

Students at Herndon High School participate in "A Night on the Runway," a fashion show fundraiser to benefit Herndon High graduate Shannon Gathercole, who was diagnosed with a brain tumor.



# Students Take To the Runway

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# NEWS

## A Voice for the Voiceless

### Q&A with SALT Coordinator John Horejsi.

**O**n Saturday, Social Action Linking Together (SALT) held its annual Richmond Wrap-Up session in Vienna. One of the most active nonpartisan advocacy groups in Northern Virginia, SALT, has 1,200 members who bring the social, economic and justice teachings of their faith to bear on public policy and legislation. SALT has had an impact shaping public policy for more than 20 years. SALT Coordinator John Horejsi talked with The Connection about some of the group's legislative victories and losses during the 2013 General Assembly "short" session.

For more information, visit [www.S-A-L-T.org](http://www.S-A-L-T.org) or contact John Horejsi at [jhorejsi@cox.net](mailto:jhorejsi@cox.net) or 703-938-9535.

#### Q: What drives SALT's legislative advocacy?

**A:** "Our activism springs from the principles of faith and responsibility. Our activism on behalf of the vulnerable does not make us better than anyone else—but it does make us very lucky persons. Our appeal is to people of faith: 'Out of the pew and into the lobby. Be a voice for the voiceless.' Involvement in the political field is clearly a part of the vocation and activity of the lay faithful. Advocacy is part of everyone's job description—even if you're retired. By working together we generate sufficient activity to have an impact. Our community activism, to us, is simply democracy in action.

We seek to serve; not to be served. We are not lobbyists, we are service providers. Our service is our advocacy for the neediest. To us advocacy is the ultimate service—'service on steroids.'

Through our advocacy we seek to keep social justice issues front and center at the Virginia General Assembly. Through our advocacy, legislators are made aware that there is a responsibility to the needs of vulnerable people—measuring every policy by how it touches the least, the lost and the left-out among us."

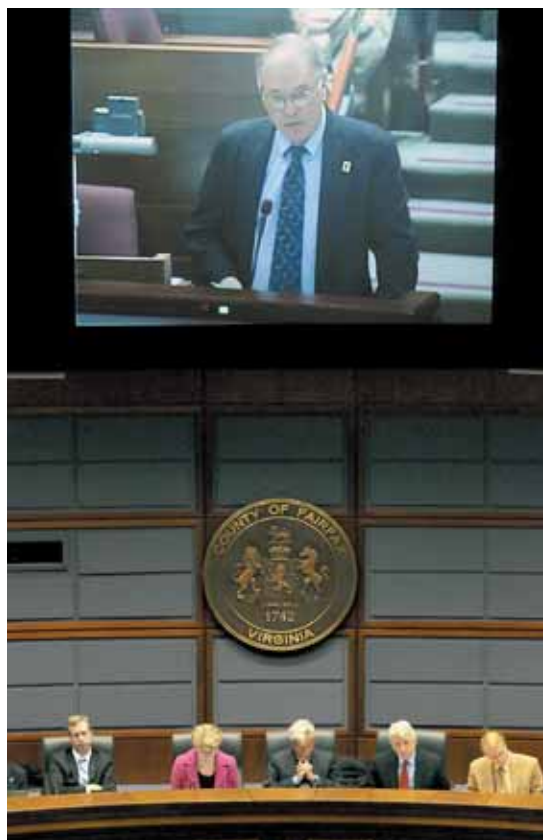
#### Q: What do you consider some of SALT's most important victories?

In the past, SALT has advocated successfully for many issues, including:

- ❖ repeal of the sales tax for food stamps each year in 19 states, increasing food aid by \$9.5 million in Virginia;
- ❖ securing \$4 million in TANF stimulus funding for emergency assistance to 2,500 Fairfax County families during the recent recession;
- ❖ establishment of a permanent statewide Homeless Intervention Program (HIP) with \$5.3 million funding;
- ❖ persuading the General Assembly to pass the Virginia Income Tax Credit (VITC), which boosts the income of 190,000 low-income workers;
- ❖ making Virginia the first state in the nation to create a system in which 100 percent of child support from the non-custodial parents goes directly to the child and custodial parent rather than to the Virginia General Fund.

#### Q: What were the most important SALT initiatives this legislative session?

**A:** "The ban on shackling pregnant inmates and Med-



**John Horejsi of Vienna, coordinator of Social Action Linking Together (SALT), testifies in the public hearing of the Fairfax Delegation to the Virginia General Assembly in January 2013.**

icaid expansion. While anti-shackling legislation was defeated in the Militia, Prison and Public Safety Subcommittee, there has been progress by SALT and anti-shackling coalition groups to prohibit shackling through the regulatory process. There is still a need for legislation to stop this practice. Protection is still needed for some of Virginia's most vulnerable women from being unnecessarily restrained—a practice that not only violates a woman's dignity, but can detrimentally affect her health and the health of her pregnancy. SALT is currently a partner in this Medicaid Expansion Coalition. Right now, the governor has Medicaid expansion in his hands. He has the ability to veto that provision. Medicaid expansion will provide more than 30,000 Fairfax County residents with access to health care coverage. The expansion is a common-sense policy that will help over 400,000 Virginians. Ultimately, we hope the governor will make the right choice for Virginia and Fairfax County and work toward expanding Medicaid as soon as possible. We would like a clear statement that he plans to expand Medicaid. Every day's delay costs Virginia \$5 million in lost funding.

#### Q: Describe your experience as an advocate in the General Assembly.

**A:** "The legislature has become more partisan and contentious. It is no longer possible to get widespread legislator support. In Richmond legislation is passed and defeated when viewed through a partisan lens. Our recent experience is that to hope for any possible success we must enter into coalitions with other statewide groups. SALT has become partners in and out of coalitions to realize success for the EIC Expansion and the Medicaid Expansions."

—VICTORIA ROSS



**Voters lined up outside Lake Anne Elementary early Tuesday morning, Nov. 6, 2012. Voters reported about a 45-minute wait at Lake Anne Elementary.**

## Better Training, More Technology

**The bipartisan commission released findings, recommendations regarding long lines on Election Day.**

BY VICTORIA ROSS  
THE CONNECTION

**A**fter learning that dozens of frustrated voters waited for hours in long lines to cast their ballots on Election Day, Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova (D-at-large) called for the creation of a bipartisan commission to figure out why and make sure it doesn't happen again.

At the March 19 Board of Supervisor's meeting, the commission—jointly chaired by Former Board of Supervisors Chairman Kate Hanley and Stuart Mendelsohn, former Dranesville supervisor—released its final report. They recommended additional poll workers, more training and better technology to keep lines moving.

Recommendations encompassed a variety of training, technology, and process improvements, ranging from using more Electronic Poll Books (EPBs) to providing additional parking spaces at polling places.

"I am pleased that the Election Commission has completed its work," Bulova said. "It is important that the county implement measures to reduce long lines, decrease wait times and streamline the election process in Fairfax County. The commission has identified a variety of improvements and efficiencies to ensure access and convenience for voters in future elections."

Additional recommendations included using electronic poll books at every precinct, and asked the county to create a

fund that would pay for upgrading voting equipment. The report also suggested that county officials find larger polling places where voters can form lines inside precincts rather than outside during bad weather.

