

## Herndon Blocked From Self-Governance?

NEWS, PAGE 3

## Stalled Labor Market Slows County Budget

NEWS, PAGE 4

# People and Pets Love Stories

PET CONNECTION, PAGE 8

Bentley has actually spent some time on Capitol Hill with his "mom" Michelle Stevens of Herndon, when she worked there. Nowadays, he takes it a little easier around home, keeping his "sister" Emily good company and starring in Stevens' book, "Bentley's Premie Blessing."



**Penny Halpern, president of HVN, with Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville).**

## Herndon Village Network Hosts Wine Tasting

Herndon Village Network (HVN), a non-profit organization in Herndon that will help to improve the lives of the 55+ seniors living in the community, hosted a Wine Tasting Fundraiser - an evening of wine, food, music and art on Feb. 15 at ArtSpace Herndon. The participants enjoyed wine tasting provided by Two Twisted Posts Winery of Purcellville, Va.; Warm Observations: People and Places art exhibit by Jill Banks; Piano music provided by David Battis of The Music Loft; Hors

d'oeuvres provided by some of Herndon's finest restaurants, including Amphora Diner Deluxe, The Breeze Restaurant & Sports Bar, Europa Restaurant, The Ice House Café, Jimmy's Old Town Tavern, Russia House Restaurant and Stone's Cove Kitbar. Raffle prize provided by Reston Limousine and Two Twisted Posts Winery

For more information or to volunteer, email [HerndonVillageNetworkInfo@gmail.com](mailto:HerndonVillageNetworkInfo@gmail.com), call: 703-375-9439 or visit [www.HerdonVillageNetwork.org](http://www.HerdonVillageNetwork.org).

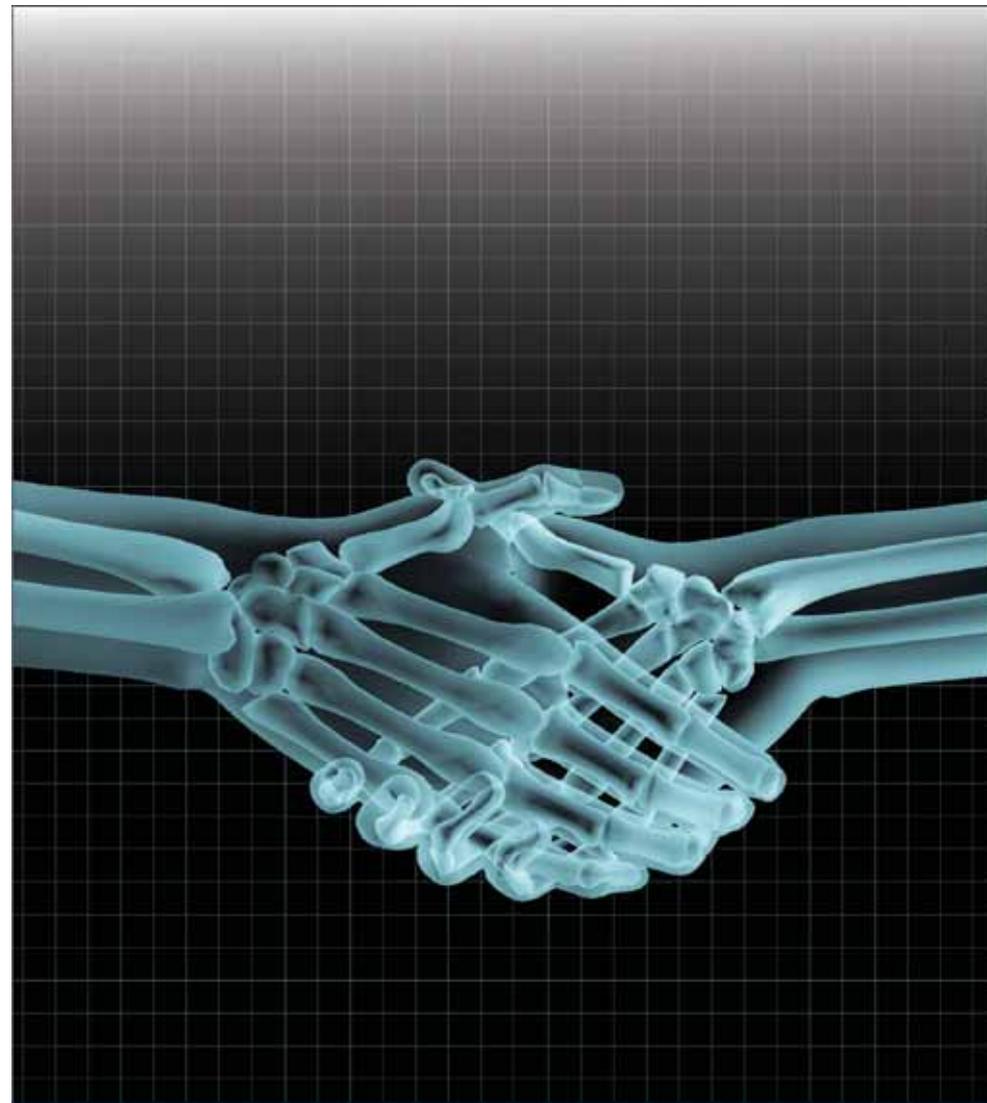


PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

**The Wine Tasting Fundraiser was a sold out event with a crowd of 100 despite the bitter cold.**



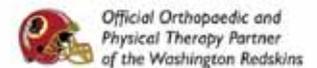
**Theresa Robertson, proprietor (far left) with winery staff.**



## Commonwealth Orthopaedics has merged with OrthoVirginia.

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## Herndon Forbidden to Govern Itself?

**Virginia House squashes Town's move to November elections.**

BY KEN MOORE  
THE CONNECTION

**T**he Virginia House of Delegates blocked the Town of Herndon's plan to move town elections from May to November. The change would have begun in 2016.

Despite passage through the Virginia Senate with a unanimous 39-0 vote on Jan. 26, the House of Delegates never voted on Herndon's bill. After the bill cleared the Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns, the House voted to send it to the Committee on Privileges and Elections on Feb. 20.

"These never go to that committee. It was sent there to die," said Herndon Mayor Lisa Merkel.

The Assembly passed four other bills unanimously this session that allowed other towns in Luray, Montross, Branchville and Buchanan to move their local elections from the spring to November. Cities of Alexandria, Falls Church and Manassas won General Assembly approval for moving elections from May to November in 2014.

Herndon's former mayor and current delegate, Tom Rust (R-86), voted in favor of those seven changes, but said before the current General Assembly session that he did not support the change in Herndon. Rust voted to send Herndon's bill to Privileges and Elections.

"This shouldn't be controversial," said Herndon Councilmember Grace Wolf. "What is special and different about Herndon?" is the question you have to ask."

The Virginia General Assembly voted in



CONNECTION FILE PHOTO

**Sen. Jennifer Wexton (D-33) carried the bill to move Herndon's town elections from May to November, which passed the Senate unanimously. But the House of Delegates voted to send it to a committee where it died last Friday, Feb. 20. Del. Tom Rust (R-86), pictured here with Wexton at a meeting on Jan. 17, said before the session that he did not support the bill.**

2002 to allow cities and towns to move their May elections to November. About six such requests a year come before the General Assembly, and approval has been routine, often unanimous.

"I remain completely baffled why the Virginia House of Delegates believes it is appropriate for other towns to move their elections to November starting in 2016 but not Herndon," said Merkel.

"We thought we were doing this the simplest and easiest way. There has never been a controversy," she said.

All 95 counties elect their Supervisors and School Board members at general elections held in November.

"This is not something that the Council dreamed up. It has come up for a decade or more," said Merkel. "We agreed that this was an issue that this needed to be

put forward."

**HUNDREDS OF CITIZENS** voiced feedback to the Herndon Town Council, which voted on Dec. 9, 2014 to move town elections from May to November.

"It was an unprecedented amount of research, and weeks and weeks of conversation," said Wolf. "We sent a postcard to every single house in town."

Some residents said town elections should be separate from federal and state elections to allow focus on town issues. Some residents and councilmembers Steven Mitchell and David Kirby suggested making the debate a referendum, allowing the town's voters to decide. And some supported the move, especially supporting any change that would increase voter turnout.

Everyone in town had his or her say, and,

**Town Council to Discuss Election Schedule**

The Herndon Town Council announced on Tuesday, Feb. 24, that it will hold a work session on changing the election schedule for the Mayor and Town Council from May to November beginning in 2016, on Tuesday, March 3, 2015 at 7 p.m. in the Herndon Council Chambers Building, 765 Lynn Street, Herndon. The council will hold a public hearing on the subject on March 10 at 7 p.m.

in the end, the Council voted 4-2, with one councilmember voting "present," to move the election to November.

"Does the General Assembly believe they are better suited to govern the Town of Herndon than the Mayor and Council elected by the citizens?" asked Merkel.

Luray's HB 1834 passed the House 99-0 on Feb. 4 and the Senate 38-0 on Feb. 20, the same day the House sent Herndon's Bill to committee to die.

"We are being unfairly singled out. It is partisan politics," said Wolf.

