Safety at a Crossroads in Poor Communities

Less affluent neighborhoods in Northern Virginia suffer from higher pedestrian fatalities.

By Michael Lee Pope
The Gazette

Hamid Farooq doesn’t remember much about the day a speeding Honda almost took him out on Route 1 back in 2009. Farooq, who is unemployed, was walking home from the government office where he receives food stamps. Suddenly, he said, a speeding automobile came out of nowhere and the next thing he can remember is being interviewed by police. He now has a metal plate in his right leg, and he can no longer play soccer. But at least he’s not one of the nine pedestrians who were killed along the Route 1 corridor in the last five years.

“It’s not safe,” said Farooq while walking down a segment of Route 1 near Buckman Road that has no sidewalk. “It’s not safe at all.”

A national database of pedestrian crashes compiled by Governing Magazine shows 95 pedestrian fatalities in Northern Virginia between 2008 and 2012. While 26 of the pedestrian fatalities occurred in wealthy neighborhoods, where the per capita income is more than $53,000, a much larger number happened in poor communities like this stretch of Route 1 in Mount Vernon. The database shows 48 pedestrian fatalities in poor neighborhoods in Northern Virginia. Census tracts where the per capita income is less than $40,000.

“If you were to look where these dots are on a map and drive through them, you’ll see that sidewalks and street lighting and raised medians will not be as common as they are in other neighborhoods,” said Mike Maciag, editor for Governing Magazine. “Poorer neighborhoods don’t have as much clout as an affluent area.”

NORTHERN VIRGINIA statistics showed a similar trend as the national database. Across America, pedestrians are killed at disproportionately higher rates in poorer neighborhoods. The database includes 22,000 pedestrian fatalities from 2008 to 2012, nationwide. Low-income census tracts in metropolitan areas showed fatality rates about twice that of more affluent neighborhoods. Poorer neighborhoods have a rate of 12.1 deaths per 100,000 people.

“Years ago, it would have been which community didn’t have paved roads,” said Jon Liss, executive director of Tenants and Workers United. “Fortunately now we’ve all got paved roads, but sidewalks are still lagging far behind.”

Nowhere are the pedestrian fatalities more pronounced in Northern Virginia than the cluster of poor neighborhoods along the Route 1 corridor, a traffic-clogged stretch from the Capital Beltway to Fort Belvoir. The area logged nine pedestrian fatalities in the last five years. Five of the victims were white and four were black, and their ages ranged from 11 to 87. The one thing they all had in common is that they live in a poor neighborhood, where sidewalks are limited and incomplete.

By Victoria Ross
The Gazette

It wasn’t that long ago when youth football coaches believed a player’s toughness was measured by his ability to play through the pain. Concussions and other serious injuries were just part of the game.

“When I was playing football for W.T. Woodson in the late 1960s, you had two practices a day in the heat and humidity of August. There were no water breaks except before and after practice,” said state Sen. Dave Marsden (D-37). “Coaches thought drinking water would make you sick.”

Marsden, a wide receiver for Woodson, said injuries were minimized.

“When someone had disorienting head trauma, we’d say ‘you got your bell rung,’ or ‘he was shaken up by the play.’ Coaches clearly expected you to go right back in the game.”

During football’s heyday, players and coaches alike looked up to legends like Paul “Bear” Bryant who left a legacy of 37 winning seasons and five Associated Press national championships at Alabama.

Bryant was also known as a strict disciplinarian: His first training camp as Texas A&M coach did much to write his legacy as a “tough” coach when Bryant took his “Junction Boys” to a small Texas town and ran a boot camp in which more than two-thirds of his players quit. As a player at Alabama, Bryant demonstrated his own toughness by playing against Tennessee with a broken leg.

“There was this thing that coaches had all been taught, that it took that kind of toughness to win. … Marsden said. “It was ridiculous, and we know better now.”

TWO YEARS AGO, as concussions were getting more attention in the NFL, USA Football — the national governing body for the sport and its youth outreach arm — created a program to teach safe tackling to youngsters called “Heads Up.” Heads Up Football is based on a style of tackling that puts emphasis on striking a blow with the shoulders instead of the head.

At the same time, Marsden received a call from his son Connor, who had played football at the University of Richmond. “He asked me to watch a Bryant Gumbel special regarding head injuries in football and said, ‘Dad you have to do something,’ he told me.”

Marsden thought about legislation, but realized there was a more efficient way to get the program off the ground: In 2013 he introduced a bill in the Virginia Senate to reduce the amount of full-contact practice allowed in high school football programs in Virginia.

Then he asked that his own legislation be tabled.

Marsden knew the chances of his legislation moving forward during a session that involved a contentious gubernatorial race — and the imminent implosion of popular Republican Gov. Bob McDonnell, who was making national headlines as the target of an FBI probe — were slim to none.

So he introduced his bill, then...
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Mount Vernon Gazette ❖ August 14-20, 2014 www.ConnectionNewspapers.com
Safety at a Crossroads in Poor Communities

From Page 1

INTERSECTIONS DON'T HAVE CROSSWALKS.

"Fairfax County has not done a good enough job on pedestrian safety in the Route 1 corridor," said former Alexandria Mayor Kerry Donley, a former member of the Alexandria Transportation Commission. "I think they've made some improvements in recent years, but even they would admit that there's a lack of infrastructure."

NOT ALL OF THE FATALITIES HAPPENED IN POOR NEIGHBORHOODS. In Arlington County, for example, most of the traffic fatalities happened in wealthy neighborhoods. But very few Census tracts in Arlington have people who earn less than $40,000 a year. So only five of the 14 pedestrian fatalities happened in poor neighborhoods. By contrast, Prince William logged 25 pedestrian fatalities from 2008 to 2012. The vast majority of those, 23 deaths, happened in poor neighborhoods.

"Ironically, people who are the most dependent on walking are the ones most likely to have poor pedestrian paths or no sidewalks," said Liss. "But folks who actually have cars have great sidewalks and pedestrian paths."

Government leaders say they are working to make every intersection safe, although limited funding is available for transportation projects. The Fairfax County Department of Transportation currently has 77 pedestrian projects underway, either in design land acquisition or construction. This fall, Fairfax voters will consider a $78 million bond referendum for pedestrian safety and sidewalk improvements all over the county. Several of the projects are on Route 1.

