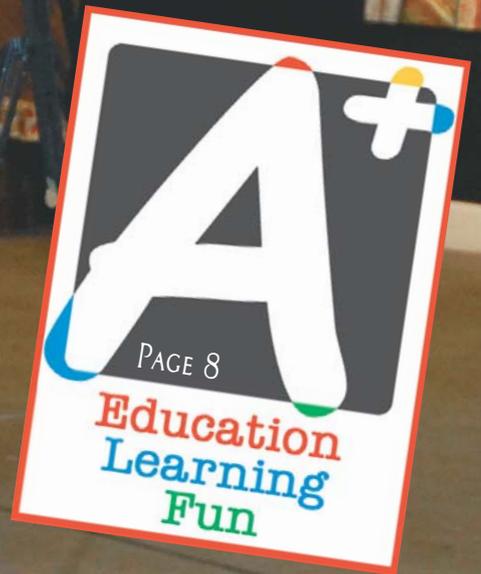


Fairfax Station ❖ Clifton ❖ Lorton
CONNECTION

Having Heart In Lorton

NEWS, PAGE 7

The Lorton Workhouse Arts Center held its 2nd Annual Saturday Art Walk last weekend, which allowed visitors to walk the halls of each building, interacting with artists. Each building featured one artist, with building W4 featuring an interactive art installation made up with donated food items, entitled the Have a Heart project.



Fairfax County
Considers Meals
Tax Referendum

NEWS, PAGE 3

Coming to America
At Robinson

A+, PAGE 8

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Fairfax County Considers Meals Tax Referendum

Revenue would be earmarked for transportation projects.

BY VICTORIA ROSS

THE CONNECTION

Last week, it looked as if the Virginia General Assembly might give Fairfax County a new funding tool: the right to generate new revenue through user fees, such as tax on restaurant meals, which would drive down the County's reliance on property taxes.

"We had heard rumblings that the state might give us the authority to do that," said Supervisor Jeff McKay (D-Lee), chairman of the board's transportation committee. "That's how we started talking about a meals tax that would generate revenue for transportation upgrades."

But when McKay and several other supervisors went to Richmond last Thursday to review the bills coming out of the Virginia General Assembly, they spotted the stick that came with that carrot.

"Yes, they were saying, 'we'll give you this authority, but you also have to take responsibility for maintaining your roads,'" McKay said. "The other shoe dropping was basically the sound of devolution... Essentially, the state would be handing us a badly broken road system without the funds to even bring it up to a barely acceptable level... That's what really infuriated me."

Virginia is one of three states in the country where the state, rather than local counties and municipalities, have the responsibility to maintain substantially all public roads. McKay said the pending legislation would transfer that maintenance responsibility to the County (a process known as devolution), but not return to the County any of the state tax revenues that currently pay for that maintenance. Officials in Fairfax County, as well as other Northern Virginia counties, are adamantly against devolution.

"It's time for Fairfax County to stop being the state's ATM machine," McKay added. "The state continues every year to suck more money from Northern Virginia... We're not going to let the state off the hook for its responsibility to maintain our roads."

Rather than relying upon the Commonwealth to grant the County additional taxing authority to address anticipated budget shortfalls, supervisors are now considering asking voters to approve a meals tax through a referendum. Such a referendum would not require additional authority from the General Assembly.

A VOTER REFERENDUM on a meals tax is an idea that gained bipartisan support during a two-day retreat for the board held last Monday and Tuesday, Feb 6-7, at the Lorton Workhouse Arts Center.

Although similar referendums have failed in the



Chairman Sharon Bulova (D-at-large) reviews goals during the Board of Supervisors retreat, held Feb. 6-7 at the Lorton Workhouse Arts Center.

"It's time for Fairfax County to stop being the state's ATM machine."

— Supervisor Jeff McKay (D-Lee)

past, supervisors say voters might approve the tax if they were assured the revenue would go directly to a specific list of transportation improvements, such as widening roads and building interchanges to reduce gridlock.

Supervisor John Cook (R-Braddock) said a 4 percent tax on restaurant meals - something that Vienna, the City of Fairfax and Alexandria already do - could generate up to \$80 million a year over the next decade. He said there is also a potential \$150 million on the table from a list of transportation-related fees the board discussed in 2007.

"We had a pretty robust discussion during the retreat of what it would take to meet our transportation needs," Cook said. Cook said the sobering financial picture presented by County Executive Tony Griffin revealed a \$300 - \$400 million annual gap "between what we need in Fairfax and what we would get under current law and budgets."

"If voters approved a meals tax referendum, we could start to close that gap. It's worth having a serious discussion about this," Cook said. But Cook stressed he has not come down one way or the other on the meals tax referendum.

"We have to wait and see what ends up passing in Richmond. We need to step back and let the state have its session," Cook said. "There are all sorts of things flying around - an index tax on gas, whether or not there's devolution - and we need to have a hand on the spoon stirring the pot. I have not endorsed (a meals tax referendum) or rejected it."

CHAIRMAN SHARON BULOVA (D-at-large) said a meals tax could be a source of funding for road maintenance, education or tax diversification.

But Bulova also noted the precarious success rate of similar referendums in the past, when voters rejected tax increases in 1992 and 2002.

"A lot has changed since those referendums failed," Bulova said. "In my heart of hearts, I think we should have a meals tax because everyone around us has it. It levels the playing field."

Senator Chap Petersen (D-34) said even though Vienna and the City of Fairfax have 4 percent meal

SEE MEALS TAX, PAGE 5



Samantha Bryant (middle) posed with the prom dress she'd created, along with Brian Beitler and Lis Rockey of David's Bridal.

Fairfax Student Wins Prom Dress Contest

Dream come true for Samantha Bryant.

BY JENNIFER FEDOR
THE CONNECTION

For 17-year-old Samantha Bryant, Feb. 3 should have been like any other school day. It was noon, when she normally left W.T. Woodson High School and drove to Fairfax Academy where she studies fashion design.

However, her day took an unexpected turn. Last fall, Samantha had submitted an illustration of her dream prom dress in the "Sketch Your Prom Dress Contest," co-sponsored by David's Bridal and Seventeen Magazine. As she entered the school cafeteria, told she was needed there for a meeting related to the senior party, she was floored to see a crowd waiting for her, including her parents, Principal Jeff Yost, classmates, and local camera crews.

