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Public Safety in the Local Area

Sheriff's Office, State Police representatives speak.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Public safety and traffic were among the topics when representatives from the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office and the Virginia State Police spoke recently in Centreville. They addressed the Jan. 25 meeting of the Sully District Council of Citizens Associations.

Lt. Col. James Whitley, Chief Deputy/Operations, with the county Sheriff's Office, presented some history along with his statistics. He's been with the Sheriff's Office for 31 years and has seen many changes since he began.

"There's been a sheriff in Fairfax County since 1742," he said. "He was also the tax collector. When I came on in 1980, we had 140 people; now there are over 600 employees. We have 1,260 beds in our jail - it's one of the largest in the state - and 85 deputies at the courthouse."

ONLY 1 PERCENT of the applicants to the Sheriff's Office are actually hired, said Whitley. "It's a rigorous process," he said. "One-fourth of our sworn staff is female, and one-third of the force is non-white, so we have a whole lot of diversity."

He said a great deal of their work is focused on cutting down recidivism. "We present our staff as role models," said Whitley. "Many [people who are arrested] never had anyone to look up to."

Furthermore, he said, "An estimated 70 percent of our inmate population has substance-abuse problems, and 16 percent is severely mentally ill and should be in mental-health facilities. We're working with the state, trying to get more hospital beds for them. We also try to get them connected to job skills."

Sgt. Robert Alessi with the Virginia State Police,

has worked out of the Fairfax office on Braddock Road since December 2006 and has served almost 25 years with the state police. "We're mainly an assist agency, helping at both the local and federal levels," he said. "We all do the same thing and we're there for each other."

There were only 300 Virginia state troopers 75 years ago, and now there are 1,800. "The interstates are our primary responsibility," said Alessi. "We do speed enforcement on I-66."

Locally, he said, "On I-66 at Route 28, we're having huge problems, mornings and afternoons, with traffic backing up on the ramps and people cutting in [to take the Route 28 exit] at the last minute. We're putting extra troopers there to try to stop that."

It happens on I-66 east leading to Route 28 north in the mornings and on I-66 west leading to Route 28 north in both the mornings and afternoons. And Alessi would like the cut-in drivers to remember that "a little courtesy out there on the road goes a long way."

BUT HELP is on the horizon, he said. "They're going to possibly open up the shoulder of I-66 as far back as Stringfellow Road," said Alessi. "Opening up the shoulder prior to the merge area [for the Route 28 exit] will get us some temporary relief so traffic could get on [the shoulder] quicker. They're also going to extend the [exit] ramp and make it two lanes; construction should begin in 2014."

He said he and his fellow troopers attend many meetings "to make the traffic easier out here." Alessi also reminded motorists what to do when they see an officer stopped on the side of the road. "Drivers in the lane closest to him must move over one lane as soon as possible," he said. "It's a law; and if they don't do so, they can receive a summons and could possibly be fined \$1,000 in court."

So does he have any firsthand knowledge of this danger? Said Alessi: "I've been hit by three cars and run over by a tractor trailer."



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

On Pink Out Day, Lauren Mason and Bahar Sayed were pleased to see many Robinson students dressed in pink from head to toe.

Robinson in Pink

Two Robinson students promote breast cancer awareness.

BY JENNIFER FEDOR
THE CONNECTION

There will be 226,870 new cases of invasive breast cancer among women in the United States, according to Susan G. Komen's website. Given that early detection positively impacts one's ability to survive this disease, Robinson High School juniors Lauren Mason and Bahar Sayed felt it was important to educate peers through their Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) chapter public relations project.

"My mom and grandmother were both diagnosed with stage one breast cancer," Lauren Mason said. "Before they were diagnosed, I knew what breast cancer was but I wasn't really affected by it so it wasn't really important to me."

Her best friend Bahar Sayed remembers, "When Lauren's mom was diagnosed with breast cancer, I was at her house every day and I saw how hard it affected the whole family. I saw it was really hard for her mother to come home from radiation and go on with her day and provide meals for [her children]."

Both Bahar and Lauren are advanced fashion marketing students at Robinson and participate in their school's DECA chapter to learn how to present in front of different audiences and prepare press releases. Although neither is sure if they'll continue to pursue marketing after high school, they are grateful for the opportunity to hone skills such as effective communication.

SARAH HINKHOUSE, Casey Hepner, and George O'Brien serve as DECA faculty advisors at Robinson. "They're absolutely amazing and fabulous at

what they do," Lauren describes. "They help us so much in everything and really guide us along in everything we do. They're really passionate about their jobs."

Hinkhouse sees DECA membership as an opportunity for young people to learn how to interact with individuals of diverse backgrounds and occupations. In addition, they learn to conduct research to support their conclusions and recommendations. DECA also helps prepare students to become civically conscious.

Each year, a State Leadership Conference brings together DECA members from schools across Virginia. Participants can compete in role-play, written events, or chapter projects. At this year's conference in early March in Norfolk, Lauren and Bahar will conduct a ten-minute presentation on their "Before It's Too Late" campaign. The top three finalists will advance to an International Career Development Conference, in May, held in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Bahar and Lauren chose to focus on detection of breast cancer "before it's too late" to spread awareness among their target audience, 14- to 18-year-olds. "I was never really exposed to breast cancer at all," Bahar admits. "The first time I heard about it was Lauren's mom. I didn't even know what it was until we started researching it and how it can be prevented through early detection."

