Traveling Down A Familiar Road

News, Page 3

Virginia Delegate Mark Keam and Senator Chap Petersen (D-34) hosted a town hall meeting Saturday at Vienna’s American Legion Post 180. Nearly 200 residents attended the meeting.

Libyan Human Rights Activist Remembered

News, Page 5

Tysons Service District Created

News, Page 3
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**Tysons Service District Created**

New tax district will help fund Tysons Corner improvements.

By Alex McVeigh

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has created a Tysons Service district, which will tax residents and businesses to help pay for $3.1 billion in improvements to Tysons Corner.

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors voted eight to two to create a Tysons Corner Service District, which is expected to raise money to help cover the estimated $3.1 billion in new roads and public transit development planned for the area.

“Tysons is going to be a wonderful place, but right now it’s got challenges. We’re in the middle of a $6 billion investment, and we’re doing things like requiring developers to build fields, which is extremely expensive in a build-out situation like we’ve got here, they’re investing in parks, sidewalks, bike lanes, a significant infrastructure investment,” said Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville), who put forward the motion at the board’s Jan. 8 meeting. “Right now we haven’t got the infrastructure, and for those people that live in Tysons it’s been a detriment, so this is an opportunity [for] residents being asked to pay a small portion of the big-picture projects that will make this area work.”

The county estimates that the district will generate around $253 million, or eight percent of the total money needed. The property within the district is assessed at around $11.5 billion, and about 83 percent of the area is commercial land.

**THE TAX RATE** for the district will not be set until the board sets county budget, but it will be based on assessed property values. The Board of Supervisors also voted to create an advisory board to provide input on the tax rate. Foust also estimated that an early prediction for the assessment would be around $18 per month for residents.

Supervisors Linda Smyth (D-Providence) and Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) were the two dissenting votes against the district. Smyth cited a “folder of correspondence” about the proposed district.

She said letters from residents are universally opposed, while letters from developers are universally in favor.

“What the residents of Tysons are saying clearly is, ‘wait a minute, we’re not the developers, we’re not the ones generating the need for these road improvements, we’re not going to make a profit,’” she said. “Not only that, these road improvements are for the benefit of commuters, people driving into Tysons to work in the new commercial spaces. We haven’t asked for one group of citizens to pay for such significant infrastructure when it is, as they see it, a matter of a bigger community interest.”

She went on to say that “people are angry and very concerned about this way of doing business in Fairfax County... and frankly, I understand how they feel.”

Herrity said he supported the idea of Tysons redevelopment, and the Tysons Corner plan and efforts to grow the county’s tax base, but felt the plan unnecessarily raised taxes on members of the district.

“I think we have a clear and viable alternative to raising taxes on the residents and business of Tysons, and that’s the restructuring of our profit dollars to include a greater focus on transportation,” he said. “Clearly developers are paying for a portion of professors, but it’s not the level it should be.”

Foust compared the situation to other special tax districts in the county, such as the ones that help fund the McLean and Reston Community Centers. “There are areas of the county that have additional taxes, some pay substantially more than what we’re talking about in Tysons, so this isn’t the first time it’s been done,” he said.

The board also voted to create two transportation funds, which will be paid into by developers. One will help pay for the needed grid of streets, the other for larger-scale Tysons Corner transit improvement costs.

**THE COUNTY** estimates the Grid of Streets Fund will raise approximately $304 million. Developers will contribute $6.44 per square foot of commercial development, and $1,000 per residential unit built.

It is estimated the Tysons-Wide Fund will raise approximately $253 million, with developers contributing $5.63 per square foot of development, as well as $1,000 per residential unit built.

The total raised by the new funds is approximately 18 percent of the $3.1 billion in total costs. County officials estimate that the $3.1 billion needed for improvements can be broken into four categories: large-scale, Tysons-wide improvements ($1.2 billion), transit ($865 million), grid of streets ($865 million) and neighborhood and access improvements ($77 million).

“The grid of streets will be paid for entirely by developers, with more than $300 million coming from the Grid of Streets Transportation fund, with the rest coming from in-kind contributions.”

Landowners will pay $506 million toward the Tysons-wide road improvements, and the county will publicly fund the remainder.

Transit and neighborhood and access improvements will be paid for publicly by the county.
Town Hall Meeting Focuses on Transportation, Education

In that sense, it is far more onerous on citizens than the gas tax which is an input cost on a product, such as gasoline, which is “priced to market.” That’s why the level of gas tax has little if any effect on the price consumers pay at the pump,” Petersen explained.

Petersen said the “real story” is the discontinuing of “user fees” to fund transportation—and instead making our roads and transit projects just another item in the state general fund. “That is a startling turn of events,” he said.

“By ending user-based financing and pushing our road costs primarily to general taxes, the governor sets up an annual clash between transportation and the funding of public schools, health providers, and first responders, to name a few,” Petersen said, adding that the governor’s plan also ensures that out-of-state highway users will use our highways for free, since the gas tax is the only way the state has to capture that revenue.

“Maryland is now for McDonnell,” Petersen quipped. “My biggest problem is that if you take a general tax and increase it on everyone, that ought to be the last resort and not the first resort,” he said to applause.