"We've got a lot of work that we are doing out there to try to make it more pedestrian-friendly," said Todd Minnix, chief of Transportation Design Division. "We have three intersections where we are getting ready to go to construction with new signals and crosswalks and a fourth one where we need to get land rights, so that one is running a little behind."

FOR PEDESTRIANS willing to risk life and limb, getting across the street quickly often takes precedence over getting across the street safely. Take the intersection of Ladson Lane and Route 1, for example. Back in 2011, a 49-year-old white man was killed here. One recent afternoon, Kori Ford ducked and weaved her way through delivery trucks and speeding sedans to get to a 7-Eleven. Although a crosswalk was only a few feet away, she says she never uses the crosswalk because it would take her out of a direct path to the store.

"I'm not going to go out of my way to go through the crosswalk. I'm going to cross," she said, adding that she was not concerned about the pedestrian fatalities along the road. "People die."

Others take a less fatalistic approach. Less than a mile away, three more pedestrian fatalities have taken place in the last five years. The stretch from Ladson Lane to Janna Lee Avenue is the most dangerous spot in the county, and a visit to the area shows why. Most of that stretch does not have any sidewalk at all, although a well-worn path along the side of the road shows how popular it is for pedestrians. And the intersection of Bukman Road and Route 1 lacks crosswalks or pedestrian signals.

"If they were really worried about people's safety, they would have done something already," said Luis Callejas, whose parents own Lucas Tacos. "Obviously they're not."

FIRST RESPONDERS often arrive at the scene of pedestrian fatalities to find gruesome scenes of mangled flesh and steel. Statistics show one of the most dangerous spots in the region is the section of Leesburg Pike that stretches through Tysons Corner. Recent deaths here include a 27-year-old white man and a 56-year-old white man, although the Fairfax County Police Department has long targeted this stretch as a problem area for pedestrians eager to bob and weave their way through traffic.

"Alcohol is often involved," said Don Gutthardt, spokesman for the Fairfax County Police Department. "They will be somewhere drinking and decide they want to go somewhere else, so they'll think the road is safe or stumble into the road and get hit."

Making the Most of Summer

This summer a group of 50 youth, parents, and mentors from UCM’s Sacramento Neighborhood Center went to Washington D.C. to visit the Bureau of Engraving and Printing for a guided tour where they learned about how money is made. This summer they have also gone to the Great Waves Water Park in Alexandria and the Postal Museum in D.C. These trips are sponsored by the Mount Vernon Kiwanis Club. The club has sponsored field trips through donations for the last five summers at UCM’s Sacramento Neighborhood Center and Creekside Community Center. These excursions provide an opportunity for youths to learn during the summer months and also encourage youth to read every day, learn new computer skills, and improve their leadership and social skills in their local UCM youth summer programs.
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Take Precautions against Rabies

Animal Shelter offers advice to reduce the risk.

Rabies is a deadly virus that infects animals and may be a risk to humans, as well. The most commonly reported rabid animals in Fairfax County include foxes, raccoons, skunks, and bats. But even pets aren’t automatically immune to this disease and must be vaccinated against it.

A Springfield woman was vaccinated against rabies after being bitten by a cat in her care. The cat was euthanized and tested for rabies as a precaution following the bite, and the rabbit test came back positive. Health department officials evaluated the woman for rabies exposure and recommended that she receive rabies vaccine to prevent rabies.

On July 30, the infected cat’s 10 kittens were signed over to animal control officers, prior to any signs that the cat was ill. Seven of these kittens were adopted from the Fairfax County Animal Shelter between July 31 and Aug. 6. The remaining three cats were not adopted and were removed from the shelter as soon as the mother cat tested positive for rabies. None of the kittens have exhibited any signs of illness.

The adopters of the seven kittens who were potentially exposed to rabies are being contacted and advised of precautionary measures. The infected cat, a grey, female tabby, lived on Laurel Oak Court in the Saratoga neighborhood of the Mount Vernon District. While there is minimal public health or safety threat, anyone concerned that they or someone they know may have been bitten or scratched by this cat should contact animal control at 703-691-2131. The Animal Shelter reminds residents to make sure their dogs and cats, as well as outdoor cats in their care, have up-to-date rabies vaccinations.

To read more about protecting pets against the rabies virus or to find out about Fairfax County’s reduced-cost rabies clinics, visit: http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/Police/animal/rabies.htm.

Reduce Rabies Exposure Risk

- Vaccinate your pets against rabies and keep inoculations current.
- State law and county ordinance require dogs and cats four months of age and older to be inoculated.
- Vaccine must be administered every one to three years, depending on the type used and the age of the animal.
- The Animal Services Division holds low-cost rabies clinics for dogs and cats throughout the year. For more information on this, call the Animal Shelter at 703-830-1100.
- Warn children to keep away from wild animals and encourage them to report any physical contact with animals.
- Minimize contact between pets and wildlife, especially at night. Walk pets on a leash. Feed cats and dogs inside.
- Eliminate possible sources of food for wildlife from your yard and keep trash can lids tightly closed.
- Do not keep wild animals as pets. Even baby skunks and raccoons can carry the rabies virus.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Rabies?
Rabies is a deadly virus that attacks the spinal cord and nervous system.

See Warning, Page 21

For more information: www.RexReiley.com

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Mount Vernon Gazette • August 14-20, 2014 • 5
Heads Up Football Flourishing in Fairfax County

FROM PAGE 1

asked that it be tabled in favor of a letter to the Virginia High School League (VHSL) by the Education and Health Committee chairman asking that the matter be studied.

“A letter signed by the members of the Virginia Senate worked just as well,” Marsden said, smiling.

A task force was established and — after a year of meetings — significant reductions in full contact were written into regulations governing high school football in Virginia. VHSL Executive Director Ken Tilley presented the task force’s action to the Senate at the 2014 session. Their actions also made “Heads Up Football” the standard of instruction.

Last year, Fairfax County became the first high school district in the country to adopt Heads Up Football.