Lauren agrees that she had limited information about it, until her mother was diagnosed, aside from a health class at school which provided guidance on self-examinations. The young women organized their chapter project to ensure that

SEE CAMPAIGN, PAGE 10

THE COUNTY LINE

Honoring Grads Who Choose to Serve

Burke moms lobby school board to recognize enlistees.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

When Carolyn Kellam's 17-year-old son, Danny, asked for permission to enlist in the U.S. Marine Corps last year, she said "the mom in me was scared to death, but the citizen in me was very proud."

Christine Zinser remembers the exact day her son, Philipp, asked to enlist. It was Valentine's Day, 2011. Instead of flowers or chocolate, her son stunned her by declaring his intent to become a U.S. Marine.

"I thought I would be finalizing college selection and admission paperwork," Zinser said. "At a time when our nation was at war, my son was choosing a military career and because of his age, needed my permission."

Both Burke moms struggled with questions. Would they be sending their sons into harm's way? What would their sons do if they just said no. Their fear eventually gave way to a sense of pride, and they allowed their sons, then seniors at Robinson Secondary School, to enlist.

But another obstacle was around the corner.

"As it was nearing the end of his senior year, and having been the parent of other students who were recognized for their academic or athletic achievements at graduation functions, I just assumed that the young men and women who were making the same decision as my son would receive recognition at their graduation ceremonies," Zinser said.

She was wrong. Frustrated by repeated attempts to get enlistees recognized during Robinson's graduation ceremony, Zinser decided to take action. In three weeks, she organized a separate ceremony with the help of Kellam, Braddock Supervisor John Cook, and an organization called Our Community Salutes. The ceremony for all Robinson military enlistees, held at the Braddock District Hall last June 9, was standing room only.

"I think it's a great idea," said Cook. "We ought to be recognizing these students for their commitment and sacrifice. I'm glad to see the school board talking about it."

Although their sons completed boot camp after graduation, the lack of formal recognition by FCPS still rankles both moms.

FOR THE PAST FEW MONTHS, they have been lobbying members of the Fairfax County School Board to ensure that any student who chooses to serve is recognized during high school graduation ceremonies.

Several school board members said they supported a uniform policy for 2012 graduation ceremonies.

"There is so much to be gained in honoring these students, and nothing to be lost," said school board member Elizabeth Schultz (Springfield). As the daughter of a Navy Captain and mother of four sons, she said she feels strongly that all FCPS graduations

"I want it done for this year. I'm not about kicking the can down the road."

— School Board member
Elizabeth Schultz



On June 18, 2011, the day after graduating from Robinson Secondary School, Danny Kellam celebrated his 18th birthday with (from left) his mother, Carolyn, sister, Kristen and father, Jim, who is holding a photograph of Danny's older brother, Dennis, who serves with the Virginia Army National Guard and was in Iraq at the time. On June 20, Danny Kellam left for Parris Island.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



PFC Daniel Kellam on graduation day from boot camp on Parris Island, S. C. on Sept. 16. He is standing with his cousin, Heather Gillespie (left) and sister, Kristen Kellam (right).

should include recognizing enlistees by allowing them to wear honor cords at their graduation ceremonies.

"I want it done for this year. I'm not about kicking the can down the road," Schultz said. "I see this as a policy issue that, rather than being left up to the discretion of each individual school principal or cluster, we should do consistently across our student body."

Schultz made sure the issue came up during the school board's forum session on Jan. 26. "Forums," generally held before each regular board meeting, are sessions in which the public can attend and observe but are not invited to speak, and board members determine if any issues merit further discussion during formal meetings.

should include recognizing enlistees by allowing them to wear honor cords at their graduation ceremonies.

SEE MOMS, PAGE 8



The first ceremony was held at Braddock Hall last June, 2011. U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly's office helped organize the ceremony along with Braddock Supervisor John Cook and Our Community Salutes, a non-profit created in 2009 to recognize and honor high school seniors who plan to enlist in the military immediately after high school graduation.

Schultz Requests Public Hearing

Majority of school board members support "individualized" graduation ceremonies.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

After a majority (7-5) of Fairfax County School Board members resisted a uniform policy to recognize military enlistees with honor cords during graduation ceremonies at its Feb. 13 work session, Elizabeth Schultz (Springfield) launched a campaign for a public hearing on the issue.

During the all-day work session, Schultz sent an email notifying Carolyn Kellam and Christine Zinser that the board heard from several "hand-picked" FCPS principals "who sought to retain autonomy for highly-individualized graduations," Schultz wrote.

She said she was "grossly disappointed we are even talking about this in terms of 'require' or 'compel' rather than seeing a 'race to embrace' this!"

Instead of a standardized policy, the board crafted the following motion to be presented as "new business" at its Feb. 23 meeting, and an "action item" at its regular board meeting on March 8:

"Direct the superintendent to require high school principals to recognize at commencement exercises those graduating se-

niors who have enlisted in the military; the recognition should be in a manner consistent with the decorum of each individual school's ceremony."

