

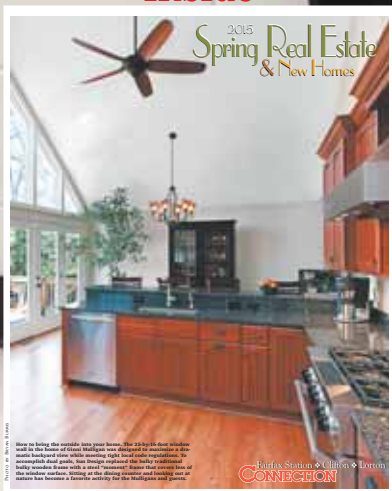
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CONNECTION

The team of South County High School juniors (top, from left) Trung Nguyen, Alex Coppeans, James Wang, Peter Wang and (front right) Brian King, along with their teacher and team sponsor Daniel Southard will travel to New York City to compete in the applied math contest Moody's Mega Math Challenge.

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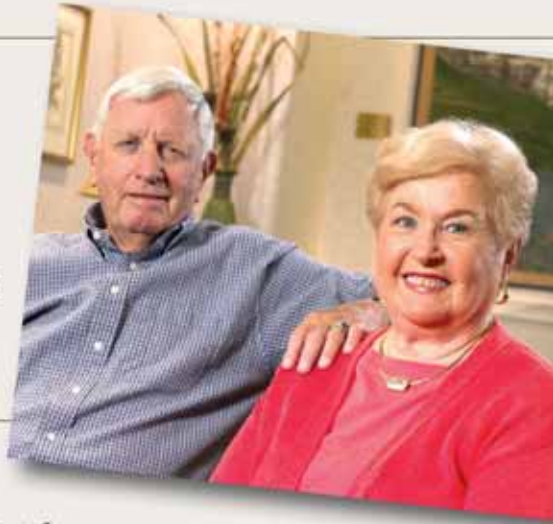
Promising 'Fabulous Time'

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APRIL 23-29, 2015

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A surveillance photo shows one suspect from the armed robberies that occurred at two CVS stores on Easter Sunday.

No Charges in Easter CVS Robberies

Police are continuing to investigate a pair of armed robberies that occurred at CVS stores on April 5, Easter Sunday, and whether or not they are related.

The first robbery took place at 9009 Silverbrook Road in the Lorton area soon after 4 p.m., according to the report from Fairfax County Police. A man described as white, in his mid 20s, between 5-foot-7 and 5-foot-9 inches tall, thin and wearing a black hooded sweatshirt demanded drugs from the technician behind the counter. The suspect took the drugs and fled.

A similar event happened at the CVS on 5652 Pickwick Road in the Centreville area,

around 10:30 p.m. In this case, the suspect was described as white and thin, and wearing a dark hooded sweatshirt, black pants and white tennis shoes, as well as a black beanie under the hood. Police said the suspect also showed a pistol and demanded drugs, but fled before taking them.

As of press time, Fairfax County Police have yet to take any suspects into custody or file any charges.

Fairfax Crime Solvers can be reached at www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org, text-a-tip through "TIP187" plus your message to CRIMES(274637)** or by calling 1-866-411-TIPS(8477).

— TIM PETERSON

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In the Mood for Math

South County team finalists in national competition.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

It's a question math students often ask their parents and teachers: When will I use this in real life? Last winter, South County High School math teacher Daniel Southard gave his students a concrete answer, attached to a financial incentive.

Southard advertised the Moody's Mega Math Challenge, a national applied mathematics competition with \$125,000 in scholarships available to winning teams, to his BC and Multi-variable Calculus students. Moody's Foundation is an education-focused charitable organization founded by Moody's Corporation, which deals in financial markets analysis and resources.

THE CHALLENGE is open to small teams of high school juniors and seniors: They're given a complex social and or technological problem and limited time to solve it, using mathematics and outside research. Last year's problem involved providing better-tasting school lunches; this year, students were asked to evaluate the cost of college education — is it worth it?

"This is a prime example of a novel situation that involves a multitude of math concepts to come up with a unique solution," Southard said. "You cannot look up how to solve this problem, there is no procedure that can be memorized."

In December, Southard helped assemble

an all-junior team comprising Trung Nguyen, Alex Coppeans, James Wang, Peter Wang and Brian King. The team met at King's house on March 1 for the problem to be revealed electronically. They then had 14 hours to submit their solution.

Southard was restricted from even being present during the competition, so the students relied on online resources recommended by Moody's, as well as published research to support their problem-solving. They weighed factors like tuition to two-versus four-year colleges, types of degrees against potential salaries in the job market and other elements that would influence an assessment of what college truly costs.

For Alex Coppeans, the research was an affirmation of "what I've been thinking about the past couple years, in general getting a Science Technology Engineering Math degree would be the best."

Trung Nguyen said that through their research on various forms of college, "for certain fields, we found, it's not worth it." The team preferred to keep further details of their findings and computations under wraps.

About a month after the South County team submitted their 33-page solution report, Southard received an email that his students had been chosen as semifinalists in a group of 201 out of 1,128 that competed nationwide. A pair of teams from Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology also made the first cut.

A week later, another email came saying South County had placed in the top six of the second round, meaning they would travel to New York City on April 27 to present their solution to a panel of judges and vie for bigger scholarship dollars.

"To be in top 200 is pretty awesome, I was fine with just that since it was the first



PHOTO COURTESY OF DANIEL SOUTHARD

The team of South County High School juniors (top, from left) Trung Nguyen, Alex Coppeans, James Wang, Peter Wang and (front right) Brian King, along with their teacher and team sponsor Daniel Southard will travel to New York City to compete in the applied math contest Moody's Mega Math Challenge.

time our school participated in this competition," said Southard. But on receiving the email about finishing in the top six, he said, "That was just tenfold excitement on my part. It was such good news for our school and for the boys."

BECOMING FINALISTS also meant surpassing the Jefferson teams, which did not continue as far in the competition. Many of the schools that regularly finish in the top 100, Southard said, are science and technology-focused, charter or private schools. "For us to be just a public, run-of-the-mill school, feels really good," Southard said. "And any time we can beat out TJ, it feels

good." Southard is confident in the solution the students came up with and proud of the way they worked together on a tight deadline. "The five of them are good friends and all very different in the ways they think," he said. "To come together and put their minds together, that's excellent. They were basically trying to solve the educational system's problems in 14 hours and I think they did a really good job."

In addition to the competition, Southard has arranged additional math-related stops for the students in New York, including the American Museum of Finance, the National Museum of Mathematics and the Hayden Planetarium.

Budget Gets Marked Up **Supervisors scheduled to adopt budget next Tuesday, April 28.**

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

The Board of Supervisors marked up the proposed budget Tuesday, April 21, by increasing school funding, adding key economic growth positions and restoring money to suggested cuts to "critical" human service programs Tuesday morning, April 21, according to its Chairman Sharon Bulova.

The board is scheduled to formally adopt the FY 2016 Budget next Tuesday, April 28.

See the Mark-up Package at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/> "This is a responsible budget that responds to the needs of our community and takes into account the feedback we received during public hearings, town hall meetings, letters, emails and phone calls from our constituents," Bulova said. More than 200 people testified and the

board listened to more than 14 hours of testimony from the public between April 7-9.

"Speakers during our three days of public hearings adopted as their theme a call to invest in Fairfax and that is what this mark-up package seeks to do," said Bulova. The marked-up budget maintains the current tax rate at \$1.09, implements a new compensation plan for county employees with an average increase of approximately 3.6 percent (including a "market rate adjustment of 1.1 percent), comes close to fully funding the School Board's transfer request, and restores a number of Human Services reductions proposed in the original advertised budget, Bulova said.

Because of an increase in property assessments, the average homeowner will pay \$185 more in property taxes, even though the tax rate will not increase. Kimberly Adams, president of the Fairfax Education Association, responded immediately.

"FEA has rallied both in Fairfax and in Richmond to tell elected officials that the community wants greater investment in our community and our schools," said Adams. "Here in Fairfax, the Board of Supervisors has tied their own hands, apologized for this being an election year, and then said they 'wish they could do more.' Our schools are not funded by wishes; they are funded by a dedication to actually invest in Fairfax before more damage is done to our community."

Three supervisors voted against the marked-up package, including Pat Herrity (R), Michael Frey (R), and Linda Smyth (D).