Craig Richardson, the vice chair of Communications for the Fairfax County Youth Football League (FCYFL) and former president and commissioner of McLean Youth Football, said Heads Up football has become a key component of all Fairfax County clubs. FCYFL is the umbrella organization comprising the 22 clubs that serve Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William and the City of Alexandria. Last season, FCYFL fielded more than 300 teams, with 1,200 coaches and more than 6,000 players. When USA Football created Heads Up in 2012, it hoped to reach a few hundred of the nearly 11,000 leagues in the U.S.

IN ONE YEAR, Heads Up Football was adopted by nearly 2,800 groups.

The NFL noticed.

This year, the NFL provided USA Football with a five-year, $45 million grant. And USA Football is in the process of hiring more master trainers, expecting to add between 50 and 70 to the first-year roster of about 30.

Heads Up football simplifies many safety techniques into six key components:

❖ education and certification
❖ equipment fitting
❖ concussion education and response
❖ heat and hydration
❖ the establishment of a player safety coach
❖ and tackling with the head up — and out of contact.

“The FCYFL has been on the forefront of making football the safest it can be for years,” Richardson said.

“For example, our age/weight matrix is the model that football programs across the county now follow. Every year, we weigh in every single one of the 6,000 or so players in our league, and they are placed within a particularly weight-class depending on their age and weight. The younger a player is in the weight-class, the more they can weigh,” Richardson said.

Richardson also noted that — because there are three skill levels within each weight-class — players are matched up appropriately.

“Finally, we require all coaches to be USA Football certified, which requires completion of an extensive online training course including a module on concussions and other safety issues, and they must complete a background check by a professional screening company,” he said.

Richardson said there was some initial hesitation from coaches, particularly those who had been around for a while.

“They had their own way of doing things, and they were a bit resistant to making changes to their approach to teaching. Once they saw the Heads-up football program, how it works, its safety benefits, and the ease in understanding it from the players perspective, all were converted and are now outspoken advocates for the program,” Richardson said.

“Parents are obviously concerned given the extensive negative publicity primarily at the NFL level, and are excited that at the youth level we were proactively addressing the issue,” he added. “The Heads-up program also requires significant parent involvement, so they are included in the training process and are an integral component of its success.”

As more than 6,000 local youth began football camps in every area of the county last week, Richardson said the FCYFL reminded coaches and parents that Fairfax County is a Heads Up organization.

“We take player safety seriously. Our number one rule stipulates that there’s no physical contact for any player during the first three days of practice, and that each player must have at least three practice periods of conditioning and training before engaging in any contact drills or scrimmages.”

Vienna Youth football commissioner Todd Casey ran a “Football Moms” camp last week at Oakton High School specifically to give parents the opportunity to experience and understand what their sons encounter during football practice.

The camp was organized by VYI Football Moms, and nearly 50 Oakton and Vienna moms attended the Friday evening camp.

Tami Chadwick’s 15-year-old son plays VYI football and whose daughter is an OHS cheerleader, said she is more concerned about the possibility of injuries in other sports.

“We have a great organization with involved coaches and parents,” Chadwick said. “It’s clear from day one that coaches are concerned with safety. For example, there is no way they let your son play with a helmet that does not fit properly.”

“We coach with safety in mind,” Casey said. “Fairfax County youth football is an incredible community that has a ridiculously large impact on the lives of those who play. Case said Heads Up has not detracted from staying competitive and continuing to compete in playoffs.

Greg Dunlap, a 15-year-old player from Lake Braddock, said the changes have made playing football “smarter and safer.”

“You understand what you’re doing. It’s not just blindly running and hitting the guy with the football,” Dunlap said.

According to the National Federation of State High School Associations, participation in high school football was down 2.3 percent in the 2012-13 season compared to the 2008-09 season.

Some of that drop-off is attributed to parents’ concerns about safety in football. Former NFL running back Merril Hoge, now a member of USA Football’s board of directors, said Heads Up Football is having a positive impact on the game and addressing parents’ concerns.

“It is very exciting to see the game ‘smarter and safer.’ The ultimate objective is to educate everyone who needs to know more about the trauma in sport, and when it happens, that the right action takes place,” Hoge says.

TO FAIRFAX COUNTY COACHES like Richardson and Casey, Heads Up Football benefits all coaches, whether they are working with pee wees starting out in football, or high schoolers with college scholarships in sight.

Marsden added that Heads Up shifts the emphasis from treatment to prevention.

“In the past so much of the focus has been on treating a player after a big hit. This is the first time we saw there was something we could do on the front end that makes the game safer,” Marsden said.

“At the end of the day, prevention is always the best place to end up, whether it’s medicine, crime or sports. Prevention is always better than the cure,” Marsden said.

Marsden sees the connection to high school football as essential.

“The high school coach is critical to this program, not only continuing to succeed, but grow,” Marsden said. “The high school coach in the area is the guy who supports the youth programs, the guy who is locked up to on every level, the guy the kids want to play for some day. The more high schools applied to the program, it will legitimize the program even more. They prepare their kids for high school. If this is part of the high school curriculum, we will see more youth coaches embrace it.”

Supervisors Honor Those Promoting Heads Up Football

Last January, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors honored a group of local coaches and residents for their role in promoting Heads Up Football, a program to reduce the number of concussions among players, in Fairfax County Public Schools.

The board recognized Bill Curran, Fairfax County Public Schools; Mark Meanna, USA football board member; Dick Adams, former Annandale High School coach; Mike Lalli, Champlin High School coach; Chris Haddock, Centreville High School coach; and State Sen. Dave Marsden.

Local coaches were also previously among just three districts in the country to adopt a pilot program. The program aims to improve tackling techniques, and by extension, reduce the number of concussions — a topic of increasing concern among parents and on the professional level, in the NFL.

“All the polls show that NFL football is the most popular sport in our country today... But there’s a bit of a contradiction, as the pro game is so popular there is a growing number of parents who are concerned and won’t let their children participate in youth sports or youth football. The concern is long-term impact of head injuries and concussion impacts. So this is just a huge step forward to give parents that one extra level of security,” said Supervisor Michael Frye (R-Sully District).

Added Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield). “Every little thing that we do, if we can prevent serious injuries, it’s important to our students and our communities.”