Since the governor’s announce- ment, Democrats, and even some Republicans, have come out in force against McDonnell’s plan. Senate Majority Leader Richard Saslaw (D-35) said “I think that thing is so dead it’s unbelievable.” Peterson, however, is the only Fairfax senator to introduce his own legislation that would adjust (or index) the gasoline tax, currently 17.5 cents per gallon, based on the fuel efficiency index, rather than eliminate it.

“Thankfully, the legislature will have a chance to weigh in the next six weeks,” Petersen said.

CHARTER SCHOOLS, TYSONS TAX DISTRICT AND ROUTE 123

Keam, who filed a total of 14 legislative measures when the legislature convened Jan. 9, introduced his legislative agenda and took questions on a number of topics.

As a member of the House education committee, Keam said he was opposed to the governor’s plan to have a constitutional amendment authorizing charter schools, allowing local school districts to decide when to allow a new charter school, without needing state Board of Education approval. McDonnell has long been a proponent of charter schools, and said Wednesday that Virginia has “one of the weakest public charter schools laws in all the country.”

Keam said he thought charter schools should meet a gap, and not replace an existing system. He received applause when he told the crowd that the governor’s plan to hold schools accountable by giving each school a letter grade was “stigmatizing the schools our children go to.” Instead, he said, the governor should consider grading the state’s transportation network. “I’d like to see some off-ramps get some F’s,” Keam said.

Walter Basnight, a member of the Town of Vienna’s planning commission, asked what lawmakers plan to do about the area’s increasing traffic headaches, especially on Route 123.

“It’s a nightmare now and it’s going to be a nightmare when Tysons gets here,” Basnight said. “We need some support from the state as well.”

KEAM said one of his bills—HB2141—would “increase transportation maintenance funds for highly used roads, such as Maple Avenue.”

Several residents asked Keam about his plan to help McLean resident avoid higher taxes resulting from the county’s plan to increase property taxes in Tysons by 7 to 9 cents to fund the area’s $3.1 billion redevelopment.

Keam said that while he fully supported the idea of redeveloping Tysons Corner into Fairfax County’s “new urban downtown,” he thought it was “unfair” to tax residents the same as commercial property owners who would directly benefit from the redevelopment. He noted many Tysons residents already pay a real estate tax, storm water tax and pest management tax.

Keam said he introduced legislation—HB2131—that would give the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors “every legal tool possible” to either completely exempt residents who live in special tax districts or require that they be taxed at a lower rate than businesses in those districts.

He cited residents of The Rotonda as among those who would be unfairly taxed in the new district. The Rotonda, a gated condominium community of five 10-story buildings built in 1978, has nearly 1,200 resident units on 35 acres near Tysons and Tysons Galleria.

“The Rotonda is home to many senior citizens who live on a fixed income. All of a sudden they have to pay for new schools, playgrounds, sidewalks? For that group of constituents, I think a new tax is blatantly unfair. I’m going to do everything I can to provide relief. For new residents? They are on notice.”

Another topic of concern was the potential closure of the Northern Virginia Training Center (NVTIC). Several parents, who have adult children at the NVTIC, asked Petersen and Keam to lobby lawmakers to keep the center open until the community could safely support a transition to a community-based home.
Family Remembers Life and Legacy of Kidnapped Libyan Human Rights Activist

Mansur Rashid Kikhia’s family lives in McLean and Vienna area.

By Donna Manz
The Connection

Nineteen years ago, on Dec. 10, 1993, Libyan human rights activist and lawyer Mansur Rashid Kikhia was kidnapped from his hotel room in Cairo, Egypt and spirited out of the country. Last month—December, 2012—Kikhia’s death in Tripoli was confirmed to his family, now living in the Vienna and McLean areas. On Saturday, Jan. 12, Kikhia’s family and friends celebrated the life of a man dedicated to human rights for all.

“Mansur Kikhia was advocating for democracy and the protection of human rights and freedom for all the Arab nations since the beginning of his career,” said daughter Jihan Kikhia. “He was a visionary, which made him an early pioneer of the recent revolution in Libya.”


In protest to the killing and torture perpetrated by Al-Gaddafi’s regime, Kikhia resigned from the Libyan government in 1980, publicly protesting against government-supported atrocities. After he separated himself from the Libyan government, he continued his opposition movement in Paris, France.

“Mansur Kikhia’s story highlights the need for humankind to constantly work hard to protect and promote our most basic human rights, even in the face of life’s most difficult struggles,” said Kikhia.

Family and friends say that Kikhia was a leading opposition figure to Muammar Al-Gaddafi, and they suspect it was pro-Al-Gaddafi supporters behind the kidnapping. Kikhia aimed to unite Libya’s opposition groups to create a powerful front against Gaddafi’s oppressive regime, said Mansur Rashid Kikhia’s daughter, Jihan ‘Jiji’ Kikhia. When Kikhia disappeared from Cairo, he was attending an Arab Organization for Human Rights meeting, of which he was a founder. International Human Rights Day falls on Dec. 10.

Family friend and supporter Larry Ekin also believes that it was supporters of Gaddafi that kidnapped Kikhia, possibly with the cooperation of people inside Egypt. “How else did they spirit him out of the country,” Ekin asks.

“Mansur was probably kidnapped because he was seen by the Gaddafi regime as a great threat to his government,” said Ekin. “Not because of military might but because of his integrity and credibility. He had the reputation and the ability to unite various groups in opposition to Gaddafi’s regime. He also had credibility with the U.N.”