In addition to Schultz, school board members who did support a standardized policy for Honor Cord recognition were: Sandy Evans (Mason); Patty Reed (Providence); Megan McLaughlin (Braddock) and Ted Velkoff (at-large). Those who did not support the initiative: Kathy Smith (Sully); Chairman Jane Strauss (Dranesville); Vice-Chairman Ilryong Moon, (at-large); Dan Storck (Mount Vernon); Tamara Derenak Kaufax (Lee); Pat Hynes, (Hunter Mill); and Ryan McElveen (at-large).

McElveen, who, at 27, is one of the youngest elected officials in Fairfax County, said he initially supported the idea, but changed his mind after hearing from several of the principals who spoke at the work session.

"After hearing the perspective of the principals and drawing on my own experience as someone who organized a graduation ceremony as a class president 'back in the day,' I remem-

SEE PUBLIC HEARING,
PAGE 8

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OPINION

General Assembly Halftime Report

BY DAVE MARSDEN
STATE SENATOR (D-37)



out of business, you will now have a remedy to receive the title and registration from the lender who financed the car dealer's inventory.

❖ Colleges and universities will be required to conduct public hearings before initiating any road construction, or traffic calming measures.

❖ The Commonwealth Transportation Board and the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority will be required to coordinate, to ensure that road construction money is prioritized for our most congested intersections and corridors.

❖ A license plate has been created to honor the victims of the Virginia Tech shootings, with proceeds going to the Virginia Tech Victims Family Outreach Foundation.

❖ School Administrators will be required to notify parents when their child is being questioned for serious disciplinary matters, beyond exegete circumstances.

❖ 100 percent disabled veterans will be able to receive property tax relief, even though their home may be placed in a trust.

❖ The Attorney General may now represent individuals who have been asked by the Cir-

cuit Court to run companies with disputed ownership, if they are sued as a result of their work for the Court.

I think many of you know that this has been a year of profound change, and seeming contradiction. We are in the process of making it harder to vote, but easier to buy a gun. When the Federal Government passed the Federal Affordable Healthcare Act, many in the Commonwealth saw it as an intrusive overreach into our personal medical lives. This year we are passing legislation dictating to doctors and women, what procedures they must undergo prior to a woman receiving a constitutionally protected abortion. The mandatory ultrasound is an intrusive procedure that is not medically necessary; this bill is aimed solely at limiting abortion rights. We are also making it legal for private adoption agencies, who receive state funds, to discriminate against prospective parents based on their ideological and religious beliefs. While this bill is aimed at making it harder for gay couples to adopt, it may be used by these agencies to deny adoptions to parents of different faiths, or to people they have philosophical differences with.

We are not done yet, and many of these bills will still have to survive the budget process. Even when bills are passed by both the House, and the Senate, if money cannot be found to fund them, they will not be turned into law.

If you haven't been following the General Assembly this year, I thought it would be appropriate to fill you in on the first half of the session. The House and Senate have each heard their own member's bills, and those that survive now take a journey to the other side of the Capitol to test their fate. Eleven of the bills I have intro-

duced have made it out of the Senate, six have been passed by for the year, and three did not make it out of the Senate committees.

RICHMOND REPORT

Here is what my bills that passed the Senate will accomplish:

❖ If you are towed in Northern Virginia, you can be towed to the nearest lot even if it crosses county lines.

❖ Individuals who suffer an alcohol or drug overdose will be required to receive follow up treatment information in emergency rooms.

❖ No one may carry a pneumatic gun (air gun) on public school property (with some exceptions for legitimate events); some of these weapons are deadly.

❖ Individuals on the sex offender registry will receive yearly updates on changes to the legal requirements under which they must live.

❖ If you buy a car from a dealer who goes

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Voter ID Protects Election Integrity

To the Editor:

There's an old Chicago saying, "Vote Early and vote often." Most of us laugh it off as a comment of a bygone era when city bosses manipulated the democratic process to ensure their favored candidate won. However, history has proven voter fraud is a real and serious issue in American politics. As we prepare for the 2012 elections, Virginia's decision to pass a voter identification bill is a necessary step to ensure free and fair elections that preserve the integrity of the electoral process.

Implementing sensible voter identification requirements will ensure that only eligible voters participate and that their votes are not cancelled by fraudulent votes that can change the outcome of an election. It is imperative that the General Assembly enact a sensible voter identification law that protects the integrity of our elections.

Requiring photo identification at the polls is a common sense solution that would clean up most of the fraud that occurs during an election. For example, by requiring photo identification, election officers could easily detect cases of voter impersonation, whereby

someone poses as a legal voter in order to vote, or that illegal aliens or legal residents without voting rights do not vote.

When a person goes to the bank to open a checking account or cashes a check, boards an airplane, visits a government building (such as the Pentagon or even the Department of Justice to lodge a complaint against the government) he or she is required to show a photo identification. Understandably, verifying who you are is important in each of these situations and it should be the same when you vote. After all, the very essence of our republic is based on the notion that as citizens we choose our elected representatives. Voter fraud casts a shadow of illegitimacy over our elections and can lead to a cynical view by the public that the electoral process is corrupt. Simply put, when fraudulent voting exists it erodes a quintessential American value.

Currently, fifteen states have a photo identification requirement to vote.

Of course rather than letting a good idea become law, some in the General Assembly will whip out the talking points used by the Obama Justice Department when it halted South Carolina's photo identification law. They will undoubtedly argue that photo identification disenfranchises minori-

ties and the poor.