David's Bridal Executive Vice President Brian Beitler and Production Development Associate Lis Rockey also eagerly anticipated her arrival, as they stood next to a dress form and an easel, both veiled in white fabric. They announced that Samantha was not only one of three finalists but had won the grand prize. Her sketch, realized in an actual dress, was revealed beneath the white cloth, as well as a blow-up of her creation in a Seventeen Magazine fashion spread.

Samantha was shaking. "I couldn't really think of anything else except 'Oh, my gosh, this is really happening.' It really did feel like a dream come true."

As her mother and father looked on, Samantha examined the dress she had sketched several months ago, inspired by

Vincent Van Gogh's painting "Starry Night."

"I was so happy with it. It was so pretty and exactly the color I was thinking of," she notes. "I've always gravitated towards blues and this was midnight blue. They captured it perfectly, the way it sparkled. It looked so good."

It was a magical moment for a girl described as quiet, humble, and respectful by her principal. Her father, who believed they were announcing that Samantha had made it into the finals, was so awestruck when he realized she'd won he forgot to take pictures with the camera he'd brought.

Beitler was thrilled to witness Samantha's reaction as well as that of her peers. "We had the chance to share Samantha's success in designing a gown that both Seventeen editors as well as David's Bridal designers and merchants thought was not only well-designed but would be successful in the marketplace," he comments. "To be able to do that in front of her classmates was a really unique experience."

OVER two thousand young women and men across the country submitted sketches to the contest in September and October. "It was a very difficult decision," Rockey recalls. "The David's Bridal team spent hours reviewing the thousands of entries."

Samantha's winning design features an A-line silhouette which is flattering for most body types, as well as elements such as sparkle tulle and beading embellishment. The tieback neckline can be worn tied at the

SEE BRYANT, PAGE 4

Bryant Sketches A Winning Dress

FROM PAGE 3

neck or behind, offering versatility to the young woman who wears it.

Rockey, who serves as a liaison between the design team and merchandising team at David's Bridal, notes that Samantha's dress was both trend-conscious and appealing to a variety of wearers. "Part of my role as a judge was to determine which of the sketches submitted could really be executed by our David's Bridal design team," she comments.

Beitler agrees. "All of [Samantha's] elements were trend-right. Then you accompany that by a style we felt would be worn easily by a range of customers, regardless of their size."

In addition to a sketch of her perfect prom dress, Samantha and other contestants were required to submit a 100-word description of their vision and inspiration. Judged by a panel of fashion editors from Seventeen Magazine and design experts from David's Bridal, finalists' sketches were also posted on Facebook for teen fans to critique.

SAMANTHA has been passionate about fashion illustration since she was 11 and was encouraged by her family to enter. Web Bryant, her dad and an artist for USA Today, remembers how exciting it was to see her sketch realized into a finished product in the school cafeteria. "It was amazing because it was so much of a finish from being there the night she did the illustration and helping her send it off and scanning it and filing out the paperwork," he observes, "To actually

see it there made you pause."

Bryant recalls that Samantha showed artistic talent early on, particularly with watercolors, pencils, and graphite. She continues to enjoy trips to places like the National Museum with friends to track down beloved pieces of artwork.

"I definitely pull inspiration in almost everything I design. I find it so much easier when you have something visual to pull from than just pulling it out of thin air in your head," describes Samantha. She had always loved Van Gogh's "Starry Night" and felt it epitomizes the romance and fairytale quality of prom night.

Samantha's prom dress went on sale on David's Bridal's website on Feb. 7. It will be sold in stores, including the Springfield location, starting on Feb. 15. "It's just so cool to think that now real girls all over the world can see it and buy it," she expresses. "Maybe girls that don't even know me or don't even realize it was from a contest will fall in love with it anyway which is just so fascinating." The Seventeen Magazine fashion spread featuring her dress appears this month.

AS IF HAVING her dress developed, manufactured, and sold by David's Bridal weren't exciting enough, Samantha has also won a \$25,000 scholarship, \$5,000 for her school, and a trip to New York City to visit David's Bridal design studio.

Samantha can't wait to visit what many consider one of the fashion capitals of the world. "I really love networking and getting to know people in the industry and seeing how every-

thing works. Any insight into that world is so exciting to me," she adds. She'll be accompanied by two other contestants from the top three.

"It's a very wonderful thing that's happened to a very wonderful young lady," Principal Jeff Yost summarizes. He plans to collaborate with Samantha to decide how to use the money she won for Woodson. He believes that programs like Fairfax Academy, where Samantha studies fashion design, expose young adults to possible career paths and prepare them for higher education.

Samantha is grateful for her Fashion 1 and Fashion 2 teachers, Barbara Galindo and Jin-A Chang, who helped her develop more commercial illustrations and prepared her for a career as a designer. She also hones her skills by taking advanced sewing classes in the evenings. She would love to major in fashion design at her top choice, the Fashion Institute of Technology in Manhattan.

SAMANTHA'S ADVICE to other budding fashion designers or anyone working towards their dream? "Just to simply work at it, every single day," she encourages. "When I first started illustrating I was awful, but if you truly love it and you are truly passionate about it, it will grow and you'll get better.

Samantha looks forward to wearing her design at her prom this year. "I'm excited to try it on. Even if it doesn't look perfect on me, I'll wear it anyway." One of Yost's assistant principals has a daughter who wants to buy the dress as well.

BULLETIN BOARD

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.

SATURDAY/FEB. 25

Youth Mental Wellness Fair. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. West Springfield High School, 6100 Rolling Road Springfield. This event will inform families and caregivers about available youth mental wellness resources. www.fairfaxyouth.org.

SATURDAY/MARCH 3

Theater Workshop. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. South County Secondary School, 8501 Silverbrook Road, Lorton. For 1-6 grade students. Presented by South County theater teachers and students. \$10. 571-408-9657 or www.southcountytheatre.org.

TUESDAY/MARCH 6

South County Federation Meeting. 7:30 p.m. South County Secondary School, 8501 Silverbrook Road, Fairfax. Southcountyfederation.com.

TUESDAY/MARCH 20

Mount Vernon Genealogy Society. 1 p.m. Room 112 of Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria. Marie Varrelman Melchiori, professional genealogist specializing in military records at the National Archives Records Administration, will describe aids to finding NARA records. 703-660-6969 or publicity@mvgenealogy.org.