With Gaddafi’s fall and death Kikhia’s case was reopened. In December of 2012, Kikhia’s death was confirmed to his family. “So, although the end of his life was a tragedy, we are here to acknowledge and commend what he did while he was a free man with a heroic vision in a world full of limitations,” said Kikhia. “We are fighting for the completion of his story and to honor his life as he selflessly did for others.”
Transportation Money

Virginia, and especially Northern Virginia, is woefully short on funds for transportation. One reason is that its gas tax, a logical way to fund transportation infrastructure, is one of the lowest in the nation, and has remained flat since the '80s, since it is not indexed for inflation. So the buying power of the gas tax has been dwindling.

It seems obvious that one way to fix this is to allow it to rise with inflation, or change it to a percentage of the price of a gallon of fuel. Tying road funding to gas consumption is a logical connection, and the increase encourages conservation and more fuel-efficient vehicles.

Instead, Gov. Bob McDonnell has proposed eliminating the gas tax, replacing the funding with an increase in the sales tax plus a plan to shift money from other state spending, like with an increase in the sales tax plus a plan to eliminate the gas tax, replacing the funding Tying road funding to gas consumption is a dis-tinguishing since it is not indexed for inflation. So transportation infrastructure, is one of the lowest in the country. Our schools are second to none. We are the home for many Fortune 500 businesses. Even with the challenging economy, our unemployment rate is among the lowest in the country.

Despite these strengths, our community also includes people who are homeless and are stay- ing at emergency shelters, living in their cars or camping in the woods. Our community in- cludes families with no place to sleep at night and children with no place to go after school. It saddens me to report that there were over 3,000 homeless individuals in our community this past year. It is unacceptable to have home- less men, women and children in our commu- nity.

Homelessness impacts every person in our community and each has a role in ending it. Through the good work of many non-profit and religious organizations, for many years we have directed our collective efforts to managing the homeless issues. However, little was done to find longer term solutions to prevent and end homelessness. That has now changed.

The leadership of Congressman Gerry Connolly helped to galvanize all of the energy and effort in the entire community. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors with leadership from Chairman Bulova and Supervisor Catherine Hudgins and all of our key stake- holders from the non-profit, government, faith and business community came together to de- velop an impressive 10 Year Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. The plan recognizes the high of all people to have a safe, afford- able place in which to live. The plan envisions our entire community working together as partners to eliminate homelessness. We have some very steep goals and lots of hard work ahead to reach our goal of ending homelessness in Fairfax County by the end of 2018.

We have made huge strides in the develop- ment of the governance structure called The Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness. The Office to Prevent and End Homelessness was established within Fairfax County. We have constituted a Governing Board made up of business leaders, elected officials, builders, clergy, law enforcement and others. We have created a new Consumer Advisory Council to ensure that currently homeless and formerly homeless have an active voice in the imple- mentation of our plan.

We have much more work to do. We have recently moved our collective efforts to the plan’s goal of creating 2,650 new housing units. We have supported and will continue to sup- port efforts to amend the county’s housing code to permit more individual housing options. We hosted a day long outreach program for our faith based communities which shows prom- ise at increasing the housing stock.

Through our collective prevention and rapid rehousing strategies, community case manage- ment and the provision of other critical ser- vices, we prevented last year over 1,400 indi- viduals from becoming homeless by providing case management and other ser- vices. In addition, we have launched a Hous- ing Locator Network to strengthen relation- ships with landlords and to help to move the homeless in our community more rapidly into permanent housing. Through the work of our partners we have seen an impressive in- crease in homeless families and individuals placed in permanent housing from 482 in 2010 to 853 in 2012. Many adults and children have been positively impacted. This can only be at- tributed to the commitment that many in our community have made to end homelessness. Our approach to preventing and ending homelessness is predicated on us doing so in partnership with a broad coalition of non-profits, faith communities, businesses and government. Working together allows us to do amazing things.

I thank you for your interest and commit- ment and look forward to our continued work together with all of our partners in the coming years as we strive to prevent and end homelessness in our community. If you would like to become involved in this important work please go to www.fairfaxhomeless.org or call 703-324-9492 for more information.

Michael O’Reilly is Chairman of the Governing Board of Fairfax Falls Church Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness.

Michael O’Reilly

Eliminating the gas tax makes no sense.

With considerable agreement that Virginia needs about $1 billion a year to pay roads and transit, this proposal would raise about one-third of that.

Part of the governor’s plan also calls for a $100 annual fee on vehicles that use alter- native fuels.

Raising the sales tax to pay for roads is particularly unfair to the many residents of North- ern Virginia who have chosen to live in Arlington, Alexandria and other ar- eas that are walkable and provide easy access to public transit.

Penalizing drivers of hybrid and electric ve- hicles by charging them more than six times what other vehicles pay is not in the best in- terests of anyone who breathes the air in Vir- ginia, and is a stark slap at innovation.

The entire proposal makes about as much sense as forcing a select few Northern Virginia residents, the drivers on the Dulles Toll Road, to almost single-handedly pay for rail to Dulles. Dulles airport is one of the key economic driv- ers for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Build- ing rail to serve the airport is an economic in- vestment that will have broad benefits in rev- enue for the state. A disproportionately small amount of that revenue will make it back to Northern Virginia. So it is welcome that the governor’s proposal calls for diverting some of the “new” transportation money to Dulles rail.