**INCREASING VOTER TURNOUT** by having town elections held in November along with State and Federal elections was the primary motivation for the proposal. At Herndon precincts, between 75-80 percent of registered voters turned out for the November 2012 presidential election year, and approximately 38-45 percent turned out during the midterm elections in November 2010, according to town records. In general, 20-25 percent of registered voters turn out for May elections.

Del. Rust (R-86) will be on the ballot in November, along with every other member of the Virginia General Assembly. In 2013, Rust defeated Jennifer Boysko (D) by 54 votes out of 20,775 cast, a margin that was reduced to 32 votes after a recount. Boysko has announced that she will run against Rust again this year.

## New Art Exhibits to Open in Reston and Herndon

**Local artwork to be on display.**

BY RYAN DUNN  
THE CONNECTION

**M**any residents of Fairfax County have an appreciation for various mediums of visual and performing art. Several nonprofits within the Reston and Herndon area, including ArtSpace Herndon located on Center Street and the Greater Reston Arts Center (GRACE) have helped showcase local artwork, and as some exhibits close, new displays will soon open.

Closing on March 3 is the Colors of Nature, a fine art photography exhibit by Kathy Kautter. The exhibit explores the vivid beauty of the natural world around us. This display was at the Reston Jo Ann Rose Gallery at Reston Community Center. Kautter is a Northern Virginia artist whose photography captures the colors and textures in nature. A member of Reston Art Gallery and Studios, her work has been featured in FotoDC exhibits as well as League of Reston Artists exhibits, receiving recognition for her "good eye." On Sunday, March 15 at 2 p.m. the Jo Ann Rose Gallery will host a reception for the Youth Art Month presenting art from Reston's Elementary Schools.

At ArtSpace Herndon, winners of the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Fine Art Photography competition will be announced by judge Carla Steckley



PHOTO BY RYAN DUNN/THE CONNECTION

**On March 3 Kathy Kautter's photo exhibit Colors of Nature at Reston Jo Ann Rose Gallery at Reston Community Center will close.**

during the Awards and Artist Reception on Saturday, Feb. 28, 7 to 9 p.m.

On Saturday, March 28, ArtSpace

Herndon will host a performance by the Celtibillies, an award-winning quartet of musicians from Abingdon, Va. They play stringed instruments in the style of the Scottish and Irish immigrants who settled in the Virginia Frontier. Led by the fiddle, an instrument originating in the Isles, the band plays Celtic tunes with a mountain flavor. They will be joined by a professional flat-footed dancer, Emily Oleson, performing Celtic and Appalachian dance. The Celtibillies have appeared at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, Blue Ridge Music Center, and the Virginia Highlands Festival. Emily Oleson has a M.F.A. from the University of Maryland and is pioneering a program in Vernacular Dance at Davis & Elkins College in West Virginia.

# Stalled Labor Market Slows County Budget

Proposed budget calls for no real estate tax rate increase, but average homeowner would pay \$184 more.

BY KEN MOORE  
THE CONNECTION

Supervisor Jeff McKay pointed out the irony in County Executive Ed Long's proposed \$3.8 billion budget. Three planning positions would be eliminated from the budget even though Long suggested the county needs more efforts to raise revenue from commercial and industrial venues.

"A timely planning process in revitalization is important in economic development," said McKay after Long's 30-minute presentation to the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, Feb. 17. "The planner piece is not going in the same direction as the economic development question."

McKay pointed to redevelopment along the Route 1 corridor as a source of economic growth that would require extra input from planning. Long agreed that the county urgently needs to expand the nonresidential tax base in the county.

Commercial assessments dropped 0.6 percent, while residential assessments increased 3.4 percent. Commercial vacancy rates are higher than they have been since 1991. Although the U.S. economy grew at an estimated rate of 2.6 percent during the fourth quarter of 2014, "we are clearly underperforming the national economy," Long told the Supervisors, mostly due to the sequester and reductions in federal spending and contracting.

"Our economy is very dependent on people buying cars, buying houses and shopping," Long said.

Long forecasts no significant improvements in the short term future. "We cannot fund all our priorities and investments." Most departments, aside from public safety, will see some expenditure reduction.

Just 5,100 jobs were created in Northern Virginia in 2014, less than half of the 11,900 jobs created in 2013, which is half the number of jobs (25,250) created on average in 2011 and 2012.

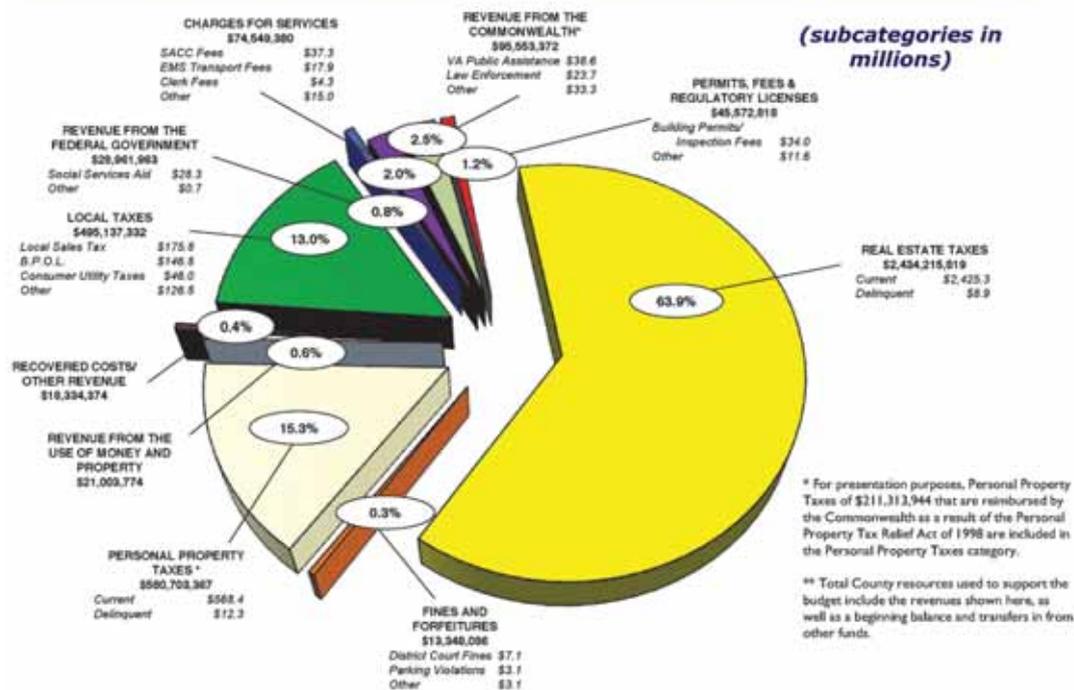
"It is a bit sobering," said Hunter Mill Supervisor Catherine Hudgins.

## Budget Schedule

- March 3: Board advertises FY 2016 tax rate
- April 7-9: Public hearings
- April 21: Budget markup
- April 28: Budget adoption

To sign up to speak at one of the public hearings, call the Clerk to the Board's Office at 703-324-3151 or 703-324-2391 (TTY 711) or to access the form to sign up to speak, go to [https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/speaker\\_bos.htm](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/speaker_bos.htm) The public can send written testimony or communicate with the Clerk's Office by email at: [clerktothebos@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:clerktothebos@fairfaxcounty.gov)

## FY 2016 Advertised Budget Plan: "Where it Comes From"



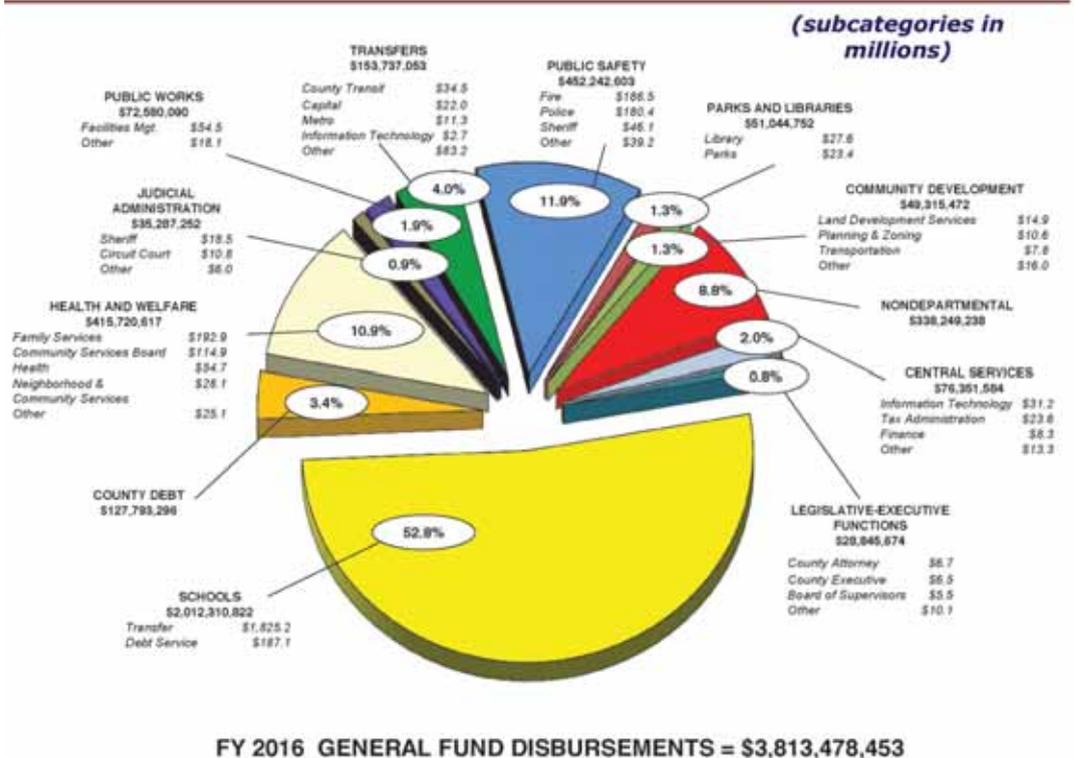
FY 2016 GENERAL FUND RECEIPTS\*\* = \$3,807,380,285 \*\*

Fairfax County, Virginia: FY 2016 Advertised Budget Plan (Includes Multi-Year Budget: FY 2016 - FY 2017)

COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY GOVERNMENT

This pie chart shows sources of county revenue, with 64 percent coming from real estate taxes.