"I am disappointed that not only did the board raise our citizens' taxes yet again, but the board majority failed to even make the easy decisions to even discuss reducing spending to address the \$100 million shortfall we are facing in FY 2017," said Herrity. "Under this board's watch our homeowners have seen their tax bills go up by 16 per-

cent in three years, our commercial vacancy rate has spiked to over 16 percent, ... but the board thought they deserved a pay raise for themselves," said Herrity.

The revised budget restores the most critical Human Services reductions in the Advertised Budget, including Healthy Families, Parenting Education "Good Touch, Bad Touch" programs, mental health services in jail, and detox diversion positions. It also restores the Enforcement of the Grass Ordinance, Bulova said. "The Advertised Budget as amended by these actions results in some changes that will make some folks happy, some relieved, and some disappointed," said Bulova.

"It is, however, a responsible package that: maintains our current tax rate at \$1.09." The marked up budget comes close to fully funding the School Board's request with an increase of over \$66 million (including funding for School Debt Service) over last year, Bulova said.

Best and Brightest?

Some say unbalanced admissions demographics at Northern Virginia's top high school speaks to system-wide equity problems.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

Consider: 70.2 percent Asian, 20.7 percent White, 5.1 percent Multiracial/Other, 2.4 percent Hispanic, 1.6 percent Black: This is the ethnic breakdown of the 493 students admitted to the 2019 class of the Fairfax County Public Schools magnet institution Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology.

The Fairfax County released the school's admissions information on March 31. Of the 2,841 students who applied, 51 percent were Asian, 29.7 percent White, 7.3 percent Hispanic, 7.1 percent Black and 5.1 percent Multiracial/Other.

Approximately 78 percent of admitted students are from Fairfax County and 22.3 percent are from Arlington, Loudoun and Prince William counties and the City of Falls Church.



PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION
Thomas Jefferson teacher Dr. John Dell explains a rare, powerful X-ray machine and desktop electron microscope in the new quantum physics and optics lab.



From left: Justin Yum of Woodbridge, Jacob Benheim of Fairfax, Nihar Gudiseva of Herndon study after school last fall in the new wing's quantum physics and optics lab.

"To me, it's the canary in the coal mine about how Fairfax County educates its children. If you're low income, you don't get the same education."

— Del. Scott Surovell (D-44)



The disparity drew criticism from Mount Vernon School Board representative Dan Storck.

"Admissions to Thomas Jefferson are not representative of the Fairfax County Public Schools population," Storck said, "and certainly not of the Mount Vernon District population. We have some serious issues about equity and how do we address that?"

Data on which feeder middle schools supplied which percentage of students to the new freshman class speaks more to the inequity. Mount Vernon-area Alexandria middle schools Whitman, Carl Sandburg and Hayfield were among 17 of a list of 26 feeder schools released by Fairfax County with the total number of ad-

mitted students to Jefferson redacted.

Spokesperson for Fairfax County Public Schools John Torre explained the redactions are because the numbers are low enough (fewer than 10 admitted) that individual students could potentially be identified.

"MAYBE WE OUGHT to rename the school 'Herndon-Falls Church Alternative School for the Gifted and Wealthy,'" said Del. Scott Surovell (D-44), referring to the feeder middle schools supplying the top quantities of students.

"To me, it's the canary in the coal mine about how Fairfax County educates its children," Surovell added. "If you're low income, you don't get the same education."

The release from Fairfax County Public Schools said 8 percent of applicants and 1.2 percent of those admitted qualify for free and reduced meals. Of all students in Fairfax County, by comparison, more than 28 percent receive free and reduced meals.

"Why is this such a significantly skewed distribution?" asked Fairfax Station resident Lolita Mancheno-Smoak, a candidate for School Board in 2011 and co-founder of the school children advocacy group Coalition of the Silence.

"If I go under the assumption we're a top-rated school system, everyone is receiving the same caliber and rigor of education at the advanced academic program centers and there's a fair and equitable process of identification of young people to be admitted into these centers."

Fairfax County's advanced academic program, or "AAP," includes numerous elemen-

tary schools and 12 middle schools where selected students take part in a more challenging curriculum with emphasis on higher intellectual performance. All nine of the schools with 10 or more students admitted to Thomas Jefferson are advanced placement program sites.

CARRIE HEILBRUN, Jefferson Class of 2015, first attended Silverbrook Elementary School in Fairfax Station then tested into the advanced academic program at Lorton Station Elementary School in third grade. She continued into the advanced academic program at Lake Braddock Secondary School, where teachers first told her and her parents Mark and Amy that they should look into applying to Jefferson.

Carrie said "fantastic" teachers at Lorton Station sparked her passion for science, technology, engineering and mathematics education.

Her mother Amy agreed that her "amazing" experience in elementary and middle school was crucial to preparing her to both enter and succeed at Jefferson. In the fall, Carrie will attend Yale University and participate on the women's swim team.

Amy Heilburn and Carrie acknowledge observing there is less ethnic diversity at Jefferson. After looking at the demographics release from Fairfax County Public Schools, "I was really shocked. absolutely floored," said Heilburn. "It just doesn't seem like it's possible, there's no way, this doesn't add up, is it our county?"

"I go back to it's what's leading up to it," Heilburn added. "What are those kids getting in elementary school?"

For Carrie, less balance in demographic numbers isn't as significant as the quality of appreciation for for the cultures and

ethnicities present at her school, particularly through a plethora of "culture clubs" like Persian, Black student union and Chinese honor society.

"I'm proud of how each culture is represented so strongly," Carrie said, "even if the numbers aren't as large for some. You definitely won't feel alone if you apply to TJ from one of those underrepresented cultures."

The question then is whether as public school students across the county, all who are objectively intelligent enough have the same chance as Carrie to propel themselves towards the school that consistently ranks at or near the top of high schools nationwide.

"There's no guarantee of getting into Thomas Jefferson," said Storck, "but we have have to ensure students have equitable opportunity to get in, and I don't believe we're doing that satisfactorily."

It's not that there have been no efforts by the county to help underrepresented populations, Storck conceded. The "Young Scholars" program in 82 schools is aimed at identifying "potential



Storck

SEE T.J., PAGE 6

FCPS Demographic Breakdown

Total Fairfax County Public Schools Demographic Breakdown, out of 2014-2015 school year projected student population of 186,785.

- ❖ African American: 10.2 percent
- ❖ American Indian: .3 percent
- ❖ Asian American: 19.4 percent
- ❖ Hispanic: 24.6 percent
- ❖ Multiracial: 5.0 percent
- ❖ White: 40.4 percent
- ❖ Students receiving free and reduced meals: 28.2 percent
- ❖ English for Speakers of Other languages students: 15.5 percent
- ❖ Students receiving special education services: 13.77 percent

SOURCE: FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

	Asian	White	Multiracial/ Other	Hispanic	Black	Free-Reduced Lunch	ESOL	TOTAL
Applied	1,448 (51%)	843 (29.7%)	143 (5.1%)	206 (7.3%)	201 (7.1%)	227 (8%)	71	2,841 (100%)
Admitted	346 (70.2%)	102 (20.7%)	25 (5.1%)	12 (2.4%)	8 (1.6%)	6 (1.2%)	5	493 (100%)
Fairfax County	36,236 (19.4%)	75,461 (40.4%)	9,339 (5%)	45,949 (24.6%)	19,052 (10.2%)	52,638 (28.2%)	28,870 (15.5%)	186,785 (100%)

SOURCE: FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

For the Class of 2019, 2,841 students applied to Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology and 493 were accepted.

News

Transurban Begins Grant Program

Transurban, the company that operates the 95 and 495 Express lanes, announced earlier this month the launch of a community grant program for non-profit organizations working in or benefiting the Express Lanes corridor.

Every quarter, the grant program will provide \$1,500 each to three organizations from the fields of environment, community and safety — totalling 12 grants per year.

The first application deadline already passed on March 31, but the remaining deadlines for organizations to apply for the grants are June 30, September 30 and December 31.

For more information visit www.expresslanes.com/grant-program.

— TIM PETERSON

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.

THURSDAY/APRIL 23

Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Burke Centre Library
Meeting, 7:30 p.m. Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Rd., Burke. Stone Brooks, Manager, Richard McKay Used Books, Inc. — discussing the landscape of book stores in today's environment.