But is there any basis to their argument? Does photo identification really disenfranchise voters? The short answer is: No. Through numerous research reports and by studying election returns in states where photo identification requirements are in effect, the evidence proves that instead of decreasing turnout, these states saw an increase in turnout.

The evidence shows that photo identification is not about disenfranchising voters; it is about good government and ensures the integrity of elections. Despite the attempts to paint photo identification as a return to the days of "poll taxes" and "literacy tests" the vast majority of Americans support the notion. A Rasmussen Poll released in December 2011 showed that over 70 percent of likely voters believe voters should show photo identification before voting. Among minority groups, the support for photo identification was even higher. A recent poll by Resurgent Republic surveyed Hispanic voters in Florida, Colorado and New Mexico regarding voter identification requirements. In Florida, 88 percent of Hispanic voters supported voter ID requirements; in Colorado, 71 percent favored voter identification and in New Mexico 73 percent of those

surveyed favored voter identification.

The majority of Americans recognize that electoral integrity is important and photo identification helps achieve that goal. The Commonwealth of Virginia carries the unique title of being the "cradle of democracy." The General Assembly honored this distinction by implementing a photo ID law that ensures that the Old Dominion's elections are free and fair and that there is never a shadow of illegitimacy cast over the results because of fraudulent voting."

M. David Skiles
Fairfax

Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue.

The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors.
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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 and services, and how to access them. 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. Theater games, voice and body techniques and stage makeup. \$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.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 14

NARFE Springfield Chapter Meeting. 1 p.m. American Legion Post 176, 6520 Amherst Ave, Springfield. With a presentation on the policies and programs affecting older adults in Fairfax County by Tanya Erway, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging. Free. Guests welcome. 703 313-9387 or jkadelg@yahoo.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. Free and open to the public. 703-660-6969 or publicity@mvgenealogy.org.

TUESDAY/APRIL 3

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

TUESDAY/MAY 1

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

TUESDAY/JUNE 5

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

Cox, Fairfax to Honor African American Women

Cox Communications, in partnership with Fairfax County, invites the public to attend a free program honoring African American women in celebration of Black History Month. The program will take place at 7 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 24, in the Fairfax County Government Center Auditorium. A free reception will be available starting at 6 p.m.

The program will include a performance by actress Jenelle Randall, who will interpret the story of music legend Nancy Wilson as part of the county's month-long tribute to African American

women in history.

Schedule:

❖ 6-7 p.m. - Reception (appetizers and light refreshments);

❖ 7 p.m. - Welcoming remarks by Vonya Alleyne, Director of Human Resources, Cox Virginia; Keynote speeches by Sharon Bulova, Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors; and Cathy Hudgins, Hunter Mill District Supervisor; Choir songs;

Step team presentation; Dance performances; performance by actress Jenelle Randall.

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Spring into Action at the Lorton Community Action Center (LCAC) Gala

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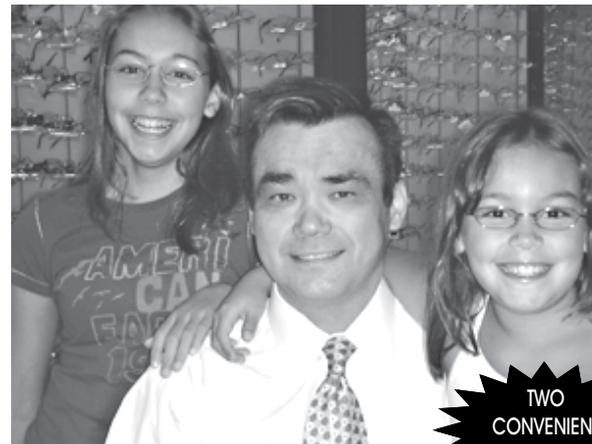
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Moms Campaign to Honor Enlistees

FROM PAGE 4

Christine Zinser and Danny Kellam attended the Jan. 26 forum. "I really feel like these kids are a forgotten spoke in the wheel of recognizing our military families," Zinser said after the forum.

"We laud those returning from war, mourn those who have fallen, show unflinching support for the families of active duty military personnel, compassion for those who sustain injuries and immense respect for our veterans," Zinser added. "But the young men and women who choose to serve, especially when our nation is at war, go unrecognized."

BOARD MEMBER Ted Velkoff (At-large) said he supports the idea, but is not certain it needs to be policy.

"We're in information-gathering mode, but I believe there will be consensus around this, whether it's encouragement to students and principals to recognize students with the cords, or implemented through policy," Velkoff said. "I would be astonished if there's any resistance to this."

Pat Hynes, who represents the Hunter Mill district, said in an email to Zinser that she is "hopeful that we can do whatever is necessary to ensure they get the recognition they deserve as they graduate."

Deputy Superintendent Dr. Richard Moniuszko said schools are reluctant to abandon their traditions to a "one-size-fits-all" motion, adding that recognition at graduation should be in line with the decorum at each school.

"There's no real issue with recognition of students who enter the military at graduation," said Moniuszko. "However, each high school has its own traditions and manner of recognizing individual students. Many of our graduations are planned by the students themselves, and individual student recogni-

tion occurs at their convocation or Senior Awards night prior to graduation.

