

Springfield CONNECTION

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Sarah Musa of Springfield delivers
baskets of supplies for new mothers at
Howard University Hospital
on Aug. 3, 2014.

Bringing Baskets of Love

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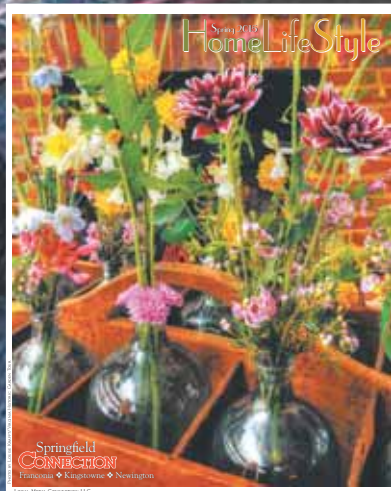
Lynbrook wins Healthy School Award

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Shark Tank coach Patty Friedman (right) and breast cancer patient Ann-Marie Boland speak to swimmers before the start of the team's fifth annual Breast Cancer Swim Marathon.



PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

Ann-Marie Boland of West Springfield (left) is joined by her granddaughter Anna Surbey (center), in eighth grade at Robert Frost Middle School, and her husband Kevin. Boland was the spokesmodel of the event, just a day away from her final radiation session for breast cancer treatment.

'The Army of Love' Fifth year of swim marathon brings in over \$23,000.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

In the last five years, young swimmers on the Shark Tank Racing Squad have seen one family lose a mother from breast cancer and another's grandmother diagnosed.

"It speaks to the kids," said Shark Tank coach Patty Friedman. "They need to learn what inflammatory breast cancer is; you don't find it on a mammogram. To see a child, have someone ripped out of your hands before you can even process it, they really get it."

Friedman, who has raised money and participated in the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer for the last 8 years, regularly quizzes her swimmers on what inflammatory breast cancer is and encourages them to spread the knowledge. "There's few of us who haven't been directly touched by it," she said.

Five years ago after she returned from an Avon walk, at practice her swimmers asked her about it.

Then they asked if they could get involved the following year. What followed was an event where swimmers each raised money to sponsor them completing a three-mile marathon. The money was then pooled with Friedman's own contribution to breast cancer research.

The meters and dollars have kept piling on, year after year. Prior to the start of the 2015 swim marathon, held March 1 at South Run RECenter, Friedman announced the donation total for this year's effort: \$23,200. Over the five years, the team has raised \$78,000 and logged one million meters, adding 270,000 this year.

Riley Allison of Fairfax participated in his second swim marathon with Shark Tank this year, along with 51 other swimmers. The Robert Frost Middle School eighth grader



Jennifer Young (left) in seventh grade at Washington Irving Middle School and Jenna Bakir (right) a sophomore at South County High School pause en route to completing a three-mile swim to raise money for breast cancer research.



(From left) Michael Kelly, sophomore at Lake Braddock Secondary School; Sophie Bennett, junior at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology; Alaina Bark, eighth grade at Lake Braddock and Charlie Lertlumprasert, junior at Jefferson, helped raise \$23,200 for breast cancer research with the rest of their Shark Tank teammates.

"went the extra mile" and swam 4 miles instead of three.

"It's great to let people know how bad the disease really is," said Allison. "I didn't know about it, but then learned a lot for a Civics project. Everyone in America knows someone with it."

Ann-Marie Boland of West Springfield has three granddaughters on the team, Nora, Devin and Anna Surbey. She was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 70 in May 2014 and has undergone 6 chemotherapy sessions and 6 weeks of radiation. Her final radiation session was scheduled for the day after the marathon. Friedman introduced her as the event's spokesmodel.

"They swim for me, but I would be happy if they didn't have to," said Boland. "I'm honored and proud of everyone on this team and the coaches."

Shark Tank's head coach Lance Page of Burke said the marathon event works on numerous levels as he and the coaches develop both swimmers and young adults.

"It's about what it brings out in the kids, the discipline, the fortitude," he said. "It's a journey. And to sponsor cancer research and give back to the community, seeing the kids wanting to give back through their gift of swimming — we're making them whole people and contributing citizens."

South County junior Moira LeMay and Westminster School seventh grader Ella Rose Friedman reflected on the marathon after LeMay completed her three miles.

"As a high school student, this was the biggest way I could help out," said LeMay.

"My mom's been telling me about giving back my whole life," said Friedman. "I know different people haven't been able to live as great a life as I have, so I love to give back."

To find out more about Patty Friedman's efforts in the Avon Walk or donate, visit www.tinyurl.com/tank2015.

Bringing Baskets of Love

West Springfield grad's nonprofit helps new mothers.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

Rather than diving into the surf at a sunny southern beach, Springfield resident Sarah Musa spent the first day of her spring break delivering care packages to Howard University Hospital.

The “baskets of love,” as she calls them, are for new mothers and contain essentials for going home and caring for a newborn baby, such as bibs, diapers, wash cloth, cotton balls, thermometer, medicine cup and clothing.

“I want the mothers to say ‘Yes, my baby has great potential,’” said Sarah Musa, a junior studying nursing at James Madison University.

Less than a year ago, Sarah Musa founded a nonprofit foundation called Prospects In Mummy’s Tummy International, with the simple but strong mantra “Healthy moms, healthy babies, healthy nations.” She delivers baskets to Howard (where she was once a volunteer) and ships them to Sierra Leone and Gambia, the original homes of her father Joseph and mother Jestina, respectively.

Sarah Musa grew up seeing her parents helping others. Her father is a water and sanitation engineer who has done humanitarian work including a water management project with Doctors Without Borders in the Democratic Republic of Congo. His nonprofit organization Washfa International seeks to provide sanitation and hygiene worldwide. Sarah Musa’s mother works at the Cherrydale Health & Rehabilitation Center in Arlington.

“They’ve always had the spirit of giving,” she said.

In high school at West Springfield, Sarah Musa helped start a chapter of Girls Learn International, during which she said “I learned I had a real passion for women’s rights.” The group raised money for a sister



The Musa family (from left Jestina, Sarah and Joseph) has turned their Springfield basement into an office for Sarah’s nonprofit organization Prospects in Mummy’s Tummy International.

school in India, working to help give more girls the chance to attend.

Then at James Madison, Sarah Musa’s interest in the medical field became more honed on labor and delivery.

“It’s exciting, cheering the moms on, telling them the end result is so close,” she said. “It brings unity to families; it’s a time of celebration.”

WHEN INTERVIEWING for the Carrie Kutner scholarship at James Madison, Sarah Musa remembers being asked about her 10-year goals.

Her answer included helping new mothers with supplies and building a clinic in Africa to facilitate more healthy births.

“It all starts with the mom,” Sarah Musa said. “Healthy moms, healthy babies, healthy nations.”

Her own mother urged her to get started sooner. “Why wait 10 years, why not start now?” Jestina Musa said. “In 10 years, you can look back and see if you had waited,

you wouldn’t have helped so many people.”

Sarah Musa’s father Joseph, having just gone through the process of establishing a 501(c)(3), helped her formalize Prospect In Mummy’s Tummy and work with contacts back in Africa. To date, the Musas have shipped 228 baskets to Sierra Leone and Gambia, as well as 200 backpacks containing school supplies.

Mothers at Howard have received 50 baskets, with another 15 going to individuals the Musas know or have met in the community.

They rent an office in Gambia, staffed by a volunteer who receives and helps distribute the baskets and backpacks, and in Sierra Leone, a pastor friend does the same.

“I’m very proud, that she is also doing humanitarian action,” said Joseph Musa. “In Africa, these things are a luxury.”

The African Health Observatory, with the World Health Organization, reports infant and maternal mortality rates in Sierra Leone are among the highest in the world. It lists



Sarah Musa of Springfield puts the finishing touches on a “Basket of Love” to be delivered to a new mother.

the majority of causes of death — including nutritional deficiency, pneumonia, malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS — as preventable but pervasive in rural impoverished populations. Right now all the work is self-funded — Jestina Musa shops at Wal-Mart, Target, Ross and dollar stores to buy supplies off the shelf — but Sarah Musa is working to increase recognition of her brand and attract sponsors. She’s built a website and produced pens, water bottles and promotional videos.

Sarah Musa knows finding more funding is her greatest challenge, but stays motivated by thinking of mothers and their children, “Just knowing these kids have such great potential, great futures,” she said.

HER GOAL is to provide 4-500 baskets of love each year, and eventually build the clinic she told her interviewer about in Sierra Leone. For more information on Prospects In Mummy’s Tummy International, visit www.pimtinternational.org.



PHOTO BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

Making the Best of Snow Days

Michael Eidelkind of Fairfax Station has been working on his snow cave for an hour at this point. “Six years ago I built one big enough for two and I’ve been dreaming of it ever since,” he said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PAT HERRITY

Supervisor Pat Herrity’s (R-Springfield) yellow Labrador retriever Rex chases him down the hill behind Herrity’s home in Little Rocky Run. “I spent most of the day working but did take a few runs down the hill,” Herrity said.

NEWS

League of Women Voters Presents Fire-arms Forum

What is Fairfax County doing to cut down on firearms-related suicide and domestic violence? The Fairfax-area League of Women Voters will host an informational public forum to discuss the topic at Pohick Regional Library in Burke on March 22.

Moderator Dr. Kristin A. Goss, Associate Professor of Public Policy and Political Science at Duke University, will lead a panel covering the collaborative efforts being taken by county organizations. Goss is a published author on fire-arms, including the books "Disarmed: The Missing Movement for Gun Control in America" and "The Gun Debate: What Everyone Needs to Know" (with Philip J. Cook).

The panel is scheduled to include Sandra Bromley, J.D., the county-wide domestic violence coordinator; Jesse Ellis, prevention manager of the Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services and MPO James T. Frey, crime prevention officer in the West Springfield precinct of the Fairfax County Police Department.