## FY 2016 Advertised Budget Plan: "Where it Goes"



FY 2016 GENERAL FUND DISBURSEMENTS = \$3,813,478,453

Fairfax County, Virginia: FY 2016 Advertised Budget Plan (Includes Multi-Year Budget: FY 2016 - FY 2017)

COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY GOVERNMENT

This pie chart shows county expenditures, with 52.8 percent going to Fairfax County Public Schools, and 12 percent to public safety.

## Budget Town Hall Meetings

Hunter Mill District Budget Meeting  
Frying Pan Park, 2709 West Ox Road,  
Herndon  
Saturday, Feb. 28, 9 a.m.

Dranesville District Budget Meeting 1  
Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown  
Pike, Great Falls  
Wednesday, March 4, 7 p.m.

Dranesville District Budget Meeting 2  
McLean Community Center, 1234  
Ingleside Avenue, McLean  
Wednesday, March 11, 7:30 p.m.

Providence District Budget Meeting  
Providence Community Center, 3001  
Vaden Drive, Fairfax - Multi-  
Purpose Room 2  
Wednesday, March 11, 7 p.m.

Chairman Bulova's Community  
Dialogue on the Budget  
Fairfax County Government Center,  
12000 Government Center  
Parkway, Fairfax - Conference  
Room 9/10  
Saturday, March 14, 2:30 p.m.

Sully District Budget Meeting  
Rocky Run Middle School - Cafeteria -  
4400 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly  
Wednesday, March 25, 7 p.m.

Braddock District Budget Meeting  
Braddock Government Center, 9002  
Burke Lake Road, Burke - Braddock  
Hall  
Wednesday, March 11, 7:30 p.m.

Chairman Bulova's Community  
Dialogue on the Budget, South  
South County Center, 8350 Richmond  
Highway, Alexandria - Room 221  
Saturday, March 14, 10 a.m.

## 5 Things to Know about the Budget

- ❖ One penny change in the real estate tax rate, currently \$1.09, is worth \$22.6 million.
- ❖ The average 2014 home selling price, \$517,000, has still not reached its previous peak value of \$543,271 achieved in 2005.
- ❖ Direct office vacancy rate was 15.2 percent as of mid-year 2014, the highest office vacancy rate since 1991.
- ❖ Fairfax County Public Schools request \$14 million more than is in the current proposed budget. Schools ask for a 3.99 percent increase; the current county budget proposal includes 3.43 percent increase over last year.
- ❖ School Age Child Care (SACC) fees restructured to generate revenue and to better reflect income levels and affordability for participating families. Full paying families will see an increase of 8 percent.

# WEEK IN HERNDON

## Celebrating Black History Month

Reston Historic Trust (RHT) and Museum, in partnership with United Christian Parish, will present a program to celebrate Black History Month on Thursday, Feb. 26, 7 - 9 p.m., at the United Christian Parish Church, 11408 North Shore Drive, Reston, Rooms 113-115.

Rev. Laverne Gill, creator and producer of the Comcast television show Reston's African American Legacy, and Laura Thomas, retired educator and long time Reston resident, will moderate the panel discussion,

video presentation and community dialogue. Panel members include:

- ❖ Bob Secundy, a Reston resident since 1967 who was active in the Reston Black Focus and Fairfax County government;

- ❖ Martin Taylor, resident since 1972 who is now an aide to Fairfax County Supervisor Catherine M. Hudgins working on housing, human services and budget issues; and

- ❖ Two South Lakes High School students.

The video portion of the program features interviews by Rev. Gill from her television show.

Admission is free.

For more information, call Reston Museum

at 703-709-7700, email [restonmuseum@gmail.com](mailto:restonmuseum@gmail.com), or visit [www.restonmuseum.org](http://www.restonmuseum.org).

## Hudgins to Host Community Summit

Hunter Mill Supervisor Cathy Hudgins will host a Community Summit on Saturday, Feb. 28 at Herndon's Frying Pan Park, 2709 West Ox Road.

The event is scheduled to begin at 8:30 a.m. and Hudgins will "kick-off" the presentations by giving residents a "virtual field trip" of the Hunter Mill District at 9 a.m.

County Executive Ed Long will present his proposed budget after Chairman Sharon Bulova discusses the county's priorities. Hunter Mill School Board member Pat Hynes is scheduled to give a report on the schools.

In addition to giving the public a chance to ask questions, Hudgins plans a "Hunter Mill Huddle," ideas from policy makers in the Hunter Mill District, especially focusing on human services needs.

The Fairfax County Department of Taxation will address questions about the Fairfax County real estate tax.

See [fairfaxcounty.gov/huntermill](http://fairfaxcounty.gov/huntermill)

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Music 4 years to 2nd grade

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# OPINION

## Managing Mental Illness in Jails

**Natasha McKenna's death provides window on national concern.**

**A** national report released on Feb. 11 highlighted the prevalence of people with mental illness incarcerated in local jails.

"Serious mental illness, which includes bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and major depression, affects an estimated 14.5 percent of men and 31 percent of women in jails — rates that are four to six times higher than in the general population. ... While most people with serious mental illness in jails, both men and women, enter jail charged with minor, nonviolent crimes, they end up staying in jail for longer periods of time." See vera.org.

Natasha McKenna, a woman with a long history of severe mental illness, died on Feb. 8, five days after being repeatedly shocked with a taser, restrained, hooded and forcibly removed from her cell by six deputy sheriffs "pursuant to its protocols for managing combative inmates."

McKenna, a small woman according to press

reports, had been held in the Fairfax County Detention Center since Jan. 26, on a warrant from the City of Alexandria. Fairfax deputies were forcibly extracting her from her cell so she could be transported to the Alexandria jail.

Here is part of the police release on the incident:

"During the struggle to restrain McKenna, a member of the Sheriff's Emergency Response Team deployed a conducted energy weapon (Taser) on McKenna. While being restrained, deputies placed a spit net (which is designed to restrict and prevent spitting) on McKenna.

A nurse from the ADC medical staff was present at that time to check on her prior to transport and cleared her for transport. Deputies attempted to put her in a medical transport chair, but McKenna continued to be combative and was moved to a restraint chair for transport."

To understand a little of what was happening, search for images of "spit net" and "prisoner restraint chair."

When the emergency response team was getting ready to load McKenna into a vehicle, "medical personnel from the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office checked McKenna and determined she was experiencing a medical emergency."

McKenna never regained consciousness.

The incident was recorded on video, but "the video is currently retained as evidence by detectives from the Fairfax County Police Department and will not be released at this time."

Less than two weeks after McKenna's death, the public knows a lot more about the details of this incident than previous cases involving the Fairfax County Police, but questions of what happened, how and why, greatly outnumber answers.

It is standard operating procedure in the United States to warehouse disruptive people with mental illness in jails. A 2006 Special Report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics estimated that 705,600 mentally ill adults were incarcerated in state prisons, 78,800 in Federal prisons and 479,900 in local jails, according to the National Institute for Corrections.

We have to ask what constitutes humane, effective treatment for people with mental illness, and often substance use disorders, who end up in jails. Are the brutal images of Natasha McKenna's handling a common experience for people with severe mental illness in jails? While deaths resulting from such incidents are rare, they do occur. What can be done to provide treatment?

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

### EDITORIAL

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Del. Rust's Votes Against Herndon

To the Editor:

Unfathomably, Del. Tom Rust (R-86), The Town of Herndon's representative in the Virginia General Assembly (GA), voted against the Town's bill to change the language in our town charter to reflect Town elections to occur in November instead of May.