The current proposal would make Virginia the only state without a gas tax. It seems un- wise for a state with such dramatic trans- portation deficits to abandon the one source of funding that makes sense. More money is needed; that requires addition, not subtraction.

— Mary Kimm.

From left — Michael O’Reilly, Jim Corcoran and Dean Klein during Jeans Day 2012.

A 10-Year Mission: End Homelessness

By Michael O’Reilly

O ur Fairfax-Falls Church community is one of the most affluent in the ur- ban Northside of Washing- ton, D.C. Yet, there are people in our community who are anxious and struggling for their survival.

Children are hungry. Some parents struggle to provide adequate nutrition to their children. For the many who are fortunate enough to have access to health care, there are waiting lists to see doctors.

The majority of people in our community are committed to making our community a better place. For 20 years, Fairfax County and the city of Falls Church have worked collaboratively to end homelessness.

This month, The Connection begins featuring a monthly column written by community lead- ers involved in Fairfax County’s non-profit organizations. Every year, thousands of Fairfax County residents volunteer with nonprofits in a variety of ways, whether it’s driving a senior citi- zen to a medical appointment or serving meals to the homeless. In one of the county’s hypot- huma shelters. According to Volunteer Fairfax—a nonprofit that matches volunteers with service projects—individuals volunteered 205,688 hours of service to the community. We launch this series with a column by Michael O’Reilly, Chairman of the Governing Board of the Fairfax-Falls Church Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness.

Editor’s Note:

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To the Editor:

Kyle McCauley heaped praise on Del. Barbara Comstock for her efforts to “increase the in-state slots guaranteed for Virginia’s students to 75 percent” [Increasing Slots for Virginia Students, Connection, January 9-15 (2013)].

Three things: 1) Comstock’s HB 1700 (which has no co-patrons) is identical to Del. Tim Hugo’s (R-40) HB 1605 (David Ramadani, R-87, is chief co-patron); 2) Both bills exclude Virginia Military Institute, Norfolk State University and Virginia State University; and 3) The increased in-state slots will not go into effect until the 2015-2019 academic year by which time I anticipate young Mr. McCauley will have graduated from the College of William & Mary.

I’ll note that Hugo’s HB 1083 from the 2012 session of the General Assembly failed to make it out of the Education Sub-Committee for Higher Education and Arts. I doubt HB 1700/1605 will go any further. Yet, these bills do pander to Northern Virginia constituents who want our children to become members of the Tribe or Wahoos. Too bad they are ineffective.

The sad fact is that Virginia’s public institutions for higher learning have been grossly under-funded by the Republican dominated House of Delegates for many years. As Sen. Creigh Deeds (D-25) notes in a recent issue of Virginia Policy Review, “Funding per full-time student has decreased 23 percent since 1992. And state funding for core academic functions at our public institutions reached a new low last year of only 33 percent.” To make-up for this neglectful funding, lawmakers and college presidents depend on the checkbooks of out-of-state families to subsidize tuition for our in-state students. The “2012-13 Tuition and Fees at Virginia’s State-Supported Colleges and Universities” report issued by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia shows that the average in-state tuition and mandatory fees is $6,224 while out-of-state families pay $20,853.

But to be fair, Del. Comstock was one of 43 co-patrons of HB 2510, Virginia Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011, a bill that passed the House and Senate unanimously. However, HB 2510 merely suggested that “Each institution’s major operating and instruction funding need, and the Commonwealth’s funding split policy by which 67 percent of an institution’s cost of education for Virginia students is funded from the state general fund and 33 percent from funds other than the state general fund, shall be taken into account by the governor during the preparation of his proposed biennial budget bill.” Governor McDonnell and the General Assembly have a long way to go to reverse last year’s 33 percent funding to the VHEO Act’s suggested 67 percent state funding.

Under-funding of state-supported colleges and universities has other consequences. State government support for student financial aid has decreased over the years. Colleges and universities have to make up the difference. This means that each of Virginia’s colleges and universities needs their own fundraising functions which includes staff and office space. Who pays for this overhead cost?

Lower state funding has probably had an effect on the available number of faculty and classrooms. What are students to do if there aren’t enough faculty to teach required courses? Not much except to take five or six years to graduate. I would hope that Del. Comstock is curious enough about the relationship between state funding and the four-year graduation rate to sponsor a bill requesting a study by the Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee.

I’m not confident that Del. Comstock is willing to make the hard choices required to increase state support for our colleges and universities while simultaneously reducing our dependence on out-of-state families. For the sake of our children, I hope she does. In any case, for Mr. McCauley, it will be too little, too late.

Greg Brandon

McLean

Doing the Right Thing on Guns

To the Editor:

The issue of gun control has been in the news lately, with everyone from President Obama to a British TV host voicing their opinion since the tragic shooting in Newton, Conn. First of all I want to point out that, according to his own logic, President Obama is partially responsible for the shooting in Newton, CT. During the 2012 presidential debates, the president passed on the idea of enacting any meaningful gun control laws, despite the fact that just months prior to the Sandy Hook and Aurora theater shooting claimed over 50 victims. If more gun control is the solution to these crimes as the Obama administration is now saying, then the president failed in his primary duty to protect the American people by not acting on this earlier. This was recently pointed out in the New York Times. And in other news, pigs are now flying.

