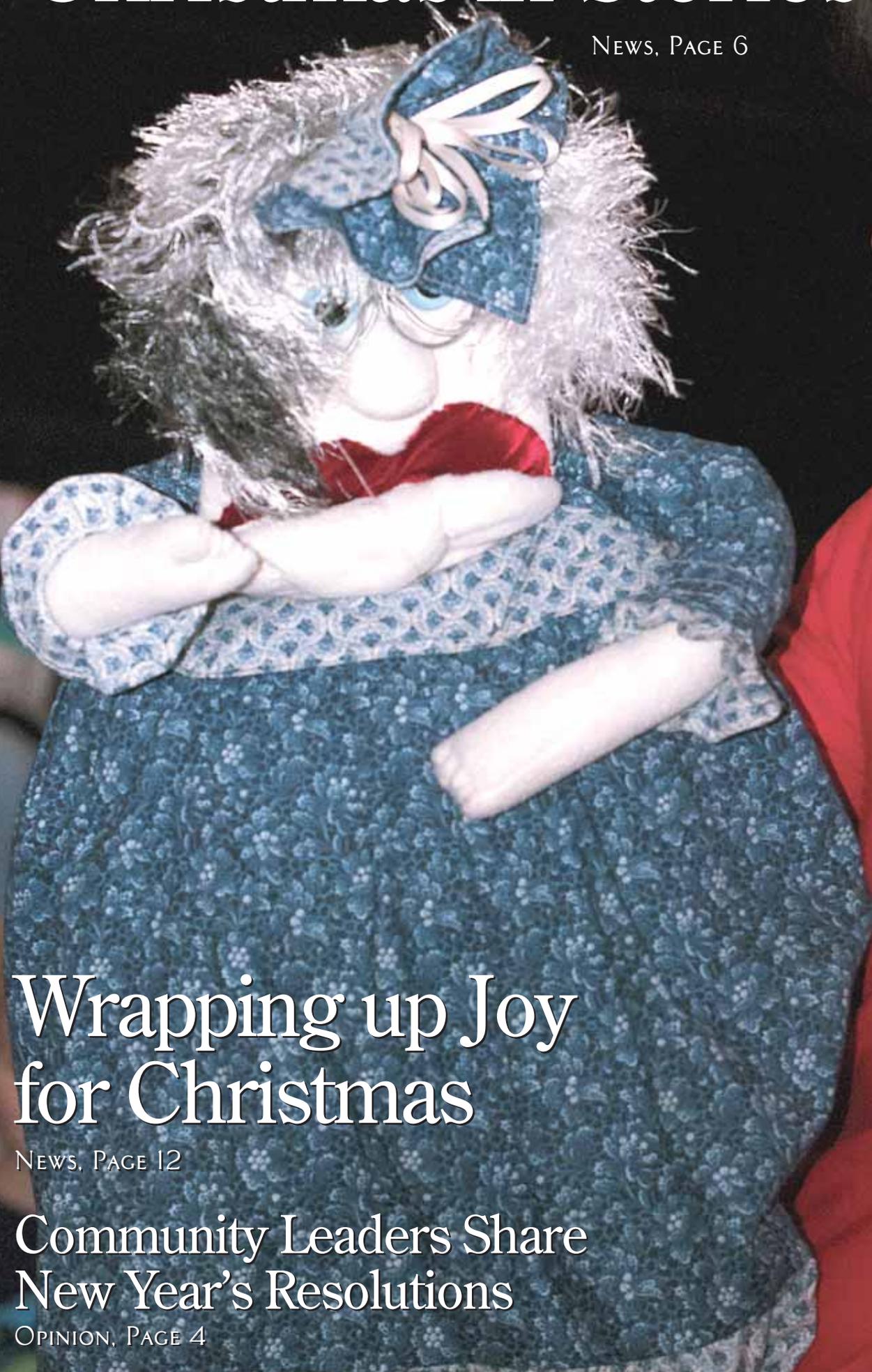


Christmas in Stories and Songs

NEWS, PAGE 6



Barbara Efron, of Storytime Express, tells holiday related stories to a group of local children at the Angelika Film Center in Fairfax on Monday morning, including of her version of the story of Old Mother Hubbard.

Wrapping up Joy for Christmas

NEWS, PAGE 12

Community Leaders Share New Year's Resolutions

OPINION, PAGE 4

FOLLOW ON TWITTER: @FFXCONNECTION

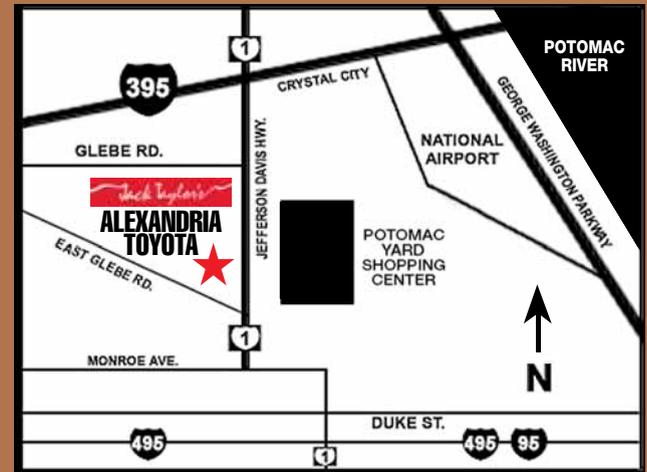
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PHOTO BY ROBBIE HAMMER/THE CONNECTION

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Delegates Make Predictions for 2014

Q&A with delegates David Bulova (D-37) and Eileen Filler-Corn (D-41).

Del. Bulova: Education, Health Care, and Ethics Reform

Q: What were some successes in 2013?

A: The big one from last year was transportation, and it would be great to keep that momentum going into 2014. I see 2014 as being a potentially very productive year and a way to differentiate Virginia from the federal government and the gridlock we are seeing up there.

