However, I know so little – as usual, of what I'm theorizing that I'm hardly qualified to offer an opinion. In fact, I probably should be disqualified. However, given the underlying fact that I am an actual victim of these circumstances, perhaps I'm able to think outside the box (from the mouths of babes, so to speak) and arrive at a Seinfeldian-type of solution similar to Jerry's riff on parking garages: colors and numbers are too easily forgettable, he observed on one episode; maybe identifying the areas with more unforgettable phrases/descriptions like “Your mother's a whore or your father was an abusive alcoholic” might help weary shoppers locate their vehicles. My suggestion is less perverse and more sensible, actually. Why not color-code the cords to match a specific device the same way Miss Utility marks respectively, the “underground facilities: buried power, sewer, gas and water” to avoid the inevitable confusion. And of course, “It's The Law. Dig with CARE.” Red, blue, yellow, green, etc. would equate with a specific device and its cord. All color coordinated – for dummies, like me.

As I sift through the cords and devices now, trying to patiently find a match; while considering adding new devices – with their chargers/cords, as technology imposes its inexorable will on me – and society, a solution better be forthcoming. Otherwise, I'll be left powerless – and helpless. Remember, a chain is only as strong as its weakest link.

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

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## THE COUNTY LINE

# Allen Declares War on Unions

Seeking his old Senate seat, former governor goes on the offensive against organized labor.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
THE CONNECTION

**H**oping to capitalize on anti-union sentiment in Virginia this year, Republican George Allen is giving labor issues a starring role in his bid to recapture the Senate seat he lost to Jim Webb in 2006. In a meeting with Connection Newspapers reporters and editors, Allen proposed a series of specific measures to undercut the power of unions. The agenda would undercut the power of the National Labor Relations Board, prohibit mandatory labor agreements on federal projects and ensure secret ballots before a labor union can be created.

"Unions are a big part of the Democrats' political operation," said Allen. "There's no secret about that."

Allen says the series of proposals were inspired by the National Labor Relations Board's lawsuit against airline manufacturer Boeing, which sought to punish the company for locating a new plant in South Carolina in retaliation for strikes by unionized workers at its existing facility in Washington state. The lawsuit was dropped last month, but Allen and other Republicans are now hoping to capitalize on the issue on the campaign trail.

"This is an issue that hits a sweet spot for Republican voters," said Kyle Kondik, political analyst with the University of Virginia Center for Politics. "So it certainly helps him in the primary against Jamie Radtke. It remains to be seen whether it's something that would appeal to voters in the general election against Tim Kaine."

**ALLEN SAYS** the freedom to work is "under assault," and repeatedly used the lawsuit against Boeing as a reason for the federal government to take decisive action. But Allen's agenda is broader than simply undercutting the power of the National Labor Relations Board. He would also like to amend the National Labor Relations Act to prevent workers from being compelled to pay union dues or fees to get or keep a job, essentially expanding Virginia's Right To Work law nationwide. He would also work to guarantee that workers have the opportunity to cast secret ballots before a union can be organized.

"None of George Allen's proposals would help workers in Virginia like me in any way," said Karen Conchar, Fairfax County employee and member of Local 5 Service Employees International Union. "Taking away



PHOTOS BY DEB COBB/THE CONNECTION

**Former governor George Allen discusses campaign issues as candidate seeking the Republican nomination for U.S. Senate.**

**"Unions are a big part of the Democrats' political operation. There's no secret about that."**

**— George Allen**

rights at the workplace doesn't help the middle class put food on the table or pay the mortgage, and it doesn't help businesses create good jobs."

As governor in the 1990s, Allen says he saw firsthand how the commonwealth's Right to Work Law helped encourage investment and expansion of business in Virginia. If elected to the Senate, he says, he wants to advance an agenda to undercut the power of unions in a way that would help businesses create jobs, save taxpayers money and protect the liberty of non-unionized workers. One of his goals would be to repeal the Davis-Bacon wage laws that he says diminish competition and inflate costs to taxpayers for construction when the federal government is involved. Ultimately, Allen said, he's hoping that voters send a mandate for action.

"The reality is that it matters who the president is," said Allen. "President Bush didn't allow project labor agreements. This president is all for them."

**ONE OF ALLEN'S** proposals would have particular resonance in Northern Virginia: It would prohibit the federal government from entering into mandatory project labor agreements, a collective bargaining agreement that establishes terms and conditions for a specific construction project. These are frequently large-scale infrastructure projects, such as bridges or Metro expansion to Dulles International Airport. Allen says that taxpayers would get more bang for their buck if the federal government was prohibited from engaging in collective bargaining on these projects.

"The reason you don't want to have these is that they increase the cost of a project, on average by 22 percent," said Allen. "You

have less competitive bidding."

Union groups dispute this notion, questioning if taxpayers would really save money by hiring low-wage workers. Supporters of project labor agreements say unionized workers are paid more money because they produce better work. As a result, supporters say, they also create infrastructure that is less likely to break down or fail — sometimes with catastrophic consequences.

"Sometimes what you see is that without project labor agreements you end up with a more exploitable workforce," said Julie Hunter, spokeswoman for the Virginia AFL-CIO. "These are workers that tend to not have the same training that the union workforce has."

**ALLEN'S OPPONENTS** don't have much to say about his specific proposals. Campaign officials for Jamie Radtke, the Tea Party candidate hoping to challenge him in the Republican primary, declined to respond to multiple requests for an interview. Her campaign website says she would oppose laws that would require a worker's secret ballot in union elections. The site also says she would support Virginia's Right To Work Law and oppose collective bargaining between government entities and public employee organizations and unions.

"The fundamental right to associate with those we choose assures workers the right to form labor organizations," Radtke said in a written statement on her campaign website. "However, this fundamental right of association also guarantees the individual the right not to associate."

If he's successful against Radtke, Allen will face former Democratic Gov. Tim Kaine — pitting two former governors against each

other in a Senate race. Like Allen, Kaine also supports Virginia's right-to-work law. When contacted about Allen's labor proposals, the Kaine campaign issued a statement saying that the former Democratic governor upheld the law as governor and will continue to support states' rights to establish their own rules on this issue as senator. The campaign did not respond to a request to address Allen's specific proposals.

"The answer to our economic challenges is not tinkering with workplace rules, as George Allen suggests," said communications director Brandi Hoffine in a written statement. "The real answer is building a high-talent economy by investing in education and workforce development."

**ALLEN'S SUITE OF PROPOSALS** will pit traditional political opponents against each other, labor unions and their Democratic allies on one side and business leaders and allies in the Republican party on the other. What's different about this election is the recession, with the unemployment rate in Virginia currently at 6.2 percent. Another difference with this election cycle is the growing Occupy movement, which seeks to cast a spotlight on the same wealth inequality that gave rise to the original labor movement in the late 19th century. Now, Allen says, it's time to move away from that model and adopt a more free-market approach.

For voters in Northern Virginia, the stakes are high.

"This artificially increases the costs and it also ends up with less competition so you end up with a higher cost to the taxpayers," said Allen. "If you look at the Metro extension to Dulles, the ones who will ultimately have to pay for these unnecessarily higher costs will be the taxpayers."