I have a more simple approach to this issue, since the gun control debate simply encourages more Americans to go out and purchase more guns (in record amounts I might add) after the administration announced support for gun control laws. Here’s my solution—stop trying to control the American people. The Second Amendment, just like the First Amendment, is a part of the DNA of these United States. Gun ownership runs in our blood, not just the ownership and use of guns, but the fact that our government, from the very beginning, trusted us to own the same weapons that they had. Just like the freedom of speech, our Founding Fathers saw gun ownership as an essential freedom, and necessary to protect all of our other freedoms from the clutches of tyranny. We are a special people, a special nation, as a result of all of our freedoms. Any effort to restrict those national freedoms will destroy our national character.

We have to remind ourselves, the freedoms we enjoy can be used for good or evil, it is our choice. Hitler used speech as a weapon that led to the murder of millions. Lenin, Stalin, Mao, all had to convince others to follow in their evil intentions before they began their campaigns of human slaughter. And I would point out in all of these mass slaughters, guns were hardly the chief weapon but rather other cruel tactics like starvation. Should we then restrict free speech, since it has led to such horrific crimes?

Mr. president and members of Congress, trust the American People. We know what’s best for ourselves and our country. We have the Constitution to guide us. Don’t try to restrict it. Do some soul searching on why the Founding Fathers trusted us with our guns just like our speech and religion, and do the right thing. It’s been a long time since I’ve felt the government trusted me. I’d like to think it’s still possible.

Tim Halisky

Great Falls
PostNet Business Center Opens in Vienna

Print shop supports businesses and non-commercial needs.

By Donna Manz  
The Connection

When James Cudney turned his back on the road warrior of years ago, he turned to the community that his family lived in, loved and supported. If he was going tochosetobea small business owner because I love this town and I want to enjoy watching my three sons grow up,” said Cudney, president of PostNet 128 Vienna, a “neighborhood business center.”

PostNet 128 Vienna owner James Cudney says the shop is focused on building this business in town and becoming a part of the Vienna business community.

“I went from a road warrior to hometown business owner because I love this town and I want to enjoy watching my three sons grow up.”

The CUDNEYS moved to Vienna 12 years ago from Paris where his wife held an executive position in an accounting firm.

Cudney’s move, April 8, 11 and 17, attend Vienna schools, and his oldest son works part-time in the shop.

James Cudney has been active in the town since his move here. He belongs to local civic clubs and business networks, is on the Town of Vienna Business Liaison Committee and is on the Board of Directors of the Vienna Business Association. He volunteers with Boy Scouts and James Madison High School Boosters.

“We’re focused on building this business in town and becoming a part of the Vienna business community,” James Cudney said. “I really care about this town.”
The Importance of Recess

Pediatric researchers say unstructured play can help a child’s cognitive, physical, emotional and social development.

By Marilyn Campbell

The Connection

Can climbing on monkey bars help a child’s cognitive development? Can a game of tag boost preschooler’s social skills? The nation’s top pediatricians say “yes” and some local educators agree.

A policy statement released earlier this month by the American Academy of Pediatrics said recess, when provided in a safe environment and under supervision, provides children with cognitive, physical, emotional and social benefits. Additionally, the AAP recommended that unstructured play be used in conjunction with physical education in schools.

“Recess and unstructured play provide children with opportunities to explore, problem-solve and learn in ways that enhance their socio-emotional, physical and cognitive development,” said Julie K. Kidd, associate professor and early childhood education academic program coordinator at George Mason University in Fairfax. “The physical and mental break from academic activities enables children to return to their studies more focused and ready to learn.”

SOME LOCAL SCHOOLS agree that recess is an important part of a student’s day. “In addition to physical education classes, our students enjoy unstructured recess every day,” said Dick Ewing, head of school at the Norwood School in Potomac, Md. “Of course, there are the health benefits of the physical activity, and teachers will tell you that children are more focused in the classroom after recess, but there are also several social-emotional benefits. Children learn important life skills during recess. They learn how to effectively communicate, collaborate, cooperate and problem solve during various play-ground games. Creativity also comes into play as children make up their own games.”

Lizbeth Borra, school counselor at Potomac Elementary School in Potomac, added: “This unstructured time gives children the opportunity to develop lifelong skills such as conflict resolution, communication, creativity, and negotiation.”

Joan Holden, head of school for St. Stephen’s & St. Agnes School in Alexandria, developed play areas known as “Tinkering Spaces” on campus, “dedicated spots where students work together with educational games, building tools and puzzles, where there are no assessments or evaluations, just a relaxing, fun atmosphere that brings out teamwork, creativity, invention and problem-solving,” said Holden.

American Academy of Pediatrics researchers and local educators concluded that recess and free play activities are a critical part of development and social interaction that students may not get inside a classroom. “Time outside in an unstructured environment among peers provides an important avenue for the development of their creative, social and moral development,” said Colin Gleason, head of the Lower School at The Heights School in Potomac.