Tami Chadwick, whose son plays VYI football, said the program even more. They prepare their kids for high school. If this is part of the high school curriculum, we will see more youth coaches embrace it.”
ALEXANDRIA $3,395,000
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Spectacular custom built residence with approximately 10,000 square feet of living space. Overlooking the Potomac River, this home features exquisite details throughout, including elegant formal spaces, relaxing informal spaces, gourmet kitchen, and 5 luxurious bedroom suites.
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ALEXANDRIA $2,475,000
407 Prince Street
Classic historic brick townhome, built in 1870, features an elegant gracious living room, separate formal dining room, spacious eat-in kitchen with center island cooktop and inside grill, high ceilings and hardwood floors throughout. Beautifully landscaped side garden with porch, patio and 2 off-street parking spaces. Great home for entertaining.
CINDY GOLUBIN +1 202 437 3861
COURTNEY GOLUBIN +1 703 989 1873

COLLEGE PARK $1,125,000
1809 Trinity Drive
Vacation at home in this 5BR, 4BA renovated colonial. Features pool, flagstone patio, outdoor Lyon grill station, high ceilings, updated kitchen, breakfast bar, study, three fireplaces and a large open floor plan.
PHYLLIS PATTERSON +1 703 310 6201
BRITT PATTERSON +1 703 310 6201

MOUNT VERNON TERRACE $975,000
5222 Burke Drive
Located in an exclusive Mount Vernon waterfront community, this 5,000 square foot colonial features 5 BRs, 3.5 BA, a 2-car garage, water views and community access to the Potomac River.
PHYLLIS PATTERSON +1 703 310 6201
BRITT PATTERSON +1 703 310 6201

ALEXANDRIA $959,500
3403 Old Dominion Boulevard
Located in the sought-after Beverly Hills section of Alexandria, this gorgeous brick colonial has 4BRs, 3.5BA, with an open floor plan, hardwood floors, new carpeting, freshly painted, renovated master bath and a cook’s kitchen.
JOHN ERIC +1 703 798 0097

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The Athenaeum

The Northern Virginia Fine Arts Association is dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in all forms of art, and to establishing programs that will enrich the cultural life of Northern Virginia and the surrounding metropolitan area. As the primary site for these activities, the NVFAA owns and maintains the historic building called the Athenaeum.

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Homelessness: Source of Trauma for Children

Nearly 700 children live in emergency homeless shelters in Fairfax County at some point during the year.

By Dean Klein

S
ummer vacation is wrapping up; kids everywhere are gearing up for the return to school. Stores are filled with school supplies; back-to-school advertising fills our TVs, radio and mailboxes. Many families are hustling from store to store getting supplies, backpacks, clothes and haircuts. As children, while we hated to see summer end, we fondly remember the yearly ritual and the excitement and anticipation of getting all those new things.

Unfortunately, not all families and children in Fairfax County experience the new school year this way. It may be hard to imagine that in a county as wealthy as Fairfax there are hundreds of children that do not have a home to call their own. In 2013, almost 700 children resided in emergency homeless shelters at some point during the year. This uncertain existence is a constant source of trauma for children.

While Fairfax County does have strong programs and initiatives provided by its local government, its public school system and community non-profits to support these children, they are not enough. Permanent housing is a critical and basic need of everyone and research has consistently shown that unless children’s most basic needs are met in a safe and consistent manner, their social, emotional, physical and cognitive development is often delayed.

Believe it or not, in a county where the median household income is in excess of $100,000, housing costs are prohibitive for many. There is often a misconception about homeless families and it is not uncommon to hear, “they need to work like the rest of us.”

The truth is they do. The vast majority of families in homeless shelters are employed and they are doing everything they can to move themselves to self-sufficiency and support their families. The problem is not with their motivation to support themselves. The challenge is that there is not housing available to them that they can afford.

While the median household income may be in the six figures, for many, it is much lower. Using the accepted formula of spending one third of gross income on housing, a rent of $1,200/month requires an annual income of $44,000. That equates to about $21 an hour. People who work in the service industry and the stores and businesses we rely on each and every day earn much less than that.

The vast majority of families in homeless shelters are employed. The challenge is that there is not housing available to them that they can afford.

As stated in the Ten Year Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness adopted by our community in 2008, we need to have affordable housing that is accessible to all its hardworking members. While it is also imperative that we as a community continue to ensure that children have school supply access, good nutrition at school, clothing etc., without a home to call their own, they will continue to live in a perpetual state of fear and stress. If we genuinely want them to succeed, that is too heavy a load for the youngest and most vulnerable in our community.

If you would like to be a part of helping these families, please contact one of our non-profit partners working so hard to find and provide housing for them or the Fairfax County Public Schools Homeless Liaison Office working diligently to make sure these children receive the services they are entitled to and need. Visit http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless/partnerupdate/community-partners.htm and http://www.fcps.edu/dss/ips/homeslessinfo/HomelessBrochure.pdf for more.

Dean Klein is director of the Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness.

Dean Klein

Lives Disrupted by Virginia Anti-gay Laws

When Julie and I decided to build our family through adoption in 2007, we knew we would need to complete a homestudy first. We called two local adoption agencies to find out how to get this process started. Upon finding out that we lived in Virginia, social workers at both agencies responded with, “Move to D.C. or Maryland!”

While complicated, either one of us could have legally adopted a child in Virginia as a single person, but we had been a couple for nearly ten years at that point. In short, we could not even have our request for a family granted to us then because we were a same-sex couple living together in Virginia. Even if we did find a way to “untangle” our lives as a couple and go forward with a single-parent adoption, the other would not have had any parental/legal rights to that child, as Virginia does not allow second-parent adoption.

To second-parent adopt in Virginia, you must be legally married. And, of course, Virginia does not recognize same-sex marriage.

Private adoption can be a difficult process for most people, but there just seemed to be more than our fair share of hoops to jump through! So we moved to Washington, D.C. Moving 12 miles might not sound like a big deal, but we had owned a house in Northern Virginia since 2000. It was the place we called home. Our house was convenient to our jobs, my family, our friends, our favorite dog parks, etc. To afford this move out of state, we had to rent out our Virginia home for the next seven years.