Q: What are some issues that should be discussed in the General Assembly?

A: Education. I see this upcoming session as focusing on a couple big areas. Education will certainly be a major focus. It is critical to ensure that the state steps up to the plate and that we fully fund re-benchmarking so that our localities don't have to make up that difference with higher property taxes. Education is a state-local partnership, and this will be a big deal to make sure we are fully funding education.

The other big one is the Standards of Learning. There's a lot of talk of the idea that we are forcing teachers to teach to the test, and we are taking the critical thinking skills out of our education process because you're basically memorizing in order to pass your Standards of Learning. You want to have the accountability, but at the same time, how do you rebalance the process so that we aren't constantly testing and making kids memorize rather than learn the skills that are necessary to compete in a global economy. My greatest fear is that we'll talk about it a lot, and then nothing will get done because it's a complicated subject. It's one of the bills that I'll be putting in-how do you structure a committee or commission to look at your standards of learning and change them in a way that is meaningful for Virginians?

Health Care. One debate with



Delegate David Bulova (D-37) speaks on the House floor during a session of the General Assembly.



Del. Eileen Filler-Corn (D-41) speaks to members at a committee meeting. Filler-Corn hopes to focus on transportation, education, and the economy this session

Health Care is whether or not to move forward with Medicare expansion in Virginia. The important part is for the debate not to center on whether you agree or disagree with the federal health care law. The issue is whether Virginia is going to take advantage of billions of dollars of poor uninsured residents in Virginia.

Mental Health Reform. I have no doubt that we'll change the way Virginia does mental health right now. The question is how far we'll be able to take that.

Q: What do you think we can expect from Governor-elect Terry McAuliffe?

A: What I'm looking forward to is really focusing in on helping to strengthen Virginia's economy, helping to diversify Virginia's economy; that is what he campaigned on, so I expect a flurry of legislative initiatives to move us in that direction. For me, I'm hoping he'll focus on the potential for some of our research universities to help with job creation.

Q: What are some of the biggest challenges affecting Fairfax residents?

A: Especially for Northern Virginia, a lot of it comes down to how expensive it is to live here. There are so many things that factor in to that. You want to make sure that if you work here, you can

afford a home here and can send your children to school here. Far too often, you have people who are moving further and further out, which contributes to sprawl and its own problems.

Q: What headline would you like to see in 2014?

A: "Virginia General Assembly Puts Aside Partisanship, Moves Forward Successfully on Major Issues, including Education, Healthcare, and Ethics Reform."

Del. Filler-Corn: Continuing Last Year's Success

Q: What do you think was a major success of 2013?

A: The Transportation Bill was a major success of 2013. That is going to allow us to move forward to alleviate congestion, improving our roads, and road maintenance.

Q: What are some of your priorities this legislative session?

A: My priorities always reflect those of my constituents, including education, transportation and the economy. I think a priority this year will be continuing to protect our world-class schools against cuts and ensuring that our kids will be successful. Improving

SEE PREDICTIONS, PAGE 5

On Sharon Bulova's 2014 Radar Screen

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova discusses the issues she sees taking center stage in the county in the coming year.

"The following items are on my radar screen for the year ahead:

The Silver Line, Phase 1, will open for passenger service through Tysons Corner to Wiehle Avenue in Reston. Construction for Phase 2, extending Metrorail from Wiehle Avenue to Reston Town Center, Route 28, Herndon, Dulles Airport and to the Ashburn area of Loudoun County will begin.

Construction associated with rezonings in Tysons will take place throughout 2014. 'Pop-up' activities and uses will provide vibrancy to Tysons while permanent uses are beginning to fill in.

The newly developed Springfield Town Center in the old Springfield Mall area will open in fall of 2014.

A new state administration will begin as Gov. Terry McAuliffe is sworn in as the 72nd governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Fairfax County has asked the General Assembly to prioritize Medicaid expansion and state funding for pre-K through 12th-grade education when they meet this winter.

During 2014, Fairfax County and the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) will be advancing transportation priorities in Northern

Virginia, putting new state transportation funding to work in order to address congestion and traffic safety.

On Monday evening, June 9, my office will be hosting a new Evolution program: Evolution of the Workplace. We will trace the trends and expectation of workers in Fairfax County, beginning when Fairfax was one of the largest producers of dairy products in the commonwealth through the modern, 'work/lifestyle' balance younger workers look for.

Back by popular demand will be our second season of Evenings on the Ellipse Concerts in the Government Center's "back yard." Concerts and wine tastings are free, thanks to corporate sponsors. I'm looking forward to balmy nights and great music already."

NOTE: Bulova's State of the County address will debut Wednesday, Jan. 15, at 7:30 p.m. It will air on Channel 16 and may be watched online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/chairman/> starting Jan. 16. The address will immediately follow her annual Chairman's New Year Reception, on Jan. 15, from 4:30- 6:30 p.m., at the Government Center.

"The Chairman's Reception is my opportunity to say thank you to the many county employees, volunteers and active neighbors who help make Fairfax County the exceptional place it is to live, work and play," she said. "All active/engaged constituents are welcome to attend."



Bulova

PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

"The Silver Line, Phase 1, will open for passenger service through Tysons Corner to Wiehle Avenue in Reston."

Sharon Bulova, Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

Looking to Hear from Readers in New Year

As local, weekly newspapers, the Connection's mission is to deliver news readers need close to home, to help readers enjoy great local places and events, to advocate for community good, to call attention to unmet needs, to provide a forum for dialogue on local concerns, and to celebrate and record milestones and events in community and people's lives.

To succeed at any of that, we need your help.

If you know of a person or an organization doing important work, something newsworthy or something that might make a good feature story, let us know. We want to know if someone in your family or your community published a book, became an Eagle Scout, raised money for a good cause, accomplished a feat like running a marathon or having an art show. Send us a photo and tell us about it.