He said types of recognition at commencement is not a level of detail that traditionally warrants a formal policy, but rather a district guideline or regulation.

Schultz said the board asked principals to come to the next school board meeting with ideas on how to implement a policy.

"We don't need to put up administrative hurdles. With a little bit of directed effort, we can make this happen. We need to send the message to these students that we're proud of you, and we acknowledge you," she said.

Kellam said she would like to see recognition given to every graduating Fairfax County senior who is enlisting in the military right after graduation.

"I feel that these courageous young men and women deserve some recognition and feel that a red, white and blue cord worn at graduation is a fitting tribute of their dedication to our county," Kellam said.

A Fairfax County 9-1-1 operator, Kellam said only one percent of graduating seniors volunteer to enlist in the military. "That one percent needs to be acknowledged."

"They want to fight for our country. It's awful and wonderful at the same time. My son is being deployed in April. It's hard for me to talk about without crying," Kellam said. "Knowing that the community appreciates their service is a huge deal mentally when they are deployed."

"Wearing the cord to the graduation ceremony embodies the mission of FCPS which is to inspire, enable, and empower students to meet high academic standards, lead ethical lives, and demonstrate responsible citizenship," Zinser said. "If enlisting in our armed services isn't one of the highest examples of responsible citizenship, I fail to see what is."

PET CONNECTION



PHOTOS BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION

Kay McCurdy enjoys walking her dog, Kerry, a 9-month-old Havana Silk Terrier, on the grounds of Greenspring in Springfield. "The breed is known as a small dog that's not yappy, which is great when you live in an apartment. She's very affectionate, and she does a great 'roll over.' McCurdy is the founder of DOG.

She's got Betty Davis eyes: Jan Madden, president of Greenspring's DOG club (Dog Owners of Greenspring), said Gilbey, her 6-year-old Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, is the "most laid back dog anyone has invented...He's a sweetie."



PHOTO BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION

From left: Freda Burner holds Itsy while "Aunt" Hazel Cross holds Bitsy, twin Yorkshire Terriers who celebrated their 9th birthday on Dec. 15. Burner started Greenspring's dog therapy program at the retirement center's nursing home. "We have been going there for seven years. Itsy and Bitsy are both very good with people who are ill. They sense it, and Itsy will nestle next to someone. Sometimes we visit the patients three or four times in a week." Burner also organizes Greenspring's Halloween Pet Parade. "Oh, these two have a lot of costumes," she said.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Supervisor Jeff McKay (D-Lee) with his rescue greyhound Vera.



Justin Monaldo of Fairfax Station with Cal, a very alert Weimaraner.



PHOTO BY JESSICA MCKAY

Greenspring resident Steve Guback holds Casey, his Dachshund, who turned 14 on Valentine's Day. "Casey's a great companion. More people around here know Casey than know me."

Public Hearing Requested

FROM PAGE 4

bered how students took pride in planning their ceremonies and that every school's ceremony has a different flavor," McElveen said.

Current policy is vague: Fairfax County high schools maintain individualized graduation ceremonies while following system guidelines.

McElveen said this essentially means that each high school determines its own graduation regalia, and cords take on different meaning at each school. Some schools don't use them at all, he pointed out.

McElveen said he supported Dan Storck's proposal that called for all schools to recognize enlistees at graduation ceremonies, but left it up to the students in each community to determine how enlistees would be recognized.

"It provides a great learning ex-

perience for those students to reflect on the importance of enlisting in the armed services, much more than would another centrally-mandated ceremonial requirement," McElveen said.

"Our job is to keep students at the center, and Dan's proposal did just that."

But Schultz said anything short of a standardized graduation policy was disappointing.

"I am very sad that we didn't vote for Honor Cords for our enlistees today," she said. "Seven of my fellow school board members do not value the enlistment and service of our graduates into military service for their behalf enough to seek a singular form of recognition, but at least we got agreement that schools must include some measure of outward, meaningful recognition at the actual graduation, not just Senior Awards."

Schultz said she has requested

"transparency," by giving the public an opportunity to address the issue prior to the school board making a final determination on March 8. "I have asked that it be placed on new business and we conduct our vote publicly after constituents have been heard."

Residents may sign up online to speak at a regular board meeting about a specific presentation, a new business item, or an action item. Residents may also mail written comments to the school board office, 8115 Gatehouse Road, Suite 5400, Falls Church, VA 22042, or e-mail the school board members at SchoolBoardMembers@fcps.edu.

To sign up online to speak at one of the meetings, go to <http://www.fcps.edu/schlbld/meetings/requestspeak.shtml>

For further information, call the school board office at 571-423-1075

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Campaign Raises Breast Cancer Awareness

FROM PAGE 3

peers were aware of the importance of early detection.

According to advisor Sarah Hinkhouse, "Lauren and Bahar are very good students. They work hard, balance their time very well, and have a dedication that is uncommon in their age group...especially to a community service effort."

THEIR CAMPAIGN included an Awareness Week, during which DECA volunteers handed out breast cancer ribbons. Lauren and Bahar learned different strategies through marketing class and DECA to promote their efforts. "The point of the breast cancer ribbons is to raise awareness of our project. Everyone wearing them and walking around the school are advocates of our project because they're showing everyone else that they're aware of breast cancer," notes Lauren. Bahar adds, "[Students] still have them on their backpacks today."