By Jennifer Shearin

And Julie Naff

Jennifer Shearin, left, and Julie Naff with their children.
Unequal in Virginia

From Page 8

eral years, become landlords, manage the property, commute longer distances to work, pay higher taxes on our income, etc. The only reason for the move: the District of Columbia would allow us to legally adopt children together.

Jumping through these hurdles paid off when our dream to become parents was realized in 2009, when our son, Daniel, was born.

And again in 2011 with the birth of our son Liam. We have open-adoptions with their birth families in California. Our children’s birthparents chose us to adopt and parent our boys, yet Virginia laws stood in the way... Virginia’s laws stood in the way of a private, consensual decision made between adults.

After finalizing Liam’s adoption in 2011, we moved back to Virginia as a legally married couple (thank you, D.C.) and as a family of four, to the home and the community that we loved and missed. Having finalized our sons’ adoptions in California (where they were both born, and where we could petition the courts as out-of-state residents), both Julie’s and my name appear on their birth certificates as the legal parents of our children. This could have never happened in Virginia as the laws stand on second-parent adoption.

Virginia’s anti-gay laws disrupted our lives for several years, not to mention the cost of our adoption process skyrocketed with a move out-of-state.

I was born and raised in Virginia. I am a product of Virginia public schools. I am a proud public school teacher in Virginia. Julie and I want our children to grow up in a diverse environment with access to quality public schools. We are law-abiding citizens who pay taxes like any other resident/property owner in the state of Virginia. Shouldn’t we have the same rights as other Virginians?

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The Saturday Market

Oliver Keckler gets up early from his bed on Saturday mornings in Gardeners, Pa., 15 miles from Gettysburg. With the help of friends and neighbors he loads his farm truck and drives to the parking lot of St. Luke’s Episcopal Church on Fort Hunt Road. Oliver, 19, is learning how to manage the family farm. This year the spring was late, tomatoes will be ripening and peak next week along with watermelons.

The market is located in the St. Luke’s parking lot at the corner of Wellington and Fort Hunt roads. It is open by 8 a.m. and closes a bit after noon. Oliver’s sisters bake up pies and set up jams and jellies while he works on the farm produce.

— Louise Krafft

Over five varieties of plums are currently available, more to come.

Heirloom tomatoes cover a table at the Saturday market.

Kale is added to the counter.

Chard and young carrots are among the many truly farm fresh vegetables available at the market.
The following incidents were reported by the Mount Vernon District Police Station.

BURGLARY, 1000 block of Neal Drive, Aug. 9. A resident reported someone entered the residence and took property.

ROBBERY, 5800 block of Blaine Drive, Aug. 6, 8:57 p.m. The victim was standing when the suspect pushed the man and took his wallet. The victim did not require rescue.

PEEPING, 8200 block of Claremont Woods Drive, Aug. 6, 8:58 p.m. A resident looked out the window and saw a man looking into the room. The suspect fled prior to police arrival.

LARCENIES
- 2800 block of East Side Drive, license plate from vehicle
- 8300 block of Richmond Highway, cell phone from business
- 2700 block of Schooly Drive, purse from business
- 7900 block of Central Park Circle, lamp from residence
- 6500 block of Quander Road, cell phone from school
- 67000 block of Richmond Highway, merchandise from business
- 5900 block of Angel East Drive, equipment from vehicle

STOLEN VEHICLES
- 5300 block of Tennesse Terrace, Jeep Wrangler
- 2700 block of Arlington Drive, Ford Explorer

The Groveton High School class of 1964 is looking for contact information for as many classmates as possible. The planning for the 50th reunion is underway, however only a small number of people have been contacted. If a Groveton graduate of '64 and interested in attending near September’s reunion email contact information to GHS64@verizon.net.

TUESDAY/AUG. 19
Top Sales in June 2014

In June 2014, 152 homes sold between $2,050,000-$107,000 in the Mount Vernon area.

1. 6215 Berkeley Road — $2,050,000
2. 6125 Edgewood Terrace — $1,000,000
3. 8810 Fircrest Place — $951,000
4. 7305 Burtonwood Drive — $875,000
5. 7629 Essex Manor Place — $1,075,700

Address ........................................ BR FB HB ...... Postal City .... Sold Price .... Type ...... Lot AC . Postal Code ...... Subdivision ......... Date Sold

1. 6215 BERKELEY ROAD ............ 6 .. 6 . 1 ..... ALEXANDRIA .. $2,050,000.... Detached..... 0.23 ........ 22307 ......... BELLE HAVEN ...... 06/30/14
2. 7608 SOUTHDOWN RD ............ 3 . 4 . 1 ..... ALEXANDRIA .. $1,675,000.... Detached..... 0.42 ........ 22308 ARCTURUS ON THE POTOMAC 06/30/14
3. 2504 SHERWOOD HALL LN .... 5 . 4 . 2 ..... ALEXANDRIA .. $1,455,000.... Detached..... 0.77 ........ 22306 ...... HYBIA VALLEY FARMS .... 06/20/14
4. 3201 WOODLAND LN ............. 5 . 5 . 2 ..... ALEXANDRIA .. $1,325,000.... Detached..... 0.43 ........ 22309 ...... WOODLAND PARK ...... 06/23/14
5. 7629 ESSEX MANOR PL ............ 4 . 3 . 1 ..... ALEXANDRIA .. $1,075,700.... Detached..... 0.35 ........ 22308 ......... FENWICK ESTATES .... 06/23/14
6. 6125 EDGEOED TERR ............. 3 . 3 . 1 ..... ALEXANDRIA .. $1,000,000.... Detached..... 0.19 ........ 22307 .......... BELLE HAVEN ...... 06/25/14
7. 8810 FIRCREST PL ............... 5 . 4 . 1 ..... ALEXANDRIA .. $951,000.... Detached..... 0.25 ........ 22308 ........ WAYNEWOOD .... 06/12/14
8. 7305 BURTONWOOD DR ........ 4 . 3 . 0 ..... ALEXANDRIA .. $875,000.... Detached..... 0.39 ........ 22307 .......... VILLAMAY ...... 06/30/14

Copyright 2014 RealEstate Business Intelligence. Source: MRIS as of July 15, 2014.
When summer comes to a grinding halt in a few weeks, a new school year will begin. From alarm clocks and school bells to piles of homework assignments and sports schedules, maintaining a coordinated household can be difficult, however. Local organizers are offering simple suggestions to help make the transition from summer to the start of the school year seamless.