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NEWS

Meal Tax Discussed

FROM PAGE 3

tax, "the board needs to really lobby the issue in order to get passage."

Bulova agreed, saying that community engagement is key to the success of any referendum.

"There's no way I would support putting a meals tax to a referendum without it being clearly defined. And we would have to have, if not support, then at least neutrality from restaurant associations."

Nancy-Jo Manney, executive director of the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, which represents hundreds of businesses and restaurants in greater Springfield, including Kingstowne as well as the fast-growing Lorton area, said a meals tax is worth a "healthy discussion."

"To get it approved by voters we will need to be confident the revenue is used for its intended purpose. I don't think using it for general budget needs will work. It needs to be for something specific - I'd vote for transportation - and not have loop holes," Manney said. "The other primary factor would be to keep the percentage at or below our neighboring localities.

A competitive meals tax would keep dining in Fairfax County more attractive."

Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) said there was a step he thinks the board needed to take first.

"Before we reach into our tax payers' pockets and impose a tax on our restaurants and tourism industry we need to make transportation a county priority—in getting real transportation proffers from developers, in our bonding authority and in our budget," Herrity said. "We also need to work with the other urban jurisdictions in the state to get more of our money back from Richmond now that urban jurisdictions have greater voting power due to redistricting. There has been no organized effort to get that done."

Bulova said the discussion on a meals tax referendum is far from finished.

"There was agreement on the board that this was the beginning of the discussion not the end," Bulova said. "Transportation funding is parked in future transportation meeting and budget committee meetings. We don't have an action plan yet."

FAITH NOTES

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.

The **Immanuel Bible Church MOPS** group meets on Mondays at 7 p.m. at Immanuel Bible Church, 6911 Braddock Road, Springfield. MOPS is for pregnant or parenting mothers of children from infancy to kindergarten. 703-922-4295 or www.MOPS.org.

The following is a list of events at **Mount Calvary Baptist Church**, 4325 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax:

- ❖ Bible study and Prayer Service every Tuesday starting at 7 p.m.
- ❖ Sunday School at 9:30 a.m., except for the fourth Sunday of the month, when Sunday School is at 9 a.m.
- ❖ Sunday morning service at 11 a.m.
- ❖ Commonwealth Care Center ministry every first and third Thursday night. Call 703-273-1455.

Beth El Hebrew Congregation has services on Fridays, 6:30 p.m. and on Saturdays, 10:30 a.m. The temple is located at 3830 Seminary Road, Alexandria. Religious school is on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings. Adult learning opportunities take place throughout the year. Tot Shabbat is on the first and third Saturdays. Kolot Shabbat, a musical service, is the first Friday of the month at 7:30 p.m. 703-370-9400 or www.bethelhebrew.org.

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OPINION

Saving the Bay: A Good Investment

Cleaning up the water that runs into the Chesapeake Bay will help create jobs and economic activity in Virginia.

A plan to raise \$300 million in bonds to upgrade wastewater treatment plants around the commonwealth stalled in a House of Delegates committee last week, a setback in meeting EPA requirements to clean up the water that leads to the Bay. Money is tight, lawmakers say, although an identical plan cleared the Senate.

Let's be clear that part of what we're talking about by delay is continuing to allow raw sewage to run into Virginia's waterways every time it rains.

This is like deciding to let the toilets in the house overflow rather than spend money on the plumber. Not only is it unhealthy and unpleasant, it also makes Virginia less attractive for tourists and eco-tourists.

Upgrading the sewage treatment plants will

generate jobs, but also upgrade the quality of the water Virginians depend on for drinking, household and business use and recreation.

More than 30 years of "saving" the Chesapeake Bay has accomplished about half of what needs to be done. The bay is primary attraction for tourists in Virginia, and is the basis for many jobs. The investment in the health of the bay is a jobs bill for Virginia.

Aside from upgrading the treatment plants, states in the Chesapeake Bay watershed will need to find ways slow the pace of stormwater runoff, do better with erosion control, change some agricultural practices to keep "fertilizer" from rushing into waterways every time it rains, and more. Efforts made upstream by other states will also benefit Virginia's water-

ways. There are new green and more cost effective ways to go about many of these tasks.

The mission will also need the continued involvement of individuals and organizations who are dedicated to the Chesapeake Bay.

It's an investment that will pay dividends for Virginia.

Pet Connection

Send us photos of your pets this week for inclusion in next week's Pet Connection. Our favorite pictures include both pets and humans. Please identify everyone in the photo, give a brief description of your pet, include address and phone number, and email to: north@connectionnewspapers.com

Community Engagement, Transportation Dominate Agenda

Chairman reflects on Board of Supervisors retreat.

BY SHARON BULOVA
CHAIRMAN, FAIRFAX COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



ing our growing minority and immigrant community, as well as our younger generations, was identified as a challenge and will be the subject for future Board discussion.

On Monday and Tuesday, Feb. 6-7, Board of Supervisors engaged in a two day Strategic Planning Retreat. The retreat, held at the Lorton Arts Workhouse Center, was an opportunity for board members to engage in some informal, in-depth discussion of our respective district issues, as well as countywide opportunities and challenges. Our location, the site of the former Lorton Prison, served as an impressive example of revitalization and historic re-use in the South County area of Fairfax County. The old prison buildings, built at the beginning of the 20th century, are now home to artists' studios and performance arenas. If you haven't visited, I hope you will do so. During a tour of the studios at lunchtime, I chatted with several of the artists and vowed to return to purchase some original artwork.

The importance of Community Engagement was woven throughout all topics during our two days. The board recognized that we make the best decisions when we have the community at the table with us. Some examples of especially successful community engagement have been our Community Dialogues on the Budget, Neighborhood College sessions, the Parks Listening Tours, and our use of new social media using online chats and surveys. Engag-

❖ Day One of our Retreat included a presentation by Fairfax County's Financial Advisor, Public Financial Management, (PFM Group) on how the Rating Agencies view us. We were described as having "Gilt Edged" ratings, which we're very proud of and which saves us millions of dollars when we sell bonds to pay for County and School facilities. Board members were complimented on our disciplined fiscal stewardship and adherence to the 10 Principals of Financial Management that guide budget decisions. The presentation sparked discussion about how large or small the county's liquid reserves need to be. Rating agencies would like them to be larger. Budget watchdogs question whether we have too much "cushion" that should instead be used to reduce the tax rate, or fund more services. More discussion of adequate vs. inadequate reserves will be subject to future discussion.