The Herndon Town Council took up the issue of moving elections to November, after several years of this being informally discussed by several previous town councils. In 2014 the town council decided unanimously to bring this issue forward for a town-wide discussion and to place it on the public hearing agenda for consideration. Initially, there were two issues on the table: 1) Whether or not to change the terms of the council members from two years to four years, and 2) Whether or not to move the town's election from May to November. After much discussion at an unprecedented number of highly advertised public meetings, it was determined that there was no significant support for extending town council members' terms to four years, while there was significant support for changing town elections to November. So the change was made.

As routine, a charter bill was

sent to the General Assembly to change our town's charter language to reflect November elections. The bill was sponsored by our state Senator, Jennifer Wexton. Del. Rust refused to sponsor it.

Bills such as these are passed routinely by the GA every year, with Del. Rust also voting for them. Del. Rust also voted for the state law that allows cities and towns the autonomy to make these election date changes. In this year's legislative session, four other Virginia towns submitted similar charter bills and they passed unanimously by the House and Senate, including unanimous votes in sub-committees. Tom Rust voted for them. But when it came to Herndon's charter bill, Del. Rust and other Republicans voted to send it to another committee, which would knowingly kill the bill. Del. Rust refused to allow it an up or down vote on the House floor. Later, the House committee refused to hear the bill and so it died in committee. This is unprecedented political gamesmanship at the expense of the Town of Herndon. This only helps divide the town and brings unnecessary controversy and negative press to the town. Why do we have a local government if our state delegate is going to try to usurp its authority in Richmond?

We need a state delegate who is

more interested in serving the Town than in furthering his own personal interests.

**Barbara Glakas**  
Herndon

#### Oversight Needed

To the Editor:

Kudos and thanks for your recent editorials voicing the concern of many Fairfax County citizens in connection with the investigation of police shootings.

James Madison said of government that we must "oblige it to control itself" through checks and balances, including vigilant oversight of administration. It is difficult to conceive where Board of Supervisors oversight is more needed than over a group—even a group as honorable and courageous as our police officers—entrusted to exercise coercive powers, up to and including life and death. The Board of Supervisors should fulfill that oversight function, starting with investigative hearings into the reasons for the secrecy shrouding the shootings identified in your editorial. State Sen. Barbara Favola and our new Del. Kathleen Murphy may also wish to consider whether to propose statutory changes to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

**Bruce Ellis Fein**  
Great Falls

#### Deer Challenge Documented

To the Editor:

Ken Moore's article on the impact of growing deer herds on our local forests ("A Time to Hunt?" - Connection, February 18-24, 2015) was a good overview of the issues facing our community and a description of some of the ways in which residents can help ensure that our local forests remain for the next generation. The article mentioned the survey by the Great Falls Citizens Association; residents interested in the whole survey, including the incidence of Lyme Disease in our community, can find it at www.gfca.org. I'd also highly recommend a video that we showed, in part, at the January GFCA town hall meeting. It's called Lords of Nature and it graphically shows how Yellowstone National Park's ecology was adversely affected when growing deer and elk populations overgrazed it, as well as the steps the National Park Service took to re-establish a balance. That video is also freely available on the GFCA website.

**Bill Canis**  
Vice President, GFCA

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# OPINION

## Herndon's November Election in Jeopardy

By LISA MERKEL  
HERNDON MAYOR

It is well known and scarcely debated that more voters participate in November elections than in those held in other months. This is certainly true in our town. I believe that we are best governed when everyone has a chance to participate in our democracy. I believe that elected officials should make elections as accessible and convenient as possible for all voters. To that end, the Herndon Town Council voted in December to move our elections from May to the more traditional month of November, starting in 2016.

Tuesday, in an obvious effort to kill the Town's charter bill (SB935) to move elections from May to November starting in 2016 — increasing voter turnout and saving taxpayer dollars — The Virginia House of Delegates voted along party lines to refer SB 935 back to the House Privileges and Elections committee.

Sending bills back to committee is a known tactic to kill legislation while avoiding the embarrassment of a floor vote on a bill that would otherwise be routine.

On April 19, 2000, and again on Feb. 22, 2002, the Virginia General Assembly, House and Senate, nearly unanimously approved an Act to amend 24.2-221 Section A Code

of Virginia "providing cities and towns the option of conducting municipal elections at the November general election."

The Town of Herndon is the third largest town in the Commonwealth; held four advertised public hearings on the proposed election changes in October, November and December 2014; sent an informational postcard to every household in town announcing the public hearing subject and dates; considered three possible changes to elections and in the end only approved one — the May to November change beginning in 2016, which significantly increases voter participation and saves taxpayer dollars, since the Commonwealth now requires towns to pay in full for May elections (yet the Commonwealth fully funds all November general elections, local or otherwise.)

Herndon's Sen. Jennifer Wexton (D- 33) patroned the bill on behalf of the Town. The Senate voted unanimously to pass SB935.

Herndon's Del. Tom Rust (R-86) refused to patron this bill in the House, stating that he didn't support the change because it was "bad policy" (despite the fact that he not only voted in favor of the legislation in 2002 enabling towns to make this change and in favor of the other charter bills moving town elections from May to November 2016 that were before the GA this year).

These types of charter bills are routine

— on average six a year are passed in the Virginia General Assembly. In fact, nearly 40 other towns and cities have already been granted this right by the General Assembly, almost always in unanimous bipartisan block votes.

The following charter bills (moving elections from May to November starting in 2016) have already been approved by the GA House and Senate in the current 2015 session: HB 1284 Town of Branchville, HB 1663 Town of Buchanan, HB 1834, Town of Luray, and SB 940, Town of Montross.

Each of these above bills passed the Senate and House unanimously, including an affirmative vote from Del. Tom Rust.

I remain completely baffled why the Virginia House of Delegates believes it is appropriate for other towns to move their elections to November starting in 2016, but not Herndon.

Why is Herndon so different?

Does the General Assembly believe they are better suited to govern the Town of Herndon than the mayor and council elected by the citizens who live here? Why does Del. Rust believe that these other four towns should have November elections starting in 2016 but not the town of Herndon? Herndon residents deserve the same consideration as every other town in the Commonwealth.



PHOTO BY LIEUTENANT COMMANDER GLORIA LAZO

### Giving Back in Herndon

Lana Truese is wiping down a senior car that needed a lot of work on Feb. 17. She said later that she felt thankful and proud that she came out to help the community, Herndon Harbor House retirement center, 873 Grace Street. "I love giving," NJROTC student said. "When I used to walk to go to Herndon Middle School, I always saw seniors shoveling snow out, I didn't like to see that, now that I am much older, I take fully responsibility to make sure they are safe for the winter conditions and I'm glad to give back and help in any way to make the community better." said Lieutenant Commander Gloria Lazo.

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## PET CONNECTION



Macska Worker takes great interest in the photos that get published in the Connection, especially hers.



Bentley sure knows how to pose! The 5-year-old Shih Tzu is a real "Mama's Boy" although he does enjoy the company of his "sister" Emily - especially since she is known to share her food goodies.



"He had such a kind face," said adoptive "mom" Dee. Dee and Boomer met at the Lake Anne PetMac during a pet adoption event. "I knew right away he was the one," Dee said.



Katie Shaw, manager of the Walker Nature Center in Reston lets their resident corn snake pick her own reading material. The snake has been her species' ambassador at the center for almost two years. "She's really great with people," says Shaw, who wants to remind potential snake owners that snakes can live more than 20 years, so think twice about a snake as a pet.



Lisa Wallace works as the office manager for the pet sitting/walking company The Pet Elf, based in Reston. Iris was a rescue found wandering after Hurricane Sandy. Looks like she feels pretty much at home now.



From left — The neighbors' dog, Winnie who likes to stop by a play, Lucy the Jack Russell and Mason. The McKnights' two dogs and their playmate like to keep watch - never know what might pass by in their Reston neighborhood.

# People and Pets Love Stories Meet some Reston, Herndon area families with pets.

By ANDREA WORKER  
THE CONNECTION

It's that time of year again. Nope, not a holi day - although perhaps it should be. It's that anticipated edition when the Connection Newspapers celebrate the furry, or finned or feathered or scaled or clawed creatures that make themselves a cherished part of the family. Although Reston and Herndon probably number as many pets as people in their populations, sadly we've only got room to introduce you to a few - so here we go.

## Meet Bentley

The 5-year-old Shih Tzu is no stranger to celebrity. When his "mom" Michelle Stevens wrote a book on the family's experiences with the birth of super-preemie Emily, Bentley graciously agreed to be the "narrator" of the tale and even to have his name in the title - "Bentley's Preemie Blessing." Bentley admits to being a "Mama's Boy," ("He's like Velcro, following me everywhere," says Michelle) although he does enjoy spending time with his "sister," especially since she provides him with the leftovers or food stuff she doesn't want. Bentley is happy to accept. Bentley came into the Stevens' Herndon household as a rescue from the Animal Relief Fund in Maryland. Aside from being the writing assistant to his "mom," Bentley can even claim some political connections, having walked the halls of the Russell Senate Office Building when Michelle worked on the Hill.



Carrie McKnight of Reston stays warm and cozy and provides additional cushiony comfort for Jack Russell Lucy and her 9-month-old "brother" Mason.