"Firearms: Reducing the Risk in Fairfax County" will be held Sunday, March 22 from 2-3:30 p.m. at the Pohick Regional Library, located at 6450 Sydenstricker Rd. in Burke. For more information, visit www.lwv-fairfax.org.

— TIM PETERSON

FAITH NOTES

Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416. Deadline is Friday. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

Fairfax Baptist Temple, at the corner of Fairfax County Parkway and Burke Lake Roads, holds a bible study fellowship at 9 a.m. Sundays followed by a 10 a.m. worship service.

Nursery care and children's church also provided. 6401 Missionary Lane, Fairfax Station, 703-323-8100 or www.fbtministries.org.

The Guhyasamaja Buddhist Center, 10875 Main St., Fairfax City provides free classes to both newcomers and advanced practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism.

The center emphasizes working with the mind and learning how to understand the workings of the mind, overcoming inner causes of suffering, while cultivating causes of happiness. Under the direction of Lama Zopa Rinpoche, the center is a place of study, contemplation and meditation. Visit <http://www.guhyasamaja.org> for more information.

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Balancing Act: Budgeting for Housing

BY DAVID LEVINE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
GOOD SHEPHERD HOUSING AND FAMILY
SERVICES, INC.

In our work housing families and individuals experiencing homelessness, many of them have never lived in housing of their own. They have lived doubled up with relatives and friends, camped out in broken-down minivans, or checked into motels for overnight stays. But signing a lease with a commitment to a year's worth of monthly rent payments — that's a new or long-ago experience for them. And it's a scary one, too.

That's when we come into their lives to help them out. Our housing locators and case managers work with them to understand the basics of renting a housing property. Without question, the rental lease gives them rights. It bestows on them the new lawful designation of "tenant." But a rental lease also comes with new responsibilities.

The responsibilities are not easy. Paying rent on the first of the month is their highest priority as a tenant. Keeping in line with rental community rules and regulations is equally important. Making sure that they keep their housing

in a good condition is another one. Excessive damage and wear-and-tear of their rental housing will make their security deposits — the one they had struggled for weeks to pull together — vanish into thin air.

We know the hardest part is making that rent payment on the first of each month. It is a real balancing act. As the sociologist Sudhir Venkatesh once noted about low-income families living in South Chicago who struggled to make rent payments: "This does not mean people fail to plan but ... there are

separate temporal horizons, one in the immediate future and the other a longer way off." In other words, these families focus on the expenses to be paid today, not tomorrow or next month.

In its just released poverty study of women and girls in the Washington D.C. metropolitan region, the Washington Area Women's Foundation included information on the average monthly expenses faced by poor families living in our region. Drawing on 2013 U.S. Census Bureau data and other datasets, the author of the study provided measures of economic security for what a family of three without public assistance would need to pay its expenses.

For example, even at \$1,325/month as the average rent in Fairfax County, this monthly rent is actually not the most costly of the family's household expenses. In fact, at an average of \$1,821/month, the highest monthly expense is for childcare. All told, when all the expenses are added up, a typical family of three would need \$82,572 in annual income in Fairfax County to afford to live comfortably there and cover all its expenses.

The federal poverty line annual income for a family of three is \$19,530. As many families experiencing homelessness are earning just above the poverty line, the amount of income needed to live without worries in Fairfax County is a long way off for them.

Still, even for low-income families and individuals experiencing homelessness, our case managers and housing locators can make a world of difference. They work to find them very affordable housing within a shrinking pool of this kind of housing. Once housed, they support them in getting a budget in place — and then we can only hope that nothing upends their budgets.

No medical emergencies. No transmission repairs on their cars used for work. No one-time spikes in their heating costs. It is a balancing act.

COMMENTARY

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

An Open Letter to Governor

Dear Governor McAuliffe,

When you visited our Pre-Session Round Table Luncheon in December 2013, we in the League of Women Voters were thrilled to hear you say, "I think we should do everything we can to make voting as easy as possible in Virginia."

You have kept your word, and have been a wonderful friend to voters in Virginia. We were proud to sit near the front when you announced budget money for new voting equipment, at your press conference in Virginia Beach — and to lobby for that budget line.

Now a bill has been passed by both houses, requiring citizens who apply for absentee ballots to include a photocopy of their valid photo ID. There is no real purpose to this bill, beyond making it harder to vote — because registrars have no photo with which to compare the mailed copy.

This measure would have especially harsh effects on the old, the poor, the disabled, and the homebound — depriving them of an easy way to vote if traveling presents a challenge.

A number of organizations — including many in the electoral board and registrar associations — oppose this bill. The League stood with them to lobby against this suppressive measure. And now we ask you, with great respect: Please

veto House Bill 1318!

We are counting on your strong promise to defend voters in Virginia. Thank you again for all you do for citizens.

Anne Sterling
President, League of Women
Voters of Virginia

Bully Bikers

To the Editor:

I'd like to share some comments about our wonderful town (Vienna) and the surrounding communities regarding bicycle riders. As a point of reference, I love to ride my bicycle, a Trek Hybrid that is perfect for the trails and the W&OD. I ride at least once a week and get in approximately 20 miles to get my exercise in and just general enjoyment.

My point here is that I recognize and appreciate all bikers and what they are doing as fun and exercise.

However, I witnessed yesterday an incident that is indicative of the increasing "bully" population of many bikers today. Bikers who ride in our streets designed for cars but taking aggression out on vehicles for following the motor vehicle laws when they themselves do not. I'm not talking about just the casual biker but the major bikers who think they are powerful enough to keep up a 50 mile an hour ride on our streets.

I was in the parking lot of Noodles and Company and Starbucks on

Maple Avenue on Sunday afternoon. A young lady driving her car in the right lane adjacent to the parking lot attempted to make a right turn (correctly) into the lot. A biker was attempting to pass her on her right side and he nearly clipped her. He started screaming and yelling at the young woman and then started hitting and kicking her car. She was terrified.

His obscenities and aggression was so horrific that it attracted numerous people.

As the young lady pulled into the parking lot the biker came to chase her and was all set to start yelling and screaming at her for "her fault" of hitting him. I intervened and stopped his aggressive approach and then he started taking it out on me! He saw my license plate as a Marine Corp's vanity plate and told me I was a disgrace to the Corps! He wanted a fight. That is all there is to it.

When is the Vienna Police department going to start ticketing these aggressive bikers who are driving on our roads but are not driving within the laws enacted for our roads? Also, what about "aggressive bicycle driver" behavior of these bully bikers? Can we do something about them as well?

Sean DuGuay
Vienna

Money Talks

To the Editor:

I must say I agree wholeheart-

edly with the "ugly" segment of your article that summarizes the end of the Virginia General Assembly (Editorial, "Good, Bad and Ugly: A look at recently ended session of the Virginia General Assembly," Connection, March 4-10, 2015). It seems as though lobbying and payoffs are far too common an occurrence in politics these days. This makes me question the legitimacy of our representatives, not to mention the government as a whole. When corporations fund a representative to a far greater degree than the majority of the public could donate during a campaign, wouldn't it be safe to assume that the money comes with multiple strings attached?

It comes with a price, that price presumably being an unwavering loyalty that disregards public opinion entirely. I see it almost as blackmail, "you put through policies that favor our business practices, the money keeps flowing and you get to stay in office."

Nowadays your bank account is your mouth, and if you don't have the money then your mouth is sewn shut. This is classism in a nutshell, and if we want to be true to democratic process, then there is no place for lobbying practices in the people's government. Oh wait I forgot, corporations are people too right?

Christopher S. Fenwick
McLean

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OPINION

The World Comes to Fairfax

World Police & Fire to be held in Fairfax County this summer.

By JOHN C. COOK
SUPERVISOR (R-BRADDOCK DISTRICT)

From June 26 to July 5, Fairfax County will host the 16th World Police & Fire Games. This international event—one of the largest of its kind—will attract between 15,000 to 30,000 visitors from all over the world, and will feature over 12,000 police officers, firefighters, customs, and correction officers competing in over 65 different sporting events.

For those competing this summer, the World Police & Fire Games is a tremendous honor, with over 70 countries represented. These brave men and women, who dedicate their lives to serving their communities around the world, will have the opportunity to showcase their athletic abilities in arenas, fields, and stadiums across Northern Virginia.

The World Police & Fire Games will provide members of the county a chance to personally honor these public safety officers by volunteering to help out at the Games. The Games require 4,000 volunteers and a variety of different volunteer positions still need to be filled.

Volunteer opportunities include acting as Games Ambassadors by sharing information with guests regarding event times, being a part of the Registration Team by helping to register each of the participants, or joining the Field of Play and Games Administra-



COMMENTARY

tion Team to help set up and tear down the sports events. Additionally, Games Village Team members are needed to ensure that all visitors have a wonderful experience, Ceremonies Team members are needed to assist in running the celebrations, and Transportation Team members are needed to provide logistical assistance. In order to ensure the health and safety of the athletes, visitors, and the staff, medical professional volunteers are also vital. I urge you to volunteer to help make these Games a huge success. If you would like to register to volunteer, or if you are looking for more information, please visit <http://fairfax2015.com/volunteer>.

The Games will provide a boost to the county's tourism industry and advance economic development throughout the region, placing Fairfax County among other prestigious host cities such as Melbourne, Stockholm, Barcelona and Belfast. In fact, several of the events will even be held right in Braddock District including locations like George Mason University, Northern Virginia Community College, Robinson Secondary School, and Wakefield Park. For those looking for more information, the World Police & Fire Games will be the focus of the Braddock Neighborhood News this month, which airs on Channel 16 on Sundays at 5 p.m., Wednesdays at 7 p.m., and Fridays at 5 p.m.