❖ Transportation played a major role on our agenda during both days. Each Board member spoke to the need to identify creative, multimodal solutions to traffic

congestion within their districts and throughout Fairfax County. With less and less funding coming from the federal government and the state, local governments are pressured to assume more responsibility for transportation - for capital, operation and maintenance. A great deal of discussion took place both days about a new Board of Supervisors Four-Year Transportation Plan that will be developed during upcoming Board Transportation Committee meetings, as well as potential sources of new revenue to support it.

Our Board continues to be concerned about plans at the state level to "devolve" the maintenance of neighborhood and secondary streets to the localities. Without sufficient state investment, our streets have deteriorated to an alarming degree. Assuming this responsibility without sufficient funding will result in a significant cost to local taxpayers.

❖ The topic of Transportation was coupled with a presentation on our Financial Outlook as we undergo a sluggish recovery from the Great Recession and as we face additional major Capital and Operational Challenges to support our growing and changing community. Bottom line, we have more needs than anticipated revenue. Both opportunity and challenges will result from future economic development and from the redevelopment of older parts of Fairfax County. The presentation was extremely valuable in setting the stage for this Board's challenges as we begin this four year term.

❖ The second day of our retreat ended with a discussion of planning and development - The Next

Planning Horizon. When Fairfax County experienced its earlier periods of growth we were a community of farms and villages. The early planning process involved Annual Plan Reviews, later changed to Area Plan Reviews. Early planning called for everything (residential, retail, commercial) to be separated from each other. The pattern requires us to get into our car in order to get almost anywhere. Newer development strategies call for more mixed use, "walkable" communities and more connections of pedestrian, bike and transit modes of transportation.

As Fairfax County matures, our growth and development will involve more Redevelopment and Revitalization of our older commercial and industrial area. Retreat discussion on this topic dealt with how we can adopt better tools for this pattern of development, and how best we can engage our community in the process. The development of a Next Planning Horizon process will take place during the next months at the Board's Revitalization Committee.

❖ Education continues to be our number one priority. Throughout the retreat Board members expressed that they are looking forward to meeting with members of the School Board at a full day retreat on Saturday, Feb. 25. A number of areas for collaboration (human services, transportation, sharing capital facilities) were suggested for discussion at that venue. As we continue to struggle with fiscal challenges and changes, it is critical that we forge an effective working relationship with our partners on the School side of the aisle.

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PHOTOS BY ROBBIE HAMMER/THE CONNECTION

The Lorton Workhouse Arts Center held its 2nd Annual Saturday Art Walk last weekend, which allowed visitors to walk the halls of each building, interacting with artists. Each building featured one artist, with building W4 featuring an interactive art installation made up with donated food items.

Having Heart in Lorton

Amy Lust places a heart on an ongoing, interactive exhibit in Building W4 at the Lorton Workhouse Arts Center on Saturday evening. Visitors to the center were able to place a heart on the wall if they brought food to donate for the Have a Heart interactive art installation. The goal is to fill the pantry in building W4 and then the food will be donated to Food for Others.



Joan Yi, a resident artist at the Lorton Workhouse Arts Center, demonstrates how to make a traditional Korean dish, at the Lorton Workhouse Arts Center on Saturday evening. Yi and her fellow Building W4 artists featured a number of food-centric art works, including an interactive art installation, meant to benefit Food for Others and to raise awareness of the benefits of healthy eating.

Makeda Thomas, an artists' intern at the Lorton Workhouse Arts Center, interviews Benjamin Rangel of Woodbridge. Thomas is making a documentary as part of the internship, in which the Have a Heart project will be the subject.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Ron Kowalski and Susan Borrelli, Re/Max Gateway Realtors, are co-hosting the 5th annual Monopoly Tournament at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton. Proceeds from the family-friendly event will benefit Habitat for Humanity of Northern Virginia.

Time to Pass Go

Monopoly Tournament benefits Habitat for Humanity.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

The new location isn't under the boardwalk, and you won't receive a "Get Out of Jail Free" card, but Ron Kowalski, founder of Lorton's annual Monopoly Tournament, said players of all ages will have a blast competing in the 5th annual game tournament at the Workhouse Arts Center.

THE EVENT will be held on Saturday, Feb. 25 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Registration is still open for players and sponsors, and the registration deadline is Monday, Feb. 20. Kowalski, a realtor with Re/Max Gateway, is co-hosting the game with Re/Max partner Susan Borrelli.

"This is the first time it's being held at the Workhouse Arts Center, and it's because we more than quadrupled our original 36 players since we started this five years ago," Kowalski said.

Glory Days Grill in Lorton, the original venue, will cater lunch for the expected 125-150 attendees.

"We are thrilled to be at the Workhouse Arts Center. They are donating the space, and it's an opportunity for people to see what a great place it is," Kowalski said. "The staff of the Workhouse Arts Center will provide tours of their facilities to all participants at the event."

Kowalski said he and his wife initially built a life-size (8'X8') monopoly game board in their garage as an attention-getter for Lorton's annual Fourth of July parade. He said he's not a Monopoly "fanatic," but admits

he has always loved the game, and has a photo in his office of playing the game when he was 10-years-old.

"The large board definitely got noticed at the parade, and several people asked us to host a tournament. It's all about having fun, and bringing the community together in great new location," Kowalski said.

As a realtor, hosting a tournament based on a classic real-estate game, and using the proceeds to benefit housing through Habitat for Humanity of Northern Virginia was a natural fit.

"Habitat for Humanity is a great cause," Kowalski said. "More than 180 children reside in these safe, decent, affordable homes, and they have a great approach to home-ownership."

Kowalski and Borrelli said they hope to top last year's total proceeds of \$5,000 during the competition. The tournament includes two 75-minute preliminary rounds of Monopoly, as well as a final round where the top six competitors will play for the top prize of \$500.

"Anyone wishing to test their real estate trading skills against other top players while helping out a very worthy cause should come out and play. There's still time to register," Borrelli said. "The cost for a seat is only \$25, which includes a light breakfast and lunch, compliments of Glory Days Grill."