Voter turnout in Fairfax County on Election Day was at an all-time high in November's presidential election, with 81 percent of registered voters casting their ballots in 2012 compared to 78.7 percent in 2008. In the 2011 state and local elections, just 32 percent of registered voters cast their ballots, while 49 percent turned out for the 2010 congressional contests.

Lines and wait times varied throughout the county's 237 precincts last November. Voters at Vienna's Flint Hill Elementary School reported ample parking and virtually no lines. At other locations, however, lines snaked around elementary school parking lots and through buildings, and it was not unusual for voters to have to wait over an hour.

Election officials said a shortage of poll volunteers coupled with complicated ballot questions and bond issues meant some voters took much longer to finish their ballots.

While the long lines created headaches for many Fairfax County voters, some voters in Prince William County faced five-hour waits before casting their ballots.

A copy of the report can be found at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/electioncommission/election-commission-report.htm>.

## THE COUNTY LINE

# Sequester's Impact in Fairfax County? TBD

Local leaders say “uncertainty” biggest fallout of sequester so far.

BY VICTORIA ROSS  
THE CONNECTION

**F**airfax County businesses have been feeling the chilling effect of the \$87 billion across-the-board spending cuts triggered March 1st for several months.

In anticipation of the original “fiscal cliff” deadline at the end of 2012, apprehensive business owners had begun taking preemptive measures, such as tightening budgets, and implementing hiring and pay freezes.

“Small and large companies are taking more conservative approaches to hiring, and government contractors, a large segment of the Fairfax County economy, could see their contracts reduced or terminated,” said Sharon Bulova (D-at-large), chairman of the Board of Supervisors.

But what has rattled Fairfax County businesses is not specific cuts in the sequester, but the uncertainty of what the cuts will be and when they will take effect.

“One of the most impactful effects of sequestration thus far has been the uncertainty that is preventing growth in the local economy,” Bulova said.

Supervisor John Cook (R-Braddock), who is a founding partner of the Fairfax law firm Cook Craig & Francuzenko, said his practice and Fairfax County are hurt by the uncertainty factor.

“The biggest problem in Fairfax County is not the sequester, per se, it’s the uncertainty. If this continues, that’s huge,” Cook said. “Businesses can deal with bad news. They can adjust to declining revenues, increased costs, what have you ... but not knowing what will happen is crippling. Congress and the president can’t do their job, and you and I are going to be paying for this for a long time.”

“From the perspective of business community, businesses are adept when they understand what’s coming. They see a problem; they solve it,” said Jerry Gordon, president of the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority (FCEDA), “The uncertainty is driving them crazy. Prime contractors, such as SAIC and Northrop Grumman, they can translate their skill sets to non-federal applications. My fear is for the sub-contractors and the sub-sub-contractors, where a single contract can make or break a business.”

## Economic Forecast: Grim and Grimmer

While every state stands to lose, Northern Virginia’s close ties to Washington and the federal spigot have the region squarely in the crosshairs of the sequester.

“With nearly 40 percent of our region’s economy tied to the Federal Government, Northern Virginia will be especially hard hit,” said Congressman James Moran (D-8) in a recent letter to constituents.

While only 1 percent of Fairfax County’s General Fund revenues come from the Federal Government, the human services system in Fairfax County receives 20 percent of its revenue base from federal funding. In 2011, Fairfax procured more than \$26 billion in federal contracts.

“The Washington Area economy has grown tremendously thanks to Federal Government spending. In 2010, total federal spending accounted for nearly 40 percent of the region’s GDP,” said economist Stephen S. Fuller of George Mason University’s Center for Regional Analysis.

The region’s strength is also its “Achilles heel,” Fuller said and warned the area “faces a sea change” as federal spending decreases.

According to economic forecasters, the outlook is grim and grimmer. Most of the fiscal apocalypse, they say, is related to government-worker furloughs, which could begin as early as next week. In addition to eroding consumer confidence, the furloughs could trigger a domino effect that impacts everyone.

“If the feds are furloughed two days a week, no more housing purchases, no more dinners out, everyone hunkers down, consumer housing starts to slow down and things come to a grinding halt and everyone is affected,” Gordon said.

Some economists take the worst-case scenario further. If the sequester lingers, they predict airport-security lines will get longer because TSA agents will work one fewer day every two weeks; fewer commercial planes will fly because of furloughs to air-traffic controllers; prisons will be locked down because Bureau of Prisons staff will be sent home; terrorists may go undetected because fewer FBI agents and counterterrorism analysts will be working.

While Fairfax County has its weak points, Gordon said the county is still entering the sequester from “a position of strength.

“Our unemployment is only 3.6 percent, far lower than the national average of 7.7 percent,” Gordon said. “We’ve been working toward a diversified economic base for more than 20 years. We are a center of information technology, software development, telecommunications, aerospace and the Internet. Our workforce is highly skilled. We have an outstanding public school system. ... All this has factored into the development of an economy based on technology and professional services. Yes, I think we’re going to take hits, but we’re in a better position than in most communities.”

**“From the perspective of business community, businesses are adept when they understand what’s coming. They see a problem; they solve it. The uncertainty is driving them crazy.”**

**—Jerry Gordon, president of the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority (FCEDA)**



**Danny Vargas, CEO and founder of VARcom solutions, during a 2012 mock debate in Spain.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF VARCOM SOLUTIONS

## Local Perspective

### Small-business owner tackles the sequester.

**R**aul Danny Vargas has beaten the odds all his life.

The son of Puerto Rican immigrants, Vargas, 47, was raised by a single mother on welfare in Brooklyn. At an early age, he faced poverty and hunger. “We lived in a ramshackle apartment, and there were days when I would eat ice cubes to curb hunger. My mother never learned to read or write, and she didn’t speak English.”

In spite of the strikes against him, Vargas said he was “blessed” with an older sister who encouraged him to stay in school and reach for more.

“I was running as fast as I could. I always tell my children now that the outcome may not be guaranteed, but the opportunity is,” he said.

Never afraid of hard work, Vargas had his first job at 12, selling snow cones from a pushcart on the streets of Brooklyn. “I would scrape shavings from this huge block of ice, and then put it in a cup and pour syrup over it. I remember that vividly. I did every job you can think of. I moved displays in big office buildings, did temp jobs... hard work was the never issue.”

He became the first person in his family to earn a college degree, eventually serving in the Air Force. But he always dreamed of owning his own business and launching a career in politics.

In 2004, after a career in the telecommunications industry, Vargas started VARCom Solutions in Herndon. The award-winning company provides strategic marketing and high-profile public relations services to small businesses and major corporations.

As a small business owner, with 15 to 20 contract employees at any given time, Vargas

thought he had weathered the worst business crisis when the economy shattered in 2008.

But sequestration—and its uncertain ripple effects—are more challenging, both personally and professionally, Vargas said.

“The uncertainty is the stake in the heart,” Vargas said during an interview Monday.

He said he has already noticed agencies, such as the Department of Defense, shelving projects after his company expected to be awarded the contract.

“I would say the issue that we’ve faced is that we’re bidding on something, it’s basically a done deal, and then, as we’re getting close to moving forward, because of the uncertainty of sequestration, the contracts were put on hold, so we can’t keep people on the bench,” Vargas said.

“Those of us just trying to move ahead, and keep the economy humming, are dealing with the headwind of a dysfunctional federal government.”