SUNDAY/APRIL 26

Burke Historical Society Meeting.
4:30 p.m. Abiding Presence Lutheran Church, 6304 Lee Chapel Road, Burke. Debbie Robison, a Fairfax County History Commissioner, will give a presentation entitled, "Discover the Mills of Fairfax County." Now that the streams have thawed, and to ensure that your molinological needs are met, it seems like a good time to consider the wealth of historic mills around us. Before being displaced by fossil fuel combustion and the Second Industrial Revolution, these fascinating structures served as the engines, both mechanical and economic, of the local area. Debbie Robison's talk will survey the County's mills (including Silas Burke's and William Holsapple's mills here in Burke) and will also describe what to look for in stream valleys if searching for a mill site.

SATURDAY/MAY 2

6th Annual Community ShredFest & Electronics Recycling Day. 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. 5501 Backlick Road, Springfield RE/MAX 100 Agents & staff cordially invite you to this event. All-Shred truck will destroy your old documents securely, right here. 123JUNK will take any electronics, even those old bulky TVs. Join in for a free Home Ownership Seminar, 9:30 -11a.m.

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TJ Reflects Economic Divide

FROM PAGE 4

high achievers” from these groups, according to Torre.

JEFFERSON ADMISSIONS Director Jeremy Shughart said in a statement that last fall the school’s admissions office created an advisory committee tasked with “looking at a variety of admissions components and making recommendations for possible adjustments to future admissions cycles.”

This is a continuation of ongoing debating of modifying the school’s admissions policy, the most recent updates to which Torre said were in 2013.

“The policy now states that students (semi-finalists) will undergo a comprehensive, holistic process that assesses their ability to meet the rigors of the TJ curriculum and the potential to be effective contributors to the school’s learning experience,” he said in an email.

Before that, he said, all the admission components were scored independently of each other and then added together for a final numerical score by which the top students were chosen to be offered admission.

The class of 2013 was comprised of:

Ethnicity—Applied—Accepted
 White—1296 (44.2%)—175 (36.5%)
 Black—173 (5.9%)—8 (1.7%)
 Hispanic—188 (6.4%)—6 (1.3%)
 Alaskan/American Indian—9 (0.3%)—1 (0.2%)
 Asian/Pacific Islander—1097 (37.5%)—260 (54.3%)
 Multiracial—163 (5.6%)—28 (5.8%)
 Other—3 (0.1%)—1 (0.2%)
 Total—2929 (100.0%)—479 (100.0%)

A DECADE EARLIER, near the end of 2003, the School Board appointed a “Blue Ribbon Commission” group of experts to review Jefferson’s admissions practices. The commission’s recommendations led to a revised admissions process that affected the 2004-2005 class of applicants.

The class of 2003 was comprised of:

Ethnicity—Applied—Accepted
 White—1590 (61.9%)—297 (69.1%)
 Black—146 (5.7%)—7 (1.6%)
 Hispanic—105 (4.1%)—10 (2.3%)
 Alaskan/American Indian—3 (0.1%)—1 (0.2%)
 Asian/Pacific Islander—583 (22.7%)—93 (21.7%)
 Multiracial—94 (3.6%)—16 (3.7%)
 Other—49 (1.9%)—6 (1.4%)
 Total—2570 (100.0%)—430 (100.0%)

Elizabeth Schultz, who represents the Springfield District on the School Board, thinks the revisions haven’t measured up to their intended effects.

“I think we have fiddled and tweaked consistently the admissions practice to the detriment of the quality of students headed to TJ,” she said. “In the end, we have contorted the process so far as to water down what it means to achieve at an academic rigor level necessary to be a successful stu-



Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology added a Monticello-esque dome in the first phase of its renovation project.

dent for all four years at TJ.”

Furthermore, she doesn’t know if leveling the playing field for potential applicants is necessarily the right answer.

“Should we be increasing the rigor of the K-12 math curriculum?” Schultz said. “Absolutely. Rigor and tracking of sustained rigor in math curriculum beginning in elementary schools needs to be improved.”

School Board members other than Storck and Schultz didn’t respond to requests for interviews.

“Could we broaden student participation in higher level math courses earlier?” Schultz added. “I think we could. Does there need to be a systemic delivery of the curriculum across the division? Without a shadow of a doubt.” Schultz referenced a recent School Board work session where a math component audit was discussed.

For Jefferson admissions, Schultz favors a simpler, merit-based evaluation separated from name, school (and advanced academic program) gender and demographics. The viewpoint of bringing in the most objectively qualified applicants is one shared by

Liz Bradsher of Clifton, who represented the Springfield District on the School Board from 2008 to 2012.

“It’s about the best and brightest in Fairfax County, students who are innately bright,” Bradsher said of the image of Jefferson.

Admissions director Shughart was not available to comment for this story; however, his statement continued: “FCPS will continue to work on increasing diversity at TJHSST and will continue to pursue outreach efforts to ensure talented underrepresented populations of students with a passion for math and science consider, apply to and attend TJHSST as their high school option.”

According to Torre, some efforts already being implemented include information sessions about the Jefferson for rising eighth grade students and their families, explaining some of the programs, admissions process and extracurricular activities. These sessions should engage the other participating school districts as well as all Fairfax County middle, secondary and elementary schools, Torre said.

Admissions by Middle School

Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology Class of 2019 admission by Fairfax County Public Schools middle school:

School, location	Admitted Students
❖ Rachel Carson, Herndon	88
❖ Longfellow, Falls Church	66
❖ Rocky Run, Chantilly	45
❖ Joyce Kilmer, Vienna	36
❖ Frost, Braddock	21
❖ Lake Braddock, Burke	20
❖ Hughes, Reston	18
❖ Luther Jackson, Falls Church	13
❖ Mark Twain, Alexandria	12
❖ Cooper, McLean	REDACTED
❖ Franklin, Chantilly	REDACTED
❖ Glasgow, Lincolnia	REDACTED
❖ Hayfield, Alexandria	REDACTED
❖ Herndon, Herndon	REDACTED
❖ Holmes, Lincolnia	REDACTED
❖ Washington Irving, Springfield	REDACTED
❖ Key, Springfield	REDACTED
❖ Lanier, Fairfax	REDACTED
❖ Liberty, Clifton	REDACTED
❖ Poe, Annandale	REDACTED
❖ Robinson, Fairfax	REDACTED
❖ Carl Sandburg, Alexandria	REDACTED
❖ South County, Lorton	REDACTED
❖ Ormond Stone, Centreville	REDACTED
❖ Thoreau, Vienna	REDACTED
❖ Whitman, Alexandria	REDACTED

SOURCE: FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Protecting Student Privacy

Protecting student privacy under Virginia Code § 2.2-3705.4.(1) as well as the federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, Fairfax County Public Schools spokesman John Torre said, is the goal with withholding the data. “Without permission of the student, families, it’s not a place we’re going to go,” he said.

“When FCPS publishes reports on student achievement or shares student data,” Torre added in an email, “FCPS must apply disclosure avoidance strategies to prevent unauthorized release of information about individual students.”

Dr. Priscilla M Regan, acting senior associate dean of the George Mason University School of Policy, Government and International Affairs, said this cautious practice is “definitely typical” of what many institutions are doing.

“Health care, education, anything where you’re dealing with anything that could be considered sort of sensitive and personally identifiable — it’s really likely there will be more of this as it’s becoming easier to identify people,” she said.”

Regan’s take is Fairfax County has likely made a calculation as to the line at which they feel individual students become “re-identifiable” and privacy becomes a concern under Virginia Code and federal law.

She added in her interpretation of the threat to students: “An indication of their scholastic achievement, their sense of how they might see themselves, the risk they’ve taken in taking the Thomas Jefferson exam, whether you’re admitted or not admitted, that’s the parents of children in schools’ decision. It’s up to them to reveal that information.”

Concerned About Artificial Turf

To the Editor:
I just finished reading that South County High School is planning on installing artificial turf to two grass fields. Do any of the people involved in this decision know that artificial turf has health problems for the kids using it and also environmental problems to homes living near these fields? There can be lead hazards, zinc hazards,

other harmful chemicals that run off after a heavy rain, and increased MRSA risk to the kids who have seven times the turf burns when artificial turf is used. I strongly feel that this issue should be looked at more closely. I hope it's not a done deal.

Susan Tawfik
Fairfax Station

Picking Up Dog Waste

To the Editor:
Thank you to all dog owners who pick up after their pooch.