Monopoly is the world's most popular board game, according to Hasbro, which produces the game. It is licensed in more than 80 countries and printed in more than 26 languages.

THE MONOPOLY GAME tournament is one of many local tournaments held nationwide to assist organizations such as Habitat for Humanity in raising funds for their causes.

For more information, contact Ron Kowalski, Tournament Director at 1-888-495-6207 x3, or go to www.lortonmonopoly.com.

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THE CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS

Education • Learning • Fun

Coming to America

Robinson Middle students simulate Ellis Island immigration.

By BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

It's one thing to read about history in a textbook, but another thing entirely to experience it "firsthand." And 550 seventh-graders at Robinson Middle School did that recently, simulating what immigrants went through at Ellis Island at the turn of the 20th century.

Students were given character identities - their names, ages, genders, countries of origin, education, whether they had children or disabilities, and economic status - most were poor. Then they dressed in costume and - in a room transformed into Ellis Island - they went through six stations, answering questions and taking tests before they could enter the U.S.



From left, three "immigrants" - Colleen Mulligan (Germany), Brennen McCarthy (Greece) and Emily Weidner (Ukraine) - with their "babies" and luggage.

homes and relatives. "They were the very best workers - highly motivated and energetic people willing to take risks," said Reade. "This is our legacy; these are our relatives, and their strength is what built the United States."

THE FIRST WAVE of immigrants came from Northern and Western Europe. "Most spoke English and were Protestant so they blended in easily," said Reade. "Industrialization begins and the Homestead Act is created. Ten million people immigrated before 1890."

The second wave of 15 million people came between 1880 and 1910. "Only assembly-line jobs were available and there was no more free land," said Reade. "U.S. workers thought the immigrants would take away their jobs, so they met them with discrimination and anger."

When Ellis Island opened in 1892 to welcome and process immigrants, immigration increased. But it declined sharply in 1914, at the start of WWI, as the U.S. wanted to keep out the immigrants and their problems.

To make the immigration experience more realistic for Robinson students, they were loaded down with luggage and clothing as they entered "Ellis Island." As they boarded ships to America, people carried all their clothes and possessions with them, Reade said.

"The richest people traveled in style; poor people traveled in steerage to save their money to live in the new country," she explained. "They had no windows or fresh air and little food. People got seasick, and there was one toilet for 500 people for the two-week journey."

Rich people went straight to New

York; the rest went through Ellis Island. Still, said Reade, as they approached the U.S., "They were greeted by Lady Liberty, representing a welcome to the immigrants who wanted freedom and were willing to work hard for a better life. They came for their dreams."

DURING ROBINSON'S SIMULATION, students went through a legal inspection, giving their personal information. During the medical exam, they disclosed any disabilities they had, read an eye chart and were checked for lice. At the mental-health station, their hand/eye coordination was tested.

At the vocations area, their documents were stamped to identify them as either skilled or unskilled workers, depending on their education. At customs, they learned what was permissible to bring into the country; and at the departure center, they took an Oath of Allegiance to the U.S.

The students were also crammed in large groups into a cardboard "tenement building" to give them a feeling of the crowded conditions in which the immigrants lived in America. Each student wore a tag containing their character's name, information, personality and abilities.

Wearing a scarf on her head and walking with a cane, Auria Pritchard portrayed a 52-year-old woman from Greece. She said the simulation was "sort of like being at Ellis Island. We actually get to experience it and feel how it would be."

Carla Abril portrayed a 37-year-old Polish Jew, Marta Levitsky, who left Poland so she could have religious freedom. She brought her 4-month-old baby girl, Melissa, with



Auria Pritchard portrays a 52-year-old woman from Greece as Robinson Middle students simulate Ellis Island immigration.

her. Carla said it was a bit confusing, walking around the processing area at Ellis Island. It was also tough being an immigrant, she said, because "People would discriminate against you. They'd yell at you and try to destroy your things." She said the Ellis Island simulation was a good idea to learn about immigration because "Instead of just reading about it, you can see what the immigrants were doing and how they felt about it."

Teacher Catherine Rodriguez called it "An amazing, educational opportunity for the students to experience Ellis Island and immigration. Being able to learn this in a more firsthand format brings the process to life for them - and they also get to dress up and do activities. We gave them guidelines about their characters and they created their own costumes."

Playing a 33-year-old candymaker from Germany was Eusebus Hershey. "It's very cool because you get to see how immigrants got here back then," he said. "I was surprised that they asked me questions about where my 'children' and 'wife' were." Eusebus said his character was jailed three times in Germany for domestic problems, but hoped to start a Catholic church in America.

Natasha Duarte portrayed Greek immigrant Athena Stavropoulous, 19. The information on her tag said she had a limp and was of moderate strength, and Natasha was enjoying the activity. "It's fun because

you get to go through Ellis Island and it's hands on," she said. "It helps you feel you're a part of history so you can understand better how immigrants were treated then and how it was, in general."

Tanner Uffelman played a 17-year-old Russian Jew named Nicholas Bulatkin, whose tag described him as having a kind and positive personality. "He left Russia because he was being persecuted and persecuted because of his religion," said Tanner. "He wanted to get a job working with animals."

Tanner said his character carried luggage containing his clothes, plus books and photos of his family. "It's fun seeing what they did at Ellis Island," he said. "And it's cool dressing up."

Afterward, Reade praised the efforts of her fellow, seventh-grade, U.S. History teachers who worked hard to make the event such a big success. Lesley Minai created the tenement, John Perriello ran the detention center and Jeannie Lesko checked the "immigrants' skills as related to their job potential. Mark Southworth dressed as a doctor gear to "examine" the immigrants, Sharon Hockenbury created a mental health and IQ testing center, and Rodriguez helped both before and during the simulation. And both Minai and the school librarians coordinated the research.

"This took a great deal of preparation and planning," said Reade. "But we all wanted to make this a very memorable event."