Vargas is also a politically active business leader. He was appointed by the U.S. Congress as a commissioner on the National Museum of the American Latino Commission and by Governor McDonnell to the Virginia Workforce Council. He also served as chairman of the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce, the first Hispanic to chair a mainstream chamber in the history of Virginia.

His political connections have given him a sobering perspective on the events in Washington.

“Everyone I’ve talked with on Capitol Hill says they are frightened over our fiscal situation,” he said.

“I do agree that cuts need to be made. We need to be able to rein in spending. But this is the most absurd way of going about it. This blind slashing is inefficient. Honestly, I think a 12-year-old with a lemonade stand could do a better job.”

—VICTORIA ROSS



# NEWS

Mom Jackie Utshudi and daughter Maureen Kabamba founded Les Mini Galettes in 2006, producing a Congolese traditional mini-waffle in a variety of flavors. Maybe Maureen's young son Elijah will join in when he's old enough to reach the baking table.



## Farm Fresh at Frying Pan

Farmers Table at Frying Pan Park offers a preview of the market season.

**D**reaming of all that farm fresh produce and the treats on offer at the area farmers' markets? Counting the days until May when most will re-open? Stop dreaming. And stop staring at the calendar. Wander over to Frying Pan Farm Park on Thursdays between 2:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. and satisfy your cravings for food that hasn't been flash-frozen or packed with preservatives so that it could make the gazillion mile trip from who-knows-where to your grocery store.

The indoor Farmer's Table market takes place in the confines of the park's Visitor Center—that means four walls that block the winds, a place where the littlest ones can scoot around a bit and still be in plain sight. It also means the added bonus of a venue where there are other activities, both indoor and out, to enhance the experience.

Frying Pan Farm Park Manager Yvonne Johnson, and Michelle Edwards, historian and Visitor Center manager, promise different themes and activities with each week's market open house, from wagon or pony rides, craft making, cupcake decorating, or a visit with the animals who call the park their home.

And then there's the food and the friendly and informative vendors and park staff. While a chill wind

SEE FARMERS, PAGE 7

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# OPINION

## More Obstacles to Transparency

General Assembly puts more information out of public reach, but other factors also limit access.

The first paragraph of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, passed by the General Assembly in 1968, states that all public records “shall be presumed open.”

It doesn't add, “except when we don't want to,” although that provision does seem to be available in many cases. Individual government entities have a variety of ways of making it hard for the public to access public information.

One such way is simply to require that the information seeker file a “FOIA request,” a written request for information under the Freedom of Information Act. Most public information should be readily available, handed over on request. The written query allows the entity, a school system for example, to parse the request to provide as little information as possible. It is a method of foot-dragging, of just hoping that the requestor will give up.

A growing obstacle involves fees. Many government agencies respond to any request for public information with a bill, sometimes for thousands of dollars. The bills can cover staff time to calculate the answers, to locate the data. The staff time involved is already on the public payroll, and charging fees to provide

### EDITORIAL

public information to the public when the public is already paying for the existence of the information is double dipping. Again, it's a method designed to discourage access. And it is often effective. And while many citizen groups in our area can cough up \$3,000 or \$6,000 or more for access to the email correspondence of public officials on a decision that affects the public, for example, many cannot. It is inequitable to charge this sort of fee.

The existence of email correspondence between public officials is another concern, allowing for discussion that, while usually FOIA-able, takes place outside the public eye. Local governments could develop a public archive for email correspondence that would do much to enhance transparency and sunshine in the commonwealth, and reduce embarrassment on the part of emailing officials because they would recognize in advance that their email is public.

The Virginia Freedom of Information Act includes an exception that allows police to withhold, without justification, “complaints, memoranda, correspondence, case files or reports, witness statements and evidence.” Police officials in Fairfax, Arlington and Alexan-

dria have adopted what they call a “blanket” approach to using their exemption. That means they have decided to withhold any document they can without any analysis of whether they should. But no public entity should be allowed blanket exemptions. Withholding public information, if it is allowed, should be on a case-by-case basis. Police departments all over the country routinely allow access to police reports, incident reports and many other source documents without harm, documents that police here refuse to allow the public to see.

So with many systemic roadblocks to public access to public information, it is discouraging to say the least to see the General Assembly add significant new obstacles.

The Virginia Coalitions for Open Government reports that the General Assembly passed exemptions that “will limit access to some correspondence of legislative aides, to evacuation plans for hospitals operating under certificates of public need, to certain flight plans filed at regional government airports, to records and meetings of the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation and to bank self-assessments. All concealed handgun permit applications will now be off-limits, too, thanks to a bill that was radically amended from its original purpose and reported from committee to House floor in less than 24 hours,” limiting public comment.

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Airport Authority Gets Into Business

To the Editor:

Since its creation in 1986, the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (“MWAA”) has been forbidden by federal law from building for-profit commercial developments on the 3,000 acres of property at Dulles Airport that it leases from the U.S. Government. It has been limited to using the Dulles property for airport purposes, e.g. runways and hangers. That all changed on Feb. 14, 2012. On that day, President Obama signed into law the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (“2012 FAA Act”). Hidden in the middle of this 150 page omnibus act dealing with all manner of subjects was a one sentence revision to the 1986 federal act that created MWAA. Henceforth, MWAA would be allowed to commercially develop Dulles Airport.

Here is why we as Fairfax County taxpayers should be concerned about MWAA's venture into private commercial development and what we can do about it.

MWAA is tax-exempt under both Virginia and federal law and thus

can unfairly compete with private landowners. MWAA does not pay state or federal income taxes, county business license taxes, or county real estate taxes. Any businesses that locate on the Dulles Airport property won't be part of a special Phase II tax district and won't pay a dime toward defraying the cost of building the Metro Silver Line. As if that isn't enough, MWAA is not subject to county zoning laws and has no incentive to offer “proffers” which are voluntary agreements by a landowner to go above and beyond what zoning laws require, e.g. planting additional trees in a development. What private landowner can hope to compete with this type of unfair advantage?

There is a limited amount of commercial development that is economically feasible at this point in time, especially with sequestration strangling businesses in Northern Virginia. This is not the time for MWAA, a quasi-federal agency sitting on land leased to it by the federal government, to crowd out private landowners who want to attract businesses to their properties. Incidentally, MWAA's development rights extend to “air rights” above the Dulles Access Road. In 2011, MWAA studied the feasibility of building commercial

projects above the new Metro stops on the Silver Line and had a report issued concerning the pros and cons of such a project.

I live in Herndon where we have great plans to attract businesses to develop property next to the Herndon Metro stop along the new Silver Line. Those businesses will be a significant source of revenue for the town. We won't get that development if businesses decide it's easier to locate a few miles down the road to undeveloped federal land run by a tax-exempt entity. Keep in mind, development at Dulles won't add to commercial development in Fairfax County. Such a development will merely transfer businesses from Fairfax County to the Dulles Airport property.

What can we do?

The 2012 FAA Act merely allows MWAA's lease with the federal government to be amended to permit commercial development. The lease amendment hasn't been signed yet. It is sitting on the secretary of transportation's desk. We can ask our elected representatives in Congress to request that regulations be issued under the 2012 FAA Act to give some guidance to the secretary of transportation as to what types of commercial development should be allowed at Dulles. Presently, the 2012 FAA Act

has vague language that states the secretary can approve any “business or activity not inconsistent with the needs of aviation.” We can't leave such significant decisions to the unfettered whim of an unelected official. Regulations can provide guidelines as to what is acceptable.