Awareness Week also involved shock candy, treats wrapped in a paper that provided a shocking statistic about breast cancer, which Lauren describes as "an interesting way to have our target audience learn about breast cancer and make it more memorable to them."

On Pink Out Day, which they advertised via a broadcast media outlet, "Good Morning, Robinson," students were encouraged

to wear pink. Bahar and Lauren were pleased to see many students dressed head to toe in the color of the day.

Other endeavors included a "paint your face with a pink ribbon" event and "Before It's Too Late" T-shirt Day. Bahar and Lauren partnered with Paul Mitchell School representatives, who donated 100 pink hair extensions for Robinson students to buy and wear. They raised almost \$300 from the extensions, all of which was donated to breast cancer research.

"For our assembly we had a Susan G. Komen representative come in," Bahar notes. "It was her second time fighting breast cancer and a lot of teachers enjoyed her sharing her story. A lot of teachers that were going through breast cancer came in."

IN ADDITION to school-wide awareness events, Lauren and Bahar's campaign had a lobbying component. They sent packets of information to congressmen and women on Capitol Hill, describing their project and emphasizing bills that would improve the availability of mammograms to the general public. Lauren observes, "A lot of women don't get mammograms because they're not aware or educated or can't afford them."

"We've gotten a lot of good responses from our classmates, especially DECA members," Bahar reports. Lauren agrees that classmates have been responsive and ma-



T-Shirt Day was a way for Robinson students and staff to promote the Before It's Too Late campaign.

ture about the subject of breast cancer awareness, indicating they'd like to make an impact as well.

Hinkhouse reports, "They were able to get their peers and community members to think about early detection and to understand the importance of the process. The students were often talking about the activities and participating in their promotional efforts."

The campaign managers also "adopted" a Robinson family experiencing breast cancer by providing meals for three days. "We know how hard it is to go through radiation and come home and try to make meals," Bahar explains.

As part of the competition they'll attend in

March, the young women were required to prepare a 30-page paper detailing their campaign efforts. "We definitely wanted our project to be successful so we took an extreme amount of time," Lauren describes. They recruited 50 DECA volunteers and involved about half of the school in at least one of their awareness activities. Next, they'll work on preparing for their 10-minute speech at the state competition as well as creating a display board that shows what they've done.

"For me, the most fulfilling aspect is to see these young adults achieve what they didn't know was possible," Hinkhouse describes. "Whether they are attempting a role play for the first time or producing a research paper for a business to compete at the State Conference or even just attending a field trip to someplace they've never been...the risk they take and the reward from it is incredible." She and the other advisors will join the Robinson DECA competitors at the conference. "We were extremely lucky to detect [my mom and grandmother's] cancer before it got to an extreme stage," Lauren emphasizes. "Some others are not as lucky." Hopefully, the campaign she organized with Bahar through their DECA chapter will ensure Robinson students are more aware of the importance of breast cancer detection before it's too late. For more information about DECA, please visit <http://www.deca.org/about/>.

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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. 24

Cox Communications, in partnership with Fairfax County, invites the public to attend a free program honoring African American women in celebration of Black History Month. 7 p.m. at the Fairfax County Government Center Auditorium. A free reception will be available starting at 6 p.m.

"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

The Sixth Generation. 7 p.m. Empire, 6355 Rolling Road, Springfield. The opening of "The Generation is Back Tour" with fight the bear, Elephant Pistol, Luke Mitchem and more. \$9. www.thesixthgeneration.com.

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

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.

Disney's Phineas and Ferb: The Best Live Tour Ever! 1 p.m., 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. George Mason University Patriot Center, 4500 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. With Phineas, Ferb, Candace, Isabella, Baljeet, Buford and their friends. Tickets \$22-\$50, available at www.ticketmaster.com or 703-573-SEAT. www.patriotcenter.com or www.feldentertainment.com/phineasandferb.

MONDAY/FEB. 27

Heart to Heart. 10:30 a.m. Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Sweet stories. Age 12-23 months with adult. 703-339-4610.

Read to the Dog. 4:30 p.m. Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Read aloud to a trained therapy dog. Sign up for a 15-minute session. Age 6-12. 703-339-4610.

Hidden Pond Monday: Nocturnal Animals. 2:30 p.m. Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce St., Springfield. Learn what goes on outside while we sleep. By Hidden Pond Nature Center. Age 6-12. 703-451-8055.

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5212 Olley Ln \$499,900 Sun 1-4 Susan Metcalf...Avery-Hess.. 703-472-6512
5445 Crossrail Dr. \$267,500 Sun 1-4 Jenny Ko Martin...Weichert.. 703-380-8825
5905 Boothe Dr. \$539,900 Sat 12-6/Sun 10-6 Kim Rosewall...Jobin.. 703-433-0600
9612 Staysail Ct. \$539,950 Sun 1-4 Kathleen Quintarelli...Weichert.. 703-862-8808

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13858 Beaujolais Ct. \$199,950 Sun 1-4 Kelli Shobe...Avery-Hess.. 703-309-9335

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7429 Kincheloe Rd. \$764,500 Sun 1-4 Marsha Wolber...Long & Foster.. 703-618-4397

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12545 Cerromar Pl. \$739,900 Sun 1-4 Larna Dicesaro...Long & Foster.. 703-938-4200
3725 Anne Pl. \$379,000 Sat/Sun 1-4 Frank Madden...Century 21.. 571-221-2062
2849 Hideaway Rd. \$750,000 Sun 1-4 Gil Stockton...Coldwell Banker.. 703-969-5089
3834 Prince William Dr. \$999,999 Sun 1-4 Mary Thyfault Clark...RE/MAX.. 703-563-2210
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Robinson's Valdez, Martino Win State Wrestling Titles

Rams finish state runner-up behind Colonial Forge.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

Santiago Valdez produced a losing record during his first two seasons as a Robinson wrestler. After two years of hard work and dedication, Valdez produced a state championship.