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 4202 Breezewood Ln.....\$545,000.....Sun 1-3.....Pat Collette.....Long & Foster..703-750-2800

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 9005 Andromeda Dr.....\$399,000.....Sun 1-4.....Star Morrad.....Keller Williams..703-447-2028
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 5210 Dunleigh Dr.....\$569,900.....Sun 1-4.....Beth Jones.....Long & Foster..703-503-1869
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 8202 Winnipeg Dr.....\$529,999.....Sun 1-3.....Alex Hodges.....Cottage Street..703-242-0005

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 4409 Sedgehurst Dr #202.....\$185,000.....Sun 1-4.....Donna Ney.....Coldwell Banker..703-691-1400
 11942 Appling Valley Rd.....\$489,000.....Sun 1-4.....Steve Dunleavy.....RE/MAX..703-946-5571
 12814 Holly Grove Ct.....\$1,195,000.....Sun 1-4.....Scott Koval.....Samson Props..703-625-3446
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 3725 Anne Place.....\$379,000.....Sat/Sun 1-4.....Frank Madden.....Century 21..571-221-2062

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9743 Rolling Ridge Dr.....\$849,950.....Sun 1-4.....Kathleen Quintarelli.....Weichert..703-862-8808

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All listings due by Tuesday at 3 P.M.

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.

FRIDAY/FEB. 17

Every Avenue. 5 p.m. Jaxx Nightclub, 6355 Rolling Road, Springfield. \$15-\$17. www.jaxxroxx.com.
Mitten Weather. 11 a.m. Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Stories and activities about mittens. Age 3-5 with adult. 703-249-1520.
Tween Book Discussion. 4 p.m. Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Book Discussion. Title pending. Age 8-14. 703-249-1520.

SATURDAY/FEB. 18

Pressed-Leaf Butterfly Workshop. 9:30 a.m. Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Code 290 182 3301. \$25. Nancy Olney, staff horticulturalist shows you how to create works of art using recently pressed leaves. Take your 'butterfly' home in a matted frame. Register at www.greenspring.org or 703-642-5173.
Conifer Conifers. 10:30 a.m. Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Code 290 182 4101. \$12. Identify and describe some of Green Spring's evergreen trees. Be inspired to consider conifers to brighten and define your winter landscape. Then step into the warmth of the Historic House for refreshments. Register at www.greenspring.org or 703-642-5173.
VITA Tax Assistance. 10 a.m. Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. IRS-

certified volunteers help taxpayers who earned up to \$50K. Adults. 703-339-4610.

VITA Tax Assistance. 10 a.m. Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce St., Springfield. Tax help. IRS-certified volunteers help taxpayers who earned up to \$50K. Adults. 703-451-8055.

Concert by the Virginia Grand Military Band. 8 p.m. Hayfield Secondary School, 7630 Telegraph Road, Alexandria. VGMB will perform works by Wagner, Beethoven, Karl King and Leonard B. Smith. Adults \$20, under age 18 free. 703-426-4777 or www.vgmb.com.

SUNDAY/FEB. 19

Virginia Chamber Orchestra: Baroque to Jazz. 4 p.m. Ernst Community Cultural Center, Northern Virginia Community College Annandale Campus, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Music Director Emil de Cou presents Handel's Two concerti grossi from the Twelve Grand Concertos, Opus 6; Tchaikovsky's Andante Cantabile from String Quartet Opus 11, No. 1; Edvard Grieg's Holberg Suite; Duke Ellington's Solitude and Leroy Anderson's Jazz Pizzicato and Jazz Legato. Reception to follow. Adults \$20, seniors \$18, students free. 703-758-0179 or www.virginiachamberorchestra.org.
Northern Virginia NTRACK Display and N Gauge Trains. 1-4 p.m. Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. \$3 adults, \$1 children. www.fairfax-station.org or 703-425-9225.
Grow the Best Tasting Tomatoes Ever. 1:30 p.m. Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road,

Alexandria. Code 290 182 4601. \$10. The importance of correct planting, feeding, watering and support, with a special emphasis on common mistakes to avoid when growing tasty tomatoes in containers. Book signing. Register at www.greenspring.org or 703-642-5173.

TUESDAY/FEB. 21

Tuesday Night at the Movies. 7 p.m. Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. The romantic comedy His Girl Friday, starring Cary Grant and Rosalind Russell. Light refreshments available. Adults. 703-249-1520.
Family Storytime. 7 p.m. Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Stories, songs and fingerplays. All ages. 703-339-4610.
Classics Book Club. 7 p.m. Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce St., Springfield. The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. 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.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 22

Learning English. 10:15 a.m. Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Conversation group for adults learning English. 703-339-4610.
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.
Travel Club. 1 p.m. Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce St.,

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

Springfield. Bring lunch and enjoy discussion. Adults. 703-451-8055

THURSDAY/FEB. 23

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

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

FRIDAY/FEB. 24

"Don't Drink The Water" by Woody Allen. 7:30 p.m. South County High School Theatre, 8501 Silverbrook Road, Lorton. An American Ambassador must leave the Embassy for business, and places his incompetent son in charge. \$10 adults, \$8 students. www.southcountytheatre.org.

Preschool Storytime. 11 a.m. John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive, Alexandria. Stories and activities. Age 3-5 with adult. 703-971-0010.

SATURDAY/FEB. 25

Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra presents Buddy, Woody, and Stan. 8 p.m. George Mason University's Center for the Arts Concert Hall, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Celebrating the music of Buddy Rich, Woody Herman and Stan Kenton. \$20-\$40. www.gmu.edu.

Fifth Annual Monopoly Game Tournament to Benefit Habitat for Humanity. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Two preliminary rounds of the game will be played to determine the six finalists, then a final round will decide the three tournament winners to receive \$500 for first place, \$250 for second, and \$100 for third. Breakfast, lunch and door prizes are included. Entry fee \$25. Register at 1-888-495-6207 ext. 3 or www.lortonmonopoly.com.

Speed Stacking Tournament. 9 a.m. Springfield Elementary School, 7602 Heming Court, Springfield. Single competition 9 a.m.-12 p.m., parent and child competition 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. Awards presented 12:30 p.m. Stack equipment and refreshments available for purchase. \$3. 703-658-5563 or semetz@fcp.edu.

Blake Shelton: Well Lit & Amplified. 8 p.m. George Mason University Patriot Center, 4500 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. With Justin Moore and "The Voice" finalist Dia Frampton. Tickets \$33.75-\$58.75.



The Sixth Generation, a 1960s rock band, will be performing at Empire in Springfield on Feb. 25. From left: Dave Walenga, Paul Davies, Ron Hamrick (of Burke), Fred Bachman, Fred Hulce and Don Simmons.