Now, please throw away that yucky bag! On a recent community-wide trash pick up event, I joined my daughter in picking up litter along Cub Run that eventually feeds into the Occoquan Reservoir. During my pickup, I found the usual empty beer cans, water bottles and plastic grocery bags. But what was surprising to me was the amount of little black plastic bags holding dog waste. At first I thought it was just one person's

honest mistake...but after about the sixth bag I picked up, I wondered if dog owners thought this was an ok practice to throw bags of dog waste into the woods or river stream. I own two big, untrained dogs that walk me, rather than me walking them. I have to carry at least 4 to 5 bags for just one walk, and I understand the frustration, inconvenience, and the sheer disgust of carrying these bags. I have been tempted a million times to fake picking up dog poop, just to leave it there covered by some leaves (I know dog owners know what I am talking about). I have even considered throwing the bag into the woods. But I know that is not right nor safe. First let's talk about the dog waste in general. According to an article by Paul Banker titled Dog Poop: The Smelly Facts published in 2013 on the online website called The Dog Blog, dogs collectively deposit about 30,000 tons of poop every day in the U.S. alone. Also in the article, we learn that dog waste does not make good fertilizer, and is toxic to lawns. Moreover, dog waste can carry nasty bacteria,

including E. coli, Salmonella, Giardia and Parvovirus - all really harmful to humans. In fact, the EPA classified dog waste as a non-point source pollution, along with herbicides and insecticides, oil, grease and toxic chemicals, according to the same article. Homeowner organizations have done a great job providing dog waste centers to make it easy for us dog owners. I think the word is out that we must pick up after our dogs. But do we also need to remind folks to properly throw away the bag! I am not an environmental scientist (in fact, I am straight liberal arts!) but bagged waste thrown along a river or into the bushes of a neighborhood's common area almost seem more dangerous to the environment in the long term than letting the dog waste decompose naturally. When you think about it, the trash and pollution dumped into the series of tributaries that flow to the Occoquan affect our county's water.

According to the Virginia.gov website, the Occoquan Reservoir is a 2,100-acre Fairfax Water Authority impoundment, which forms the boundary between Fairfax and Prince William counties. Fairfax County Water Authority manages Occoquan as a water supply impoundment, which serves residents of Fairfax County and the City of Alexandria. I welcome any input from the community to prove me wrong.

But until then, thank you for picking up after your pooch. But please properly throw away the yucky bag into a garbage can!

Elizabeth Sherman
Clifton

Who Pays for a Mistake?

To the Editor:
So the agreement was reached to pay John Geer's family just under \$2.95M for the mistake of a police officer. My heart goes out to the family.

But I am concerned about the payment.

Why are taxpayers responsible to pay for this? Where is the statute that justifies this?

I pay over five digits in real es-

tate tax, personal property tax, car registration fees, licensing fees, and who-knows-how much in sales tax.

But the Board of Supervisors pays millions to a victim of a mistake; yet the roads I have to drive on are still full of lumps, bumps, cracks, and potholes. Where is the money for that? What gives?

Bob Fritz
Oakton

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OPINION

Connection Papers Win Awards

Variety of coverage honored at annual Virginia Press Association conference.

On Saturday, April 18, a group of journalists from the Connection Newspapers traveled to Roanoke for the annual Virginia Press Association event to collect awards

for business reporting, government writing, writing about health, science and the environment, feature writing, sports writing, column writing, obituaries, cartoons, entertainment pages and writing, public safety writing, editorial pages and writing, page design, informational graphics and more.

A look at the themes of some winning entries gives some insight into the mission at the Connection: to tell stories of significance, using reporting, data and analysis while getting to the heart of why the issues matter in local lives. In a time that we, like all newspapers, are functioning with reduced resources, it helps affirm that the effort can make a difference.

Bonnie Hobbs won for ongoing coverage of

EDITORIAL

a family's efforts to provide the best life for a son they call "not special needs, but a special person," and a second award for coverage of issues related to affordable housing and homelessness.

Judges call Michael Pope's business reporting "first-rate, data-driven reporting and analysis on important issues." Stories on driving habits, cesarean deliveries and the Affordable Care Act are called "well-researched, clearly written and engaging. The use of real-live people high up in stories to illustrate makes for very compelling material."

Vernon Miles won for breaking news coverage of Arlington's first same sex marriage, being "on the scene of a local event that has local, statewide and national significance. ... The story is multi-sourced; has a strong lead that gives readers a sense of the scene; places the

event in historic context; and captures the celebratory feel of the event."

On Pope government reporting: "Rather than regurgitating official statements, the reporter tells people's stories to illuminate the consequences of government decisions. This represents a model for all government reporting."

On Marilyn Campbell's reporting for Wellbeing: "These articles amount to personal guidance in the best sense of the term."

Even in recreation and entertainment, our mission is to provide our readers with the information they need to have fun, and our annual update to the "Insiders Guide to the Parks," brainchild of Jean Card, is designed to do that.

What are we missing? We rely on our readers to let us know. We invite your story ideas, your tips, your letters to the editor, calendar listings, photos of mothers for Mother's Day and fathers for Fathers Day, and more. Visit www.connectionnewspapers.com and click on "contact us," or email editors@connectionnewspapers.com

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Winners

Truncated list, for a complete list, see www.connectionnewspapers.com

Jon Roetman, The Vienna/Oakton Connection — Sports Writing Portfolio, First Place. *Madison's Koshuta Scores 39 Against 'Idol' Floyd; Oakton Girls' XC Repeats as State Champs; Madison Volleyball Drops Heartbreaker in State Final.* Judge's comments: Strong and clear writing and excellent storytelling helps game stories feel more like features. Excellent work.



Jon Roetman



Victoria Ross



Joan Brady

Victoria Ross, Oak Hill/Herndon Connection — Government Writing, First Place. *Let Sun Shine on Virginia's Financial Disclosure Laws, Mr. Horejsi Goes to Richmond; Bulova: 'This Will Be a Challenging Budget.'* Judge's comments: An engaging look at a lobbyist who fights for the little guy; an entertaining story on a political candidate, helping readers put the upcoming election into context; one of the better budgeting stories I've seen lately that helps readers understand how the county's budgeting process is going to cost them more money. The supporting sidebars help bring the message home.



Mary Kimm



Marilyn Campbell



Bonnie Hobbs

sight. Her writing combines depth and subtlety with eloquence of expression. In some senses, her subject matter is narrow. But viewed through a different filter, it is universal. She writes engagingly on a consistent basis.

Marilyn Campbell, Chantilly Connection — Health, Science and Environmental Writing, Third Place. *Spiritual Wellness in the New Year; Consistent Bedtimes Aid Children; How To Age in Place Safely.* Judge's comments: These articles amount to personal guidance in the best sense of the term. They should serve as very helpful resources for readers of a variety of ages. In concise manner, they effectively made the

concepts clear and applicable to the reader. The aging in place article was particularly relevant and insightful, the childhood sleep story was unlike anything I'd ever read (and I have two kids) and really summed up how a specific approach to children's health makes sense. The spiritual health article was unusual, refreshing to see, and I love the variety of sources and comments.

Bonnie Hobbs, The Fairfax Connection — Personal Service Writing, Third Place. *Affordable Housing Lack Can Lead to Hunger; 'Help Us, Will You Please?' City of Fairfax to Tackle Affordable Housing; Council 'Honored to Support this Project;' 'Dream Come True' for Lamb Center.* Judge's comments: Solid writing and good follow-through on the housing issues. The writer did a good job of including income and free lunch data without breaking the flow of the story.

Mary Kimm, The McLean Connection — Editorial Writing, Third Place. *Trending in the Right Direction; Virginia Proves Elections Matter; More Affordable Housing Needed; Tragic Consequences; Deadly Medicaid Debacle.* Judge's comments: This submission consists of five well-articulated and well-grounded pieces tackling access to affordable housing and health care, a pair of closely related state and national issues with important local ramifications. The work combines passion with a persuasive factual underpinning.

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Lorton & Clifton
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SCHOOLS



Fantine (Cara Bachman) confronts Jean Valjean (Jack Gereski) about what led to her downfall. South County High School's "Les Miserables" opens May 1.

Promising 'Fabulous Time' South County High School Theatre presents "Les Miserables."