The World Police & Fire Games not only provide us an opportunity to recognize and support thousands of brave men and women who serve us on a daily basis, but they also offer us an avenue to show the world what those living here already know: that Fairfax County is a wonderful place to live, work, and visit. I hope you all take advantage of the spectacular events coming our way this June, and consider lending a hand as a Games volunteer.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Fair and Humane

To the Editor,

I completely agree that there should be better management of mental illnesses in jail (Editorial, "Managing Mental Illness in Jails," Connection, February 25-March 3, 2015).

This is a common pattern that many people are unaware of or simply don't care about because of the stigma that comes with those imprisoned.

It is common to assume that because someone is imprisoned, they are undoubtedly "evil." Since substance abuse and mental illnesses are common patterns among prisoners, more awareness should be spread on this issue so that treatment can be improved.

If people who are not imprisoned can receive support and treatment for their addictions and illnesses, then prisoners should receive the same opportunities. It is not fair to deny people access to these resources just because of what they've done in the past. In fact, receiving this treatment could improve their quality of life and possibly keep them from future criminal activities.

Despite what they have done in the past, criminals deserve fair and humane treatment just as any other human does. Along with humane treatment comes effective treatment, involving proper support and resources for those suffering from addictions and mental illnesses. Natasha McKenna obviously did not receive humane or effective treatment, as she was suffering from severe mental treatment and was punished to the point of death for it rather than receiving adequate and proper treatment. Her situation could have easily been avoided if there was better management of mental illnesses in her jail facility. Perhaps she would not have been so combative or aggressive if she had received adequate care. Enclosing people in restrictive jail cells is not an effective response to mental illnesses, as we have learned in the past from asylums and other inappropriate "hospitals" for the mentally ill. I hope that our society will soon realize this so that action will be taken.

Victoria Lamb
Reston

Helping Mentally Ill

To the Editor:

I would like to discuss the article "Managing Mental Illness in Jails" (Connection, February 25-March 3, 2015). I think that the mention of the mentally ill woman, Natasha McKenna, demonstrated an important issue in our society today. That issue is the prevalence of mental illness and how it is present in individuals but ends up affecting the larger society. This is because some people may see this as just one woman who had a history of mental illness, but fail to understand what may have contributed to her illness and the illness of others. I believe that we should look to the prison system, which is so widespread in our nation and question the effect prison has on people. Also, we should look at how we view mentally ill people. Do we just ignore them or do we actually try to help them so they don't end up in these harsh prison environments?

Steven Koskulitz
Herndon




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Parcel 2 (Mohammed N. Shirazi, et al.): 10503 West Drive #D, Fairfax; Fairfax Professional Village Condos.
Tax Map #: 57-4-20-4C

Parcel 3 (Mohammed N. Shirazi, et al.): 4242 Chain Bridge Road #C, Fairfax; Fairfax Professional Village Condos. Tax Map #: 57-4-20-6C

Parcel 4 (Mohammed N. Shirazi, et al.): 4242 Chain Bridge Road #D, Fairfax; Fairfax Professional Village Condos. Tax Map #: 57-4-20-7D

Parcel 5 (John Samuel Jackson, et al.): 6313 Old Dominion Drive, McLean; Chesterbrook; 0.438 +/- Acre.
Tax Map #: 0313-01-0070



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Lynbrook wins Healthy School Award

Students are awarded with \$1,000 and a show.

BY DOMINIQUE ESCALERA
THE CONNECTION

“**O**orah!” shouted the students from Lynbrook Elementary as the banner displaying their Health School Award was raised to its display height on the gymnasium wall.

About 311 Lynbrook students participated in the Marine Corps Marathon Kids Run in October, earning them the award of “Healthy School,” a check for \$1,000 and the rock and roll nutrition show, Jump with Jill.

Physical education teacher, Jed Bobier, has organized for the kids to participate in the Kids Run for 10 years. “It started before I came here with Mr. Dexter, he was from a military family,” said Bobier. “We, as a school, have been trying to make it bigger and better every year.” Lynbrook encourages all kids, first grade and up, to run. “We take six school buses packed with kids, volunteers and parents into Washington D.C.” Bobier explains, “It’s quite a day.”

“We’ve run it every year since first grade,” said sixth grader Erika Turcios. Turcios and her friends, Cindy Gutierrez and Liliana Alvarenga have done the Kids Run five times. “We like it because it’s fun and we are representing Lynbrook when we can beat all the other schools,” said Gutierrez.

All three girls plan to volunteer to run with the school next year, even though they will be attending Key Middle School. “We always feel excited at the end,” said Alvarenga. “And we get a bag of food at the end.”



Jed Bobier, Lynbrook physical education teacher, congratulates the children in the costume of his alter-ego, Mr. Johnny Rocks. Mr. Rocks only makes appearances during special events.

Sodexo is a sponsor for the MCM Kids Fun Run and hands out goody bags at the end of the race. “We want to initiate and support healthy eating and activities for kids in the community,” said Eugene McKnight, Sodexo area general manager.

Sodexo provided the school with a \$1,000 check. According to Lynbrook Principal Mary McNamee, the check will go to new equipment and resources in the P.E. department. “In that way it will touch all the children and they will all benefit from it,” she said.



Lynbrook Principal Mary McNamee receives a check for \$1,000 from Eugene McKnight, area general manager of Sodexo. Sodexo in partnership with the Marine Corps Marathon granted money to the school’s P.E. department.



Cindy Gutierrez and Erika Turcios dance along the Jump with Jill show. Both girls have run in the Marine Corps Marathon Kids Run five times.

Lynbrook has won the Healthy School Award every year since 2001. The National Watermelon Promotion Board sponsored a healthy assembly with Jump with Jill, a nutrition education live concert.

“We have a high poverty rate and a very

diverse community,” said McNamee, explaining the school’s focus to help grow the whole child, through education, community and healthy lifestyle. “We are delighted to teach the whole child and prepare them for life.”

Keene Mill Elementary School Hosts Take Your Family to School Week

Keene Mill Elementary School hosted this year’s Take Your Family to School Week to support student success.

National PTA’s Take Your Family to School Week is a program encouraging strong family engagement and the importance of partnerships among parents, teachers and school administrators.

For the 2014-2015 academic school year, Take Your Family to School Week will incorporate the theme Supporting Student Success, which will address the risks associated with high school dropout.

Keene Mill Elementary PTA received a grant from the National PTA and AXA



The event allowed Keene Mill Elementary School students and families to engage in hands-on science activities.

Foundation to host a Family Science Night. This fun and educational event led by the Carnegie Science Center was held on Feb. 25.

The event allowed Keene Mill Elementary

School students and families to engage in hands-on science activities.

“The Keene Mill PTA, with the support of our school, strives to engage our families by offering fun, community events. We are

grateful for this grant and the additional opportunity, as we know what a difference it makes for our students to have families involved,” said Kelly Wevley, Keene Mill ES PTA President.



PHOTOS BY MEREDITH ROCKEFELLER PHOTOGRAPHY



Chris Kim, chef at Kana Sushi.



PHOTOS BY MARISSA BEALE/THE CONNECTION

Kana Sushi is located on Old Keene Mill Road, and open seven days a week. The restaurant used to be the location of Toki Teriyaki.

Kana Sushi Opens in Springfield

A newly opened Kana Sushi, located on Old Keene Mill Road in Springfield, strives to offer authentic Japanese food at affordable prices.

The establishment opened Dec. 1 and is near Springfield Plaza, and right next to Noodles & Company. The small restaurant is owned by Haeri Kim. Her husband, Chris Kim, who attended culinary schools in Tennessee and in Toronto, Canada, is the restaurant's chef. "When I made the menu, I tried to make the prices lower than prices of competitors," said Kim. "We've received good business. People notice the restaurant when driving by." The restaurant's specialties are sushi and sashimi. The establishment has received favorable reviews on Yelp, generating an average rating of 4.5 out of 5 stars.

Patrons have referred to Kana Sushi as their "go-to place," praising the friendly staff and overall atmosphere. Popular menu items include the Kana Dragon Roll, which includes shrimp tempura, a crab salad, eel, tobiko, and the chef's special sauce. The Creamy Shrimp Tempura Roll, another popular item, is made of shrimp tempura, cucumber and avocado and comes with a crab salad.

"We have been in the Japanese restaurant business for about 10 years," said Haeri. "This is our first restaurant and is a dream come true."

The restaurant is open seven days a week, Monday through Friday during lunch time and dinner time. They are open all day on Saturday and Sunday.

— MARISSA BEALE

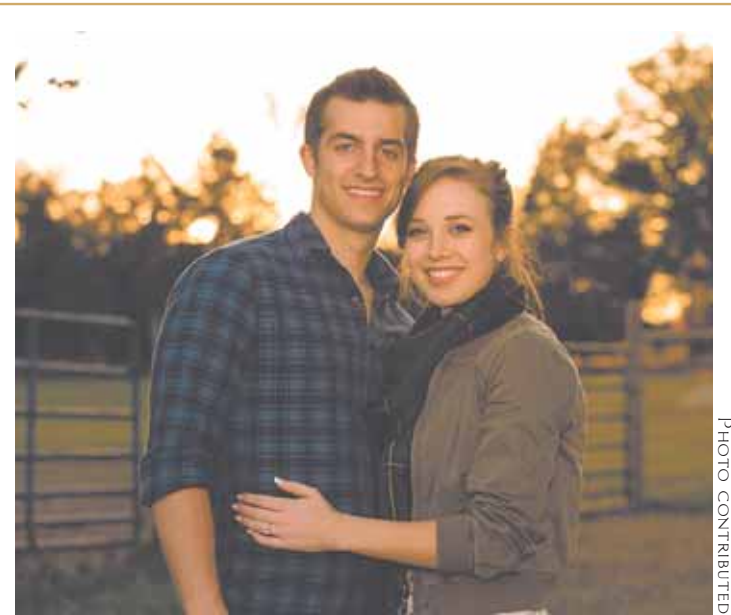


PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Stephen A. Lieske and Brynn E. Rollo

Brynn E. Rollo, Stephen A. Lieske Engaged

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas E. Rollo of Springfield are announcing the engagement of their daughter, Brynn E. Rollo, to Stephen A. Lieske, son of Mr. and Mrs. John A. Lieske of Fairfax.