We publish photos and notes of a variety of personal milestones and community events, including births, engagements, weddings, anniversaries, awards and obituaries.

We are also interested in events at your church, mosque, synagogue, community center, pool, school, club, etc. To have the best chance of getting an event included in our calendar ahead of time, email us the details of the event (who, what, where, when why) at least two weeks ahead of time. Email to south@connectionnewspapers.com. Events generally must be open to the public and either free or at nominal cost to be included in calendars.

After your events, email us a photo and a note so we can consider including it in our coverage. Be sure to include the names of all the people who are in a photo, and say when and where the photo was taken.

We also publish notes about news and events from local businesses. Notes about openings, new employees, anniversaries are welcome.

In covering the issues, we strive to provide a voice for our readers. We look forward to hearing from you.

EDITORIAL

The Connection Newspapers are published by Local Media Connection LLC, an independent, locally owned company. The publications and websites include the Alexandria Gazette Packet, the Mount Vernon Gazette, the Centre View, the Potomac Almanac and individual Connection papers and websites serving McLean, Great Falls, Vienna/Oakton, Oak Hill/Herndon, Reston, Springfield, Burke, Fairfax, Fairfax Station/Clifton/Lorton, Arlington, Centreville, Chantilly/Fair Oaks, Alexandria and Mount Vernon.

The publications and websites have won hundreds of awards for news and community coverage just in the past few years, including the Virginia Press Association Award for Integrity and Community Service for coverage of efforts to prevent and end homelessness, and Best in Show for information/art for coverage of local parks.

The operation of these community-serving publications is entirely funded by advertising. The papers are delivered free to homes and

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Community Leaders Share New Year's Resolutions

— JANELLE GERMANOS

Del. Dave Albo (R-42)

"My New Year's resolution is to learn the song Moves like Jagger on my guitar, because my boy, who is eight, likes that song."



Del. Eileen Filler-Corn (D-41)

"With regards to the General Assembly, I just hope to have a productive session and we'll cross party lines and being able to come up with good legislation that helps our constituents and moves Virginia forward. Personally, I hope to be able to continue to have more time to spend with the family."



Supervisor John Cook (R-Braddock District)

"To look for solutions to complex problems and concrete ways to make our communities stronger and even better places to live."



Paul Gilbert, Executive Director, Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority

"I'm always making plans. I have not come up with my resolution. But what I try to do is whatever my plan is, put it in a positive. I'm not going to say, 'In 2014 I will eat less potato chips.' Instead, in 2014, I will focus on something positive rather than something negative. One thing I am planning to do is to do more hiking. Every time I do, I think, 'why I don't do this a lot more?'"



Supervisor Jeffrey McKay (R-Lee District)

"My New Year's resolution is to make sure I keep the right grounding between my responsibilities to my constituents and my responsibilities to my family, and that's tough. It's the toughest thing about this job. Making sure you have that work, life, balance is really important. I need to make sure I stay focused on that balance."



Del. David Bulova, (D-37)

"This time of year, every year, you have to remind yourself to step back and ask what is the most important thing in your life. That is family and especially the kids. While being in the legislature means being down in Richmond for two months out of the year, it also makes you really cherish what you have. That is my annual New Year's resolution-to make sure you are taking time to spend with the kids."



Brian Bauer, Marketing and Communications Director, Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority

"To be more consistent with my gym plan. What I have a tendency to do, and what I may probably do again, is in January go to the gym, and kill it for three months, and hurt my ankle or something. I need to come up with a more consistent, realistic, plan and stop going through these cycles."



NEWS

Predictions for 2014

FROM PAGE 3

transportation continues to be a focus. Creating new jobs and improving the economy always continues to be a priority. We really need to look at our education system and figure out what is working and what's not. Making college affordable for our students and family is an issue I will continue to work on.

Q: What are some challenges facing the community?

A: I think we have to look back at sequestration and the government shut down, and look at the effects that had on so many families in our area, with layoffs and furloughs.

Q: What do you think we can expect with Governor-elect Terry McAuliffe?

A: He's put together a very impressive administration when you look at the appointments he's made so far. I think he's very focused on economic development and job creation, and he's spoken a lot about SOL reform and education, and those are important issues to me and my constituents.

Q: Do you think partisanship will be a major issue this session?

A: I certainly hope not. I knocked on a lot of doors this past campaign and I keep very well in touch with my constituents. I heard from folks day in and day out that they are concerned with public safety, education, transportation, and they don't want to focus on social issues. They are looking forward and they are hopeful. They are anticipating that this will be less partisan and more focused on the issues that we can really move forward on and make a difference.

— JANELLE GERMANOS

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Spiritual Wellness in the New Year

What is it and how does one achieve it?

By MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

As we begin a new year, many are focused on their spiritual health and well-being. In fact, the National Wellness Institute names spiritual wellness as one of the seven dimensions of overall wellness. It's essential in life, say experts.

Lisa Jackson-Cherry, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Counseling at Marymount University in Arlington, who specializes in pastoral counseling and pastoral integra-

tion, believes spiritual well-being doesn't always have to do with religion. It's about being connected to something greater than one's self. "It doesn't have to be a higher power," she said. "It can be your community or nature, but the key piece is that there is a connection to something other than yourself."

Elizabeth Rees, the associate rector at St. Aidan's Episcopal Church in Mount Vernon, said, "I would say at its heart, spiritual well-being is knowing ourselves to be loved and cherished by God and then living into that truth."

Kathy Judd, Alexandria-based meditation teacher and director of No Place Like Om, said, "Spiritual health and well-being is when you ... feel just as, if not more, connected to what you can't see as to what you can. It's about knowing that there is an animating force



Connecting with others is an important part of spiritual well-being say experts.

that drives the show and seeing all the ups and downs of our human experience as just like that — a show."