By T.J. GOUTERMAN AND
A.J. LICHSTRAHL

"Les Miserables" is famous musical adapted from the 1862 novel by Victor Hugo. The story revolves around former convict Jean Valjean and his pursuit of self-redemption by breaking his parole, thus having to escape the fleet of inspector Javert. Intertwined are the students' revolution to combat the monarchy and a love triangle between schoolboy Marius, Valjean's daughter Cosette, and the poor Eponine. Taking place in France in the early 19th century, the central themes are compassion and social injustice. "Les Miserables" was adapted by Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schonberg, originating in France. The show premiered in England in 1985, and in New York in 1987 at the Broadway Theatre. Out of 12 Tony nominations it went on to win eight, including Best Score, Best Book of a Musical, and Best Musical. Theatre teacher Kathie McCormally chose the show because of the progression of her actors throughout the years. "At the time, I did not really think it would be possible, but I told the students that if they progressed, and we had enough quality male singer/actors, I would love to do the show their senior year," she added. "Fast forward four years and here we are. We have a fabulous group of se-

nior theatre students, plenty of quality males who showed up to audition and a great supporting cast."

With a show completely sung-through, the show certainly comes with its difficulties. McCormally elaborated, "The largest challenge for the actors and pit orchestra is having the stamina to last the entire show. Actors must take extra care of voices throughout the rehearsal and performance process. The show requires so many hours of rehearsal and the voices will become tired."

"My goal is for everyone to have a fabulous time throughout the entire process and for the students to feel a great sense of pride and accomplishment when the curtain comes down for the final time," McCormally said. "Of course I want everyone to grow as performers, but I really am more interested in this being a positive experience for everyone involved."

Featuring a cast of over 60 students, the show includes Jack Gereski (Jean Valjean), Cameron Powell (Inspector Javert), Kyle McKnight (Marius), Katelyn Sparks (Cosette), and Rachel Snare (Eponine) along with a strong ensemble of various characters.

The show will perform on May 1-2, 8-9 at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$12 for general admission and \$10 for students and senior citizens. You SEE SOUTH COUNTY, PAGE 10

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NEWS

Growing Expectations

**2015 SpringFest Fairfax
at the Workhouse Arts
Center on April 25.**

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

An Earth Day celebration wouldn't be complete without ponies and food trucks. At least the combined Earth Day and Arbor Day event in Fairfax County, known as SpringFest Fairfax, wouldn't.

Jen Cole, executive director of Clean Fairfax, expects those two attractions to be among the most popular of 40 to 45 vendors and exhibitors for children and adults at the day-long educational festival held April 25 on the grounds of the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton.

"It's all about clean water, clean air and sustainability," Cole said. "It's not just some event; it's officially the county's Earth Day."

Clean Fairfax is a nonprofit organization that works in partnership with the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services to educate schools, businesses and other groups about sustainability and environmental issues. They host the event with several partners, but largely produce it from their own operating budget. Last year the cost to Clean Fairfax to put on the free public event was \$35,000.

OTHER VENDORS and presenters include representatives from the Fairfax County Park Authority, Fairfax Water, plant sales, seed exchange and other public works agencies.

"Stormwater, wastewater, forestry, recycling, all the Park Authority and nature centers — County agencies alone make this a great event," said Cole. "They really go all out." Educational programming such as an environmental passport project will be mixed with entertainment like the ponies and a moon bounce.

Cole is particularly hyped for the return of Fairfax Water's "water bar," a hydration setup with wooden taps for pouring County water into commemorative, reusable cups. Otherwise there are no-bottle and limited paper policies in place on the campus.

"We encourage vendors to not give away anything that can become instant trash," she said.

Of the roughly 15 food vendors, around half will be food trucks from around the region, including Washington, D.C.-based The Big Cheese, Good Grubbin' fajitas from Ashburn and Teachers Making Dough-Nuts from the Fairfax Community Farmers' Market.

Cole said the goal is to grow that element of the festival: "Food trucks, local food, farm-to-table — it all is really sustainable and resonates with people."

Held for decades at the Northern Virginia Community College Annandale campus, the location switched to the Fairfax County Government Center when the campus was undergoing some development and construction. After two years, Board of



PHOTO COURTESY OF CLEAN FAIRFAX

Pony rides are one of the popular staples returning to the 2015 SpringFest Fairfax held at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton.

Supervisors chairman Sharon Bulova suggested the event might be better situated at the Workhouse.

"It's a beautiful location and a really interesting place," said Bulova, adding that the adaptive reuse of the former Lorton prison buildings "is a demonstration of recycling and sort of embodies our environmental agenda and goals."

"It's across from the Water Authority," she continued, "next to Occoquan Park and down the street from the waste energy facility. There's a lot of things happening in that part of the county that demonstrate the County's commitment to environmental protection and sustainability."

One of Bulova's favorite aspects is also that the Workhouse artist studios are open for people to explore and even purchase artwork.

Since coming to the Workhouse in 2013, Cole said SpringFest Fairfax attendance doubled each year, with 5,000 people at last year's event.

THE FESTIVAL will also include a food drive for the Lorton Community Action Center, which is asking specifically for dry breakfast cereal and individual packages of children's snacks such as Goldfish or peanut butter crackers.

As the temperature increases, so does the need of individuals from the community who look to the Lorton Community Action Center for support. Director of Development Andrea Clay said their pantry will generally give out more than 240 boxes of cereal each week, as well as offer fresh produce over the summer. "People need to understand that's a local problem, not a theory, something that happens to someone else," Clay said. "We're thrilled to be a part of SpringFest again, an event where someone wouldn't think of local issues of hunger."

SpringFest Fairfax is scheduled to take place rain or shine on April 25, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton, located at 9518 Workhouse Way in Lorton. The event is free, though some activities require a \$5 all-access wristband. For more information visit www.springfestfairfax.org.

South County Presents 'Les Miserables'

FROM PAGE 9

can order tickets online at southcountytheatre.org. You can follow on Twitter at @SoCoTheatre. The students' YouTube channel includes a student-made

documentary series of the entire rehearsal process each week. The Dale S. Rumberger Auditorium at South County High School is located at 8501 Silverbrook Road, Lorton.

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.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/APRIL 24-25

Seussical, the Musical Jr. 7:30 p.m. on April 24. 1:30 & 7:30 p.m. on April 25. Family Worship Center, 7719 Fullerton Road, Springfield. Northern Virginia Players is thrilled to present Seussical, the Musical Jr. All of your favorite Dr. Seuss characters spring to life onstage in a fantastic musical extravaganza from TONY winners Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty. For more information and ticket purchase, please visit our website at: NVPlayers.com. For Group Information or further assistance, please call 703-866-3546.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/APRIL 25-26

The Emperor's New Clothes. 1 p.m. Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Presented by Pandemonium Theatrical Productions. Guess who's got a passion for fashion? In this musical adaptation of the classic tale, Emperor Augustus has been led astray of his once kind-hearted nature by a villainous duo who are eager to take over the throne. In his newest quest to be the best-dressed man in town, Augustus seeks the help of two mysterious tailors who promise a magical Suit of Honor that is sure to amaze! Join the adventure in an afternoon of mystery, music and lots of laughter. Running time approximately 75 minutes, with one intermission. Appropriate for all ages.

SATURDAY/APRIL 25

Model Classic 2015. 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Fairfax High School, 3501 Rebel Run, Fairfax. Annual exhibit of scale models. Event will feature: A display of hundreds of museum quality scale models. A modeling contest consisting of over 80 categories. 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place awards in each category. Admission Fees: Adults \$8 (\$10 entire family). Junior (Under 18) free. Adult Contestant \$10 (includes admission). www.novaipms.org

Mothers, Daughters and Special Friends Tea. 2-4 p.m. Historic Pohick Church, 9301 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Join the Historic Pohick Church Docent Guild for their annual Signature Tea. The theme this year will be "Mothers, Daughters, and Special Friends." New children's tours of the historic church for our young guests will be held before the tea beginning at 1 pm. The special afternoon tea with a Colonial Living History program follows the tours at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$25 for adults and



All of your favorite Dr. Seuss characters spring to life onstage in a fantastic musical extravaganza, Seussical, the Musical Jr., playing April 24-25 at Family Worship Center, 7719 Fullerton Road, Springfield.

\$15 for children under 12. Seating is limited. For reservations and more information please contact Helen Parker at 703-497-5927 or email at helenandjeffp@verizon.net.