Brynn is a graduate of George Mason University and is currently pursuing her Masters

degree at the University of Massachusetts Boston. She is employed by Learning Systems International as a Technical Writer in Washington D.C. Stephen is a graduate of James Madison University. He is employed by ICC Structured Cabling as their Mid-Atlantic Regional Sales Manager. An early 2016 wedding is planned.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416. The deadline is the Friday prior to the next paper's publication. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

THROUGH SUNDAY/APRIL 5

Reference. W-16 - Vulcan Gallery, Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Reference is a multi-media exploration of the various modes of influence that inform visual artists in both content and process. In Reference, participating artists incorporate performance, sound, process, and imagery to address the strong influence of other artists, visual and otherwise, upon their creative output as well as their deepest philosophical and spiritual understandings. No ticket required.
www.workhousearts.org. 703-584-2900.

THURSDAY-SUNDAY/MARCH 12-14

"Doubt: A Parable." 7:30 p.m. Old Town Village, 3950 University Drive, Fairfax. Tickets are \$17 in advance. Remaining seats, if available, will be \$20 at the door, one hour prior to performance times. Free parking is available. The production runs approximately 90 minutes, and a brief, talk-back session with the actors and directors will follow each performance. Buy tickets at: http://fairfaxcitytheatre.ticketleap.com/doubt-a-parable/.

FRIDAY/MARCH 13

Military and the Arts Reception. 7-9 p.m. Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. The event is the culminating performance of a Music & Writing workshop offered at the USO Warrior and Family Center at Fort Belvoir. In that workshop, local Service Members will collaborate with internationally touring poet Mahogany L. Browne as well as Christylee Bacon and Wytold to compose original songs that speak to the theme of origins and place. The event will also feature remarks by Colonel Gadson (USA, Ret.), and the launch of the Workhouse Military and the Arts Initiative. This event is sponsored by the USO of Metropolitan Washington-Baltimore.

SATURDAY/MARCH 14

Burke Racquet & Swim Club's 30th Birthday Celebration with Health Fair & Inova Blood Drive. Blood drive: 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. Health Fair: 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. 6001 Burke Commons Rd., Burke. Come and visit with your local doctors and health presenters. Free morning exercise classes, seated massages,



Frozen Potomac on Sunrise by artist Glen Cook. View more of his work at the Workhouse Arts Center exhibit "Landscapes, Dancers & Other Things I See." Cook will be on hand to talk about his work at the opening reception on March 14, from 6-9 p.m. in Gallery 9 at The Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton.

Clifton to Host Meeting On Human Trafficking

The Democratic Women of Clifton and Northern Virginia are trying to raise awareness of the risk of human trafficking. On March 15 the organization plans to host a public meeting from 3-5 p.m. at the Clifton Community Town Hall on the issue. Speakers will include Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-30), Elizabeth Payne, a member of the Northern Virginia Human Trafficking Task Force and K-12 coordinator for health, family life edu-

cation, and physical education with Fairfax County Public Schools, and Jenna Jacoby, mentor coordinator for Youth for Tomorrow.

The Fairfax County Democratic Committee and Springfield District Democratic Committee are co-sponsors of the meeting.

Clifton Community Town Hall is located at 12641 Chapel Road in Clifton. For more information, email info@dwcnv.org.

—TIM PETERSON

rock climbing and more. You can even save a life by donating blood. **Annual Talent Hunt Competition** at Robert E. Lee High School, 6540 Franconia Rd., Springfield, 1—4 p.m. organized by men of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc., Psi Alpha Alpha and Eta Delta Delta Chapters of Fairfax County, in conjunction with P.A.A.M.A.S. Social Organization of Lee High School. Students exhibit their talents and share gifts of musical disciplines, oratorical delivery and visual artistic interpretations with family, friends and community.

History Symposium: Food in America. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. American cuisine,

like the nation itself, is a melting pot. Explore historical influences on the American dinner table through lectures, exhibits and living history. Distinguished guest speakers discuss the influence of African food traditions, European culinary techniques, innovations in food technology and more on America's palate. Lunch included. Call site for vegetarian request. \$75. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring using code 290 183 3101 or call 703-642-5173.

The Male Chorus Annual Fundraiser, with a free Gospel Concert and Dinner Sale at Greater Little Zion Baptist Church, 10185 Zion Drive, Fairfax: 2-4 p.m. Dinner SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

SPECIAL CONNECTIONS CALENDAR

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday unless noted.

MARCH

3/25/2015Spring Fun, Food, Arts & Entertainment
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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

Sale; 4:30-6:30 p.m. - Gospel Concert, featuring Minister Isaac Howard and the Combined Gospel Chorus, along with the Zion Inspirational Choir of Greater Little Zion. Dinners \$12, Concert - free (Love Offerings will be accepted). Call 703-764-9111 to place advance orders.

2nd Saturday Art Walk. Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. The 2nd Saturday Art Walk at the Workhouse showcases the diverse work of more than 100 visual artists in a unique historic venue, creating an atmosphere that encourages visitors to immerse themselves in the richness of this creative community.

“Landscapes, Dancers & Other Things I See” Exhibit. 6-9 p.m. The Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Rd., Lorton. Glenn Cook will be on hand to talk about his work at the opening reception on. A freelance writer and editor whose work has been featured in local, regional and national publications, Cook's interest in making art from the ordinary, mundane aspects of life started as a tribute to his late father, a visual artist who died in 2007.

SUNDAY/MARCH 15

Floral Design Workshop: Catch the Irish Spirit. 2:30-4 p.m. Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Irish or not, you can enjoy the spirit of the day. Floral design instructor Chuck Mason helps you create an arrangement with an Irish spirit using decorative greens and flowers. \$38 plus \$25 supply fee. Register for both the program and workshop supply fee. Register at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring using code 290 188 4601 for the program and code 290 188 4602 for the supply fee or call 703-642-5173.

Model Trains Running. 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. The Northern Virginia NTRAK group will have running N Gauge Model trains at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. Admission: Museum members and children 4 and under, free; children 5-15, \$2; adults 16 and over, \$4. www.fairfax-station.org, 703-425-9225.

THURSDAY/MARCH 19

Fashion Show Luncheon & Marketplace Fundraiser. 10 a.m. . Church of the Good Shepherd, 9350 Braddock Road, Burke. At 10 a.m. to noon, attendees are invited to shop at the spring marketplace where local vendors will sell their products, with a percentage of proceeds going to SCFB. Starting at noon, there will be a *fashion* show by Draper's & Damon of Fairfax and special luncheon, along with door prizes, raffles and coupons. For reservations, call Faye Quesenberry, 703-620-0161, by March 12. The cost is \$25; checks payable to SCFB. If transportation is needed, call the SCFB office 703-323-4788. Visit www.scfbva.org for more information.

THURSDAY-SUNDAY/MARCH 19-21

BULLETIN BOARD

Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416. The deadline for submissions is the Friday prior to publication. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

FRIDAY/MARCH 13

Tax Relief Workshop. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Providence Community Center, 3001 Vaden Drive, Fairfax. Real estate tax relief is available for older adults and people with disabilities who meet certain qualifications; you may also be eligible for car tax relief and tax relief for renters. Hosted by Supervisor Linda Smyth. Free. 703-560-6946.

SATURDAY/MARCH 14

Chairman Bulova's Community Dialogue on the Budget. Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax - Conference Room 9/10, 2:30 p.m. **Speak Up for a Child.** 11 a.m. - noon. Fairfax CASA office, 4103 Chain Bridge Rd., Suite 200, Fairfax. Fairfax Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) is hosting an information session. If you would like to learn more about advocating for abused or neglected children,

Friends of the Burke Centre Library Spring Used Book Sale. Thursday: 1 - 9 p.m. Friday: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Saturday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Thousands of books to look through covering every genre of interest plus DVDs and CDs that have been donated. Proceeds benefit programming at Burke Centre Library and collection enhancement for the Fairfax County Library system.

FRIDAY/MARCH 20

Garden Talks with Master Gardeners: Composting. 1:30-2:30 p.m. Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Don't drag your garden and yard waste out to the curb week after week. Learn how to turn it into compost or black gold. Master Gardeners show you the right way to make rich, nutrient-filled compost that plants love. \$10. Register at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring using code 290 183 3501 or call 703-642-5173.

SATURDAY/MARCH 21

Decorating Birdhouse Gourds Workshop. 10-11:30 a.m. Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Turn a gourd into a beautiful, crafted birdhouse for your feathered friends. Susan Eggerton shows you a stencil, wood burning, and ink dye technique to free your decorative imagination and turn a plain gourd into a work of art. \$35 plus \$25 supply fee. Register in advance for both the program and supply fee at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring using code 290 201 5801 for the program and code 290 201 5802 for the supply fee or call 703-642-5173.

Brownies: Letterboxer Badge. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. For Girl Scout Brownies. Want to work towards your Letterboxer badge? Join us and complete activities that satisfy requirements for this badge. \$12. Register at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring using code 290 274 4201 or call 703-642-5173.

Juniors: Geocacher Badge. 1-3 p.m. Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. For Girl Scout Juniors. Want to work towards your Geocacher badge? Join us and complete activities that satisfy requirements for this badge. \$15. Register at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring using code 290 274 4801 or call 703-642-5173.

Date Night: Chef's Table. 7-9 p.m. Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Anyone can go out for dinner and a movie so why not make your night something special to be remembered? Date Night cooking classes are designed to be fun, relaxing and an escape from the daily grind. They are great way to learn some basic cooking techniques while enjoying your company and making new friends. The menu items will be prepared by participants working together at each of the cooking islands. Participants will be served a tasting portion of all the entrees and a pre-chef-selected drink of

please call 703-273-3526, x22 or email ekosarin@casafairfax.org for more information.