Some say that expectation management is a factor in spiritual wellbeing. "If there is a gap between expectation and reality, there can be a ... lack of contentment," said Rabbi Stuart Weinblatt of Congregation B'nai Tzedek in Potomac, Md. "When we set our expectations lower in terms of what we expect from others, we are less likely to be disappointed. It is appropriate to set our goals high, but our expectations lower. Goals motivate us, but when we have expectations, we set ourselves up for disappointment."

WHILE SPIRITUAL WELLNESS can mean different things to different people, experts said there are common factors that can help one achieve it, such as engaging with others. "When we think about spiritual health or well-being, we think about people being at peace with themselves and others," said Jackson-Cherry.

"Community is a big one, and also what you pay attention to and consume," Judd said. "If you're constantly tuned in to the news cycle and people who are negative and arguing, you're going to see the world from a certain viewpoint. ... If you take time to be in nature, read uplifting things, eat [the right] foods, and surround yourself with a community of people who are loving, supportive and want to bring out the best in you, you'll have a very different experience of the world."

Prayer is an important part of many religions. "Spirituality is found both within the context of meditation and reflective time, which could be prayer, as well as being part of a larger community," said Weinblatt. "That is why people

can find contentment in prayer and places of worship and as well as in other contexts."

Jackson-Cherry said, "When I'm working with clients, I find that people who have the healthiest spiritual well-being are people who have a sense of purpose in life or have a meaning in life. They might not have achieved it, but they are working toward it. Having a sense of purpose or meaning in life leads to contentment."

So how does one find a sense of purpose and meaning in life? "We've talked about this question a lot," said Rees. "What comes up most frequently is the idea of finding ways to live in the present, slowing down and finding God present in the moment. ... Hearing where other people are finding God, and taking the time to look for God acting in my own life and share that with others makes me much more aware of God all around, and helps me to remember that God is also acting in and through the people around me."

LIVING IN THE MOMENT is also a factor that can lead to contentment and spiritual well-being. "I think trying to ... find as much love and joy in it as possible is a huge piece," Judd said. "Also, worry less about what others think and be more willing to live and love greatly." Rees said keeping a journal is a useful tool in developing gratitude. "One spiritual exercise that helps me sometimes is to practice gratitude by prayerfully journaling about the things for which I am grateful," she said. "Sit down and write 100 things for which you are grateful. You start with the big and obvious things, but then also find yourself digging deep for the small but ever-present graces of life. ... Journaling in general can be a great for spiritual well-being."

PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. AIDAN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



Around 50 children and their parents attended the holiday event, Joyful Jingles: Stories and Songs for Christmas on Monday morning in Fairfax.

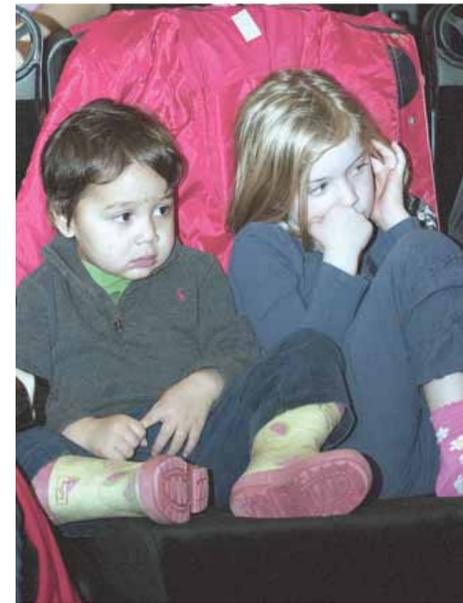


Barbara Effron, of Storytime Express, tells holiday related stories to a group of local children at the Angelika Film Center in Fairfax on Monday morning. Around 50 children and their parents attend the story-telling and holiday song event.

Christmas in Stories and Songs



Brady Everson, 2, of Vienna, feeds Old Mother Hubbard a bell as part of a retelling of the Old Mother Hubbard story with a holiday twist.



Jasper, 2, and Sarah, both of Vienna, share a seat while listening to holiday stories and songs.



Around 50 local children and their parents attended the holiday event, Joyful Jingles: Stories and Songs for Christmas on Monday morning in Fairfax, and enjoyed dancing to some of the songs.

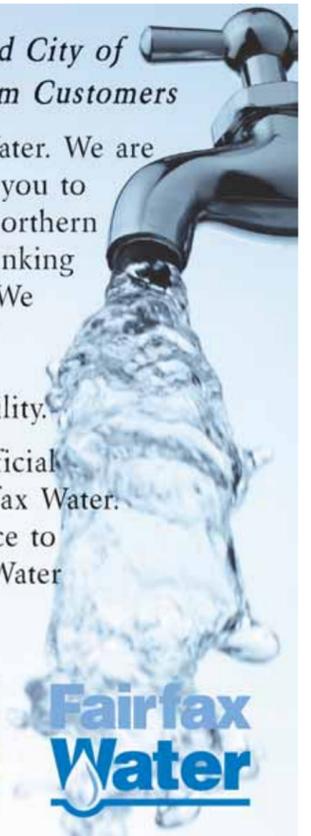
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ROBBIE HAMMER/
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SPORTS

Top Sports Moments of 2013

The year 2013 provided several exciting moments in local sports. For Woodson, the boys' basketball team's epic comeback earned the Cavaliers a Northern Region title. West Springfield's Caroline Alcorta had a memorable senior cross country season. Lake Braddock's boys' basketball team won its first district title since 2002, South County's girls' track team won a pair of state titles and the Edison girls' basketball team won a region championship.

Here is a look at the top moments in Burke/Springfield/Fairfax/Fairfax Station sports for 2013.

Woodson Boys' Basketball Wins Region Title

Trailing Wakefield by 19 points entering the fourth quarter of the Northern Region championship game, it appeared the Woodson boys' basketball team would have to settle for the state playoff berth it clinched by winning in the semifinals.