We can call upon Governor McDonnell not to agree to the lease amendment until Virginia citizens are given a right to voice their concerns. Previous lease amendments were signed by the governor of Virginia. I presume the governor must sign this lease amendment also. Virginia has the right to object to this plan because we created MWAA, along with the federal government and the District of Columbia, and we can uncreate it, so to speak. Virginia also granted MWAA a special exemption from state income tax. See Virginia Code Sec. 5.1-172. If that doesn't give us a right to have some say in MWAA's for-profit commercial development enterprise, then nothing does.

We could use the backing of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in our request to Governor McDonnell.

Dave Webster  
Herndon

Oak Hill & Herndon  
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# NEWS

Farmer Chris Guerre puts together a bouquet of mini-baby carrots for shopper Susan Gentry of Vienna. In the background is Nsougan Sessou, owner of Becky's Pastries.



## Farmers Table Offers a Season Preview

FROM PAGE 5

blustered outside, the shoppers last Thursday were treated to information about the produce currently in-season from farmer Chris Guerre, who with his wife Sara, owns and runs the Maple Avenue Market in Vienna and farms in Great Falls. Ever heard of "mache?" Guerre will cheerfully tell you about this baby green that has been used for thousands of years in salads, cooked like spinach, or used in soups and stuffings.

A few tables down, Nsougan Sessou was tempting shoppers with his homemade breads and muffins sold under the label of "Becky's Pastries"—but don't ask him to divulge the secret ingredients that were handed down from the family recipe back in Togo. He'll just smile and say, "It's all good for you—and tastes good, too!"

Next up, Katherine Adams is ready for a chat about life on Stallard Road Farm in Rixeyville, Va., and why

grass-fed, grass-finished beef is the healthy way to go. Sweet treats were also available, courtesy of the ladies of Les Mini Gallettes, featuring waffle-like delicacies with a French-African flavor, and the cupcake delights of Sweet Thang Bakery, where dad does the baking and son Matt Smith and associate Allie Hallman take the goodies to market.

There's no telling what may be in store at next week's market, but don't delay. These spring Farmers' Table happenings are only on through April 25, so come on down for an afternoon on the farm at 2739 West Ox Road in Herndon. For more information, check out the "Event" tab at [www.fryingpanpark.org](http://www.fryingpanpark.org), or give them a call at 703-437-9101. Bring that re-usable shopping bag to fill up, and as they say, come "shake the hand that grows the food."

—ANDREA WORKER

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## FAIRS & FESTIVALS

### April

**FRIDAY/APRIL 19-MONDAY/MAY 6**  
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**SATURDAY/APRIL 27**  
**Taste of Vienna.** 11 a.m.-8 p.m. at The Vienna Volunteer Fire Department. The VVFD will host the 2nd annual Taste of Vienna to showcase the many restaurants that the Vienna area has to offer. Visit [www.tasteofvienna.org](http://www.tasteofvienna.org).

### May

**FRIDAY/MAY 17-SUNDAY/MAY 19**  
**Northern Virginia Fine Arts Festival.** At Reston Town Center, the three-day event attracts more than 50,000 patrons and provides an interactive experience to view, purchase, and experience art directly from the artists who have created it. Visit [northernvirginiafineartsfestival.org](http://northernvirginiafineartsfestival.org).

**SATURDAY/MAY 18**  
**McLean Day.** 10:30 a.m. at Lewinsville Park. Festival and rides will run from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. [members.mcleanchamber.org/events/details/mclean-day-2013-430](http://members.mcleanchamber.org/events/details/mclean-day-2013-430).

**SATURDAY-MONDAY/MAY 25-27**  
**Viva! Vienna!** Vienna's largest festival, Viva! Vienna!, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Greater Vienna, returns to the historic Church Street corridor for three days of family fun, including carnival rides, diverse food, live entertainment for children and adults and more than 300 vendors selling crafts, services, jewelry, children's toys and books, novelties. Admission to the festival is free, rides are not. Visit [www.vivavienna.org](http://www.vivavienna.org).

**THURSDAYS-SUNDAY/MAY 30-JUNE 2**  
**Herndon Festival.** The Town of Herndon's Parks and Recreation Department hosts the annual Herndon Festival. This is a town-wide event and attracts more than 80,000 people from the greater D.C. area. There is no admission fee to enter the Herndon Festival. Visit [www.herndonfestival.net](http://www.herndonfestival.net).



PHOTO BY ALEX MCVIEGH/THE CONNECTION  
 Guests at the 2012 Northern Virginia Fine Arts Festival in Reston Town Center examine a piece by mixed media 3D artist David Burton, made up of various action figures and toys.



PHOTO BY ALEX MCVIEGH/THE CONNECTION  
 Scott Ramminger and the CrawStickers perform at McLean Day Saturday, May 19, 2012.



PHOTO BY DONNA MANZ/THE CONNECTION  
 Thousands fill the rides section at the 32nd annual Herndon Festival Saturday, June 2, 2012.



PHOTO BY ALEX MCVIEGH/THE CONNECTION  
 There's always a line for the spinning teacups at Viva! Vienna!

## ENTERTAINMENT

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

**WEDNESDAY/MARCH 27**  
**Meet Me at the Movies Senior Movie Day.** 10 a.m., at the Bow Tie Cinemas, 11940 Market St., Reston. Reston Association presents Oscar-winner "Argo" starring Ben Affleck and Alan Arkin, refreshments and door prizes provided prior to the movie. 703-435-6530.  
**American Contemporary Music Ensemble: Brutal + Sublime.** 8 p.m., at Reston Community Center, CenterStage, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. The ensemble plays selection of Nico Muhly, Timothy Andrew, Mick Barr, Jefferson Friedland, John Cage and Louis Andriessen. \$15 for residents; \$30 for non-Restonians. 703-476-4500 or [www.restoncommunitycenter.com](http://www.restoncommunitycenter.com).

**THURSDAY/MARCH 28**  
**Beverly Cosham.** 2:15-3:30 p.m., at Center Stage, Reston Community Center, Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. The cabaret singer has performed her act at nightspots across the country and Bob Smith, presidential pianist for Presidents Nixon through Clinton, accompanies her; the second in a series of seven free Thursday afternoon "Meet the Artists" concerts. 703-503-3384 or [www.olligmu.edu](http://www.olligmu.edu).  
**Tuscan Wine Dinner at Il Fornaio.** 6:30 p.m., at Il Fornaio, 11990 Market St., Suite 106, Reston. Five courses paired with wine. \$65. 703-437-5544.

**FRIDAY/MARCH 29**  
**Lenten Cantata.** 7:30 p.m., at Floris United Methodist Church, 13600 Frying Pan Road, Herndon. Soloists, choir and orchestra present "The Seven Last Words of Christ," by Theodore Dubois on Good Friday. 703-793-0026 or [www.florisumc.org/lentencantata](http://www.florisumc.org/lentencantata).

**SATURDAY/MARCH 30**  
**Tuscan Wine Cooking Class at Il Fornaio.** Noon, at Il Fornaio, 11990 Market St., Suite 106, Reston. Three-course lunch with wine and recipes, \$45. 703-437-5544.