TUESDAY/MARCH 17

Tax Relief Workshop. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Kings Park Library, 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke. Real estate tax relief is available for older adults and people with disabilities who meet certain qualifications; you may also be eligible for car tax relief and tax relief for renters. Hosted by Supervisor John Cook. Free. 703-425-9300.

SATURDAY/MARCH 21

Opportunity Expo and Job Fair. 1-5 p.m. West Springfield High School, 6100 Rolling Road, Springfield. The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce has partnered with Supervisor Pat Herryty and West Springfield High School PTSA to host a job fair for local job seekers. Although the job fair is not strictly for students and young job seekers, area high schools are making a push for students and parents to take advantage of this event to line up after-school employment, an internship, volunteer opportunities or a seasonal position for the summer.

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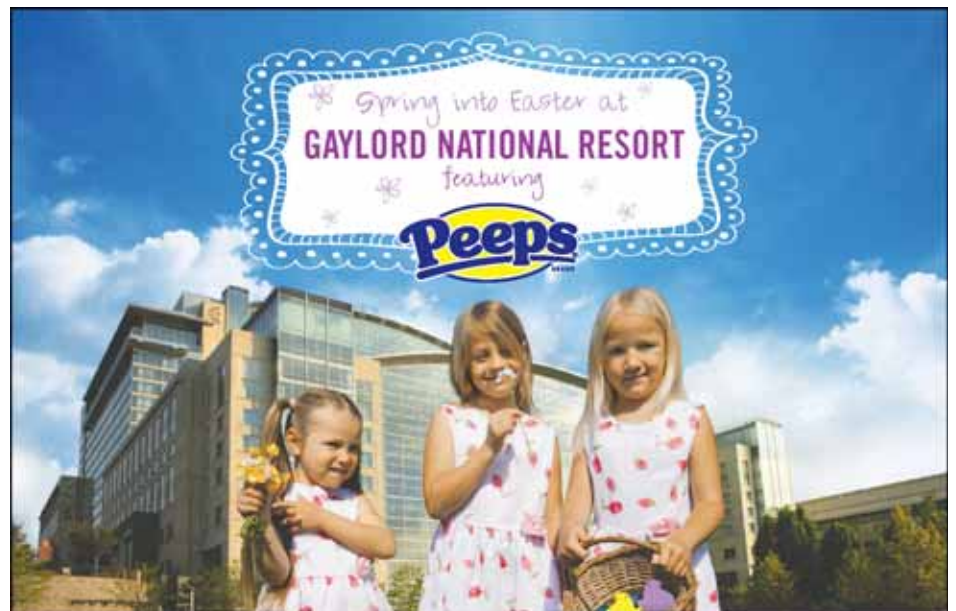
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Fairfax Gymnast Barborek Wins State All-Around Title

Senior takes advantage of second chance, wins as alternate.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax gymnast Rachel Barborek thought her year-long dream of winning a state all-around championship was dead following the 6A North region meet on Feb. 11.

Barborek finished outside of the top four in the all-around standings and failed to earn a state berth. Nearly a month later, however, a text message from head coach Marissa Gaines informed Barborek she had received a second chance.

Barborek learned on Friday, March 6 that she would compete as an alternate in the state all-around competition. Two days later, the senior made the most of her opportunity.

Barborek won the all-around championship at the VHSL individual state meet on Sunday, March 8 at Patriot High School. She produced a score of 38.7, finishing ahead of Hickory's Haley Cole (38.3), Marshall's Morgan Stahl (37.625), Cox's Mary Munitz (37.35) and Washington-Lee's Sophie Hatcher (37.325).

Barborek became just the second Fairfax County gymnast to win the state all-around title since 2002, and the first since Herndon's Maria Hayden accomplished the feat in 2010.

Barborek's stellar performance included three event titles — bars (9.825), floor (9.675) and beam (9.65).

"I was just so excited," Barborek said after the meet, "that I got a second chance."

Barborek's year-long journey to a state championship began at the 2014 state meet. After watching Great Bridge gymnast Courtney Adams step onto the medal stand and accept the all-around title, Barborek, then a junior, vowed to be No. 1 the following year.

"I remember last year watching the girl who won all-around at states," Barborek said, "just watching her go on the podium and I was saying, 'I want that to be me next year.'"

The thought of an all-around title kept Barborek motivated during training. When her senior season arrived, the former Level 10 club gymnast was impressive. She crushed the competition during the final home meet of her high school career, when she produced an all-around score of 38.325. She also finished first in the all-around at Washington-Lee's Barbara Reinwald Invitational.

At the Conference 6 meet on Feb. 2, Barborek won the beam championship and earned a regional all-around berth. But nine days later, with Barborek needing to qualify just once more to earn a trip to states, she stumbled during the 6A North region meet



Fairfax gymnast Rachel Barborek won the bars state championship (9.825) on March 8 at Patriot High School. Barborek's stellar performance included two other event titles — floor (9.675) and beam (9.65).

at Lake Braddock Secondary School.

Barborek fell during her beam routine and earned a less-than-stellar score of 8.475. Her bars routine went well until the end, when a "mental block" led to Barborek hanging on too long before her dismount. She finished with a score of 8.775.

At the end of the competition, Barborek had won a regional floor title and qualified for states in three events. However, she placed fifth in the all-around, and only the top four advanced to states.

Her year-long goal of winning an all-around state title had seemingly come to an end.

"She worked really hard and she was really, really disappointed after regionals," said Barborek's mother, Susan Barborek, a Fairfax assistant coach and former gymnast at the University of Michigan. "It was the

worst meet of her life."

The individual state meet, originally scheduled for Feb. 21, was postponed three times due to inclement weather concerns. During the delay, Yorktown freshman Bella Kane, who placed second in the all-around at regionals and earned a state berth, suffered a knee injury during a club meet. The injury kept Kane from competing at states and opened the door for Barborek to compete in the all-around as an alternate.

After Gaines was notified, she sent a text message to Barborek and her mother on Friday night, roughly 40 hours before

the competition, to inform them of the senior's all-around opportunity. While Barborek was excited, she now faced the challenge of going through her beam routine, which she hadn't practice for three

weeks after failing to qualify at regionals. Barborek practiced on a balance beam for one hour on Saturday before competing at states the following day.

During warmups on Sunday, Barborek could sense the possibility of something special happening.

"I had a pretty good vault warmup — it was OK — and then I went to bars and I had a really good bar warmup and I was like, it's going to be a good day," Barborek said. "I could just tell from the beginning."

Gymnasts from the 6A North region started on vault, and Barborek produced a score of 9.55, which would place her in a tie for 10th.

After vault, it was on to bars, the event during which Barborek ran into a mental block at regionals and failed to let go when she was supposed to dismount. On this day, however, the Fairfax senior nailed her routine and produced the top score of the day in any event — 9.825.

Susan Barborek celebrated by jumping in the air and hugging her daughter after Barborek landed her dismount.

"Were you at regionals?" Susan Barborek asked a reporter when talking about her celebration. "She didn't let go of the bar. So, yes, I was happy that she let go of the bar. ... I was just happy that she did what she is capable of doing."

From there, it was on to beam, the event Barborek had practiced once in three weeks. Lack of practice did not hinder her performance, however, as Barborek earned a 9.65, which held on as the event's top score.

At that point, with three strong performances in the bag and Barborek's best event — floor — remaining, a championship seemed like a possibility to Barborek and her mother.

"... I realized, you've hit three events and floor is your best," Susan Barborek said. "I was like, I know what you can do on floor, so I was feeling somewhat confident."

Barborek finished strong, scoring 9.675 on floor, which gave her three event championships and secured the all-around title.

"It's amazing, but it doesn't surprise me, just knowing how much of a hard worker she is and how dedicated [she is] and how much she wanted it," Gaines said. "I knew she would fight for it."

With the competition having ended, Barborek would make four trips to the top of the medal stand.

"I was very happy for Rachel," Hayfield gymnast Molly Overstreet wrote in an email. "I knew from the beginning that she deserved it and that she could win the all-around."

After receiving first-place medals for bars, beam and floor, Barborek's final trip to the top of the medal stand completed her year-long goal of winning the state all-around title.

It required a second chance, but Barborek made the most of her opportunity.

"I couldn't ask for a better state meet or a way to end the season," Barborek said. "... The whole year I was just training, thinking I want to win states [in the] all-around. When I won, it's just unreal. I was so happy."

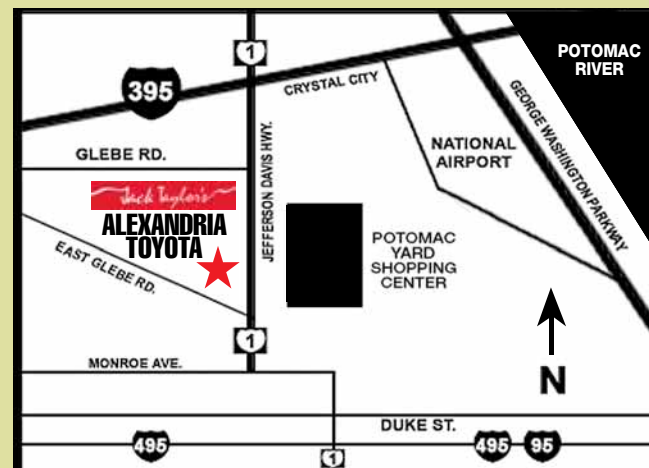
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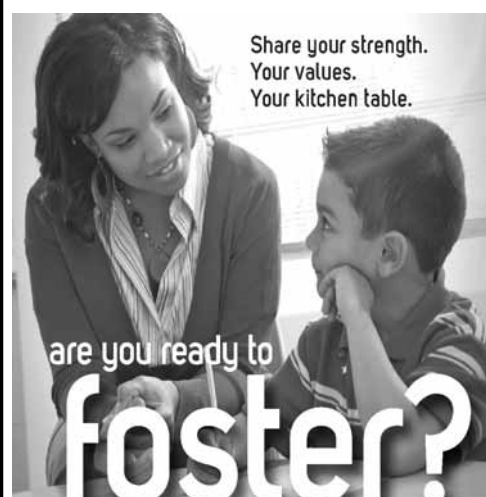
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Spring 2015 HomeLifeStyle

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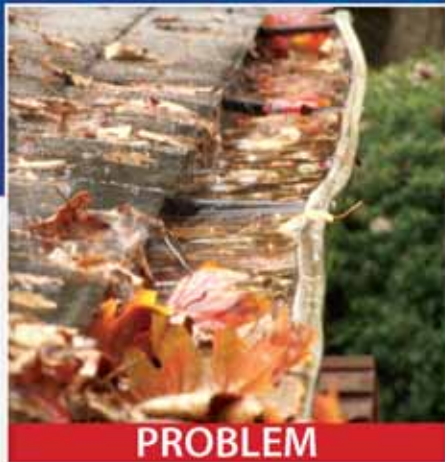
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Spring Pop for the Real Estate Market?