Twelve minutes and one furious comeback later, Woodson was heading to states with the program's first region championship in the school's 50-year history after a 75-70 overtime victory.

Wakefield led by as many as 22 points in the second half and held a 52-33 advantage entering the fourth quarter. But Woodson, which had struggled offensively for three quarters, opened the fourth with an 11-0 run, cutting the Warriors' lead to eight. The Cavaliers, a strong outside-shooting team, continued their comeback with a barrage of perimeter shots. A Peter Murray 3-pointer cut the Woodson deficit to five. Forty seconds later, Alex Boock's 3-pointer cut Wakefield's lead to 55-52. Murray made another 3-pointer with 1:20 remaining, tying the score at 59-all and the game went to overtime.

In the extra period, Damian Bell's 3-pointer gave Woodson a 62-61 lead — the Cavaliers' first lead since the 5:33 mark of the second quarter. After a Wakefield free throw tied the score at 62, Woodson's Tommy Stepka knocked down a 3-pointer with 2:10 left in overtime, giving the Cavaliers a lead they would not relinquish.

How did the Cavaliers pull it off?

"It's funny because I've been asked that several times," Woodson head coach Doug Craig wrote in an email. "Our kids were just so confident. I remember them coming into the huddle between the third and fourth quarters. Our kids were absolutely not panicked, unnerved, or distraught. There was just a sense of resolve. They just knew they were going to get back in the game, even with how well Wakefield had played. Our kids had a supreme confidence that we could shoot our way back into the game because we had been a team all year that could score points in bunches. We talked



West Springfield senior Caroline Alcorta won the Group 6A state championship.

very calmly about what we wanted to do. Then went right out and got the lead down from 19 to 10 points in 1 minute, 48 seconds. From there we could just feel the confidence in our huddle. I'd never seen a team just handle that adversity so well. They really weren't fazed a bit about being behind."

In the final 12 minutes, Woodson outscored Wakefield 42-18. The Cavaliers outscored the Warriors 26-7 in the fourth quarter to force overtime.

Murray and Boock each scored 19 points for Woodson. Stepka scored 12 points, and Eric Bowles and Bell each had 11. Murray was named tournament MVP while Stepka and Boock made the all-tournament team.

"Damian Bell, who was perhaps our 10th or 11th guy on the depth chart, hadn't played much the last month of the season. We were going so bad offensively and Damian could really shoot it. We went to him in the last minute of the third quarter through the end of the game. We were looking for a spark and he scored 11 points in the last 13 minutes of the game. He hit a 3 and all of a sudden the confidence spread like wildfire. In the fourth quarter and overtime, we hit like nine threes by four different players. All of a sudden guys that were struggling all night seemed to find their confidence. It really all began with the 3



Jada Graves and the Edison girls' basketball team won the Northern Region title in 2013.

Damian hit in the last minute of the third quarter. He'll be the guy I will always laud to future teams about staying prepared to play. Biggest game in school history and he hasn't played in a month and comes up huge and really propelled us."

After the game, the Cavaliers paid tribute to former Woodson coach Red Jenkins.

"After the game in the locker room was pretty special and no one got to see it," Craig wrote. "It was the school's 50th anniversary and our first region championship. We had won 19 district titles and been in the regional championship game several times without winning. So many great teams and players (Tommy Amaker, Pete Holbert, Greg Williams, etc.) at Woodson through the years that never quite got it done. After the game our players and coaching staff invited several people in the locker room that had been a big part of Woodson basketball over the years. We had two of the three former head coaches (Red Jenkins and Mike Pflugrath), two former DSA's (Tom Casey and Phil Turner), a couple of former assistant coaches, as well as our principal and current athletic staff. The team presented the regional championship trophy to Coach Jenkins and asked him to accept it on behalf of all the players, coaches, assistant coaches, managers that had been so close

and had never quite got it done. Fifty years and so much history, we were so fortunate that Coach Jenkins and others could still be there to be a part of it. A lot of people over the years put in work to get the program there. Our kids really understood how important it was to the school community and wanted to share the moment with some of those people."

Woodson went on to reach the state semifinals.

Spartan Harrier Alcorta Produces Fantastic Senior Season

Caroline Alcorta's senior cross country season was one to remember.

After the West Springfield harrier won the Conference 7 championship on Oct. 30, Alcorta won the 6A North region title on Nov. 6 with the third-best time in the history of the Burke Lake Park course (16:31). After committing to the University of North Carolina, Alcorta went on to win the Group

PHOTO BY ED LULL

CONNECTION FILE PHOTO

Top Moments of 2013

FROM PAGE 8

6A state championship on Nov. 15 at Great Meadow, finishing with a course-record time of 17:13.

Next, Alcorta won the Foot Locker south regional on Nov. 30 in Charlotte, earning her a trip to nationals. On Dec. 14, Alcorta earned All-American status by placing third at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships national meet in San Diego. She finished with a time of 17:31.

"I think my favorite part of the XC season for Caroline was her winning states," West Springfield head coach Chris Pellegrini wrote in an email. "It was the first individual XC state championship in our girls' history, and she looked relaxed and comfortable the whole time."

Pellegrini noticed Alcorta's level of confidence grow.

"I think one of the reasons why Caroline has had such a great fall was because she has gained a lot more confidence from her previous seasons of running," Pellegrini wrote. "Her mentality heading into each race has been excellent, and she's provided the other girls on the team a great example of the type of approach that is successful. This type of approach has allowed her to just go out and execute the race plan, rather than worrying too much."

"Her performances at Foot Locker South and Foot Locker Finals in San Diego were really gravy at the end of the season, and it was nice to see that she can match up well at the highest levels."

Edison Girls' Basketball Wins Northern Region Championship

The Edison girls' basketball team stumbled out of the gate in the 2013 Northern Region championship game, falling behind South Lakes 20-5 at the end of the first quarter and trailing by as many as 17 points.