## A Lake Anne Love Story

The protagonists are Dee, a 36-year resident of Reston and a realtor with Long and Foster at Lake Anne, and Boomer, an adult Tick hound, who couldn't really share his back-story, but will no doubt be making lots of new memories in his new forever home. Dee says she has always been a dog lover,

so when PetMAC opened its Lake Anne doors in January, she just had to stop by and take a look. As owner Cindy Williams says, PetMAC is "a one-stop shop for the healthiest choices in pet foods, as well as toys and accessories." The store is also a pet adoption center, working in partnership with a number of animal rescue and welfare groups - and that's how Dee and Boomer met. "I went by when they were having an adoption event. I knew I didn't want a puppy - too much like a new baby for me! And I saw Boomer. He had the kindest face. I think he had been to several adoption days and hadn't been picked. I think he looked a bit sad, so I just knew he was the one," said Dee. After 3 weeks, Boomer has settled in well to his new home, although his feline siblings (especially one brother) still have him a bit intimidated.

## Share the Love

Share the love with a creature that kind of belongs to us all. She's an un-named 3-year-old corn snake who resides at the Walker Nature Center in Reston. "We never named her," said Center Manager Katie Shaw, "because she's really more of an ambassador for her species than a pet" - although everyone who has ever met Jane Doe the Snake agrees that she is just as friendly and fun. Ms. Snake came to the Center from South Lakes High School where she hatched 13 babies. As fun and entertaining as she can be, Director Shaw reminds us that snakes "often live more than 20 years. If you are thinking of a pet snake, please keep that in mind. Only go to a reputable pet store or breeder, and never

release a pet snake into the outdoors." And don't forget to stop by and meet this friendly representative of the reptile world.

## A "Tail" of Survival

Although we'll never get the details from Iris the Cat who was a Hurricane Sandy survivor. "I would love to hear her story," says adoptive "mom" Lisa Wallace of Reston. "But she's not talking - at least not about that!" For reasons known only to Iris, she prefers to be the only cat in her kingdom, which suits Lisa just fine. Wallace is the Office Manager for The Pet Elf, a Reston-based pet sitting and care company, so she knows a thing or two about finicky felines and in their one year relationship has bonded well with Iris and made her feel right at home. "Iris is who she is," says Wallace. "She likes to be nearby, does like some petting now and then. She's certainly claimed a lot of spots around the house as hers. It's a good relationship."

## Keeping the Pack Intact

When the McKnight family of Reston suffered the loss of several furry family members in the last year, what could they do but look for the right new additions to the family pack. The McKnights always had a bit of a menagerie going on around the house between the kids and the creatures. Now they have 9-month-old rescue Mason and 6-year-old Lucy to keep things interesting.

## The Writer's Prerogative

OK. This one is cheating, but meet the writer's friend, Macska (pronounced

"muchka," it's the Hungarian word for "cat"). Now 3 years old, Miss Macska came into the Worker household from their own backyard,

when she was just 6 weeks old. When she was discovered, the torn-up kitty immediately dived into the pond, from which she

had to be soggly rescued. After some medical care and socializing, this is one tortie who knows who's in charge and never lets you

forget mealtime. And that's all the time we have. Maybe next time your Fido or Fifi will be in the spotlight.

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## CALENDAR

Send announcements to [reston@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:reston@connectionnewspapers.com). The deadline is the Friday prior to the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged.

### THROUGH MONDAY/MARCH 16

**Ice Skating at Reston Town Center.** 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Reston Town Center, 11900 Market Street, Reston. From early November through the early March, the Pavilion floor is transformed into a gleaming ice skating rink. Ice skates and other supplies are available inside the Skate Shop directly beside the Pavilion (behind Clyde's). Admission: \$10 per adult; \$9 for children under 12; \$5 per skate rental.

### FRIDAY/FEB. 27

**Kids at Hope Family Passport to Fun.** 6-9 p.m. Herndon Community Center, 814 Ferndale Avenue, Herndon. Come experience activities that will let your child know that he or she is "Capable of Success, No Exception." Parents will be encouraged to become Treasure Hunters and seek the hidden talents, strengths, and abilities of their children and others around them. This event is designed for children to share the fun with a caring and significant adult in their life. All children attending must be accompanied by a caring adult. Bring a float and your bathing suit to play in the pool. \$2.

### SATURDAY, FEB. 28

**Bluetrain.** 7:30 p.m. Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 1090 Sterling Road, Herndon. A relatively new band on the musical scene but its members are all seasoned veterans having performed with many of the top bluegrass bands in the Washington Metro area. They have a marvelous mix of voices that blend perfectly bringing out all the emotion each songwriter intended. Watch out for some super hot instrumentals as these guys are superb in this regard also. Come see for yourself. Tickets: \$15; children 12 and younger admitted free.

### SUNDAY/MARCH 1

**Ice Breaker 5K.** 8 a.m. Join us for the First Annual Ice Breaker Family Fun Run 5K. Let's put winter behind us and get active outside and prepare for the spring. The course will take you through a scenic section of Herndon around the Herndon Parkway and Sugarland Run Trail. Pre registration is \$20 per runner and \$25 on race day. Register at [active.com](http://active.com) or [herndon-va.gov](http://herndon-va.gov) and click on parks and recreation.

### FRIDAY/MARCH 6

**Art House Cinema Presents: Trois films du Cinéma Français.** 7:30 p.m. ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Join in on the First Friday in March, April and May, 2015 for these masterful works, each selected for making significant contributions to the film industry. The March film will be *The Intouchables* (2011). Tickets are \$7.50 per person for the movie and fresh popcorn. Beer, wine, water, and concessions will be available for purchase. The doors open at 7. To buy tickets: <http://www.artspaceherndon.com/art-house-cinema-presents-trois-films-du-cinema-francais/>. For more information call 703-956-6590. , VA 20170.

### FRIDAY-SUNDAY/MARCH 6, 7, 8

**Three Day A Cappella Music Festival.** South Lakes High School,



**Catch Bluetrain, a relatively new band on the musical scene but its members are all seasoned veterans having performed with many of the top bluegrass bands in the Washington Metro area. They have a marvelous mix of voices that blend perfectly bringing out all the emotion each songwriter intended. Watch out for some super hot instrumentals as these guys are superb in this regard also. See them live on Feb. 28 at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 1090 Sterling Road, Herndon.**

### PET FRIENDLY EVENTS

#### SATURDAY/MARCH 7

**Fun Dog Show.** 11 a.m. Market Square, 301 King Street, Alexandria. Register your dogs to win the contests ranging from Best Tail Wag to Best Irish Costume. The show starts at 11:15 a.m., and afterwards all dogs are welcome to walk in the annual Old Town Alexandria St. Patrick's Day Parade. Register and learn more at [http://www.ballyshanners.org/parade/ParadeInfo\\_dogshow.htm](http://www.ballyshanners.org/parade/ParadeInfo_dogshow.htm).

#### FRIDAY-SUNDAY/MARCH 27-29

**Super Pet Expo & Doggie Kissing Contest.** Dulles Expo Center, Chantilly. The Super Pet Expo is the largest, most amazing event for animal lovers in the DC Metro. Learn, shop and be entertained with hundreds of vendors and fun activities. Buy tickets at <http://www.superpetexpo.com/> tickets and use code NOVADOG to save \$3. Before the expo on Saturday morning, join hundreds of other dogs and the people who love them to attempt to set a doggie-kissing record.

11400 South Lakes Drive, Reston. Professional a cappella groups from around the world will perform with collegiate and HS groups at the 7th annual SingStrong International Charity A cappella Festival. SingStrong, will feature the best professional a cappella singers from around the world at South Lakes High School's Arts Center. Tickets range from \$15 to \$35. Discounted passes available for Seniors, Students and groups of 10 or more. Free Parking. Tickets and complete info at [www.SingStrong.org](http://www.SingStrong.org).

#### SATURDAY/MARCH 7

**Annual Polish/American Dinner and Polka Dance.** 6 p.m. St. Joseph's Parish Hall in Herndon. Tickets are \$65 per couple, \$35 per adult and \$20 per child/student. Ticket price includes a traditional homemade Polish Dinner of stuffed cabbage, kielbasa and pierogies, as well as beer and wine or other beverages. For tickets or more information, contact Bern Patchan at 703-395-8294 or email at [bernpatchan@gmail.com](mailto:bernpatchan@gmail.com).

#### FRIDAY/MARCH 13

**Senior Tea.** 1-2 p.m. ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Every month seniors are invited to visit the gallery to view the current exhibit and enjoy a cup of tea and a sweet treat. Seniors from the Herndon Senior Center are regular visitors. All teas are free and open to the public. For more information call 703-956-6590 or <http://www.artspaceherndon.com>

[www.artspaceherndon.com/events-2/senior-tea/](http://www.artspaceherndon.com/events-2/senior-tea/)

#### SATURDAY/MARCH 14

**Kids' Trout Fishing Derby.** 7 a.m. - noon. Sugarland Run.

#### SUNDAY/MARCH 15

**Spring Golf Tournament.** 10 a.m. Herndon Centennial Golf Course, 909 Ferndale Avenue, Herndon.

#### WEDNESDAY/MARCH 18

**Brilliant Birds.** 10 a.m. & 1:30 p.m. Walker Nature Center, 11450 Glade Drive, Reston. Many birds migrate far away during the winter. They return with their most colorful plumage in spring. Make a colorful bird craft, see feathers and birds up close, and go on a short hike to see if we can find these beautiful birds in the trees or at the feeders. Ages 3 to 5. Reservations required by March 13. Fee: \$7/child RA members · \$9/child Non-members. For more information, email [naturecenter@reston.org](mailto:naturecenter@reston.org), or call 703-476-9689 and press 5.