“If you’ve had a lazy summer and your home is an organizational mess, take a day off from work or at least set aside several hours to spend whipping it back into shape before the first day of school,” said Faye English, an organizer from Fairfax. “The school year will be much easier if you get organized from the beginning.”

Set aside time for tackling such projects as cleaning out bedroom and coat closets and mudrooms. “Take all of the clothes, jackets, shoes and sports equipment that your kids have outgrown and give them away,” said English. “Once you’ve discarded everything you no longer need, start setting up new storage systems and make sure everything has a place.” One of the most noticeable changes that many families experience after returning to school is an increase in the paper that accumulates at home. “You have to plan the increase in paper work,” said Alexandria-based organizer Laura Dando. “Give each child a file folder or a bulletin board where they can keep their important papers, permission slips and homework assignments. To control clutter, clean it out once a week.”

Create a space to store or display artwork. “Children enjoy seeing their artwork hanging at home,” said Dando. “At the end of the school year you can store some of the artwork in a keepsake box.”

SET ASIDE A SPACE where children will do homework and make sure each child has a bin with the supplies he or she will need for completing their assignments, said Arlington-based organizer Michelle Stanbury. “The homework space should be quiet, free of distractions and have good lighting,” she said. Keep a large family calendar that includes each child’s events. “It can even be a dry erase board,” said Stanbury. “But it should include sports schedules, club meetings, field trip dates and other events. Use a different color marker for each child. This way everyone in the family knows everyone else’s schedule.” Encourage children to begin choosing their outfits for school before going to bed at night. “This will save a lot of time and fights when children are getting ready for school in the morning,” said Dando. “With younger children, it also helps if, when you’re school shopping, you buy clothes that all coordinate together and match. This is especially useful for children who like to pick out their own outfits for school.” Designate a place in your home where children hang up and store their coats and backpacks. “As parents, sometimes it feels easier to hang up our children’s clothes for them,” said English. “But if kids are trained to hang up their coats, back packs and lunchboxes as soon as they come in the door from school, it will be less stressful for everyone.”

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T he Vola Lawon Animal Shelter joined forces with the Del Ray Artisans Aug. 8 to celebrate the opening of “All Creatures Great and Small,” the first animal art exhibit to be held at the AWLA facility on Eisenhower Ave.

“It’s exciting that this first exhibit is with the Del Ray Artisans,” said AWLA Board Chair Charlotte Lotté Hall. “These are two bright, shining stars in our community.”

Nearly 60 pieces of original art were created by Del Ray Artisans members and are on display at the shelter through Oct. 26.

“We are excited to have this art exhibit at the shelter,” said AWLA Executive Director Megan Webb. “The idea is to encourage people who haven’t been to the shelter to stop by and to also show off the artwork of these talented artists who love animals.”

The art on display is for sale and a portion of the proceeds will be donated to the shelter.

“Several pieces have already been sold with 20 percent of sales being contributed to the shelter,” Webb explained. “Another 20 percent goes to Del Ray Artisans as well, so it’s a win-win for everyone.”

More than 100 people turned out for the opening night reception, many of whom took tours being offered by Animal Control Officer Joe Selsky.

“This was a great cooperative effort with the city,” Selsky said. “General Services arranged to hang the art rails similar to what is on display at City Hall. And Sheriff Dana Lawhorne and the sheriff’s office provided inmate labor for the painting. I can’t thank enough everyone – they all did a great job.”

Among those touring the shelter facility were Rick and Ann Dorman of Alexandria.

“Ann is passionate about animals,” Ann Dorman said. “I had no idea how much is done here. This is a great way to get people in here to understand what the shelter is all about.”

Reception donors included King Street Blues, Tres Hermanas Restaurante, Chadwick’s, Laverden Moon Cupkaylker and Unwined.

“We encourage people to stop by to see the art during our regular adoption hours,” Webb said. “But you don’t have to adopt a pet. Just come and enjoy and perhaps purchase the artwork. It’s a way to contribute even if you can’t adopt. This is a win-win for everyone.”

The exhibit “All Creatures Great and Small” will be on display at the Vola Lawon Animal Shelter, 4101 Eisenhower Ave., through Oct. 26 during normal adoption hours. Admission is free and interest in adopting a pet is not required. Call 703-838-4774 or visit www.AlexandriaAnimals.org for more.


AWLA executive director Megan Webb, right, and board chair Charlotte Lotté Hall enjoy the opening night art reception at the Vola Lawon Animal Shelter.


All Creatures Great and Small
BY JEANNE THEISMAN
THE GAZETTE

At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St.
Friday, Sept. 28
AUG. 5 THROUGH SEPT. 7
Crayons, charcoal, watercolors, oil and acrylics will be on display in采用多种画种

AWLA hosts Del Ray Artisans animal art exhibit.
Call for Participants.
MONDAY/AUG. 18
Civil War Sunday.

Biodiversity Discover Club. 9-11
SATURDAYS/AUG. 16 AND 23
7:30 p.m. at The Angaleena Presley.

SATURDAY/AUG. 16
Java Jolt: Alexandria and the War
7:30 p.m. Mount Vernon Hall at the Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Free. Call 703-746-4399 for more.

SATURDAY/AUG. 16
Angelaene Presley. 7:30 p.m. at The Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. $35. Visit www. birchmere.com.

SATURDAYS/AUG. 16 AND 23
Biodiversity Discover Club. 9-11 a.m. at Burke Branch Library, 8531 Riverside Drive. Cost: Free. 8:30-9:30 a.m.; free after 9:30 a.m.

SUNDAY/AUG. 17
Civil War Sunday. 1-5 p.m.

SUNDAY/AUG. 17
Biodiversity Discover Club. 9-11 a.m. at Burke Branch Library, 8531 Riverside Drive. Cost: Free. 8:30-9:30 a.m.; free after 9:30 a.m.