But thanks in large part to then-freshman Jada Graves, who scored a game-high 23 points, the Eagles battled back and won their first region title since 2007, beating South Lakes 60-52 on Feb. 23.

South Lakes' 6-foot-2 center Abby Rendle finished just shy of a triple-double, totaling 14 points, 12 rebounds and nine blocks. But Rendle didn't stop the 5-foot-9 Graves from being aggressive on offense.

"I'm not scared of anybody," Graves said after the game. "I was going to take it and try to get her in foul trouble. If she blocks it, [I'm] just going to go again."

South Lakes led 50-47 with 4:27 remaining in the fourth quarter, but Edison answered with back-to-back 3-points from Megan Hendrick and Lindsey Krisak and closed the game on a 13-2 run.

"I remember vividly when it hit me late in the game that we were going to pull off



Tommy Stepka and the Woodson boys' basketball team won the Northern Region championship in 2013.

CONNECTION FILE PHOTO



The Lake Braddock boys' basketball team won the Patriot District title in 2013.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

the win!" Edison head coach Dianne Lewis wrote in an email. "South Lakes was a very good team and I knew the game could go either way. And when it was apparent we were going to get the win, I was trying very hard not to smile until the buzzer went off. But, I was just so happy for the girls. No one expected it from them and that's why the win was most special."

Edison finished the season with a 24-5 record after falling to Colonial Forge in the state quarterfinals.

"Last year's team consisted of six players new to varsity basketball (five freshmen)," Lewis wrote. "Another three players played the previous year but were still trying to find their role on the team. Early in the season was a challenge; I would teach a new drill and we would have a question and answer period longer than the drill! But what I realized about them is that they wanted to

learn and they were not afraid to compete against the best! There are no drills to teach passion for the game, and that's what they had. It was very refreshing!"

Lake Braddock Boys' Basketball Wins Patriot District Title

In back-to-back February nights, the Lake Braddock boys' basketball team knocked top seed and eventual region champion Woodson out of the Patriot District tournament and defeated South County to win the district title.

Lake Braddock defeated South County 50-40 on Feb. 15, giving the Bruins their first district title since 2002. Lake Braddock trailed by two with 3:05 remaining in the

game, but closed the contest on a 15-3 run.

"(My) fondest memory of the moment would have to be the sheer joy on our guys' faces," Lake Braddock head coach Brian Metress wrote in an email. "Having been beaten badly by Woodson at Woodson earlier in the year and again on our own home court toward the end of the season, the upset of them in the semis, followed by then beating one of our arch rivals, South County, really made it special for the guys."

Lake Braddock's Will Gregorits scored 21 points in the district final and was named tournament MVP. A.J. Alexander finished with 16 points.

"The most important reason for our victory, I think, was that we had a gritty group of guys who every day at practice just came out and tried to get better," Metress wrote. "We were a much better team at the end of the year than we were at the beginning. At the beginning of the year we were a team finding it hard to win consistently, but by the end of the year we were a team which was tough to beat night in, night out."

Lake Braddock finished the season with an 18-8 record and reached the region quarterfinals.

South County Girls Win Indoor, Outdoor Track Titles

The South County girls' track team captured the school's first team state championship when it won the indoor title in the winter.

What did the Stallions do for an encore? Win the outdoor title.

South County won the girls' indoor track state championship with a score of 52 on Feb. 23 in Hampton. The Stallions won the outdoor title with a score of 50 on June 1 in Newport News.

"The most memorable moment was the fact that it was the school's first team state championship and to come back in the outdoor season and win the outdoor state championship is even better," South County head coach TD Holsclaw wrote in an email, "because to duplicate and keep the team focused for that period of time is an accomplishment. Our ladies had a mission and they accomplished it with a lot of pressure on them."

Felicia Majors led the way for South County, winning individual state championships in the pole vault and long jump during indoor, and the 400 during outdoor, along with placing high in several other events.

"I would say the most important reason we were able to win is that we had a very talented athlete in Felicia Majors and when she was tired or down because of another performance, the girls grouped around her for overall moral support to keep her focused," Holsclaw wrote. "We also had other athletes that stepped up in individual events and relays."

Fairfax Symphony Orchestra Promises 'Intense, Personal, Intimate Experience'

Concerts at GMU's Harris Theater to celebrate the 100th birthday of Benjamin Britten.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

Have you heard? The next performance of the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra (FSO) chamber series, will be in a special location; the Harris Theater at George Mason University. It will give audiences an intimate setting to encounter first-class classical music. As a unique treat, there will be an after-performance event bringing the music, the musicians and the audience even closer together.

According to FSO Music Director Christopher Zimmerman, the new venue for the Jan. 18-19 performances "will allow for an intense interaction" between audience and the FSO. He selected music that "reflects this in its emotional charge and content; that is, a concert which leans more towards the intense, personal and intimate experience."

Zimmerman wove together a musical concert to celebrate the 100th birthday of Benjamin Britten, one of the 20th Century icons of classical music with compositions by Edward Elgar and Dmitri Shostakovich. "It occurred



PHOTO BY BARRY WHEELER/COURTESY OF FAIRFAX SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Fairfax Symphony Orchestra Conductor Chris Zimmerman.

to me that the focus on him [Britten] could be deepened by pairing him" with other major modern composers.

The performance will include Britten's "Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings" with William Hite, Tenor, Shostakovich's "Chamber Symphony in C Minor," Britten's "Simple Symphony" and Elgar's "Serenade for Strings."

Describing the concert in visual imagery Zimmerman called

Britten's "Serenade" a "rich and multi-layered" poem. "The music is highly expressive and concentrated atmospheric: the sense of night, sleep, shadows, farewell and other nocturnal elements are omnipresent, as well as the opposite allusions to greetings and love."