**Poetry Readers Roundtable.** 7 p.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. An informal discussion of the life, times, and work of Langston Hughes.

#### FRIDAY/MARCH 20

**Fireside Fun.** 7-8 p.m. Walker Nature Center, 11450 Glade Drive, Reston. Gather, share stories and think of warmer days soon to come.

## SPECIAL CONNECTIONS CALENDAR

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday unless noted.

### MARCH

3/11/2015.....HomeLifeStyle Real Estate Pullout  
3/18/2015.....A+ Camps & Schools  
3/25/2015..Spring Fun, Food, Arts & Entertainment  
FCPS Spring Break 3/30-4/3

### APRIL

4/1/2015.....Wellbeing – Senior Living Pullout  
Easter Sunday is April 5  
4/8/2015.....HomeLifeStyle  
4/15/2015.....A+ Camps & Schools  
4/22/2015.....Real Estate Pullout – New Homes  
4/29/2015.....A+ Camps & Schools Pullout  
4/29/2015.....Mother's Day Celebrations, Dining & Gifts I

### MAY

5/6/2015.....McLean Day Pullout  
5/6/2015.....Mother's Day Dining & Gifts II  
5/6/2015.....Wellbeing  
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- Potomac Almanac
- Reston Connection
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- Vienna/Oakton Connection

## ENTERTAINMENT



PHOTO BY TONY DE LA PAZ

Members of the CBT on stage at Reston Community Center. Since 1991, the mission of CBT has been to provide education, performance and outreach opportunities in the performing arts to Northern Virginia and surrounding communities.

## Ballet Display at Reston Community Center

### Classical Ballet Theatre wows audience with choreography.

BY RYAN DUNN  
THE CONNECTION

At Reston Community Center, the Classical Ballet Theatre (CBT) presented "An Evening with Classical Ballet Theatre" on Friday, Feb. 13. The show was a combination of both contemporary and classical ballet, and included original choreography by guest artists and CBT faculty as well as audience favorites. "We love the ballet and want to continue supporting local ballet program," said Reston resident Ning-Ning Mahlmann, Ph.D., who attended the evening show.

Since 1991, the mission of CBT has been to provide education, performance and outreach opportunities in the performing arts to Northern Virginia and surrounding communities. CBT provides the highest caliber of training and coaching opportunities to prepare young dancers for a career in the performing arts as well as provide classes to dancers of all ages and levels in the community. Greeting guests at the lobby was CBT founder and Executive Director Cynthia Donavin. "I have been very impressed by the organization," said Reston resident John Mahlmann. "The school is well managed. Cynthia has exceptional staff and faculty. The school also maintains high artistic standards."

Donavin said the year brings a new era of artistic direction at Classical Ballet Theatre. Gillmer Duran and Dubraskha Arrivillaga are the new artistic directors. "They were the former directors of the Alaska Dance Theatre," stated Donavin. "They bring their immense talent, energy, passion, and integrity to the organization. We are proud to have them with us."

With the addition of Arrivillaga and Duran to its faculty, CBT is taking a turn towards a more relevant and balanced dance experience for young and contemporary adults. "We feel part of the family," said Gilmer Duran. "I am enjoying watching the process of seeing the kids blossom, there has been tremendous progress."

"An Evening with Classical Ballet Theatre" featured pieces created by Meghan Rudorfer and Tara Henderson and performed in Philadelphia for the Youth America Grand Prix (YAGP). The show also included the Pas de Deux of Paquita staged by Ballet Mistress Dubraskha Arrivillaga as well as three brand new pieces by Artist in Residence Gillmer Duran. Before the intermission, dancers performed the Spanish themed Alegrias. "It was something created in mid-90s and we pulled it out of the cobwebs," said Meghan Rudorfer.

"My daughter has been dancing with this studio for seven years," said Tony de la Paz, a resident of Herndon. CBT provides exceptional performance opportunities with world renowned choreographers, and master teachers, while offering high quality productions to the community at affordable prices. CBT's extensive community outreach includes free performing arts enrichment programs for local schools, organizations and underserved populations, as well as "tribute" performances that raise public awareness for worthy causes and honor members of the community. CBT Herndon studio is located at 320 Victory Drive, Herndon. It will host a spring performance of Cinderella on April 25 and 26. For more information on CBT, visit [www.cbtnva.org](http://www.cbtnva.org).

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Anas Fain helped the South Lakes boys' indoor track team place fourth at the 6A North region meet by winning the 55-meter hurdles.



The South Lakes girls' 4x400 meter relay team (from left, Claire Nieuwsma, Nikayla Hoyte, Golden Kumi-Darfour, Jessica Lister) won the 6A North region title.

## South Lakes Indoor Track Qualifies 21 for States

**V**ictories in the boys' 55-meter hurdles, triple jump and girls 4x400-meter relay highlighted the South Lakes indoor track team's performance at the 6A North Region Championship Thursday, Feb. 19 at the Prince George's Sportsplex in Landover, Md.

SLHS will be represented by 21 athletes at the 6A State Indoor Championship Feb. 27-28 in Hampton.

Both teams finished fourth in their divisions in the 26-team field. The top six finishers in each event earned a spot in next weekend's state meet. The SLHS boys' team was led by juniors Anas Fain and Eric Kirlew, who took top honors in individual events with Fain capturing the 55-meter hurdles in 7.72 and Kirlew winning the triple jump in 45-01.50. Kirlew also teamed with sophomore Timiebi Ogobri and juniors Skander Ballard and Alex Rudison for fourth in the 4x200 relay (1:34.21). Ballard finished sixth in the triple jump (43-02.00). Senior Nathan Stone was sixth in the 55 hurdles (8.01). Junior Golden Kumi-Darfour placed the girls' team as the anchor on the winning 4x400 team that included senior Claire Nieuwsma and sophomores Nikayla Hoyte

and Jessica Lister and ran a 4:03.42. Kumi-Darfour also finished second in the 500 meters (1:18.07) as did sophomore Devyn Jones in the 55 meter hurdles (8.58).

Senior Comfort Reed finished third in the long jump (16-05.25) and fifth in the triple jump (35-05.00). Senior Jordan Lozama finished fourth in the 55 meters (7.45). Lozama, Hoyte and seniors Samantha Webb and Delaney Wickman finished third in the 4x200 meter relay (1:47.09).

Also, senior Ozioma Chinaka finished 10th in the pole vault, but her clearance of 8-09.00 is a school record.

The 4x800 meter team of senior Andrew McCool, juniors Connor Smith, John LeBerre and sophomore John Swecker ran a 8:15.73 for third.

Lake Braddock won the girls' regional title with a score of 88. Robinson finished runner-up (63.50), followed by Battlefield (52), South Lakes (50) and South County (43).

Lake Braddock also won the boys' title with a score of 92.50. T.C. Williams finished second (80), followed by Chantilly (64.50), South Lakes (42.50) and South County (41).



Chris Kucik and the Herndon boys' basketball team finished runner-up in Conference 5.

PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

## Herndon Boys' Basketball Falls in Conference 5 Final

**T**he Herndon boys' basketball team overcame an early deficit but eventually succumbed to Westfield, 66-54, in the Conference 5 championship game Monday night at Chantilly High School.

The Hornets fell behind 12-2 in the first quarter, but outscored the Bulldogs 22-8 over the next eight minutes to take a 24-20 second quarter lead. Westfield then

closed the first half on an 11-1 run, including a buzzer-beating 3-pointer by Blake Francis, and led for the remainder of the contest. Chris Kucik, Liam Harrington and Trevon Wright each scored in double figures for Herndon.

Kucik and sophomore guard Michael Griffin were named first-team all-conference. Keyshawn Hamlin was named to the all-defense first team.



Eric Kirlew won the 6A North region long jump title.

PHOTOS BY  
LISA MCARTHUR  
MILESTAT



# Yes, Cats Can Be Trained Too

Reston cat trainer Lisa-Maria Padilla gives techniques to train feline friends to do tricks.

BY STEVE HIBBARD  
THE CONNECTION

**L**isa-Maria Padilla, 53, of Reston was recently in Del Mar, Calif., close to San Diego, for the largest cat show in the West coast, called the San Diego Cat Fancier's Show, which featured more than 400 cats. She took her cat named Racy Mooner, a blue Abyssinian ("Abys") who has a Facebook page, there to do cat tricks and introduce people to training techniques.

Padilla, who has been showing her performance cats for 15 years all over the country, is an expert cat trainer who dispels the secrets to training cats. And like dogs, cats can be trained to do tricks, or behaviors.

Padilla says it's easier to start when a cat is a kitten, but older cats can be trained too. "Usually the problem is we humans don't have enough patience," she said.