THURSDAY/AUG. 28

WEDNESDAY/AUG. 27
Live Music. 7:30 p.m. in the Music Hall at the Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Larry Graham and Graham Central Station. $47. Call 703-836-4414 or visit www.larrygraham.com for more.

FRIDAY/AUG. 29

SATURDAY/AUG. 30
5K and 1M family Fun Run. 8 a.m.
Run, Fun. 8:30 a.m. 5K at Good Shepherd Catholic Church, 8710 Mount Vernon Highway. Proceeds benefit local non-profit groups as well as the Shepherd’s Gate grant program. 5K: $10 for adults, $20 for 18 and under; 1M: $30 for adults, $15 for 16 and under. Visit http://gs cc.org/getinvolved/ infestivalpaper.php for more.

White Elephant Sale. 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. at Good Shepherd Catholic Church, 8710 Mount Vernon Highway. Shop for found treasures at one of the largest indoor yard sales in the area. Proceeds benefit local non-profit groups as well as the Shepherd’s Gate grant program. $10 8:30-9:30 a.m., free after 9:30 a.m. Visit http://gs cc.org/getinvolved in festivalpaper.php for more.
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Ross Enters First Season as West Potomac Head Coach

Wolverine athletes eager to prove themselves.

By Jon Roetman
The Gazette

I t took a few tries during a post-practice meeting, but first-year West Potomac head coach Jeremiah Ross got his players to speak at an adequate decibel level when acknowledging the most fundamental part of his program.

"Do your job? What? "Do your job!"
While Ross seemed to be stressing the importance of accountability and teamwork, several Wolverines are already plenty motivated to do their jobs.

Last season, much of West Potomac’s on-field responsibility fell on the shoulders of DeMornay Pierson-El, a supremely talented athlete who is now injured in the season opener against Centreville. From there, the West Potomac offense revolved around Pierson-El’s ability to make plays with his arm or his legs.

This year, Ross is implementing a no-huddle, spread offense that should give multiple Wolverines the chance to make an impact.

"I like the new offense he brings," senior receiver Marquis Saldana said. "It’s a lot more complicated, but I believe it will work if we do our jobs. … This year will definitely be the year that you’ll see more weapons."

Ross’ offense isn’t the only thing that has the Wolverines’ attention. Ross comes to West Potomac with a wealth of experience, as a coach and a player. The California native was an accomplished offensive lineman at Rancho Alamitos High School in Orange County. He attended Fresno State, where he was a competing offensive lineman at California State University, and was recently the head coach at Crespi Carmelite High School in Encino, Calif., where he won a state title and coached University of Oregon center and NFL prospect Hroniss Grasu, along with future Division I quarterbacks Kevin Prince (UCLA) and Bryan Bennett (Oregon). Ross was an assistant at Western Carolina University, and was recently the head coach at Caroline County High School in Milford, Va. "He came from a school that won states and he’s trying to bring the same thing out here," West Potomac receiver Daniel Asumadu said. "That’s what I’m trying to do my senior year. I’m not trying to go home crying. I’m going to play my hardest every time I’m on the field."

— West Potomac receiver Daniel Asumadu

a freshman on the University of Nebraska football team. Pierson-El played on both sides of the ball and special teams. After playing receiver as a sophomore and running back as a junior, Pierson-El moved to quarter-back when starter Preston Jones was injured in the season opener against Centreville. From there, the West Potomac offense revolved around Pierson-El’s ability to make plays with his arm or his legs.

After his playing days ended, Ross became the head coach at Crespi Carmelite High School in Encino, Calif., where he won a state title and coached University of Oregon center and NFL prospect Hroniss Grasu, along with future Division I quarterbacks Kevin Prince (UCLA) and Bryan Bennett (Oregon). Ross was an assistant at Western Carolina University, and was recently the head coach at Caroline County High School in Milford, Va. "He came from a school that won states (CCHS) and he’s trying to bring the same thing out here," West Potomac receiver Daniel Asumadu said. "That’s what I’m trying to do my senior year. I’m not trying to go home crying. I’m going to play my hardest every time I’m on the field."

Asumadu and Saldana are two targets in West Potomac’s talented receiving corps. Joining Saldana on the outside is junior CJ Burch. Joining Asumadu on the inside is junior Brad Schaefer.

Jones and sophomore Mark Ellis are competing for the starting quarterback position. Jones, a senior right-hander, started the 2013 season opener but suffered a broken wrist. Ellis is a lanky left-hander with potential.

"It’s going to start with the quarterback," Ross said. "Between Preston and Mark, we’ve got to make good decisions there. Really, this offense predicates off the quarterback — the option, the ability to make choices. Whether we’re running or throwing the ball, there are always built-in options. We’re trying to be a first- and second-down team and play fast. … Preston’s got a little bit more experience, a little bit older, so he’s got a plus in that factor. Mark is a very talented young kid. He’s got a very high ceiling. It will be interesting. … They’ve made it hard. They’ve both been great."

Senior Josh Carter will see carries at running back. Senior left tackle Will Pendergraph and junior Taylor Diggins are two of the team’s top offensive linemen.

Defensively, West Potomac will operate out of a base 4-3 alignment. Senior safety Glenn Rushing, senior linebacker John Eckardt and junior linebacker Keshawn Dikes are some of the Wolverines’ top defensive players.

West Potomac will open the season on the road against Lake Braddock at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 29. The Wolverines’ first home game is Sept. 5 against Fairfax.

Aces Reach Playoffs

The Alexandria Aces reached the Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League playoffs in 2014 for the second consecutive season.

The Aces entered the postseason as the No. 5 seed after posting a 23-17 record in the regular season. Alexandria defeated No. 4 Gaithersburg 5-3 in the opening round on July 28, but lost its next two games.

The Baltimore Redbirds went on to win their third consecutive league title.

A team from Belle Haven Country Club won the USTA U14 Intermedi- ate Mid-Atlantic championship last weekend in Charlotteville. The team advanced to the regional tournament by winning the state championship two weeks ago in Virginia Beach. They will compete in the national USTA Junior Championships in South Carolina in October. From left are Grace Winfrey, Mia Elsheikh, Olivia Mullaney, Cavin Reed Winfrey, Wyatt Moll, Gordon Turner and Coach Mike Smith.
Warning on Rabies

From Page 5

Brain in warm-blooded animals, including humans. Animals with rabies can survive for up to six months in an infected state and may or may not show any symptoms.