Gleason said unstructured play provides a much-needed outlet for some children. “At this age, children, and especially boys, overflow with physical energy,” he said. “They are wired ... to explore and learn about the world around them in an active way, using all of their senses. Also, by organizing play with their peers in this environment, they learn the natural laws of social interaction. They learn that it pays off to be kind towards others, to work together to make a game run smoothly [and] to make rules that are fair.”

American Academy of Pediatrics researchers also recommended that recess not be withheld from children as punishment. Shannon Melideo, chair of the education department and an associate professor at the School of Education and Human Services at Marymount University in Arlington, agrees: “Too often the children who are denied recess as a punishment are the children who need recess most.”

Some local educators say that recess gives children an opportunity to learn how to manage their free time. “Current research in brain development highlights the connections between physical activity, attention and memory,” said Dresden Koons, head of Lower School at St. Andrew’s Episcopal School in Potomac. “We ... [believe] that what happens outside the classroom benefits what goes on inside it, and vice versa.”

THE AAP STATEMENT stresses that recess should complement, not replace physical education classes, even for schools with limited outdoor space, and Reston based National Association for Sport and Physical Education spokeswoman Paula Reyes Kun agreed. She said, “All children need a minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Regular daily recess should be a part of every school day. It provides children with discretionary time to be active, helps them develop healthy bodies and enjoy movement.”

She added that NAPSE is calling on schools across the country to find creative ways of increasing their students’ physical activity levels before, during and after school.

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Off to the Movies

Mason professor has unconventional method of teaching complex concepts.

By Marilyn Campbell

The Connection

A n Arlington resident and George Mason University professor has an unconventional way of helping her students master complex concepts and evaluating their proficiency. She requires them to watch movies.

Laurie Meamber, an associate professor of marketing in Mason’s School of Management in Fairfax, teaches a consumer behavior course in which students study the actions and motivations of buyers. Meamber teaches them how to analyze why and how consumers make certain decisions.

The class studies characters in popular films to see the concepts they learn throughout the semester.

“A primary goal of a consumer behavior course is for students to better understand consumer behavior in order to become more effective marketing managers,” said Meamber. “An additional goal ... is to enhance their knowledge of consumer behavior so that they as consumers can consume wisely.”

Meamber says that through watching and analyzing movies, her classes examine the entire range of internal, external and situational influences on consumer behavior. She divides her class into three groups and each group focuses on one factor that affects consumer behavior: external influences, internal influences and decision-making.

“Students [write] a brief plot summary, providing descriptions of the major characters as consumers and analyzing concepts that they had learned in the course that appear in the film,” she said. “They do this in a comprehensive fashion, after having learned all of the ideas taught in consumer behavior. This allows them to reflect upon, apply and synthesize the entire range of knowledge they have acquired in the course.”

Mason spokeswoman Catherine Probst said, “Along the way, the students construct consumer profiles of the characters and examine reasons why and how they make decisions throughout the film. Specifically, students are looking for influences on consumer behavior based on attitudes, motivation, income level and occupation.”

Mason student, and Reston resident, Ben Coffinberger took Meamber’s consumer behavior class during the fall semester. His group chose “The Devil Wears Prada.”

“We presented it by dressing up as the four main characters and acting out small scenes from the movie that provided examples of important marketing concepts we learned throughout the semester,” said Coffinberger. “I was forced to identify and apply the marketing concepts I learned in the consumer behavior course to the scenes in the movie. Before taking this class, I didn’t think to really recognize consumer-marketing behaviors in movies, television and everyday life. Now I view things in a totally different light.”

Meamber says the increasing popularity of social media makes the movie approach a successful learning tool. “As time moves forward, this type of assignment fits in with the interests and learning styles of this generation of undergraduates,” she said. “This type of assignment allows students to analyze and reflect upon movies as a medium that portrays many examples of consumers and of consumer behavior.”
Maddie’s Blankets Makes 10,000th Blanket

Susannah Bianco, a fourth grade student at Haycock Elementary School, made the 10,000th blanket for Maddie’s Blankets on Wednesday, Dec. 19. This blanket will be donated to the Lost Dog and Cat Rescue Foundation for use in their Tysons PetSmart animal adoption center.

Susannah Bianco is the youngest of 10 children, an avid reader, a great help around the house according to her father. She enjoys the activities she’s involved in at school, and especially the teachers she’s had so far. Maddie’s Blankets is a not-for-profit organization based in Oakton that works with children, senior citizens and developmentally disabled individuals to provide community service opportunities to these individuals as well as soft fleece blankets for children in need and rescue animals in shelters. Founded in 2007, they have donated blankets to organizations in nearly a dozen states and involved over 5000 children in the making of these blankets. The goal is to provide community service opportunities to children showing them that they can make a difference in the world one blanket at a time. Their website is: http://www.maddiesblankets.org.

The Rev. James Papile, Rector First Baptist Church of Vienna, made the 10,000th blanket to organizations in nearly a dozen states and involved over 5000 children in the making of these blankets. The goal is to provide community service opportunities to children showing them that they can make a difference in the world one blanket at a time. Their website is: http://www.maddiesblankets.org.