Agents again optimistic for a strong spring

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

Just like last year, real estate agent Ron Kowalski is optimistic coming out of the winter doldrums. He runs Ron Kowalski Real Estate Group with Keller Williams Capital Properties, covering Lorton, Fairfax Station and Springfield.

"Expectations are again high for the spring market," he said. That's due in part to mortgage interest rates being attractively low, just like last year. "The rates haven't gone up, as we all thought."

Interest rates for a 30-year fixed mortgage, both nationally and in Virginia, weren't quite as low in April 2014 (4.1-4.2 percent) as the year before (3.3 percent), according to the online real estate database Zillow. But with the economy gradually recovering, agents were feeling a surge coming on.

In 2014, "the year started off strong until we got up to about July and August," said Rex Reiley, with RE/MAX Allegiance in the Mount Vernon area, "when things started to taper off a bit."

Agents were also anticipating a raise in rates, but that didn't happen. And now, the national and state interest rates are currently hovering around 3.8 percent for a 30-year fixed mortgage with a credit rating of 740 to 850 according to Zillow.

Though rates have dipped somewhat from a year ago, prices and available inventory have grown.

In the past year, Fairfax County has seen the average selling price of homes rise from \$491,144 to \$526,786 (a 7.3 percent increase) versus the Mid Atlantic Region average increase of 3.2 percent. Over the same period the number of active listings in the county increased from 1,634 to 2,198 (a 34.5 percent increase over last January). (Source: RealEstate Business Intelligence)

With the spring 2015 market preparing to bloom, agents are hopeful the low rates and available inventory will motivate more buyers and sellers to get off the fence and into the arena. Particularly because it's unclear when rates might rise again.

"People don't want to wait," said Pattie Mancini, whose coverage area with Avery-Hess Realtors includes Springfield. She said her office has been hitting sales goals for the first time in over a year. "With prices going up, and interest rates might be going up, this is the perfect storm."

Mancini said she's seeing more "millennials" coming into the market in Springfield, and finding more houses available from older individuals who had been holding out while the market was worse over the last five years.

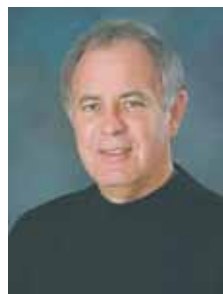
"The millennials are getting older," she said, "seeing it's not such a bad idea, and



PHOTO COURTESY OF PATTIE MANCINI
5409 Yorkshire St., in the Kings Park area of Springfield, listed at \$535,000.



PHOTO COURTESY OF RON KOWALSKI
"The builder, McShay Communities from Springfield, is building four homes on spec since he's optimistic about the spring market in this price range (\$949,900-\$1.3M)," said Ron Kowalski, of the new McDonald Estates development in Lorton. "We even painted, decorated and staged the model home (pictured, available for \$1.25M), which is rare for a seven-home development." One active listing is 9324 Dachshund Drive, listed at \$949,900.



Rex Reiley with RE/MAX Allegiance.



Ron Kowalski of Keller Williams Capital.



Pat Richter of Residential Preferred.



Pattie Mancini of Avery-Hess Realtors.

seeing more value in a mortgage than rent."

Pat Richter with Residential Preferred Properties in Burke could use more sellers putting up their property. With more people gaining confidence in their economic stability, she said there are more buyers looking to "move up" in her area.

"For years, we haven't had much of a move up market," Richter said. "Now, people are starting to say this townhouse is

too small, this single family home is too small, and want a bigger one."

With the move up market and more buyers looking to move into Burke, "It's a good time to be a buyer," she said. "But that doesn't mean prices have escalated tremendously. It's interesting because assessments all went up. Now starting April 1, we'll see prices go up a little, pricing for the spring and summer market."



PHOTO COURTESY OF REX REILEY
8717 Falkstone Lane in Mt. Vernon Manor, Mount Vernon. "This house went on the market Feb. 25 and a contract was ratified Feb. 28th," said Rex Reiley. "There were multiple offers because this was listed at \$370,000. The interior needed to be remodeled totally and with its low price, it attracted many investors and builders who will renovate it."



PHOTO COURTESY OF REX REILEY
4505 Dolphin Lane, located in Yacht Haven, Mount Vernon, is listed at \$875,000. Its renovations include a two-floor addition on a half-acre lot.

Fairfax County mailed its 2015 real estate assessment notices Feb. 17: 74 percent of residential properties saw an increase.

SEE LOW INTEREST RATES, PAGE 5

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HomeLifeStyle

Historic Virginia in Gardens

Tour includes a rare private look at special properties in Fairfax County, Old Town Alexandria and Leesburg.

The Virginia Historic Garden Tour is an 8-day event that stretches across the Commonwealth. Each spring visitors are welcomed to over 250 of Virginia's most beautiful gardens, homes and historic landmarks. This event provides the opportunity to see unforgettable gardens at the peak of Virginia's springtime color, as well as beautiful houses sparkling with more than 2,000 flower arrangements created by Garden Club of Virginia members.

The Clifton Historic District, registered as a Virginia Historic Landmark, was a Civil War railroad stop and is filled with shops, memorable restaurants and restored homes. Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross, tended to soldiers after the Battle of Second Manassas at St. Mary's Church and the historic Fairfax Station, now a Railroad Museum.

A self-drive tour on April 21 features stables, vineyards, a world-class garden, Georgian-revival architecture, and a 10,000 square-foot contemporary home with a vanishing edge swimming pool – four private homes with gardens and two stables in all. Tour ticket includes a tea at the Clifton Presbyterian Church.

Tour proceeds fund the restoration and preservation of Virginia's historic gardens, and provide graduate level research fellowships for building comprehensive and ongoing records of historic gardens and landscapes in the Commonwealth, and support the mission of the Garden Club of Virginia.

Clifton and Fairfax Station, Tuesday, April 21

This self-drive tour features stables, vineyards, a world-class garden, Georgian-revival architecture, and a 10,000 square-foot contemporary home with a vanishing edge swimming pool – four private homes with gardens and two stables in all. Tour ticket includes a tea at the Clifton Presbyterian Church. Advance Ticket Sales: \$30 at www.vagardenweek.org or email fairfaxtickets@vagardenweek.org. Visit www.gardencluboffairfax.blogspot.com for a list of local retailers selling tickets.

Old Town Alexandria, Saturday, April 18

Old Town Alexandria was in 1946 the third city in the country to create a historic district to preserve its downtown. Today it has 4,000 buildings with a historic designation. The April 18 walking tour in Old Town includes five row



PHOTO COURTESY OF GARDEN CLUB OF FAIRFAX

Nestled in an equestrian neighborhood, a 10,000 square-foot contemporary home was built in 2013 for an active family with young children. An immaculate two-stall stable is home to a beloved horse and a pony. The wife is an accomplished equestrian as evidenced by a tack room filled with trophies and ribbons.

Virginia Historic Garden Tour in Clifton and Fairfax Station

❖ 7014 Redlac Drive, Clifton Located in a pastoral setting with grazing horses nearby, this graceful 1987 Georgian Revival house draws its elegant inspiration from historic Williamsburg. Large rooms with arching Palladian windows overlook a formal boxwood knot garden and serene five-acre landscape. The hardwood tree canopy shades a hillside azalea and rhododendron

garden with a bridge over a swale. Details inside include formal dining and living rooms with deep crown and base molding and regal blue and gold wallpaper. Antiques and the owners' serendipitous flea market finds abound. The foyer, with Currier and

Ives prints, leads to the living room with its 1876 grand piano. The dining room features a silver meat dome on the hunt board as well as a mahogany tea cart handmade in Honduras. The large oak table in the gour-

SEE HISTORIC GARDENS, PAGE 6

houses with courtyard gardens in this preserved area, and refreshments at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. In addition to the private properties featured, the tour ticket allows access to The Carlyle House Historic Park, Lee- Fendall House Museum and Garden, George Mason's Gunston Hall and George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens. The tour is hosted by The Garden Club of Alexandria and Hunting Creek Garden Club. www.vagardenweek.org

Leesburg, Sunday and Monday, April 19-20

Leesburg was mapped and recognized by the Council of the Colony in 1758. Most of the 11 featured tour properties are located on two historic roads, Edwards Ferry Road and Cornwall Street. The neighborhoods offer a variety of architectural styles and well established gardens. This two-day Towne and Country tour features 11 properties and coincides with the Leesburg Flower and Garden Festival, which takes place on April 18 and 19.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GARDEN CLUB OF FAIRFAX

The self-drive garden tour in Fairfax Station and Clifton in Fairfax County features stables, vineyards, a world-class garden, Georgian-revival architecture, and a stunning 10,000 square-foot contemporary home with a vanishing edge swimming pool – four private homes with gardens and two stables in all.