Spring Fest Fairfax 2015. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Spend the day at the historic Workhouse Arts Center learning about environmental projects and programs, tasting food from around the world, playing games, and riding ponies! Don't miss Billy B! on the main stage. Other activities include a petting zoo, rock climbing walls, bounce houses, face-painting, plant sales, wagon rides, and dozens of exhibits and vendors. Admission is free; some activities require a \$5 wristband. For more information, please visit: <http://www.springfestfairfax.org/>.

Bill Gaither & Gaither Vocal Band. 6 p.m. Patriot Center, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Multi-Grammy Award-winner Bill Gaither will host a spectacular evening of music, laughter and encouragement featuring the talent of the prestigious Gaither Vocal Band and several talented musical guests. Tickets are also available in person at the Patriot Center Box Office, as well as all Ticketmaster outlets. Group rates are also available by calling 703-993-3000.

Community Wellness Fair. 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. 9316 Old Keene Mill Road, Burke. Body composition measurements - find out how old your body really is. Nutritional consultations; exercise demonstrations.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 29

Prison Lecture Series: Life After Prison. 7:30 p.m. Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Many prisoners gained new vocational and academic skills while incarcerated. The first panel consists

of former officials who share their experiences with prison industries. The second panel will include parole officers who describe the reintegration of inmates into the real world community.

SUNDAY/APRIL 26

"Images of Rails." 1-4 p.m. 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. A special photographic exhibit of Virginia railroad sites, past and present, will be on display. Museum members and children 4 and under, free; children 5-15, \$2; adults 16 and older, \$4. www.fairfax-station.org.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/MAY 1,2,8,9

"Les Miserables." 7 p.m. South County High School, 8501 Silverbrook Road, Lorton. Tickets will cost \$12 for general admission or \$10 for students and seniors.citizens. You can order tickets online at southcountytheatre.org. "Les Miserables" is famous musical adapted from the novel by Victor Hugo in 1862. The story revolves around former convict Jean Valjean and his pursuit of self-redemption by breaking his parole, thus having to escape the fleet of inspector Javert.

SATURDAY/MAY 2

Historic Pohick Church Saturday Tour. 1-3 p.m. Pohick Church, 9301Richmond Highway, Lorton. The Historic Pohick Church Docent Guild willgive free guided tours of the historic colonial church. <http://www.pohick.org>.

SUNDAY/MAY 3

Workhouse Farmers Market. 1-5 p.m. Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. The opening day of this year's farmers markets season.

SPECIAL CONNECTIONS CALENDAR

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday unless noted.

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5/6/2015 Mother's Day Dining & Gifts II
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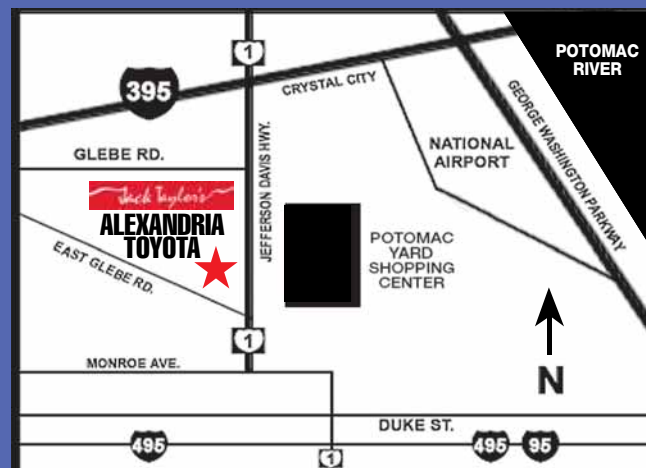


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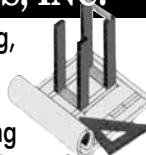
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21 Announcements

21 Announcements

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21 Announcements

**PUBLIC HEARING FOR TOWN OF CLIFTON, VIRGINIA
PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO SPECIAL USE PERMIT
PUBLIC HEARING OF TOWN COUNCIL
May 5, 2015**
Notice is hereby given that the Town Council of the Town of Clifton, Virginia will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, May 5, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. at the Clifton Town Meeting Hall, 12641 Chapel Road, Clifton, VA 20124 to consider the amendment of the special use permit of Clifton General Store / Main Street Pub, located at 7140 Main Street, to include and authorize an increase in number of seats and increase in parking onsite and off-site for the public and employees. The application for the proposed amendment to Clifton General Store / Main Street Pub special use permit is available for review and downloading on the Town's website at www.clifton-va.com and a hard copy may be examined at the Clifton Post Office, 12644 Chapel Road, Clifton VA, 20124. All interested parties are invited to attend and express their views with respect to the requested amendment to the Clifton General Store / Main Street Pub special use permit.

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-Archimedes

21 Announcements

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21 Announcements



Fairfax senior Christian Leckert threw a three-hit shutout against McLean on April 17.

PHOTO
BY CRAIG
STERBUTZEL/
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax Pitcher Leckert Throws 3-Hit Shutout Against McLean

Rebels improve to 8-4 with 1-0 win over Highlanders.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax pitcher Christian Leckert stepped off the mound, took a deep breath and regrouped.

The senior right-hander had a 1-0 lead against McLean in the bottom of the fourth inning, but outfielder Matt Collins had nearly put the Highlanders in front with a two-run homer. Collins' blast down the left-field line landed in the parking lot at McLean High School, but had curved foul. "... [I] thought about location [and] how I can get him out," Leckert said. "So I just kept pitching [with a] short memory."

Leckert responded by striking out Collins and getting Billy Gerhardt to fly out, ending the threat.

As it turned out, Collins' long foul ball was the closest McLean would get to scoring against the Fairfax hurler.

Leckert, who will play for James Madison University, tossed a three-hit shutout and led the Fairfax baseball team to a 1-0 victory over McLean on April 17.

Leckert walked two and struck out six. The Highlanders did not have runner reach third base.

"[Leckert] is a heck of a pitcher, obviously," Fairfax head coach Rick Freeman said. "Everybody knows that. When he throws his curveball for strikes consistently, that's the kind of game he gets. He's able to pitch backward to a lot of hitters and get them off balance early in the count and then his fastball looks a lot better than it is. He's a heck of a pitcher."

"When he throws his curveball for a strike, he's really lights out."

Freeman praised Leckert's ability to bounce back after Collins' long foul ball.

"That's who he's become," the head coach said. "He's a senior now and he pitches with a lot of confidence and a lot of leadership. I don't think he was rattled by it. I think he looked at it and said I can still get this guy, I've just got to make a good pitch."

A two-out single by McLean's CJ Downey and a wild pitch by Leckert gave the Highlanders a runner in scoring position in the bottom of the seventh inning, but Leckert got Frank Minamino to ground out to end

the game.

"He's an absolute workhorse," Fairfax shortstop Jason Waldman said about Leckert. "He's been doing this since sophomore year for us. He pretty much goes the distance every single time. It's fun to play behind him. He just gets groundballs, weak fly balls all the time. It's fun to watch."

McLean head coach John Dowling praised Leckert's effort, but said the Highlanders' inability to adjust contributed to their lack of production.

"All the credit in the world to Leckert," Dowling said. "He threw strikes and we did not come into the game with a strong approach and we did not adjust to what he was doing. If I'm him, I'm going to do the same thing: a lot of breaking balls that were effective."

What would Dowling have liked McLean batters to do differently?

"Adjust to a lot of breaking balls," Dowling said. "We were taking fastball swings in fastball counts and he was not throwing fastballs. And for seven innings, we continued to do the same thing. That is not acceptable."

While Leckert shut down the McLean lineup, the Highlanders found success by using four different pitchers against the Rebels.

Jon Clines, Charles Groppe, Downey and Gerhardt limited Fairfax to four hits, including none in the final three innings, but the Rebels managed to score the one run they needed.

Waldman, who will play for William & Mary, led off the top of the fourth with a double and advanced to third on a wild pitch. Senior third baseman Victor Danieletto then singled, driving in the winning run.

Waldman finished 2-for-3 with a pair of doubles. Sophomore Tommy Bradley had a single for the Rebels.

The win improved Fairfax's record to 8-4. The Rebels started the season with six consecutive victories, but lost four of their next five.

The Rebels will travel to face Yorktown at 6 p.m. on Thursday, April 23.