The Britten "Simple Symphony" is a "hugely precocious and fun early work...Bright, sparkling, youthfully energetic with unam-

Where and When

Fairfax Symphony Orchestra performing at the Harris Theater, George Mason University, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Performances Saturday, Jan. 18, 2014 at 8 p.m., and Sunday, Jan. 19, 2014 at 2 p.m. Tickets: \$25-60. For information call 703-563-1990 or visit: www.fairfaxsymphony.org.

biguous emotions," said Zimmerman.

Zimmerman said the Shostakovich "Chamber Symphony" was "one of the most direct and simply-stated of all his works, capturing the horrors of Stalinist-Soviet repression and the composer's life within that, in all its sorrow and hopelessness." Elgar's "Serenade for Strings" was described as "strongly wistful."

The Harris Theatre, with its 460 seats, is noted for a "live" acoustical sound well suited to music events such as an FSO chamber performance.

When asked to sum up how music can affect a listener, Zimmerman said, "in both the sounds and what lies behind them, [music] heightens and enriches our perception of life." He added that musical entertainment can be like poetry, "there are no hard and fast rules. It's not cool or uncool, it's not fashionable or unfashionable." Just open yourself to it. Let it resonate inside you. Enjoy.

Benny is Back!

Arriving soon for your entertainment.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

Jack Benny was a classic comedian of stage, screen, radio and television. He spanned decades and generations. He is even considered a forerunner of what is now called situation comedy. Some suggest that the comic styles of Jerry Seinfeld and Kelsey Grammar ("Frasier") have Benny-like qualities.

Soon there will be a golden opportunity to see him again. Well, not "the" Jack Benny, but award-winning actor Tim Newell in a one-man performance of "Mister Benny" at the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia in a

production for all audiences, non-members and members alike.

"Mister Benny" is the life and times of Jack Benny dramatized by playwright Mark Humphrey. The play shows Benny at the peak of his career, preparing to go on for a television special in 1950. And then later in 1965, preparing his TV series finale. Along the way, the play highlights Benny's relationship with other comics and lets the audience in on how Benny developed some of his famous sketches and routines.

Benny was known for his comic timing, his supposed "stinginess,"



Tim Newell as Jack Benny in 'Mister Benny.'

Where and When

"Mister Benny" performed at the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. Performances: Friday, Jan. 10, 2014, 2 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 11, 8 p.m. and Sunday, Jan. 12, 2 p.m. Tickets: \$29, \$24 for JCCNV members and seniors (65+), \$19 students and groups (10+). Call JCCNV Box Office at 703-537-3000 or visit: www.jccnvarts.org

his recurring 39th birthday, and his off-key violin playing. He was especially known for his ability to create laughter with a silent pause accompanied by a silent look of complete exasperation. His facial expressions and hand to cheek were priceless.

Newell indicated that he is "always reviewing video clips, just to study his [Benny's] mannerisms." He is constantly seeking new Benny material to keep the show fresh. "I always manage to find new things whenever I'm playing Jack; discovering different ways to say something, or gesture a certain way."

For those who remember Benny, Newell promises that "they can expect to be taken back in time, for one. It's a wonderful journey."

He promises that "All in all, they can expect to have a really good time."

And for those who never heard of Jack Benny, Newell suggested that they will "have a good time" becoming familiar with a man who helped create what is now television sitcom.

"Jack's style was unique...his timing, his takes, his quiet ways." noted Newell. He was "the forefather of the sit-com: he was the central figure, surrounded by a brilliant supporting cast, and always the brunt of their jokes; hence the deadpan stare, or the hand to the cheek, or the exasperated, "Well! Classic!"

Get yourself ready, Jack Benny is in the house. Cue up "Love in Bloom."

CALENDAR

To have community events listed, send to south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416 with questions. The deadline for submissions is the Friday prior to publication; we recommend submitting your event two weeks ahead of time. To see more entertainment events, go to: <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2013/sep/26/fairfax-county-calendar/>.

TUESDAY/DEC. 31

The Ultimate 80s New Years Eve.

9 p.m. Empire, 6355 Rolling Road, Springfield. \$20.

The Ultimate New Year's Eve Experience.

7 p.m. - 1 a.m. Hyatt Fair Lakes Hotel, 12777 Fair Lakes Circle, Fairfax. Live entertainment, music, food, and more. Tickets: \$159 per person.

Cool Cow Comedy Presents: The New Years Eve Special.

7 p.m. & 9 p.m. Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Admission: \$35. With powerful stand up comedy and hilarious sketch comedy, Rahmien Mostafavi (DC Improv, Kennedy Center), Jon Mumma (DC Improv, Sirius XM), and Danny Rouhier (106.7 The Fan, DC Improv) will take you toward midnight with side splitting comedy. For tickets, visit: <http://www.workhousearts.org/events/performing-arts/cool-cow-comedy-presents-nye-special-show>.

FRIDAY/JAN. 3 & SATURDAY/JAN. 4

Cabaret Series: Welcome to the Speakeasy.

8 p.m. Workhouse Arts, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. A raucous ramble through the Jazz Age as talented performers tackle the tunes inspired by the gin-joint atmosphere.

SUNDAY/JAN. 5

Cabaret Series: Welcome to the Speakeasy.

1 p.m. Workhouse Arts, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. A raucous ramble through the Jazz Age as talented performers tackle the tunes inspired by the gin-joint atmosphere.

ONGOING

First Fridays at the Clifton Art Guild.

6-9 p.m. at Clifton Wine Shop, 7145 C Main St., Clifton. Enjoy a wine tasting and mix and mingle with the Art Guild of Clifton artists. 703-830-1480 or www.artguildofclifton.org/.

Saturday Farmers Market.

8 a.m.-1 p.m., at the parking lot at the intersection of West and Main Streets behind Wells Fargo Bank in Fairfax. Every Saturday there is fresh produce, goods and wares at the market. church@sovgracefairfax.org or www.FairfaxSaturdayMarket.com.