Low Interest Rates Give Agents Optimism for Spring

FROM PAGE 3

"Assessments matter because the tax burden is increasing on homeowners in many jurisdictions, particularly Fairfax," said David Versel, senior researcher with the George Mason University Center for Regional Analysis.

Another burden on homeowners who may be waiting to enter the market is lingering insecurity over the effects of government Sequestration.

"I gear it to federal government spending," said George Mason professor of finance Gerald Hanweck. "When is that going to bottom out? When it does and they begin to spend again, then we'll see a pickup."

Rex Reiley is looking for that to happen soon, hoping that Congress signs off on a new budget and that it eliminates or reduces Sequester cutbacks. "If that happens, think we'll see a big boom, with everyone confident in their employment again."

Longer term, Hanweck is encouraged by an "up-surge in technology entrepreneurship" in Northern Virginia, as well as the development of the Inova research campus in Merrifield for attracting pharmaceuticals and biotech. But that impact on the real estate market could take years to notice, he said.

In the short term, he expects house prices in Fairfax County to fall slightly, forecasting a 2 percent drop in the median over the next few months in existing and new homes, a great opportunity for first-time

buyers who qualify for low-interest loans.

"Agents have a right to be optimistic," said Hanweck. "At same time, they'll have to work real hard to make the optimism pay off, selling about 97-98 percent of the listing price. That's going to certainly drop, it's just a matter of pricing."

In Lorton, Ron Kowalski has observed steady sales overall in the last month, about one per day for the 22079 zip code as a whole. The "move up" segment of houses priced \$500,000 to \$800,000 has lagged behind the "low end" (under \$500,000) and upper tier (\$1 million and above).

He's confident that increasing inventory coupled with the interest rates and "lenders loosening standards a little" will continue to help with affordability and drive sales into the spring, especially with first-time buyers.

But, he said more of his clients are researching properties on the internet before they meet with him. And that's having a mixed effect on whether they decide to make a move or not.

"They're getting a lot of information," he said, "but so much is filtered through what they want to look at. There are both sides to the story. People focus on the one that sold super high or low. My issue is a lot of the information is self-directed."

Kowalski doesn't mind buyers or sellers coming into the market loaded with their own data; he's just happy they're there.

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Historic Virginia in Gardens

FROM PAGE 4

met kitchen is the perfect place to cook and share family meals. The bedrooms upstairs are filled with vintage linens and family heirlooms including the family's first-communion dress, and are connected by a central library furnished with an antique parlor set. Balconies overlook a shaded flagstone patio and swimming pool. The lower level contains a recreational area and bar with generous wine racks. An additional guest room and bath with a separate entrance completes the home's amenities for gracious entertaining. Dennis and Cyndy Patrick, owners.

❖ 7810 Willowbrook Road, Fairfax Station Nestled in an equestrian neighborhood, this 10,000-square-foot contemporary home was built in 2013 for an active family with young children on the site of their previous house. A handsome entrance of stone, leaded glass and ironwork leads to a spectacular open-plan living, dining and kitchen area designed by the fun-loving owners with year-round entertaining in mind. The kitchen has mosaic tile backsplashes, a walk-through pantry with etched glass doors and double granite-topped islands where everyone can join the fun cooking and baking. The living area contains a double fireplace and a backlit onyx bar. Large doors open to a long covered veranda fitted with retractable screens where family and friends enjoy dining outside during warm months overlooking the infinity-edge swimming pool. Other thoughtful details include an elevator, a home gymnasium and a separate garage for the children's bikes and toys. The immaculate two-stall stable on the property has attached horse trailer storage and is home to a beloved horse and a pony. The wife is an accomplished equestrian as evidenced by a tack room filled with trophies and ribbons. Local equestrians will be in the stable to answer horse-related questions. Garth and Heather Viar, owners.

❖ 7607 Willowbrook Road, Fairfax Station Serenity awaits visitors at this single-story California-style property. The experience begins on the long drive that winds past a riding ring and pastures. Slate steps lead to the entrance courtyard, where a koi pond and bamboo fountain set the warm spa-like mood of this wonderful home. The house, purchased in 2003, has been completely renovated by the current owners, and has been personalized with twin studies, an open-plan kitchen with state-of-the-art appliances, swirling honed grey and white granite counters and a bistro-style espresso coffee station. Clean, contemporary and connected to nature, the rooms along the back of the house each open to a series of graceful garden rooms with an entertaining deck, a yoga/meditation deck, an outdoor shower and a seating area surrounding a fire pit. Inside, visitors find delights like a glass conservatory and studio, a relaxing slate tiled guest bath with heated



COURTESY OF GARDEN CLUB OF FAIRFAX

Located in a pastoral setting with grazing horses nearby, this graceful 1987 Georgian Revival house in Clifton draws its inspiration from historic Williamsburg.

towel bar, solid cherry doors throughout, a master suite with his and hers dressing rooms and a sleek bath with heated marble floors. The eco-friendly, award-winning stable complex contains a four-stall barn, equipment storage, dry lots, round pen, composting system and pastures. Randall and Joan Onders, owners.

❖ Poplar Grove 11600 Lakewood Lane, Fairfax Station Time stands still at Poplar Grove. A curving driveway leads visitors through towering oaks and flowering cherry and plum trees to a slower, more gentle way of living. The warm cream colored Federal-style home was built in 1964 and renovated quite literally from the ground up in 2001. The owners, one a landscape architect of world-class talent and the other a graduate

of DuPage School of Horticulture and a seventh-generation Virginian, Poplar Grove Clifton - Fairfax Station carved a paradise of 18th-century grandeur out of what had been seven overgrown acres. The owners' passion and expertise brought to life a two-level Colonial parterre kitchen garden with boxwood topiary, oyster-shell walkways and a climbing-rose-covered chicken coop for collecting daily eggs. Nearby is a vineyard with over 400 Petit Verdot grape vines. Visit the swimming pool garden and follow a shady path that leads to the secret white garden with a pond and splashing fountain. In fact, fountains can be heard bubbling and splashing in every direction. Another fountain brings wandering guests to an alfresco dining area reminiscent of Charleston. Inside, visitors find grand moldings, sparkling

chandeliers and museum-quality artwork and antiques. This property is a must-see for antiques enthusiasts and avid garden designers alike. Master Gardeners will be available to answer questions in the gardens. Charles Prillaman and Parker Jennings, owners.

Places of Interest:

❖ Clifton Historic District. Well preserved and easy to walk, Clifton maintains the small-town feel of the turn of the twentieth century. Most homes were built in the late 1800s or early 1900s. Adaptive reuse is evident in the homes turned into thriving shops, businesses and restaurants. A stop on Virginia Civil War Trails, most of the buildings have plaques that explain their history. Watch for the commuter trains that still pass daily at the railroad crossing. Clifton-VA.com

❖ St. Mary of Sorrows Catholic Church, Ox Road and Fairfax Station Road. Dedicated in 1860, St. Mary's Catholic Church was built by Irish immigrants who came to work on the railroad. Here, Clara Barton nursed wounded soldiers evacuated from the Battle of Second Manassas. Still in use today, it is now a Historic District and a stop on the Virginia Civil War Trails. The cemetery grounds and grotto garden are open to the public. StMaryofSorrows.org

❖ Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road. Originally built in 1852, the station was used as a supply base and hospital during the Civil War. The reconstructed station is a replica of the 1903 building including its separate waiting rooms. The museum, now run by Friends of the Fairfax Station volunteers, houses Civil War and railroad memorabilia and is a site on the Virginia Civil War Trails. Free admission to the museum and to the 1968 Norfolk Western cupola model caboose on tour day to HGW ticket holders. A picnic area is available. www.fairfaxstation.org

❖ Mason Neck State Park, 7301 High Point Road, Lorton. Opened to the public in April 1985, the park is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. On Saturday, April 25, the park will host its annual Eagle Festival, which features music, food, displays by environmental organizations, information about eagles, wildlife shows, hayrides, birding tours and activities for adults and children. In conjunction with Historic Garden Week, a spring wildflower walk Photo courtesy of The Garden Club of Fairfax 68 Fairfax County 69 Clifton - Fairfax Station through the marsh and forest on one of the park's most popular trails is featured on the day of the festival.

Note that the Alexandria tour on April 18 includes a walking tour in Old Town of five row houses with courtyard gardens in this preserved area, and refreshments at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, plus the tour ticket allows access to The Carlyle House Historic Park, Lee- Fendall House Museum and Garden, George Mason's Gunston Hall and George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens.

Home Improvements Earn Awards

Four Sun Design remodeling projects named Washington-area “Contractor of the Year” winners.

BY JOHN BYRD

It’s been a good year for Sun Design Remodeling.

In January, the full-service design/build remodeler won four “Contractor of the Year” awards from the Washington, D.C. chapter of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI). Then, in February, an already locally-honored gourmet kitchen was named category best (“kitchen above \$150k”) in the 10-state southeastern region.

Winning projects include: a rear elevation poolside recreation solution; a French Country gourmet kitchen (the southeastern regional winner); an open kitchen plan in a traditional interior style; and a lower-level build-out to designed for use by three generations.

French Country Kitchen Is Local and Regional COTY winner: Residential Kitchen Over \$120,000

For Dr. Rick Layfield and his wife Kelly Layfield, the search for their dream kitchen started shortly after they purchased their 3,700-square-foot, four-bedroom home in Clifton eight years ago.

“The kitchen suite was a primary selling point,” Kelly Layfield said of the 400-square-foot room.

But she found the rear of the house dark and dated. Sightlines to the children’s backyard play areas were not well-aligned. And there was a visually obstructive bulkhead over the primary food preparation zone.