**SUNDAY/MARCH 31**  
**Easter Brunch at Il Fornaio.** 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at Il Fornaio, 11990 Market St., Suite 106, Reston. Easter egg hunt and Easter bunny visit. 703-437-5544 or [www.ilfo.com](http://www.ilfo.com).

### Jimmy's Old Town Tavern 'Plays it Forward' With Fundraising Party

Council for the Arts of Herndon partners with The Music Loft, LLC, to bring donated musical instruments to Herndon-area schools via a used instrument donative drive. From April 1-30, drop off instruments at 730 Elden St., Herndon, at the Herndon Council for the Arts or at The Music Loft, 1141 Elden St., Suite 212, Herndon. Jimmy's Old Town Tavern will also host a Fundraising Party with a live band and cash bar at 697 Spring St., Herndon, on Thursday, April 18, in support of the instrument drive. For more information: 703-689-9535, [info@herndonarts.org](mailto:info@herndonarts.org) or [www.herndonarts.org](http://www.herndonarts.org).

**THURSDAY/APRIL 4**  
**National Symphony Orchestra Rehearsal.** 8 a.m.-2 p.m. at Hunters Woods Shopping Center, Thoreau Place, Lake Anne Plaza, Reston. Attend an open rehearsal of the

National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center Concert Hall. Reston Association: \$27; non-members: \$30. 55 years or older: 703-435-6577 or [Ashleigh@reston.org](mailto:Ashleigh@reston.org).  
**Write your Memories into Memoirs.** 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., at the

Reston Association, 12001 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston. Whether you are just beginning or already writing your memoirs, this eight-week class focuses on turning life experiences into an engaging story. Reston Association: \$32; non-members: \$42. 55 years or older: 703-435-6577 or [Ashleigh@reston.org](mailto:Ashleigh@reston.org).

**Ali Mushtaq.** 2:15-3:30 p.m., at Center Stage, Reston Community Center, Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Ali Mushtaq, winner of the 2011 Washington International Piano Artists competition, a forum for all levels of non-professional pianists, plays a concert; the third in a series of seven free Thursday afternoon "Meet the Artists" concerts. 703-503-3384 or [www.olligmu.edu](http://www.olligmu.edu).

**SATURDAY/APRIL 6**  
**Dance the Blues Away.** 8 p.m., at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Rhythm & blues, motion, swing and music-to-remember calls to singles and couples in casual or elegant attire for a night to put ladies and gentlemen in the mood to dance; dance demonstrations precede, light refreshments and wine and beer included with admission. \$10. [www.artspaceherndon.org](http://www.artspaceherndon.org).

**Prom Dress Giveaway Boutique.** Noon-6 p.m., at Reston Community Center, Lake Anne, 1609 A Washington Plaza, Reston. Teens ages 14 to 18 can shop for a complete prom look at the Jo Ann Rose Gallery boutique event, with hundreds of new and gently used dresses, with top designers pieces in the mix. Accessories, shoes, jewelry, handbags and make-up lessons will be up for grabs as well; enter raffle for restaurant gift cards, flowers and limo service. [www.restoncommunitycenter.com](http://www.restoncommunitycenter.com).

**THURSDAY/APRIL 11**  
**Brian Quenton Thorne and Francis Conlon.** 2:15-3:30 p.m., at Center Stage, Reston Community Center, Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. The tenor and pianist collaborate on works of well-known composers and lyricists; the fourth in a series of seven free Thursday afternoon "Meet the Artists" concerts. 703-503-3384 or [www.olligmu.edu](http://www.olligmu.edu).

**FRIDAY/APRIL 12**  
**Empty Bowls Fundraiser.** 5:30-8 p.m., at Floris United Methodist Church, 13600 Frying Pan Road, Herndon. A dinner of soup, bread, beverage and dessert and a bowl handcrafted by a local potter; proceeds go to hunger relief in Northern Virginia. \$20 donation minimum. 703-665-9334 or [emptybowls@givingcircleofhope.org](mailto:emptybowls@givingcircleofhope.org).

**Trinity Presbyterian Church,** 651 Dranesville Road in Herndon, has Sunday Worship Service at 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Nursery and childcare are available during worship services. Youth and Adult Sunday School is held Sundays from 9:40-10:45 a.m. 703-437-5500 or [www.trinityherndon.org](http://www.trinityherndon.org).

**St. Anne's Episcopal Church,** 1700 Wainwright Drive in Reston, holds Sunday services at 7:45 a.m., 9 a.m., 11:15 a.m. and contemporary service at 5 p.m. Nursery, Sunday School and Adult Education available. Morning Prayer on Monday at 9:30, Holy Eucharist Wednesday at 8:15 a.m. 703-437-6530 or [www.stannes-reston.org](http://www.stannes-reston.org).

### FAITH NOTES

Faith Notes are for announcements and events in the faith community, including special holiday services. Send to [herndon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:herndon@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is Thursday.

**St. Timothy's Episcopal Church,** 432 Van Buren St., Herndon offers Holy Week services beginning March 24th with Palm Sunday services at 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. A Maundy Thursday Holy Eucharist Stripping of the altar service is on March 28 at 7:30 p.m. On March 29th, the church offers a Good Friday Stations of the Cross service at 12:15 p.m. and a Passion Gospel and solemn prayer service at 7:30 p.m. St. Timothy's will celebrate Easter Sunday, March 31st, with Resurrection/Easter Holy Eucharist

services at 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Nursery care will be available at the Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Sunday services for newborns to 3-year-olds. 703-437-3790 or [www.saint-timothys.org](http://www.saint-timothys.org).

**Southview Community Church,** 2620 Reston Parkway, Herndon, holds their annual Easter Egg Hunt! Festivities, open to the community, on Saturday, March 30, at 10 a.m. with lunch and activities including crafts, bounce houses, a carousel, a rock wall and a family presentation on the story of Easter. 703-860-880 or [www.southview.org](http://www.southview.org).

**Trinity Presbyterian Church,** 651 Dranesville Road, Herndon, has Sunday worship services at 8:30 a.m. and 11

a.m. Nursery and childcare are provided and youth and adult Sunday school classes are held prior, from 9:40-10:45 a.m. 703-437-5500 or [www.trinityherndon.org](http://www.trinityherndon.org).

**Vajrayogini Buddhist Center,** Unitarian Universalist Church, 1625 Wiehle Ave., Reston, holds monthly classes for the general public which use Buddhist teachings to practice meditation. [www.meditation-dc.org](http://www.meditation-dc.org) or 202-986-2257.

**The Baha'i community of McLean** holds a weekly fireside, a meeting of discussion, devotion and fellowship, at 7500 Box Elder Court in McLean, at 8 p.m. every Friday. An opportunity to learn about the Baha'i faith. 703-556-3400.



## OPEN HOUSE LISTINGS

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The Rev. Jacqueline Thomson  
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**THE  
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## NEWS

# Putting Feelings on the Page

Carlin Pierce releases first poetry book.

By ALEX McVEIGH  
THE CONNECTION



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**Carlin Pierce, 17, has written her first book, a collection of poetry called "Stone Like Wind."**

Since she was able to hold a pencil, Carlin Pierce has been writing. Through her years at Herndon Elementary, Middle and High Schools, she has been writing. Her friends have always known her as the girl with a pen or pencil in her hair.

After her freshman year, she decided to transfer to Flint Hill School, which triggered a change she had never experienced before.