Visit These Houses of Worship
To Highlight Your Faith Community, call Karen at 703-917-6468

First Baptist Church of Vienna
450 Orchard Street, NW
Vienna, VA 22180
703-938-8525
fbcoffice@verizon.net
www.fbcv.org

SUNDAY WORSHIP, 7:45 AM & 11:00 AM
CHURCH SCHOOL 9:30AM-10:30AM
MIDWEEK SERVICES, WED. 7:00 PM
HOW TO GET YOUR SPECIAL EVENTS IN THE CONNECTION

Calendar Listings

The Connection Newspapers can include a Calendar of Upcoming Events every week. While we cannot guarantee that every event we receive information about will be listed, here is the information we need for your upcoming event to be considered for the Calendar. We welcome photographs of similar events held previously, which sometimes appear with Calendar items.

Name of Event:
Day of the Week, Date and Time:
Name of the Place Event Will Be Held:
Address of the Place Event Will Be Held:
Name and Phone Number for More Information:

Please submit your calendar information at least two weeks before your event. Clear photographs from similar previous events are always welcome.

All events should be open to the public. We give first priority to free events. E-mail listings to:

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

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When you visit one of these Open Houses, tell the Realtor you saw it in this Connection Newspaper. For more real estate listings and open houses, visit www.ConnectionNewspapers.com and click on the “This Week in Real Estate” link. Call Specific Agents to Confirm Dates & Times

Vienna

In November 2012, 88 homes sold between $1,473,500-$1,813,000 in Vienna. In 2011, sales in the $1,473,500-$1,813,000 range in Vienna included 98 homes.

REAL ESTATE

To have real estate information listed in the Connection, send to greatfall@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Friday.

REACS, Inc., a minority-owned commercial real estate company in Tysons Corner, has been named a recipient of the company’s International President’s Awards. The awards include—Individual Achievements: President’s Club Linda Knowles and Sue Jan Song.

Harper McDaniel, associate broker with the CENTURY 21 New Millennium McLean office and a past member of the CENTURY 21 President’s Recognition System—President’s and Quality Service Pinnacle Awards and last year following her 2010 sales success.

Arlington

Vienna

Vienna

Fairfax Station

Hampton

McLean

Oakton

Sterling

To add your FREE Realtor represented Open House weekly listings, please contact Don Park at 703-778-9420, or donpark@connectionnewspapers.com. All listings are due by Monday at 3 P.M.
**SPORTS**

**McLean Wrestling Wins Cavalier Duals**

The McLean Highlanders wrestling team finished the 2012 year strong by winning the Cavalier Classic Wrestling Tournament. With 12 teams competing in 14 weight classes and competition from Fairfax, Arlington, Washington, D.C., Suffolk, Richmond, and Fredericksburg, the Highlanders advanced five out of their 11 wrestlers into the championship finals and two in the consolation round.

Overcoming other teams having 14 possible scorers, the Highlanders pulled together collecting bonus points from pins and major decision victories where they could. Each of the wrestlers contributed as the Highlanders found off-second-place Saint John's College High School with three head-to-head match-ups in the championship round.

McLean wrestlers winning first-place individual weights included: Conner Grammes (106), Adilet Uppee (145) and Bryson Davis (182). Other medalists included Forrest Stieg (152, second – injury), Gabe Sutherland (170, second), Eric Johnston (120, third) and Nick Echeverria (138, fourth). At the end of 2012, the McLean wrestling team was ranked top 10 in the Northern Region.

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**Oakton Girls’ Basketball to Face 14-1 Centreville**

The Oakton girls’ basketball team defeated Robinson 61-39 on Jan. 10, improving its record to 13-2 overall and 3-0 in the Concorde District. The victory was the Oakton’s third straight and the Cougars’ 10th in their last 11 games.

Oakton will host Centreville at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 18. Centreville is 14-1 overall and tied with the Cougars atop the Concorde District. The victory was the Oakton’s third straight and the Cougars’ 10th in their last 11 games.

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**McLean Youth Soccer Registration**

McLean Youth Soccer Spring 2013 registration has begun on MYS Web site www.mcleansoccer.org for all returning and new families. MYS offers various programs for children ages 4 through 18, including recreation, travel, McLean Premier Soccer Travel, US for pre-K players, and TOP Soccer for children with special needs.

The season will begin the week of April 1 and extend through mid-June. Be sure to register no later than Jan. 31 to take advantage of the early discounted registration fees. Registration is still open for MYS Winter Ballmasters Training Session 2, which begins Jan. 27. Contact the MYS club administrator at admin@mcleansoccer.org if you have any questions or call the MYS Office (703) 506-8068.

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**Ashley Cross Signs Letter of Intent**

Ashley Cross, a Great Falls resident and Senior at Bishop O’Connell High School recently signed a letter of intent to play Division 1 lacrosse at Monmouth University. Ashley has played Great Falls youth lacrosse since second grade and has coached the youth clinic the last 2 years.

The past three years she played for Capital Lacrosse Club. She has been a starting midfielder for O’Connell High School and was selected to the Washington Catholic Athletic Conference/Second Team her freshmen, sophomore and junior years.
**ENTERTAINMENT**

Send announcements to vienna@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Thursday for the following week’s paper. Photos/artwork encouraged. For advertisement & editorial listings, visit www.connectionnewspapers.com.

**WEDNESDAY/JAN. 16**
Grace Pettis and Pierce Pettis. 8 p.m., at Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave. E, Vienna. The singer-songwriter and daughter singer-songwriters, both winners of the New Folk Award, play a show together. www.jamminjava.com.