How is rabies spread?
The rabies virus is spread through the infected animal’s saliva and can be transmitted through any open wound, nose, or mouth.

What to do if a child or adult comes in contact with an animal that may be infected?
If bitten or scratched by a wild or stray animal or a pet that was seen acting strangely, wash the wound immediately and thoroughly with soap and water. Soak the affected area for 10 minutes. Apply antiseptic. Seek medical attention and report the incident to the Animal Services Division of the Fairfax County Police Department, 703-691-2131 and the Health Department at 703-246-2433.

What to do if a pet is bitten by an animal species known to carry rabies?
Report it to the Animal Services Division of the Fairfax County Police Department, 703-691-2131.

What will happen if a pet is exposed to rabies?
There is no cure for rabies. Rabies vaccinations are the most important protection you can give your pet against the deadly disease.

A pet, when bitten by a rabid animal, may develop symptoms within two to 24 weeks, but the usual period is within two to six months in an infected state and may or may not show any symptoms at all. Once clinical signs, or overt symptoms, appear, the animal will die within a week. If you have additional questions or concerns, contact the Fairfax County Health Department at 703-246-2433.

What to do if a wild animal, or any animal for which the owner is unknown, acting strangely?
Be wary and keep your distance from it. Report strange animal behavior or animal attacks to the Animal Services Division of the Fairfax County Police Department, 703-691-2131.

How to minimize contact between my pets and wild animals?
Take precautions. Have all pets sleep indoors. Walk your pet on a leash. Feed cats and dogs inside.

Reduced-Cost Rabies Clinics

Sept. 21, from noon-2 p.m., at the Mason District Government Center, 6507 Columbia Pike in Annandale.
Oct. 19, from 2-4 p.m., at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, 4500 West Ox Road in Fairfax.
Nov. 16, from noon-2 p.m., at the Mount Vernon RECenter, 2017 Belle View Road in Alexandria.

Cost is $12/pet, cash or check only. Note: Only dogs and cats are eligible for vaccinations.
✦ Dogs must be on leashes.
✦ Cats must be in carriers.
✦ All pets will receive a 1-year rabies vaccine. To obtain a 3-year rabies vaccine, bring your pet’s rabies certificate showing your dog’s current rabies vaccination and expiration date. Only those able to show proof will be eligible for the 3-year vaccination for their pet.
✦ Only rabies certificates will be issued (no tags).
✦ 2013 dog licenses will be sold at each clinic at an additional cost of $10.

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SPECIAL PULLOUT TAB
Community & Newcomers Guide

August 27, 2014

The annual Newcomers and Community Guides for each of our 15 communities with inside facts on what makes each community special, their secret places, the real power players, how to get involved and more.

Including the history, schools, parks, libraries, local people, elected officials, county/city offices, how decisions are made, a calendar of events and other vital community information.

Due to the popularity and long shelf life of this issue, an overrun of the publication is made to meet demand. Extra copies are delivered to select Chambers of Commerce, Realtors, Citizens’ Associations and local government.

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-Abraham Lincoln

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From PAGE 11
visit campuses in Alexandria, Annandale, Loudoun, Manassas, Springfield and Woodbridge. Call 703-323-3000 for more.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 7
Talent Scouts. 7 p.m. at 3709 Shannons Green Way. Talent Scouts will be scouting for amateur performers at the Spring Hills Toll Talent Show. People who wish to perform, email spingatore@spring-hills.net by Aug. 31. Visit http://www.spring-hills.com/ for more.

MONDAY/SEPT. 8 OR WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 10
Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training. 7-10:30 p.m. Fairfax Fire and Rescue Academy, 4660 West Ox Road, Fairfax. Fairfax County will offer Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training to residents over a two month period, during September and October 2014. Residents may choose from one of two sessions, either Sept. 8, 15, 22, 29, and Oct. 6, 20, 27, or Sept. 10, 17, 24, and Oct. 1, 8, 22, 29. The training intends to provide immediate assistance and critical support before first responders arrive on scene. Free. To sign up, go to the Fairfax County volunteer portal at https://volunteer.fairfaxcounty.gov and search for CERT. Call Jeff Katz, at 703-246-3926.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 13
Office Hours. 12:30-2:30 p.m. at the Sherwood Regional Library, Conference Room 3. Dan Storck, Mount Vernon District School Board Member for Fairfax County Public Schools, will host Saturday community office hours. Members of the community are invited to stop by to ask questions or to discuss concerns, no appointment necessary. Contact Dan Storck at Dan.Storck@fcps.edu for more.

SATURDAY/OCT. 11
Office Hours. 12:30-2:30 p.m. at the Sherwood Regional Library, Conference Room 3. Dan Storck, Mount Vernon District School Board Member for Fairfax County Public Schools, will host Saturday community office hours. Members of the community are invited to stop by to ask questions or to discuss concerns, no appointment necessary. Contact Dan Storck at Dan.Storck@fcps.edu for more.

TUESDAY/OCT. 14

THURSDAY-FRIDAY/OCT. 16-17
Mental Health First Aid. 8:30 a.m.—1:30 p.m. at the South County Center, 8350 Richmond Hwy. Public education program from the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board Wellness and Health Promotion. Over a two-day course, certified instructors help people learn to assist someone developing or experiencing a mental health problem or crisis. $25. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hscode/ereg/Registration.aspx?groupID=47.

NOVA SENIOR OLYMPICS
Registration for the senior olympics is open for the 10 day of competition from Sept. 13-24. Events include track and field, tennis, handball, dominoes and more. Registration is $12 which covers multiple events. Participants must be 50 by Dec. 31, 2014. Online registration opens July 3 at www.avvo.us. Call 703-228-4721.

School Notes
Email announcements to gazette@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Thursday at noon. Photos are welcome.

Fairfax County Public Schools Superintendent Karen R. Garza has named Kristi Michael, who currently serves as director of budget services, as the new assistant superintendent of financial services, effective Aug. 1. Michael replaces Susan Quinn, who was recently promoted to chief operating officer.
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