The senior won a 5-4 decision against Grassfield's Taylor Misuna in the 138-pound final during the AAA state championships on Feb. 18 at Robinson Secondary School. Valdez's victory, along with Brooks Martino's second state title helped the Rams finish runner-up in the team competition.

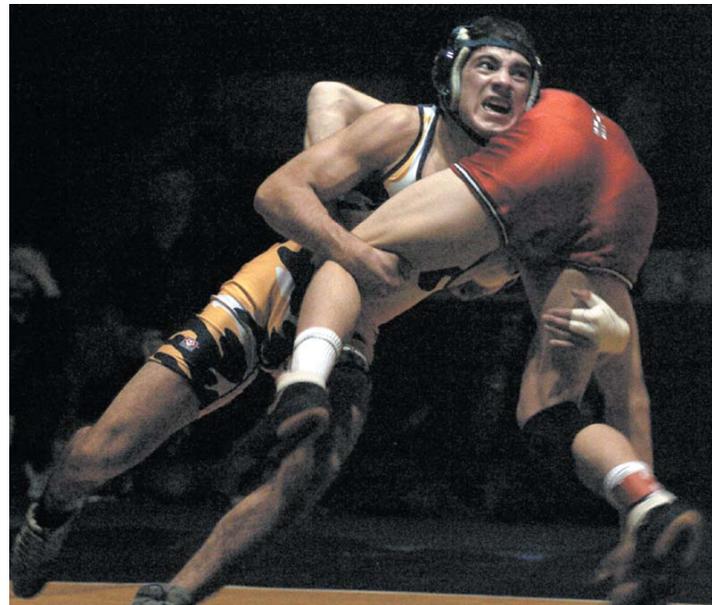
Valdez, who finished runner-up to Westfield's Derek Arnold at the Northern Region championships on Feb. 11, was the only non-region champion to capture a state title.

"His first two years he had a losing record," Robinson head coach Bryan Hazard said. "His father took him all over the country. He traveled and trained six to seven days a week for the last two-and-a-half years and it paid off. He made good decisions socially; he did all the right things that you ask of a kid. He is the poster child for what hard work can do because he has put in more work than any kid you will ever see in the state."

Valdez said his father, Patrick, played a major role in his development by taking him to wrestling camps and tournaments.

"I had a goal and I knew I had to work hard to get it," Valdez said. "I did what I had to do."

After Valdez won the 138-pound crown,



Robinson senior Santiago Valdez won the 138-pound state title at the AAA state wrestling championships on Feb. 18 at Robinson Secondary School.

Martino followed with his second consecutive state championship. The senior defeated Salem's Zach Kechter 3-1 in the 145-pound final, and outscored his four opponents 32-1 during the state tournament.

"It was a whole lot harder the second time — a lot more pressure," said Martino, who last year won the 135-pound title. "I wouldn't say pressure, but maybe [higher] expectations coming in. People are gunning for whoever is defending. You just want to get that top

"He is the poster child for what hard work can do because he has put in more work than any kid you will ever see in the state."

— Robinson wrestling coach Bryan Hazard about Santiago Valdez

person. I've been working for this all year. As soon as that last buzzer went off I was so happy. I was ecstatic."

While Martino was excited about his accomplishment, he also showered Valdez with praise.

"I am beyond happy and proud of Santiago," Martino said. "I couldn't be more proud of him. We've been grinding on each other for three years since I've been here, but especially this year. We worked out 95 percent of the time. At practice it was me and him. We've both been pushing

each other so hard and we both got [state] titles. It's just unbelievable.

"The amount that he's improved — he wasn't even a starter his freshman year — it's ridiculous. I'm so proud of him."

Sophomore heavyweight Jake Pinkston finished state runner-up for Robinson and senior Jonathan Simmons took fifth in the 160-pound bracket. After losing some talented grapplers from last season's state championship team, Hazard said he was pleased with the Rams' runner-up finish.

"I think there's a lot of naysayers out there saying that this team would fold when our stars leave," Hazard said, "but it shows you what team is all about."

Colonial Forge won the team championship with 152.5 points. Robinson finished with 87 points, followed by Matoaca (67.5) and Annandale (65.5).



Robinson senior Brooks Martino, bottom, won his second consecutive state championship, winning the 145-pound title on Feb. 18 at Robinson Secondary School.

PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBITZEL/THE CONNECTION

Good Showing by Northern Region at State Wrestling

Westfield's Donahue earns state title; Dooley of Madison and Forrest of South Lakes earn second place medals.

BY RICH SANDERS
THE CONNECTION

Three Northern Region teams - Robinson, Annandale, and Westfield High Schools - finished among the top 10 team finishers at last weekend's Virginia State AAA Wrestling Championships, held Feb. 17-18 (Friday and Saturday) at Robinson Secondary.