The most important training mechanism for cats is to use treats, she said. And one of the biggest mistakes pet owners have is "free feeding," where people leave a bowl of food out all day for the cats to go back and forth at their will. She said it discourages cats from being motivated by treats because they're not going to be hungry. "You want the cat to be hungry and ready for a treat," she said.

She said the easiest thing to teach a cat is to sit and stay. "And that can be the basis of establishing if you're going to have a training period with your cat," she said.

The training consists of sitting your cat down close to you and putting your hand in front of its face, saying the cat's name and "stay," then immediately giving it a treat. "And you increase the period of time the cat needs to sit still," she said. Just gently keep the cat still as you say "stay."

She said it's important to keep the training sessions short — no more than two minutes twice a day. "You don't want to discourage the cat and wear them out in terms of their attention span," she warns. "And it's important to end on a high note."

Some trainers use clicker training but Padilla uses voice and hand commands. They work under the same principle of awarding a behavior based on a positive — based on a key word or sound that a cat knows and clicks in his mind that that is the desired behavior.

"I always tell people to keep their voice commands short and use a high voice," she said. "Cats respond to higher pitched sounds and they respond to those more positively. Cats are sensitive to a higher tone."

**FOR TREATS,** Padilla uses Whole Life Freeze Dried Chicken Treats, a nice protein snack. "We call it 'Kitty crack' and they're very responsive to it. To get a cat to roll over, she holds the treat over the cat's head, makes sure the cat is looking at the treat,



Lisa-Maria Padilla of Reston shows off 10-year-old Abyssinian, Twyla Mooner, at the National Capital Cat Show in Chantilly.

and with her free hand, will reach down and gently roll the cat over as she's moving the treat over the cat's head. "And I would say the key word, 'roll over,' and as I do it, I'm having the cat watch the treat and roll over." She adds: "You do it a few more times and see that the cat is struggling less and rolling over more."

It's a very short training session, not more than two minutes. She said if you do two training sessions a day, the cat is going to have a sense of expectation that the training session will lead to treats. "He will be more willing to pay attention and do the behavior that the trainer is asking."

For the learning curve, she said all cats are different. In some cats it may take two or three training sessions; in others, it may take a few weeks. "Consistency is very important," she said. "If you're going to do two training sessions a day, maintain consecutive days that you're doing it." She said it will get to the point where all you have to do is touch the cat and it will begin rolling over on its own. "Then one day, it clicks in

the cat's mind, and it will roll over on its own when the treat comes out. And you reinforce that when the cat thinks it will get a treat; it will do auto-rollovers. "But I don't reward those; I only reward when I say 'roll over.'"

Padilla said one of the most important behaviors that owners can teach is for cats to walk on a leash because that leads to pet safety. Having a cat who is used to a harness makes it much easier to travel more safely.

"I travel all over the U.S. demonstrating that cats can be trained, not just to perform tricks, but also to walk on a leash successfully," she said. "It's good for safety purposes; it enriches their lives, both the owner and animal to be able to go traveling and walking and enjoying the outside together."

She said training a cat to a leash is easy if you remember to be patient. "Introduce the walking vest as a friend to the cat. I put the walking vest in their bed — to have the cat's smell on the walking vest so that it smells like a part of the family," she said. "You get

your treats out and hold the treat far enough away from the cat; the whole idea is to get the cat comfortable and know that he can move when he has the walking vest on...we need the cat to rediscover that he has legs."

**EACH TIME** with that training session, the owner moves the treat further away, so the cat needs to move further to get the treat, she said. "Once I introduce the walking vest to the cat, I feed the cat meals while he's wearing the walking vest — to connote a positive experience when he's wearing it. And very quickly the cat can get used to wearing the vest. They're playing in it; it becomes a family experience and something that cat is comfortable wearing." She said the cat will feel comfortable and when it's time to attach the leash, the owner can start working with the cat to walk on the leash.

"Again, you're using the treats; never drag the cat on the leash. Use the treats; call the cat's name. Gently tug the leash and hold the treat." She adds: "I would say, 'Racy come.' I would gently tug the leash and hold the treat. You never want to yank the cat."

Getting the cat used to the walking vest is half the challenge won, she said. It's getting the cat to be comfortable in the walking vest. And once the cat is used to the leash, it makes it much safer to travel with the cat.

A cat that is comfortable in a vest is a more confident animal and less likely to get spooked easily, she said.

While showing her cats at cat shows, Padilla gets them to jump through hoops; jump from the floor to her shoulder; walk out on the end of her arm to retrieve a treat, and then walk to the other arm. "A cat can be trained to stay, look left or right, or any number of behaviors."

For the agility courses, which is a more directed, organized play, she said they utilize the cat's desire to run and chase prey. "That's why we use a lure with a toy on the end of it. And kittens are very easy to train for agility courses; they love to play."

Padilla's cat Twyla Mooner, a 10-year-old blue Abyssinian, was the first national feline agility champion, whose best record was seven seconds in a San Diego Cat Show. Twyla, who loves to play and has a great deal of energy, still enjoys going through an agility course.

Padilla said you can make your own agility courses at home using your imagination to create items for weave poles, setting up bottles that the cat needs to weave around; or making steeples that a cat can jump over using stacks of books.

"Introducing a cat to agility competition is a time for the owner and cat to have some organized play together," she said. "That can be a nice way for the cat to expend some energy and have some time together with the owner; it's mentally and physically stimulating to the cat."

CONTRIBUTED BY MARK HANNON/THE CONNECTION

# Not So Late This Time



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

But real-time once again: February 20, 11 hours, approximately, after our regularly-scheduled, post-scan meeting with the oncologist at 10:00 this morning. The news could have been better, and realistically assessing, it could have been worse. But since it wasn't better, it was definitely worse. Something "fluffy" (my oncologist's description) has appeared and begun to take some kind of shape in my left lung. It's not exactly a nodule or a tumor yet, but it's something that wasn't there previously. Oddly enough, all the other tumors that we've been monitoring didn't grow, nor were there any fluid issues to consider. Nevertheless, something new seems to be forming.

In discussing its appearance with my oncologist, he said if the mass was smaller, he wouldn't be too concerned and if it was larger he'd be more concerned. But its size is in the middle. Compounding his level of concern – and complicating his medical opinion, is that I remain relatively asymptomatic, giving him no clues and/or indications to corroborate a malignancy or even a possible pneumonia. Consequently, this appointment became a serious discussion about varying options to determine a prudent course of action treating forward; the kind of appointment which we haven't had for over 18 months, since I was last hospitalized in August, 2013.

To say we've been living on easy street, accordingly, this past year and a half is a bit of an oversimplification. To say we've occasionally taken for granted my amazing good fortune is likewise a bit of a presumption. We have, however, gotten accustomed to an ebb and flow, focusing more on the good and less on the bad. But since an updated determination concerning this growth can't be made for two months, until my next CT Scan (advanced by one month due to these new circumstances), waiting, wondering and worrying will be the inescapable order of the day, week and months ahead; a bit of a different mindset than we've been used to of late. Over this interval, my treatment will continue on as usual: chemotherapy every three weeks with Alimta, so long as my kidney function allows it. In the short-term interim, I have been prescribed five days of antibiotics in case this growth is pneumonia, not cancer. Regardless, we still won't know anything for a few months, unless, of course, I develop some new symptoms.

I can't deny that receiving this news earlier today was discouraging. I'll probably need some time to assimilate it, rationalize it, understand it and ultimately deal with it. But "it" is definitely now top of mind once again, not where I want it and certainly not where I need it.

Still, life goes on, as I often say, and it's a life I've been extremely fortunate to have had, given the "13-month to two-year" prognosis I received back in late February, 2009. (I always put the "prognosis" in quotes because that's what my oncologist told Team Lourie.) In fact, next Friday is February 27th, my six-year anniversary of surviving a terminal diagnosis, I'm proud to point out. And even though I've been there and done that years longer than anticipated, doing this doesn't get any easier.

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

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Notice is given that a hearing is scheduled for March 3, 2015 commencing at 1:30 p.m. in Division M of the Boulder County District Court, 1777 Sixth Street, Boulder, Colorado 80302. The purpose of the hearing is to request a change of name for Saira Rose Shafi. At this hearing the Court may enter an order changing the name of the minor child. To support or voice objection to the proposed name change, you must appear at the hearing. ATTORNEY FOR PETITIONER Christopher Tomchuck, Stevens, Littman, Biddison, Tharp & Weinberg, LLC, 250 Arapahoe Ave., Suite 301, Boulder, CO 80302.

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### FRIDAY/FEB. 27

**ESL for Beginners.** 10 a.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Dr. Reston. Join Elayne's Friday conversational group. Adults.

### SATURDAY/FEB. 28

**Hunter Mill District Community Summit.** 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. Frying Pan Farm Park Visitor Center, 2739 West Ox Road, Herndon. The Community Summit features presentations and conversations with county officials and residents on: FY2016 Proposed Budget for Fairfax County, FY2016 Proposed Budget for Fairfax County Schools, Hunter Mill Huddle with a focus on human service needs in the district.