"For the first time I was in an environment where I was meeting whole groups of new people, and the book is about the resilience, change, strength, everything I went through," she said.

**THIS CHANGE** led Pierce to publish her first book, a collection of poetry titled "Stone Like Wind."

"For me, writing is 10 percent actual writing and 90 percent editing, tweaking, throwing things in the trash can, then going back to the trash can to dig things out," she said. "I knew at some point I would write a book, I come from a family of writers, so it's always been an unspoken expectation for me to eventually go into print."

Pierce says she always has multiple notebooks on her at all times, for writing, drawing and other ideas. She prefers to hand write her early drafts, then eventually transfer it to a computer.

"I do a lot of my writing based on visual things, sometimes I'll see the top of a tree and have a mini-existential crisis, or see a McDonald's and start thinking about childhood obesity," she said. "I listen to a lot of music and like visiting museums, and when I feel something, I internalize it and it sort of comes flowing out of my pen onto the page."

Always a voracious reader, Pierce says she loves reading everything from poetry books to fantasy and science fiction.

"When it comes to poetry, I look at writers like Edgar Allen Poe and Robert Frost, because of the way they work their syllables and rhymes to get everything to flow so well, yet tell a story," she said. "Barbara Kingsolver is also one of my idols, I would love to meet her one day. And I love the way Dan Brown writes."

Pierce has attended writing and publishing workshops for years, and when she made the decision to put out a book, she reconnected with her contacts.

During the more than two year process, Pierce said she learned a lot about the publishing process, everything from choosing the fonts to page layouts.

Kwame Alexander, a writer who has taught poetry and publishing workshops in more than 50 schools around the world, has worked with more than 2,500 different authors.

"At 17, Carlin Pierce is one of the most authentic, passionate and powerful young writers I have ever encountered," he said. "'Stone Like Wind' is a remarkable debut signaling the arrival of a brilliant literary voice."

Pierce isn't sure yet what the future holds for her, other than it will include publication of more books. She's working on a transcendental collection for a June release, and another collection for the fall. She's also working on a novel, which she calls "poetry in story form."

"I'll always be writing, but right now I'm not sure if it's something I want to do as a profession. It's something that's a release for me, but depending on it for my income might turn it into a source of stress, and there are enough other things to cause stress in life," she said. "There's a lot of things I'd like to try out, personal narratives, an epistolary novel, I want to explore outside the box."

She said she hopes to study sustainable development, archaeology or anthropology.

"**STONE LIKE WIND**" is available on amazon.com, and has a Facebook page. Pierce says she hopes to make it available in local stores sometime this year.

## Baskets for Those in Need

Over 650 Easter baskets were donated by members and friends of Floris United Methodist Church this year. The baskets will be distributed to needy children ages 2 to 14 in Fairfax and Loudoun counties. Pictured are (from left) Becky Smith, Lauren Speers, Megan Van Dyke, Kayse Umbaugh and Diante Robinson.



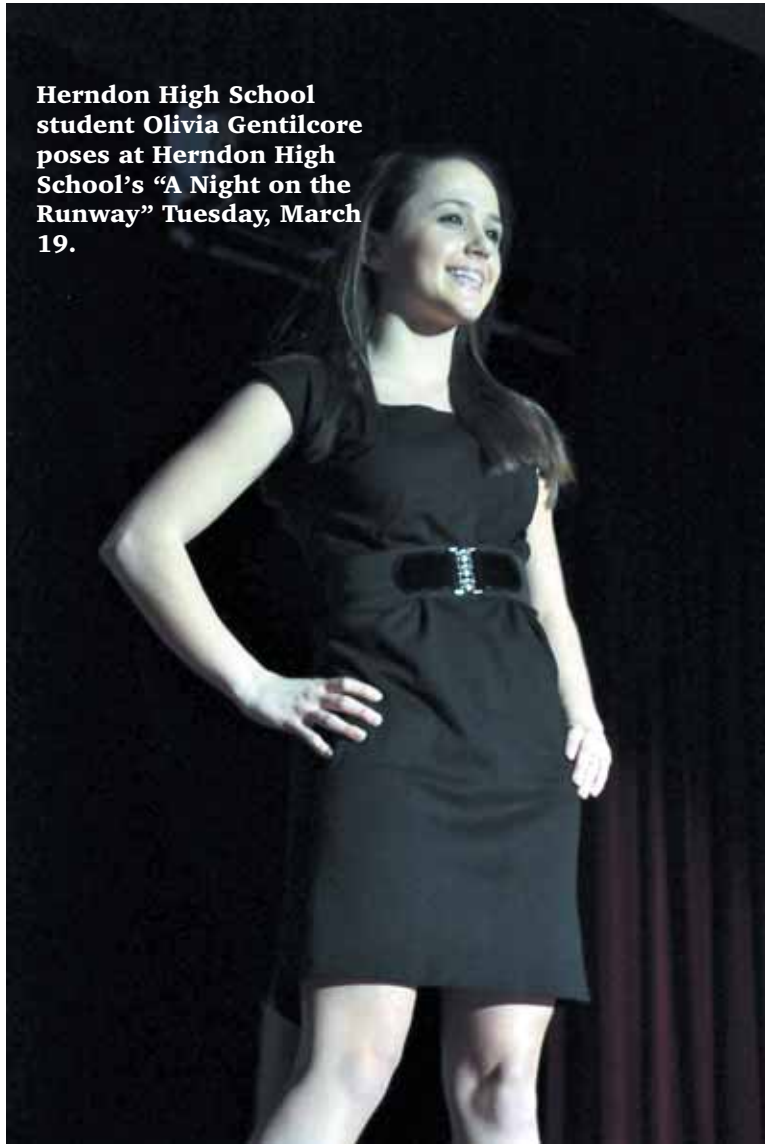


Students at Herndon High School put on "A Night on the Runway," a fashion show to benefit Shannon Gathercole, a Herndon graduate who was diagnosed with a brain tumor.



PHOTOS BY ALEX McVEIGH/ THE CONNECTION

Herndon High School student Olivia Gentilcore poses at Herndon High School's "A Night on the Runway" Tuesday, March 19.



## Students Take to the Runway

Herndon High's fashion show aids graduate with steep medical bills.

BY ALEX McVEIGH  
THE CONNECTION

The Herndon High School community rallied around one of their own Tuesday, March 19, with "A Night on the Runway—Strutting for Shannon." The school's marketing department held a fashion show with proceeds going toward Shannon Gathercole, class of 1997.

Gathercole, who now lives in Florida, began experiencing headaches and blurred vision in August of last year.

"One Friday morning when I got up for work I felt really weird and 'off' and had a bad headache and strange body aches but went to work anyway," she wrote on her website. "Then I ended up passing out, fainting, about an hour or so after I got to my office and apparently had three seizures following the syncope episode of passing out."

Five days later she was diagnosed with a tumor on her frontal lobe, measuring about five centimeters.

She was eventually referred to a doctor in Jacksonville, Fla., who performed surgery to remove the tumor Oct. 15, 2012.

Unable to work at her office job, her medical expenses total more than \$150,000, and are growing. She is still on anti-seizure medication.

Herndon High Marketing Coordinator Julie Pickering said that Gathercole was an instrumental part in the school's first fashion show, making it appropriate that this year's show is helping her.

Gathercole was the first student to create her own designs for the show, designing and constructing 10 different outfits.