Also, the pentagon-shaped food preparation island and dining counter wasn’t well suited for in-kitchen dining. And the corner breakfast area was cramped — making it hard to access a door to the back porch which used to be a pathway to the family’s outdoor grill.

Fortunately, Kelly Layfield’s first meeting with designer John Benson was productive from the start. He proposed a rectangular food preparation island with a granite surface, parallel with the two corners of the cook’s work zones.

Benson also helped Layfield explore the lighter, more textured hues she had been seeking: marble subway tile wall covering; surfaces in Granite Bianco Antico; white cabinets with glass facings; and an oven backsplash in a white quatrefoil tiling. The coffers, likewise, are delineated in a white and grey duotone.

“This is just the balance I was looking for,” Layfield said. “It feels like home.”



PHOTO BY BRYAN BURRIS

With its private entrance, fully operative kitchenette and dining table for four, the new lower level allows Tina’s mother, Kay, to host bridge parties for friends independent of any other household activities.



PHOTO BY MITRO HOOD

BEST RESIDENTIAL KITCHEN: Sun Design’s winning kitchen solution takes full advantage of a 13’ cathedral ceiling with a two-level window wall. Owner Melynda Britt says the space is much better organized, yet more accessible — perfect for entertaining.

Open Floorplan Defines Casual But Elegant Kitchen Residential Kitchen; \$80k to \$120k; COTY Honorable Mention

Steve and Melynda Britt’s four-bedroom colonial in Vienna offered considerable charms when the couple purchased it 10 years ago.

There was a nicely finished library and living room, a formal dining room and a sizable family room in the back half of the house with a 13-foot cathedral ceiling framing a lovely view of mature landscaping.

For Melynda Britt, the larger goal was a kitchen footprint that offered an efficient work space — integrated with the surrounding great room.

“Since the emphasis was on a more intelligent use of limited square footage,” Sun Design’s Duroske said, “we thought custom-built-ins would help create better coordi-

nated work zones.”

Critiquing the kitchen now, Britt is amazed at how much more effectively the solution works on several fronts: The food preparation island protects the cook’s work triangle, and is positioned for easy service to the family room; the beverage station, an effective space divider, is accessible from both the breakfast area and family room; the coffee bar is situated between doors leading to the dining room and the breakfast room, out of the chef’s way; the kitchen’s mosaic tile flooring has been replaced by a refinished hardwood flooring.

“We can now comfortably entertain 20-25 guests,” Britt said. “Better yet, the space is really warm and comfortable.”

Finished Lower Level Offers Multi-Gen Family Solution COTY Honorable Mention

Eric Park and his wife Tina, both physicians, were already quite busy 10 years ago when they purchased a 3,400-square-foot two-level neo-colonial in Falls Church.

“Our plan all along was to create a family home,” Tina Park said. “We saw the lower level eventually playing a part in our daily lives, but were only using it for storage. It wasn’t until my mother began regularly helping us with the girls that we began looking at the house more closely.”

At first Park’s mother, Kay, would stay in the guest room, but gradually everyone started looking at ways to increase available privacy.

It’s at this point that Sun Design Remodeling enters the story.

“A basement conversion is challenging,” said Sun Design’s Liz Lee-Sint, who guided the Park project from concept to completion, “especially when it’s going to be mainstreamed with the rest of the house.”

For Kay, the top priority was a suite with all the features of independent living, including a private entrance, a comfortable master suite and a fully functional kitchenette with dining for four.

On a separate note, the Parks envisioned a 195-square-foot family fitness center and a children’s play zone with custom built-ins.

Describing the finished décor as “modern Asian contemporary,” Tina Park stressed simple lines, soft tones and open visuals.

“It’s really the nicest place in the house now,” Park said. “And it satisfies so many different needs that it’s become our main gathering place.”

House and grounds reconciliation judged this year’s best Exterior Solution/COTY Grand award winner

As Monte Zaben tells it, the rear elevation to his 8,300-square-foot colonial in Fredericksburg was so sun-exposed it was uncomfortable sitting by the pool he had just installed the year before.

After researching several options, however, he stumbled on Sun Design’s portfolio of indoor-outdoor solutions, and set up a meeting.

Combining an extended radius that steps down to the pool with vaulted entrance way, the structure’s architecture is welcoming.

Tapered craftsman-style piers support a seam metal roof. Inside, three distinct activity zones flow together: an open-air lounge; a cozy poolside vista with a pair of wicker chairs; and an outdoor kitchen equipped with a traditional grill, a power burner and refrigerators. A second level grilling deck is now, likewise, under roof.

Happy with the outcome, Zaben said he enjoys the outdoor kitchen so much he was out grilling one of his specialties this past January. “We make regular use of the outdoor space on just about every seasonable day,” he adds. “It’s very much a part of our lives now.”

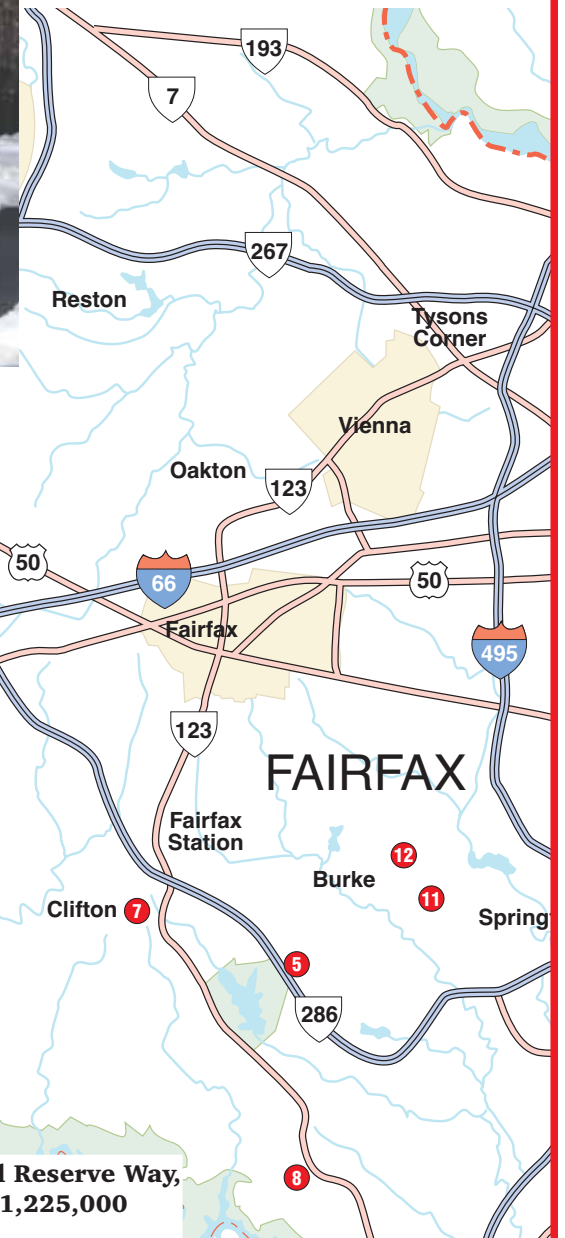
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Local REAL ESTATE

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THE CONNECTION

January, 2015 Top Sales

2 7063 Balmoral Forest Road,
Clifton — \$1,415,700



4 9407 Old Reserve Way,
Fairfax — \$1,225,000



3 12510
Yates Ford
Road, Clifton
— \$1,300,000



8 8740 Mountain Valley Road,
Fairfax Station — \$1,047,500



10 5105 Bebe Court, Centreville — \$802,000

Address	BR	FB	HB	..	Postal	City	Sold Price ..	Type	Lot	AC	PostalCode	Subdivision	Date Sold
1 12995 WYCKLAND DR	6	..	8	..	2	CLIFTON	\$2,100,000 ..	Detached	5.00	.....	20124	WYCKLAND	01/16/15
2 7063 BALMORAL FOREST RD .	5	..	5	..	3	CLIFTON	\$1,415,700 ..	Detached	3.00	.....	20124	BALMORAL GREENS	01/23/15
3 12510 YATES FORD RD	3	..	2	..	0	CLIFTON	\$1,300,000 ..	Detached	15.62	.....	20124	PEPPER MILL FARM	01/08/15
4 9407 OLD RESERVE WAY	5	..	4	..	1	FAIRFAX	\$1,225,000 ..	Detached	0.27	.....	22031	PICKETT'S RESERVE	01/09/15
5 6511 BURKE WOODS DR	6	..	5	..	2	BURKE	\$1,150,000 ..	Detached	0.83	.....	22015	BURKE LAKE MEADOW	01/26/15
6 13102 BELLE COTE LN	5	..	4	..	1	FAIRFAX	\$1,100,000 ..	Detached	0.83	.....	22033	OAK HILL RESERVE	01/15/15
7 11311 CHAPEL RD	4	..	4	..	1	FAIRFAX STATION ...	\$1,060,000 ..	Detached	5.00	.....	22039	WOLF RUN HUNT	01/05/15
8 8740 MOUNTAIN VALLEY RD .	5	..	4	..	1	FAIRFAX STATION ...	\$1,047,500 ..	Detached	5.91	.....	22039	HAMPTON HILLS	01/13/15
9 10687 YORKTOWN CT	3	..	4	..	1	FAIRFAX	\$1,005,000 ..	Townhouse .	0.05	.....	22030	JAGUAR/YORKTOWN	01/06/15
10 5105 BEBE CT	5	..	3	..	1	CENTREVILLE	\$802,000 ..	Detached	0.17	.....	20120	FAIRLAKES CROSSNG	01/26/15
11 6114 GARDEN RD	4	..	3	..	1	SPRINGFIELD	\$729,000 ..	Detached	0.19	.....	22152	LEE-BROOKE	01/16/15
12 5413 MOUNT GREENWICH CT .	4	..	2	..	1	BURKE	\$715,000 ..	Detached	0.23	22015	SIGNAL HILL	01/15/15

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