Colonial Forge (Stafford) of the Northwest Region was the team champion with 152.5 points, well ahead of second place and defending state champion Robinson (87). Matoaca High (67.5) of Chesterfield finished third ahead of fourth place Annandale (65.5) and fifth place Forest Park

(63) of Woodbridge. Westfield High, this year's Northern Region champion, finished in eighth place with 57 points behind sixth place Ocean Lakes (59) of Virginia Beach and seventh place Kellam (58.5), also of Virginia Beach. Rounding out the top 10 behind Westfield were ninth place Hanover (54.5) of Mechanicsville and 10th place Salem High (50).

Thirty-nine teams were represented at states. Other teams from the Northern Region included South County (17th place), Madison (23rd place), South Lakes (28th place), Lake Braddock (29th), Wakefield (31st), Marshall (32nd), Hayfield (33rd), Centerville (34th), Yorktown (36th), and Stone Bridge (38th).

FIVE NORTHERN REGION wrestlers

won individual state titles: Ali Musa (220 weight class) of Annandale; Beau Donahue (152) of Westfield; Brooks Martino (145) of Robinson; Santiago Valdez (138) of Robinson; and Dane Harlow (126) of Annandale.

Second place finishers from the Northern Region were: Jake Pinkston (heavyweight) of Robinson; Ryan Forrest (160) of South Lakes; Henry Majano (132) of Wakefield; and Robert Dooley (120) of Madison.

Third place finishers from the Northern Region were: Matt Crawford (heavyweight) of Marshall; Brett Stein (160) of South County; Jonathan Faul (152) of Stone Bridge; Sahid Kargbo (138) of Hayfield; and Hunter Manley (106) of South County.

A fourth place finisher from the Northern Region was Charlie Whelden (heavy-

weight) of Yorktown.

Fifth place finishers were: Bryan Jefferson (heavyweight) of Annandale; Ryan Sepulveda (170) of Centerville; Jonathan Simmons (160) of Robinson; Rori Renzi (145) of Lake Braddock; Leland Jenkins (126) of Langley; and Brett Campbell (120) of Westfield.

Sixth place finishers were: David Chenevey (195) of Centerville; Dusty Floyd (170) of Mount Vernon; Stephen Aiello (145) of Westfield; and Ibrahim Bunduka (113) of T.C. Williams.

Seventh place finishers were: Tyler Morson (170) of Westfield; Derek Arnold (138) of Westfield; Sean Haskett (132) of Lake Braddock; and Austin Riggs (120) of Robinson.

Eighth place finishers were: Gil Enav (170) of Lake Braddock; Brock Jacobsen (132) of Edison; and James Cusack (113) of Marshall.

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streets and this lovely home awaits you. Stunning Colonial featuring 4 nice size Bedrooms, 2 1/2 Baths, Hardwood Floors on main level, Updated Kitchen and Baths, New windows and much more.

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Oakton \$1,150,000
Elegance abounds in this spacious 3-level home set on premium lot in the heart of Oakton.

Upgraded throughout, this 4 bedroom 4.5 bath home with brick on 3 sides, beautiful hardwood floors, 3 fireplaces, screen porch, 2 car garage makes the perfect home for everyday living or gracious entertaining. Absolutely move-in condition. 2977 Trouseau Ln.



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NEW LISTING

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rm, Liv rm w/gas flpl & vault ceilg, Din rm, M/L MBR suite w/2 walk-in closets, Sun rm, Loft & Guest suite, Hdws, Neut crpt, unfn W/O LL w/rough in BA, Huge deck. (50+ OK)

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BURKE CENTRE - REMODELED WITH MAIN LEVEL MASTER! 3,750 fin sqft, 3 lvls, open flr plan, Gourmet kitchen, 5BR, 3BA, 2 HB, walkout LL, huge deck, backs to trees. Robinson HS

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7429 Kincheloe Rd.
Hurry to see this impressive home before it is gone! Sited on 5.7 acres, renovated granite & stainless kitchen, renovated baths, and more! Sought after MAIN LEVEL master suite, prof landscaping, 4 BR, 3.5 Bas, 3 car garage parking. Impeccably maintained, move in ready. Union Mill ES, Robinson SS. Call Marsha to see.



Carol Hermandorfer
703-216-4949



John Astorino
703-898-5148



Clifton - \$1,175,000 (5 acres, w/Pool & Barn)



Fairfax Station - \$789,000 (.9 acres with Pool)

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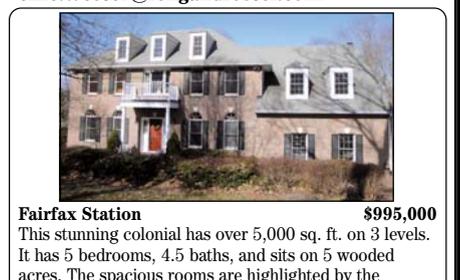


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Fairfax Station \$995,000

This stunning colonial has over 5,000 sq. ft. on 3 levels. It has 5 bedrooms, 4.5 baths, and sits on 5 wooded acres. The spacious rooms are highlighted by the breath-taking views. One that must be seen!
Ellie Wester 703-503-1880

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