Sunday Farmers Market.

10 a.m.-2 p.m., at the parking lot at the intersection of West and Main Streets behind Wells Fargo Bank in Fairfax. Every Saturday there is fresh produce, goods and wares at the market. church@sovgracefairfax.org or www.FairfaxSundayMarket.com.

Fairfax Mosaic Wednesday Night Freshbikes Rides.

6:30 p.m., at Fairfax Mosaic Freshbikes, 2910 District Ave., Fairfax. Weekly bike rides leave from the Fairfax Mosaic store, the newest addition to the Freshbikes family of stores in the area. www.freshbikescycling.com.

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Wrapping children's gifts at the family shelter are (from left) Lake Braddock sophomore Liz Barr and Robinson sophomore Carolina Gonzalez, both of Girl Scout Troop 870 of Burke, plus Liz's mom, Evangeline Barr.

Having fun wrapping presents are (from left) Robinson sophomores Abby Toler and Emily Treanor of Girl Scout Troop 870 of Burke.

Wrapping up Joy for Christmas

Students, Scouts, police brighten holiday at Hanley Shelter.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

The children living in the Katherine Hanley Family Shelter may not have many possessions; but on Christmas Day, they had presents. The gifts were donated by a variety of groups, including the Fair Oaks District Police Station and Chantilly High's photography students.

And the evening of Dec. 19, the students kept the children busy with arts and crafts projects while, in another room, their parents picked out their Christmas presents from the donated items. The gifts were then wrapped by more students, plus some members of a Girl Scout troop from Burke.

"We like helping the community and this is a fun way to do it," said Chantilly sophomore Autumn Tury. "And since this is Christmastime and some kids' families can't afford presents, it's important that we do this."

PFC Wayne Twombly, the crime-prevention officer with the Fair Oaks District Station, has donated toys to the shelter before. But for the past two Christmases, he's teamed up with Chantilly's Photography Club for an even bigger impact.

"A lot of the kids know him from working the [Charger] football

games and doing driver's-license ceremonies at the [Fairfax County] courthouse," said photography teacher and club advisor Betty Simmons. "And when Photo Club decided to do a service project, Officer Twombly's name was given to me as a good point of contact to help us find a cause we could contribute to."

WHEN THE TWO SPOKE on the phone, Twombly suggested the Katherine Hanley shelter, which provides a temporary home for mothers with young children. He also offered his help coordinating their joint efforts.

"I loved the idea because I think it's important for students to see the police in a positive light and be able to work alongside them for the betterment of the community," said Simmons. "Last year [2012] we partnered for the first time, and Officer Twombly was a tremendous help in making this project a success."

And Twombly couldn't be happier about their participation. "She and her students get very excited about wanting to make it a special time for the children there," he said. "We're now making it an annual event."

Last Christmas, the shelter children each got two or three gifts; but this Christmas – because of the community's generosity – they each received five presents. "We've been collecting toys since November," said Simmons. "We got the photography classes involved, too."

On Dec. 19, the students helped the children color Christmas cards and make picture frames for their parents. They also took photos of

the children with Santa Claus (Twombly in costume) and handed out stockings full of snacks and toys.

Junior Darren Almodiel brought toys for both boys and girls. "I just wanted to give back," he explained. "It helps you realize how lucky you are."

"A lot of the students said they couldn't imagine being in a situation where Christmas was an impossibility," said Simmons. "So they really wanted to do something personal for these families."

ALSO LENDING A HAND wrapping gifts were Lake Braddock Secondary sophomore Liz Barr, plus Robinson Secondary sophomores Carolina Gonzalez, Abby Toler and Emily Treanor, all of Girl Scout Troop 870 of Burke.

And the shelter residents appreciated everything that was done for them. Alberta Fryar and Dathan Azariah picked out gifts for their children together and were overjoyed to be able to give them presents for Christmas.

"I think this program is awesome," said Fryar. "And considering the situation we're all in, it really lifts our spirits when they do something as nice as this."

Azariah was also pleased that an "ample amount" of gifts had been donated.

"It looked like a toy store in there, and it gave the kids a variety," he said. "I think it's great how people give back to the less fortunate, and I really appreciate what the volunteers did. Hard times don't last, but it's important to have a little something for the kids at Christmas. In this time of joy, that's what it's all about."



Braddock District Supervisor John Cook, left, thinks that education funding should be a top priority for Virginia legislators this session.

Supervisor Looks at Year Ahead Q&A with Supervisor John Cook (R-Braddock District).

Q: What headline would you like to see for Fairfax County in 2014?

A: "Economy takes off, raising commercial real estate values."

Q: What are some challenges and opportunities facing Fairfax County residents in 2014?

A: On the challenges, slow national economic growth and federal cutbacks slowed down local economic growth and have frozen commercial real estate values. We need economic activity, which will increase commercial property value and produce tax revenue. That commercial revenue is the only viable way to meet the increased needs of schools and other county services. On the positive side, as we begin to use funding from the state transportation plan passed in 2013 we will start to see meaningful new transportation initiatives that will reduce congestion. I am also looking forward to the beginning of implementation of my neighborhood speeding initiative.

Q: What do you think is the most important issue affecting your community and how will you address it?

A: We have several important issues. One, certainly transportation, which we will start to address with the new state funding. Two, school funding and infrastructure funding for which we need more commercial tax revenue, which requires economic growth. We need to diversify our local economy as much as possible and continue to make it attractive to business. I co-chair the Infrastructure Financing Committee which is looking for solutions. Three, on the neighborhood level, my speeding initiative will begin to address the number one neighborhood complaint I receive from citizens, which is speeding on neighborhood streets.

Q: What do you think should be top priority for Virginia state legislators this session?

A: Education funding.

— JANELLE GERMANOS

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