"This group is probably one of the more talented groups that have come through Fairfax in a while," Waldman said. "I think if we can play like we did tonight every single night, [there is] no reason why we shouldn't be taking a regional championship home."

28 Yard Sales

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21 Announcements

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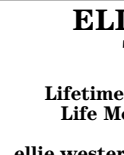
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2015 Spring Real Estate & New Homes

PHOTO BY BRYAN BURRIS

How to bring the outside into your home. The 25-by-16-foot window wall in the home of Ginni Mulligan was designed to maximize a dramatic backyard view while meeting tight local code regulations. To accomplish dual goals, Sun Design replaced the bulky traditional bulky wooden frame with a steel "moment" frame that covers less of the window surface. Sitting at the dining counter and looking out at nature has become a favorite activity for the Mulligans and guests.

Fairfax Station ♦ Clifton ♦ Lorton
CONNECTION

On Tour: Aging in Place Renovation

BY JOHN BYRD

A Vienna whole house remodel that incorporates an Aging-In-Place solution will be featured in the Parade of Homes/ Remodeled Home Tour April 25-April 26.

The circa-1970s split-level owned by Andre and Katy Hollis was substantially repurposed and renovated by Sun Design Remodeling of Burke.

"I decided that I really liked our neighborhood and that with changes we could stay in the house indefinitely," Katy Hollis said.

Mindy Mitchell, the Certified Aging-In-Place Specialist (CAPS) at Sun Design Remodeling who executed the Hollis design solution, says such inquiries have become more common in recent years.

After considering options, the Hollis family settled on several revisions: a spacious first floor bedroom; a gourmet kitchen; a better entertainment plan; and a guest suite with dedicated bath.

"I thought we probably had enough

square footage to achieve what we wanted," Katy Hollis said, "but there were lots of functional problems, and we weren't sure how to address them." The challenge was reconfiguring adequate existing space into a better plan serving long term horizons.

Katy wanted both a guest suite and a larger, more private master bedroom suite.

The former master bedroom suite now becomes spacious guest quarters. A corner bedroom has been transformed into a second upstairs bathroom.

Mitchell and team re-deployed 300 square feet on the rear of the first level for a very private master bedroom suite that includes a master bath and generous walk-in closets.

A home office behind glass-facing French doors opens directly into the redecorated living room.

"It's a terrific solution in every detail," Hollis said. "And knowing we've already made some solid decisions about the future has really given me peace of mind."

Call 703-425-5588 or
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PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

A whole house aging-in-place solution by Sun Design Remodeling will be featured in the Parade of Homes' Remodeled Homes Tour, April 25 and April 26. The firm executed a top-to-bottom makeover to a circa 1970s split-level, creating a first level master suite and a gourmet kitchen.

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Spring Real Estate & New Homes

Staged to Sell

Real estate agents give the lowdown on getting your home ready for the market.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

When a Burke family hired E. Diane Neustrand to sell their home, she did her standard walk-through of the house to assess it, but when she reached the dining room, she stopped cold.

"It was painted with three different shades of orange and accessorized with black, white and gold furniture," said Neustrand, a real estate agent with Long and Foster Real Estate, Inc. in Burke, Fairfax Station and Clifton.

First on Neustrand's chopping block: a pair of zebra print chairs. The boisterous wall colors were next.

"It wasn't harmonious at all," said Neustrand, who also works as a professional home stager. "We had to calm that down because orange is not a color that sells well. You want neutrals in paint and furniture, so potential buyers can visualize their own items in your home."

Residential real estate staging, the practice of preparing a home to go on the market for sale by making it aesthetically appealing, is credited with giving homes an advantage over the competition.

Staging can range from rearranging furniture, decluttering and painting the walls to furnishing a home in which the seller no



PHOTO BY ROBERT WHETZEL

Realtors say professionally staged homes spend less time on the market.

longer resides.

The National Association of Realtors' 2015 Investment & Home Buyers Survey showed that staging can have a positive impact on the number of days a home sits on the market and the amount of money potential buyers a willing offer for the home.

"STAGED HOMES traditionally present themselves better than the competition by being clean, clutter-free and ready to show to prospective buyers," said Mona Bekheet, a real estate agent with McEneaney Associates, Inc. in McLean. "Home staging is decluttering, depersonalizing and preparing a seller's home to look like a model

home so the potential buyers can see themselves living in the home."

The survey showed that 49 percent of agents say most buyers are affected by home staging, while a 2013 study by the Real Estate Staging Association showed staged homes sold 83 percent sooner than houses that weren't staged.

Realtors also believe buyers usually offer a 1-5 percent increase on the value of a staged home.

"Staged homes take less time on the market and they sell at the best price," said Bekheet. "Buyers view them as well cared for properties and appraisers are more likely to appraise staged homes at a full or higher value."

That increase can offset the expense of having a home professionally staged. Services, including consultations and furniture rental, can cost \$250 to \$2,000. Neustrand uses as many of the homeowners' possessions as she can to minimize out-of-pocket expenses.

"Since staging gives a home a clean, fresh, current look, it makes a home more attractive to buyers," said Betsy Schuman Dodek of Washington Fine Properties in Potomac, Md.

However, real estate agents say initiating conversations with homeowners about their homes and suggesting changes must be

SEE STAGED, PAGE 5

Optimism for 2015 Real Estate Market

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

After what seemed to be an endless winter, spring has finally come calling, signaling the start of the year's first real estate high season. Homes trade hands all year long, but spring is often for buyers, seller, agents, brokers and lenders like those weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas; buyers at full speed searching out the best bargains and sellers looking to move their wares without having to resort to price-slashing sales tactics.

So far, area real-estate experts and the data from sources like the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors (NVAR), Movoto

Real Estate, and SmartCharts (powered by RealEstate Business Intelligence with data supplied from the MLS listing service) are all aligned in their assessment of the outlook for the 2015 market in Northern Virginia. Compared to a lackluster 2014 after a strong 2013, there's reason for optimism.

Veronica Seva-Gonzalez, NVAR board member and Realtor with Compass Real Estate, noted that the spring weather and positive housing market news had arrived simultaneously. "It's great to see how all of the numbers are up from last year and also from the beginning of this year," she said.

Across the board, the numbers do look positive. Combined data collected for the counties of Fairfax and Arlington, the cities

of Alexandria, Falls Church and Fairfax and the towns of Vienna, Herndon and Clifton, show a first quarter increase of total units sold of just over 9 percent, with 3,657 units sold in 2015 compared to 3,352 the prior year. For the same period and for the same localities, days on the market (DOM) per unit actually rose in 2015 and the average ratio of sales price to list price showed marginal slippage, but Realtors and market analysts see the significant improvements in March 2015 numbers vs. March 2014 figures as an indicator of a healthy selling season ahead.

The March 2015 increases were seen in

SEE OUTLOOK, PAGE 4

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Outlook Optimistic for Local 2015 Real Estate Market

FROM PAGE 3

all sectors of the residential market, with “attached” homes like townhouses leading the way with a 3.6 percent uptick in average sales price. Condominiums came in at second place, with a 1.8 percent increase in the month compared to 2014. Single-family homes came in last for the March 2015 totals, but still better than the prior year by 0.7 percent.

Greatly increased inventory versus last year could be one factor in the more modest single-family home price increases. In 2015, 3,165 new properties came onto the market during the month, while only 2,656 were put on the books during that month last year. A total of 3,381 units were available to buyers in March this year compared to 3,011 last year.

“In some areas and some price ranges, there is definitely more choice,” said Reston Long and Foster Realtor Anita Lasansky. “Sellers are starting to get more confident.”

Realtor Jennifer Boyce, Long and Foster Gold Team, also noted that some buyers were starting to “come out from under,” having held on during the worst of the economic downturn. “Equities are looking stronger, so they can get back in, selling or buying.”

The data does vary around the region. Not all areas experienced an increase in sales prices in the month-to-month comparison. Falls Church City, for example, posted an increase in the numbers of units sold, but a 19.12 percent decrease in median sales price.

Arlington County, on the other hand, saw the largest increase in the March 2015 vs. March 2014 side-by-side; with 24.43 percent more closed sales and a 10.68 percent increase in the median sales price.

Janet Gresh of the Gresh Group in McLean says that her experience so far this year is in line with those numbers. “Arlington is definitely hot right now, close in and enough quality properties that you see serious competition.”