'The Sixth Generation' Performs in Springfield

The Sixth Generation, a 1960s rock band, will be performing at Empire in Springfield on Feb. 25. The show is produced by Afton Presents and will begin at 7 p.m. The Sixth Generation was originally formed in Michigan in 1966 and was inducted into the Michigan Rock and Roll Legends hall of fame in 2011. The band regularly performs at venues and festivals across the Midwest and Mid Atlantic regions, although this will be

their first appearance in Northern Virginia. The band performs popular rock songs from the 1960s as well as original songs that baby boomers readily relate to.

Their song, "That Was The Time" is a particular favorite among the baby boomer generation but they also have a following among younger fans. Tickets can be purchased online at <http://tickets.aftonshows.com/thesixthgeneration>.

800-745-3000 or www.ticketmaster.com.

8th Annual EcoSavvy Gardening Symposium. 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Code 290 188 5501. \$50. Explore the world of Birds, Bats, Bees and Bugs. Sponsored by Virginia Cooperative Extension. Call site by February 17 to order a vegetarian or non-vegetarian lunch for \$12. Register at www.greenspring.org or 703-642-5173.

VITA Tax Assistance. 10 a.m. Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. IRS-certified volunteers help taxpayers who earned up to \$50K. Adults. 703-339-4610.

VITA Tax Assistance. 10 a.m. Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce St., Springfield. Tax help. IRS-certified volunteers help taxpayers who earned up to \$50K. Adults. 703-451-8055.

"Don't Drink The Water" by Woody Allen. 7:30 p.m. South County High School Theatre, 8501 Silverbrook Road, Lorton. An American Ambassador must leave the Embassy for business, and places his incompetent son in charge. \$10 adults, \$8 students. www.southcountytheatre.org.

Collector's Showcase. 7:30 p.m. Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. An artwork lottery for ticket holders, a fundraising event with over 100 pieces made by Workhouse Artists. www.workhousearts.org.

SUNDAY/FEB. 26

Queen Elizabeth: A Day in the Life. 1 p.m. Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. \$27. Enjoy a glimpse into the daily life of the queen and more. Reserve at 703-941-7987.

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Robinson Grapplers Pinkston, Martino Win Region Titles

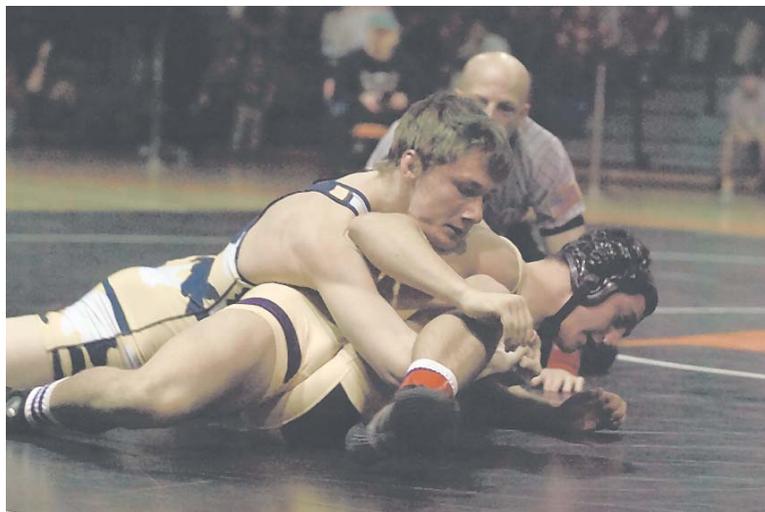
Rams finish region runner-up to district foe Westfield.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

Robinson heavyweight Jake Pinkston dropped 10 pounds prior to regionals. In exchange, he gained a second Northern Region championship.

A lighter, quicker Pinkston pinned Marshall's Matt Crawford in the first round of the 285-pound final during the region wrestling championships on Feb. 11 at Hayfield Secondary School, helping the Rams to a runner-up finish. Pinkston, a 5-foot-8 sophomore, said he dropped from 254 pounds to 244 prior to regionals — a move which paid dividends. He was recognized for recording three pins in 5 minutes, 21 seconds during his four-match ride to the championship.

"I meant to be more aggressive and not as passive," said Pinkston, a state runner-up last year. "Last week [at districts], I just wanted to get through it. This week, I



Robinson's Brooks Martino, top, defeated Lake Braddock's Rory Renzi for the 145-pound Northern Region wrestling title on Feb. 11 at Hayfield Secondary School.

wanted to prove a point that I'm the best heavyweight in Virginia."

Pinkston said experiencing regionals as a freshman helped him this year.

"It kind of helped me with my approach because last year I was like, 'Wow, what is this tournament? I've never been here before,'" he said. "Now it's kind of like, 'OK, I've got to win [the] first two [matches on the] first day [and the] second two [on the] second day to be on top.'"

Teammate Brooks Martino won the 145-pound title, earning a 16-3 major decision

against Lake Braddock's Rory Renzi for his third region championship. Martino, a 2011 state champion, was named the most outstanding wrestler for the 2012 regional meet.

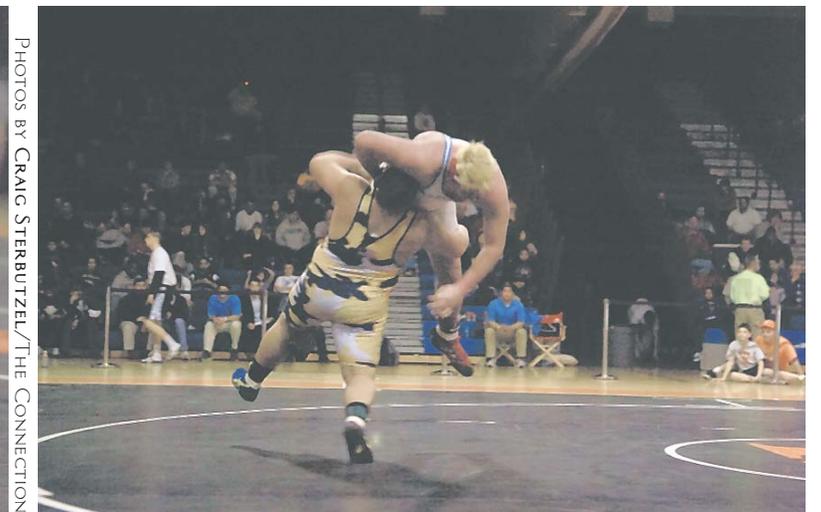
"You kind of know what to expect," he said. "You expect a bigger crowd than district or other tournaments you've been to. You're going to know there's tough competition that you've been training for."