The show used fashion capitals of the world, such as New York City, Paris, London, Berlin, Milan and Moscow for inspiration.

"These students did a terrific job of putting together a lot of stunning outfits," said Sandy Dungen, who came with her neighbors, parents of a Herndon student. "The whole show was very well put together, I'm impressed with the level of professionalism."

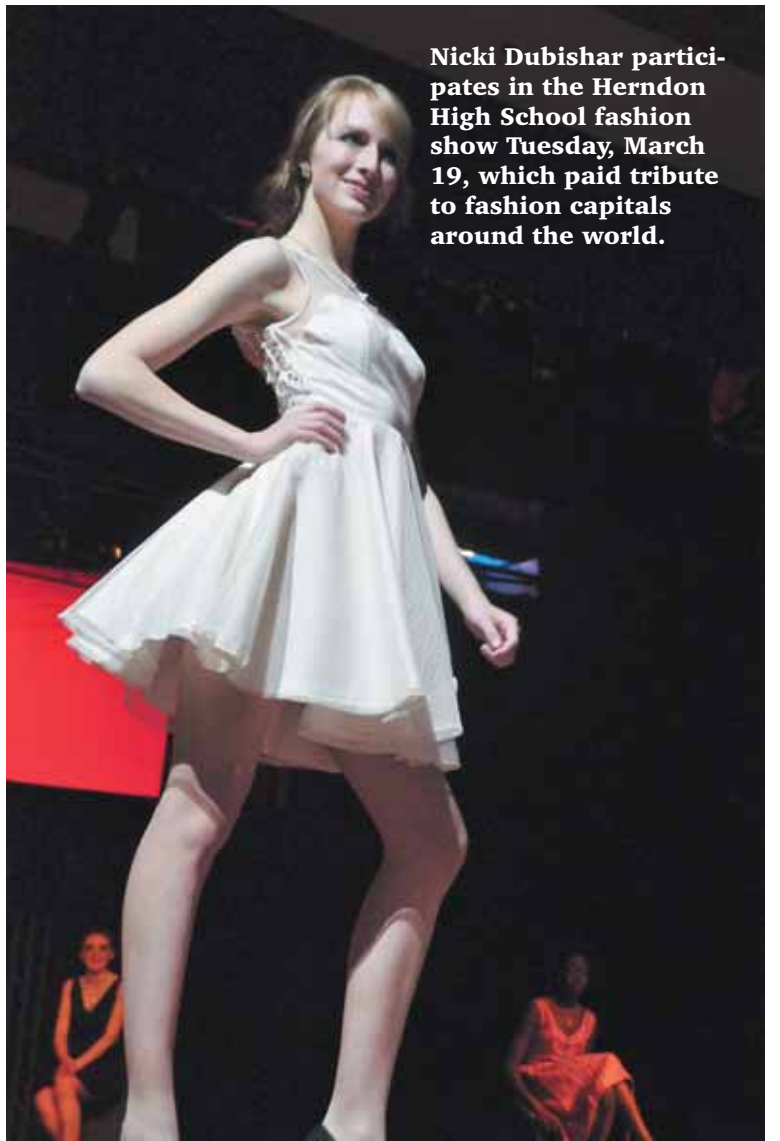
Gathercole said she had a follow-up MRI Feb. 1 and the tumor has not grown back. She will have another one in six months.

More information about Gathercole and the fundraising efforts for her can be found at [www.giveforward.com/shannonsbraintumorfund](http://www.giveforward.com/shannonsbraintumorfund).

Herndon High School students take to the runway during their annual fashion show, which raised funds for Herndon High graduate Shannon Gathercole, who was diagnosed with a brain tumor last fall.



Nicki Dubishar participates in the Herndon High School fashion show Tuesday, March 19, which paid tribute to fashion capitals around the world.





# SPORTS



Members of the Reston Raiders youth hockey team listen to their coach during practice Thursday, March 21.



The Reston Raiders youth hockey team will play in the national championships next week in Charlotte, N.C.

PHOTOS BY ALEX McVEIGH/THE CONNECTION

## Reston Raiders to Play on National Stage

### Youth hockey team to play for national championship in Charlotte, N.C.

BY ALEX McVEIGH  
THE CONNECTION

The Reston Raiders youth hockey team will make its first trip to the national championships next week for the first time in 10 years. The team, made up of 14- and 15-year-olds, defeated the Ashburn team in the state championship the first weekend of March.

"We didn't have a great start to the season, but as we rolled along, we picked up steam," said Daniel Audiokhin, who has been playing hockey since he was 4. "As we went into the state championships, we felt pretty confident, and I think we're all feel-



Andrew Demorat, a player on the Reston Raiders, practices at Skatequest in Reston. The Raiders team will compete in the national championships next week in Charlotte, N.C.

ing pretty good going to nationals."

The Raiders play around 50 games per season. Player Sam Shapiro said that the team really gelled after a trip to Florida.

"When we went to Florida, we beat a team from Russia, and they were a really good team," he said. "We figured if we could play them tough, then we could play anyone tough."

The team holds tryouts each May, and plays for most of the year, wrapping up the regular season in February. In addition to regular schedules, the team had the opportunity to play on a few rinks around the country.

"My favorite part of the season was getting to play on the rink at Lake Placid [New York], on the same ice the team in the 1980 Olympics did their 'Miracle on Ice,'" said Billy Shand.

In addition to their regular schedule of games and practices, the team takes time to watch game film, both of themselves and of their opponents.

"I think watching the film really helps us, we can see how the other teams cycle

their players in and out, and get a feel for what they like to do," said Mathew Kassab. "It also helps to watch ourselves, to get a feeling of what we're doing wrong out there."

The team shares the ice at Skatequest in Reston with other age groups and teams from other programs, so time on the ice together is at a premium.

"Once we're all out there playing with each other, that's as close as we're going to get to matching a game situation," said Daniel Silvers. "Coach always has us moving."

The Raiders played a home and home series with the Delaware state champions last weekend, and will travel to Charlotte from April 3 to 7.

"We're really excited, if for nothing else then to play against some really good teams," said Jason Guidi.

The first round will see them facing off against teams from New Jersey, Texas and New Hampshire. If the team does well enough in their pool, they will advance to the later rounds.

### SPORTS ROUNDUPS

#### South Lakes Baseball Drops Season Opener

The South Lakes baseball team kicked off its 2013 high school season Friday night, March 15, against its rival, the Herndon Hornets. The stands at Herndon were packed with a large contingent of fans for both teams.

The Herndon Hornets won the cross-town non-district game 2-0. Herndon picked up one run in the bottom of the fourth and another run in the bottom of the fifth to complete all the scoring in this close game.

South Lakes senior Bobby Rae Allen pitched a solid game, going five strong innings. South Lakes junior Terry Petersen came on in relief and pitched a scoreless sixth inning. The Seahawks' play of the game came in the fourth inning. With bases loaded and one out, Allen caught a line drive with a quick relay to sophomore first baseman Kyle King. The Herndon runner was caught off first base for the inning-ending double play. Junior shortstop Jo Jo Lear completed a great double play to King in the fourth inning.

Herndon pitching kept the South Lakes bats quiet in the shutout.

South Lakes lost 13-0 to McLean on

March 20 and beat Thomas Jefferson 5-3 on March 22. The Seahawks are competing in Myrtle Beach, S.C., March 25-29. South Lakes will travel to face Langley on April 2.