**One-to-One Technology Help.** 11 a.m. Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Dr. Reston. Need help with eBooks, smartphones or tablets? Come to a Saturday session with a technology volunteer. Call branch for times. Adults.

### ONGOING

**Food Addicts in Recovery.** Wednesdays at 7 p.m. at The Vine Church, 2501 Gallows Road, Dunn Loring. Are you having trouble controlling the way you eat? Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous (FA) is a free twelve step recovery program for anyone suffering from food obsession, overeating, under-eating or bulimia. For more information or a list of additional meetings throughout the U.S. and the world, call 781-932-6300 or www.foodaddicts.org.

**Fairfax County's Meals on Wheels** urgently needs drivers in the Annandale, Franconia/Kingstowne, Reston, Mount Vernon and McLean areas. 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults.

**Knitting Enthusiasts, Musicians Needed.** 10:30 a.m.-noon, at Herndon Senior Center. Herndon Senior Center seeks a knitting enthusiast to teach basic procedures. Musicians to play soothing music on weekend mornings also needed. 703-324-5406, TTY 711, www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadult or VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov.

## FAITH NOTES

Faith Notes are for announcements and events in the faith community, including special holiday services. Send to reston@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Thursday.

**Ash Wednesday at Antioch Christian Church.** The public is invited to a free soup supper at 6:30 p.m. and Ash Wednesday worship on Wednesday, Feb. 18, 7:30 p.m. The service is a time of quiet and reflection on how we can prepare ourselves in the next 40 days for the death and resurrection of Jesus. Antioch Christian Church is located at 1860 Beulah Road in Vienna. For more info call 703-938-6753 or go to www.antiochdoc.org

**Trinity Presbyterian Church,** 651 Dranesville Road, Herndon, has Sunday worship services at 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Nursery and childcare are provided and youth and adult Sunday school classes are held prior, from 9:40-10:45 a.m. 703-437-5500 or www.trinityherndon.org. Vajrayogini Buddhist Center, Unitarian Universalist Church, 1625 Wiehle Ave., Reston, holds weekly classes starting Sept. 12, Thursdays 7-8:30 p.m., for the general public which use Buddhist teachings to practice meditation. \$12. 202-986-2257 or www.meditation-dc.org.

**Adult Sunday school** will be held 9:30 a.m. Sundays at the Washington Plaza Baptist Church at Lake Anne Village Center. The group is studying the Gospel of Mark. Services follow at 11 a.m.

# Fairfax County REAL ESTATE

## 2015 Assessments by Area

Hunter Mill Supervisor **Cathy Hudgins (D)** saw no change in her home assessment. This year, her home was worth \$638,100, same as last year.



Dranesville Supervisor **John Foust (D)** saw a 0.75% increase in his property value when compared to 2014. The county valued Foust's house at \$2,917,660 last year and \$2,939,290 this year.



Mason Supervisor **Penelope Gross (D)** saw her home value go up 4.91% from \$440,970 in 2014 to \$462,630 in 2015.



Lee Supervisor **Jeff McKay (D)** saw his assessment go up 9.07% from \$710,220 in 2014 to \$774,620 in 2015.



Braddock Supervisor **John Cook (R)** saw a 4.68% increase in the value of his home over the last year. Cook's home was assessed at \$634,760 in 2014 and \$664,480 in 2015.



Fairfax County Chairman **Sharon Bulova (D)** saw her home value go up 7.36% from \$601,550 in 2014 to \$645,380 in 2015.

Sully Supervisor **Michael Frey (R)** saw a 8.57% increase in the value of his home over the last year. Frey's home was assessed at \$252,830 in 2014 and \$274,500 in 2015.

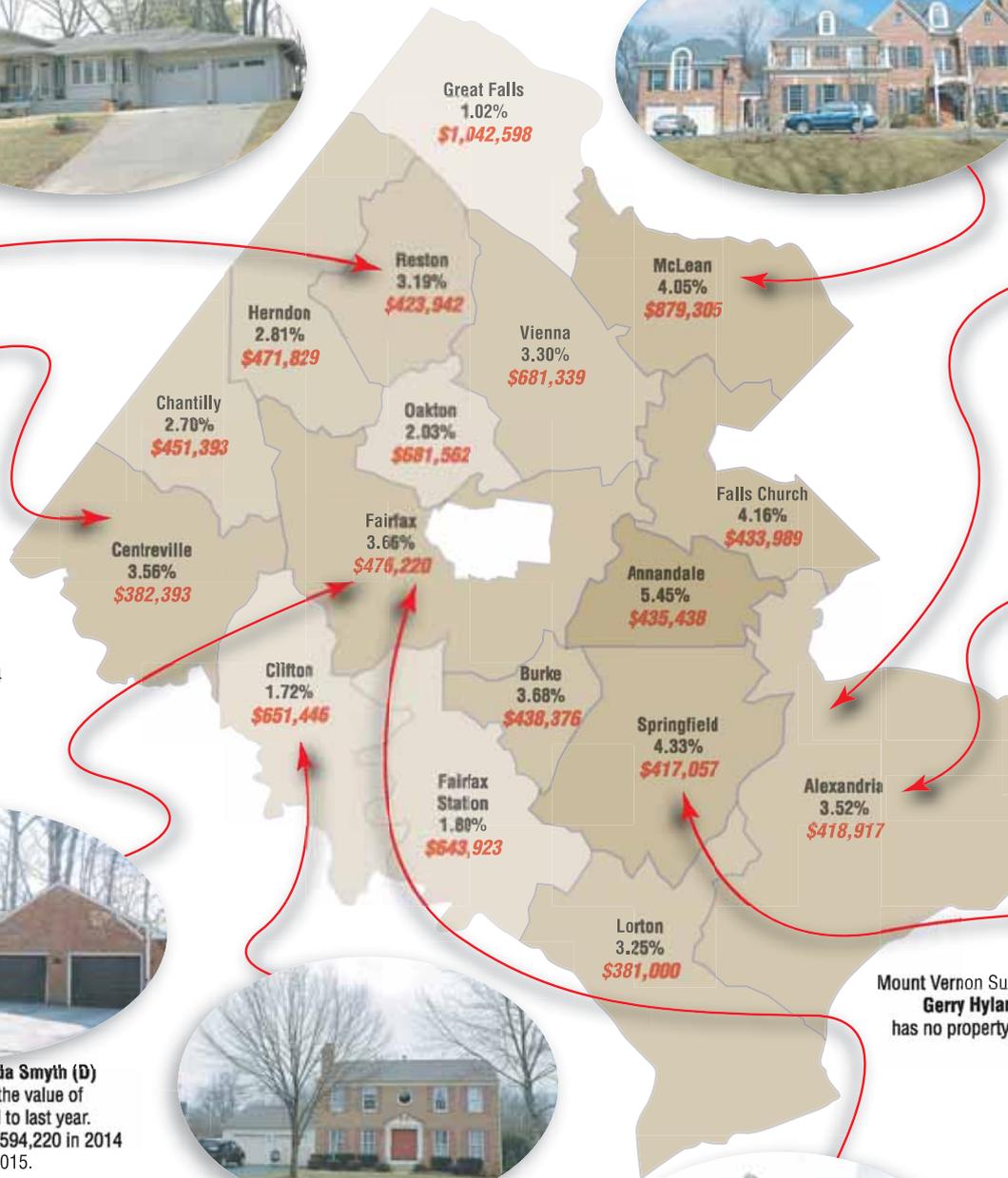


Providence Supervisor **Linda Smyth (D)** saw a 2.87% increase in the value of her house when compared to last year. Smyth's home was valued at \$594,220 in 2014 and \$611,280 in 2015.



Springfield Supervisor **Patrick Herrity (R)** saw a 4.57% gain in his property value when compared to 2014. Last year, his home was worth \$573,460 and this year it is valued at \$599,660.

Mount Vernon Supervisor **Gerry Hyland** has no property listed.



**2015 County Average (Percent Change)**  
 Single Family Detached **\$620,080 (3.27%)**  
 Townhouse **\$385,338 (3.81%)**  
 Condos **\$259,752 (4.48%)**

ZIP CODE AREA	2014 MEAN	2015 MEAN	PERCENT CHANGE
Alexandria/Mount Vernon	404,687	418,917	3.52
Annandale	412,942	435,438	5.45
Burke	422,815	438,376	3.68
Centreville	369,253	382,393	3.56
Chantilly	439,525	451,393	2.70
Clifton	640,436	651,446	1.72
Fairfax	459,412	476,220	3.66
Fairfax Station	632,518	643,923	1.80
Falls Church	416,666	433,989	4.16
Great Falls	1,032,117	1,042,598	1.02
Herndon	458,919	471,829	2.81
Lorton	369,023	381,000	3.25
McLean	845,113	879,305	4.05
Oakton	668,009	681,562	2.03
Reston	410,846	423,942	3.19
Springfield	399,742	417,057	4.33
Vienna	659,582	681,339	3.30

for single family, townhouses and condominiums

The average assessed value of a single family home in Fairfax County for 2015 is \$620,080, up 3.27%

SOURCE: FAIRFAX COUNTY