Robinson's Santiago Valdez placed second in the 138-pound bracket, Daniel Mika finished second at 182, Austin Riggs placed

third at 120, Jonathon Simmons took third at 160 and Greyson Olimpo finished fourth at 106.

Robinson posted a team score of 174.5, finishing runner-up behind Westfield's 193. Annandale finished third with 129.5, followed by Mount Vernon (126.5), Lake Braddock (105), Marshall (81), South County (79.5) and Oakton (73.5).

The state championship will be held Friday and Saturday, Feb. 17-18 at Robinson Secondary School.



Robinson's Jake Pinkston picks up Marshall's Matt Crawford during the heavyweight final of the Northern Region wrestling championships on Feb. 11 at Hayfield Secondary School.

Area Wrestlers Show Strong at Regionals

BY RICH SANDERS
THE CONNECTION

The following is a look at how the high school wrestling teams and individuals from southern Fairfax County fared at last Friday and Saturday's Northern Region Championships held at Hayfield High School. Westfield High, from the other side of the county, reclaimed its position as Northern Region champions as the Bulldogs dethroned Robinson and earned its fourth crown in five years.

"I am extremely pleased with how our guys have stepped up under pressure and performed," said Westfield head coach Chuck Hoskins, whose team, nearly two weeks ago, opened the postseason by winning the Concorde District Championships. "I am so proud of our team. We had some adversity to begin the season which I believe prepared us well for the end of the year. Our [challenging] schedule helped us a great deal."

Westfield had captured the region championship three straight years (2008, '09, '10) before fellow Concorde District rival Robinson soared to the top of the region last year and ultimately captured the state title as well.

But following a year hiatus from the top, Westfield re-emerged this season as the dominant team of the region. At Saturdays

regionals, the Bulldogs finished atop a field of 30 teams, scoring 193 points to runner-up Robinson's 174.50. Annandale (129.50), Mount Vernon (126.50), and Lake Braddock (105) finished third, fourth, and fifth, respectively.

Marshall High, which finished second place at the recent Liberty District Championships two weeks ago, finished sixth place at regionals with 81 points, ahead of seventh place South County (79.50), eighth place Oakton (73.50), ninth place Langley (69.50), and 10th place Madison (68).

At regionals, the top four individuals of each weight class earned an automatic seeding at the upcoming state AAA championships. Fifth and sixth place finishers did not qualify for states but did earn top six medals.

Robinson: The Rams finished a strong second place at regionals and two individual Robinson wrestlers won titles in heavyweight Jake Pinkston and Brooks Martino (145). Pinkston won three of his four matches by pin, including his finals victory over Marshall's Matt Crawford. Martino, meanwhile, won his first three region matches by pin before besting Lake Braddock's Rory Renzi in the finals by major decision (16-3).

Two Robinson wrestlers earned second place finishes - Daniel Mika (182) and Santiago Valdez (138). Mika lost a tough 3-2 finals decision to Madison's Nick Hoy

and Valdez lost a low-scoring 3-0 title match decision to Westfield's Derek Arnold.

Robinson third place finishers were Jonathan Simmons (160) and Austin Riggs (120). Simmons won his consolation finals match over Washington-Lee's Jared Deiner, and Riggs won his third place match over Lee High's Max Benitos.

Earning a fourth place finish for Robinson was Greyson Olimpo (106). Cole Depasquale (170) finished in fifth place and Andre Kendall (220) was sixth.

Lake Braddock: The fifth place Bruins had two second place finishers and two third place finishers. Jake Sage (152) and Rory Renzi (145) were second place finishers. Both won three straight matches to make it to the finals. There, Sage lost to Westfield's Beau Donahue, 3-1, and Renzi fell to Robinson's Martino.

Sean Haskett (132) and Ryan Haskett (106) earned third place finishes for the Bruins. Sean Haskett won his 132 third place match over Chantilly's Walter Carlson and Ryan Haskett won his third place match over Robinson's Greyson Olimpo.

Also qualifying for states for Lake Braddock was Gil Enav, who was fourth place at 170. Earning a sixth place medal was Ian Reilly (182).

South County: The seventh place Stallions had two champions crowned - Brett Stein (160) and Hunter Manley (106). Manley

defeated Westfield's Gabe Ryan, by major decision (9-1), in the finals, and Stein, at the 160 finals, defeated four-time Liberty District champion Ryan Forrest of South Lakes, 5-3. Also for South County, Keegan Sullivan finished third in 182 weight class. He defeated Mount Vernon's Xavier Craig in the consolation finals.

Lee High: The Lancers, 16th place overall, had one state qualifier in Max Benitos, who finished in fourth place at 120.

Hayfield: The host Hawks received a third place finish from Sahid Kargbo (138). Kargbo won his consolation finals match, 10-5, over Langley's Jay Ives.

Other teams: Thomas Jefferson High's Patrick O'Connor was champion of the 195 weight class. He defeated Oakton's Austin Murga in the finals match by technical fall.

From Annandale High, Ali Ali Musa won the 220 division title with a major decision win over Mount Vernon's Nathan Haro. Also winning a title for the Atoms was Dane Haelowe, who beat Mount Vernon's Cody Marino in the 126 finals.

Edison High's Brock Jacobson advanced to the 132 finals where he lost a 9-5 decision to Wakefield's Henry Majano. Also for the Eagles, Brandon Mowery finished in fifth place at 106 and Baden James was a sixth place finisher at 160.

From Woodson High, Mitchell Kohlhaas was a fifth place finisher at 126.

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Barbara Jean Parkinson, age 67
of Sterling, VA, died February 7, 2012 at her residence. Born on September 17, 1944 in New York she was the daughter of the late Charles and Elizabeth Lundy. Ms. Parkinson was a member of Cornerstone Chapel in Leesburg, VA. Barbara attended Michigan State University where she received her Bachelor's Degree in Music. During her high school years she was a member of the singing group known as The Jill's. She worked for Connection Newspapers for many years. Barbara enjoyed and loved spending time with her grandchildren and doing crafts with them.

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