— KEVIN DARBY

#### Herndon Baseball Starts 3-0

The Herndon baseball team opened the season with a 2-0 victory against South Lakes on March 15 and continued winning, beating Broad Run 6-5 on March 19 and Gonzaga Prep 4-0 on March 23 in Myrtle

Beach, S.C.

According to the Herndon High School athletics website, Hornets pitcher Michael Curcio threw a three-hit shutout against South Lakes. Herndon catcher Austin Schnarrs delivered a game-winning double in the bottom of the seventh against Broad Run and Hornets pitcher Karsten Highberg threw a shutout against Gonzaga Prep.

After Herndon's trip to Myrtle Beach, the Hornets will travel to face Park View on Wednesday, April 3. Herndon's next home game is April 12 against Centreville.





Oakton sophomore Lydia Montanino scored four goals against Langley on March 21.



Oakton junior Tori Anderson scored three goals, including the game-winner, against Langley on March 21.

PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

## Oakton Girls' Lax Beats Langley in Frigid Conditions

**Cougars win rematch of last year's state final.**

BY JON ROETMAN  
THE CONNECTION

**W**ith temperatures in the low 30s, the Oakton and Langley girls' lacrosse teams braved the elements on March 21 for a rematch of last season's AAA state championship game.

"[The cold weather was] the first thing we talked about down in the locker room," Oakton head coach Jean Counts said. "I said, we can make excuses and really be affected by it, or we can chalk it up to another experience. You're never going to forget this really, really, really cold game against a really, really, great team."

Thanks to junior attack Tori Anderson, the Cougars' memory would not involve overtime.

Anderson scored from free position with

15 seconds remaining, saving the Cougars from additional time on the field while lifting Oakton to an 8-7 victory during a frigid night at Oakton High School.

Last season, Oakton defeated Langley three times, including a 9-7 victory in the Northern Region championship game and a 12-7 win in the state final. On Thursday night, the combination of Anderson and sophomore attack Lydia Montanino helped the Cougars once again top the Saxons.

"[I] just had to make that goal," Anderson said about her thought process in the final minute. "... Composure, composure, composure."

Montanino, a second-year varsity player, finished with four goals and Anderson, a three-year varsity starter, added three.

"They both have this — you can call it boys' style — but they just play [with] a different style," Counts said. "They're the kind of players that [make] you ... do a double take. You're very impressed with what they've done because it's not as conventional on the girls' side. ... They're just

playing so great. ... When [Anderson is] going to goal, it might not always be a goal, but you know it's going to be a quality take and it's so great to see her have the confidence, see her have the strength to do so. Lydia is the same thing. She's got the first-year-freshman-on-varsity [challenge] behind her and she's really starting to mature right in front of our eyes. It's beautiful."

Oakton junior Danielle Palmucci also scored a goal.

Montanino scored a pair of early goals as Oakton built a 3-0 lead in the first 10 minutes. Langley scored four of the next five goals, including two from senior attack Rachel Wagner, but Anderson answered with a goal from free position late in the first half to give the Cougars a 5-4 halftime advantage.

Montanino's second goal of the second half gave Oakton a 7-5 lead with 13:01 remaining, but Langley freshman midfielder Halle Duenkel and senior midfielder Hayley Soutter each found the net to tie the score at 7-all with 5:50 remaining.

Wagner, Soutter and senior midfielder Grace Goettman each scored two goals for Langley. Duenkel finished with one.

The loss dropped Langley's record to 1-2. The Saxons opened the season with a 13-6 loss to Westfield on March 12, and beat Woodson 15-13 on March 14. Langley, which finished Liberty District, Northern Region and state runners-up last season, will travel to face McLean on Friday, April 5.

Oakton improved to 2-1, including a season-opening loss to The Hill Academy on March 12 and a victory against Lake Braddock on March 15. Oakton, the defending Concorde District, Northern Region and state champion, will host Cold Spring Harbor at 1 p.m. on Thursday, March 28.

"I want them to connect. I want them to find their own identity," Counts said. "We graduated an excellent, ridiculously talented class last year — not only on the field, but as leaders and personalities. We're more of a subdued group in personalities, but I don't think that makes you any less on the lacrosse field."



Langley's Olivia Sisson shoots against Oakton on March 21.



Langley's Rachel Wagner scored two goals against Oakton on March 21.



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# 14.8 Percent



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

That is the percentage of diagnosed  
lung cancer patients who survive beyond  
five years, according to The National  
Cancer Institute's SEER Cancer Statistics  
Review, 1975-2009, in a graph published  
in the February 26, 2013 Washington  
Post's weekly Health & Science section. As  
a non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) sur-  
vivor beginning his fifth year post-diagnos-  
is, charting my prospects in such a cold  
and impersonal manner is both chilling  
and arguable. "Chilling" in that facts speak  
for themselves and are hardly made up of  
whole cloth, to invoke one of the late Jack  
Kent Cooke's more famous quotes. And  
"arguable" in that charts, statistics, etc.  
may very well measure the mean, but it  
sure doesn't measure the man (this man,  
anyway). Meaning, from my perspective:  
sure, the chart is scary as hell, but I'm not  
sure I'm on it, if you know what I mean? (I  
know you know what I hope.)

Now whether you believe it or not mat-  
ters not to me, rather what I believe mat-  
ters most. And I believe in the individual-  
ity of individuals and of the immeasurable  
characteristics that don't show up on two-  
dimensional graphs. Since I live in a three-  
dimensional world, I'm loathe – and quite  
hesitant, to think that I'm just another ter-  
minal patient/number. Now, I don't dis-  
miss such statistics out of hand, obviously,  
but nor do I take them to heart to deter-  
mine how I intend on living my life.  
Certainly I'm not going to ignore them;  
I'm not a blockhead. But neither do I  
expect them to affect my thinking, my  
judgment, my preparation and my atti-  
tude. I still believe anything is possible and  
I'd like to think – and continue to think:  
"I've lived this long. Certainly I can live a  
little bit longer" (updated daily).

I have to admit though, that reading  
articles and seeing charts which offer  
improving but still extremely discouraging  
life expectancies, particularly for lung can-  
cer patients (12.3 percent was the previ-  
ous five-year survival rate, the lowest for  
all cancers charted in this particular graph)  
doesn't exactly make my day – or night,  
for that matter. Somehow, I have to find a  
way to disassociate myself from that popu-  
lation despite being immersed in its cul-  
ture every minute of every day. Which  
when you consider that I have my oncolo-  
gist's phone number programmed on my  
speed dial and that the chemotherapy-  
induced neuropathy in my feet offers con-  
stant reminders that I'm not in Kansas any-  
more (if I were in Kansas, I'm sure the  
neuropathy would be just as bad), the  
likelihood of my not feeling the effects of  
my diagnosis, physical, mental or emo-  
tional is somewhere between slim and  
none. Coping is what it's all about and not  
taking anything too personally, even  
though this is all very personal. And  
though I am keenly aware of my circum-  
stances – as most of you regular readers  
are, finding a way to not let it define me  
and/or control me totally, is the challenge  
with which I am most familiar.

As Popeye the Sailor Man so famously  
said: "I yam what I yam." And so am I. I'm  
Kenny-with-cancer. So what else is new?

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



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