**WEDNESDAY/JAN. 16**
Gin Blossoms. 8 p.m. at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. American pop-rock icons of the Arizona-bred band play favorites. Miserable Experience to their latest album. Tickets $45. www.wolftrap.org.

**THURSDAY/JAN. 17**

**Perils of the College Drinking Culture Forum. 7 p.m., at McLean High School, 1633 Davidson Road, McLean. The Perils of the College Drinking Coalition of Fairfax County’s highly acclaimed program prepares families for what students will face at college related to underage and binge drinking. www.unifiedprevention.org or depbyrd@unifiedprevention.org.

**Membership Meeting. 7:30 p.m., at Neighbor’s Restaurant, 2620 Cedar Lane, Vienna. Full membership meeting at dinner and 6:45 p.m., Paul White speaks on Covert Vietnam Military Operations in Laos and Cambodia. www.vva227.org.

**International Guitar Night. 8 p.m., at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. A group of innovative acoustic guitarists showcases the diversity in the niche; performers include Martin Taylor, Solorzaf, Celso Machado and Brian Gore. $25. www.wolftrap.org.

**FRIDAY/JAN. 18**
Classical Jams. 8 p.m., at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Texan singer/songwriter, Academy Award, Golden Globe Award and five-time Grammy Award-winner Christopher Cross plays www.wolftrap.org.

**SATURDAY/JAN. 19**
Oratorical Contest 10 a.m., at the Vienna American Legion, 300 Center St. N, Vienna. High school students can register by Jan. 11 to participate. 703-867-1285 or tsp@555 Yahoo.com.

**An Evening With Dick Gregory. 8 p.m., at the Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. A movement leader from the 1960s and comedian, civil and human rights activist, author, recording artist, television and film personality, nutritionist and veteran committed to non-violent social change speaks in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. $20, $10 MCC residents. www.aldentheatre.org.

**SUNDAY/JAN. 20**
Breakfast Buffet. 8 a.m.-noon, at the American Legion, 330 Center St. N, Vienna. Orange juice, scrambled eggs, blueberry pancakes, bacon and all the fixings. $8, adults; $3, children.

Christopher Cross 8 p.m., at Wolf Trap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Texan singer/songwriter, Academy Award, Golden Globe Award and five-time Grammy Award-winner Christopher Cross plays at Wolf Trap on Friday, Jan. 18 at 8 p.m. 703-938-1379.


TUESDAY/JAN. 22 Mike Loulakis Discusses Design-Build Legal Lessons Learned. 11 a.m.-2 p.m., at Wildlife Restaurant in Tysons Corner, 1714 International Drive, McLean. The January DBIA-MAR luncheon meeting will feature Mike Loulakis, Esq., from Capital Project Strategies, LLC with a review and update of the impact of recent legal decisions. Members, $45; Non-members, $55; students, free. http://dbiamarlegal.eventbrite.com.

Art Appétiters Returns! 7 p.m., at McLean Project for the Arts, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Art, appetizers and conversation combine the evening in the gallery sponsored by the New Dominion Women’s Club. $20. www.ndwc.org/home.html.

Vienna Resident Honored by U.S. Census Bureau

Matthew Jordan, of Vienna, was honored with the prestigious Bronze Medal Award for “superior federal service,” the highest honorary recognition awarded by the U.S. Census Bureau. The award is given for superior performance of assigned tasks and for significant contributions affecting major programs within the U.S. Census Bureau, including the demonstration of an unusual initiative in the development and improvement of methods and procedures.

Jordan, a mathematician statistician at the U.S. Census Bureau for three years, graduated an “All-American” swimmer from Adelphi University with an undergraduate degree in mathematics and C.W. Post with a graduate degree in applied mathematics. Jordan currently lives in Vienna, but returns home on holidays to visit with his parents, grandmother, and friends in Long Island New York.

**Entertainment Section**

**Matt Jordan, of Vienna, received a Bronze Medal Award for “superior federal service.”**

**Faith Notes**

Faith Notes are for announcements and events in the faith community. Send to vienna@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Friday.

Church of the Holy Comforter, 543 Beal Rd., NE, Vienna, holds a Taize contemplative worship service at 5 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 27. The service combines chant and scripture with time spent in silence in a setting of greenery and candlelight. 703-938-6521 or www.holycomforter.com.

Great Falls United Methodist Men invite you to their annual pancake dinner Tuesday, Feb. 12, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at 10100 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Dinner is free and donations are accepted. All proceeds will be sent to The Society of St. Andrew to help feed the hungry. For more information call the church at 703-759-3705.

St. Francis Episcopal Church, 9220 Georgetown Pike in Great Falls, offers three Sunday services and a host of musical, educational, outreach, and fellowship programs to enrich spiritual growth. 7:45 a.m. Worship Service without music; 9 a.m. Worship Service, Children’s Chapel and Children’s Chorus; 10 a.m. Sunday School and Adult Forum; and 11 a.m. Worship Service with Adult Choir. 703-759-2012.

Redeemer Lutheran Church, 1545 Chain Bridge Road, McLean, offers a 9 a.m. traditional service and a 10:30 a.m. contemporary service on Sundays. Also offers two services during the summer – both of which will include children’s sermons. 703-356-3346.

**Vienna/Chantilly Connection**