Lasansky gave the numbers she is seeing for Reston a “thumbs up,” as well. “We’re up about 15 percent in the first quarter over last year and about 5 percent up in median sales price.”

In the City of Alexandria, the median sales price rose by more than 10 percent in March on an increase of 14.37 percent in closed sales.

Fairfax County and Fairfax City both saw more moderate improvements in median sales prices at 2.79 percent and 2.00 percent respectively. For Fairfax City, the positive takeaway from the March figures is that the median sales price rose despite a drop in total closed sales of more than 50 percent compared to last year.

While all of the data provided is considered preliminary and still subject to revision, the numbers available to date suggest a good start to the year – and barring the unforeseen negative impact – a positive 2015 real estate market.

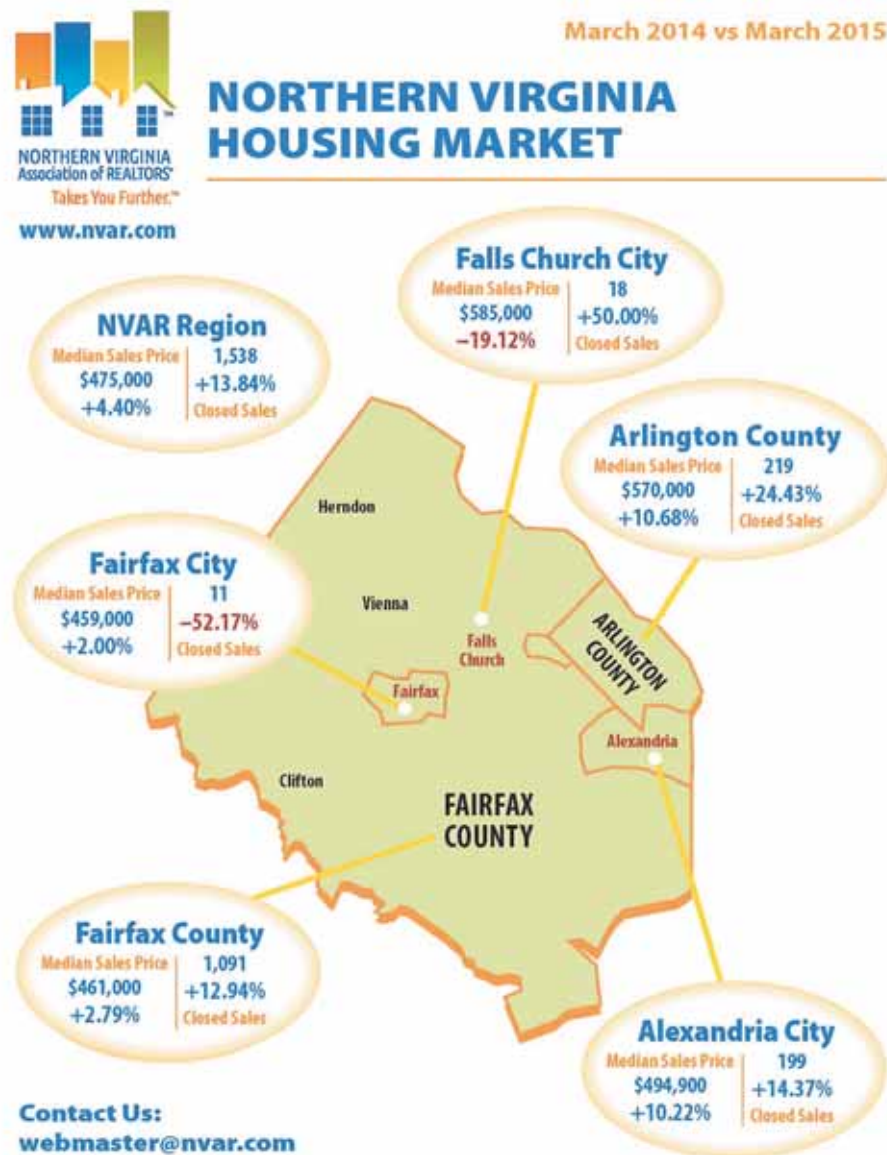


IMAGE COURTESY OF NVAR

Plus-column numbers on the books, the collective optimism of many of the area’s top real estate professionals, and respected organizations like the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors adding that “2015 may be different because of its more sustainable, positive market direction,” all offer signs that the real estate market in the region is looking at a healthy year. Any number of factors, including the ever-present threat of the Federal Reserve raising interest rates sometime this year, could stall or even reverse the positive trends.

Whatever comes along, realtors like Kathleen Quintarelli, Weichert Realtors, Burke, think we will deal with it. “People have kind of stopped believing that the rates will go up again and when they do it will be a shock and have its impact, but we will adjust to that new norm, as well.”

With the latest figures in hand, we asked some of our area’s top real estate professionals for their perspectives, and to offer some expert advice to buyers and sellers alike.

❖ **Virgil Frizzell, Ph.D., MBA**, realtor Long and Foster Reston: “I think the March housing statistics indicate a healthier spring housing market in the footprint of the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors than for the rest of the country. The con-

tinuing improvements ... are good for both homebuyers and home sellers and likely indicate a more balanced market. Buyers should benefit from increasing inventory, still low mortgage [rates] and easing credit standards. The year-over-year increase in housing units sold and modestly rising median prices may embolden sellers.” (Frizzell is the 2015 NVAR Chairman-Elect.)

❖ **Mary Bayat**, owner of Bayat Realty in Alexandria and 2015 NVAR Chair: “Finally, many buyers who had distressed house sales years ago could have enough repaired credit to qualify for a new loan. They will get more house for their money now than if they wait. We expect the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates later this year. Another local indicator is that active listings have risen more than 25 percent.”

❖ **Jennifer Boyce**, Long and Foster Gold Team Burke/Fairfax Station/Clifton: “Don’t price too aggressively in late spring or early summer is my advice. Homes that are well priced and in good condition will sell. The \$500,000-\$800,000 homes are in high demand. Homes that are priced over \$1 million face a smaller and sometimes more exacting buyer base, not willing to compromise much and expecting top quality for their money.”

❖ **Will Farnam**, Long and Foster Falls Church: “I think the data so far for this year would be considered bright - not a boom - but strong. It’s a market that’s good for good properties, not good for just anything. There’s enough choice. One good sign is the traffic at Open Houses. The last two weekends I have had house-fulls, quite different from last year. Smaller down payments on many FHA and VA loans is helping, but despite some lending requirement easing, I find that buyers with credit problems are still struggling to get a loan.”

❖ **Janet Gresh**, The Gresh Group@Keller Williams: “The market is looking good, but it is still a bit more of an art than a science at times. If an under-\$1 million home is priced right, I am starting to see multiple offers, especially in Arlington. ... In some of these areas, if the house doesn’t sell or have offers in the first two weekends, it could be a sign of trouble and time to re-evaluate. ... Don’t overprice and you may end up getting more than you ask for. I have experienced that recently.”

❖ **Anita Lasansky**, Long and Foster Reston: “It’s looking good, strong numbers over last year for Reston especially, what some call the ‘Silicon Valley of the East.’ Some homes are selling now in days, not weeks, if they are well-priced with updated kitchens and bathrooms. Those homes take top dollar and for the first time in years I am seeing multiple offers on those properties. The properties over \$1.2 million are still sitting. Sellers should also be cautioned not to overprice based on the addition of the Metro Silver Line. I see that a lot of people are riding it, but it hasn’t had that much of an impact on house prices in the area, at least not yet, but some sellers are factoring in 5-10 percent in their list price based on the Metro.

❖ **Kathleen Quintarelli**, Weichert Realtors, Burke: “I’m excited. 2015 looks slightly better already. Open Houses are really packed. With interest rates staying so low, more choice, the easing up on credit requirements, and fewer short sales and foreclosures - all those factors are really giving the market energy. There’s just not enough inventory in some categories, especially anything around \$350k - \$450k. Anything in good condition in that price range can go in the first week. My advice to sellers: Price well, prepare your home and stage it. And have your photographs taken by a professional. If the potential buyer comes in and says “Wow! This place looks a lot better than the pictures on the internet!” then your agent - or you - have done something wrong. Sellers should be ready to buy, even the same day you see the house you want. That means pre-approval and preferably by a local lender that we can work with quickly, especially if you’re faced with multiple offers or counters.

Staged to Sell

FROM PAGE 3

handled delicately.

"You don't want to hurt someone's feelings by telling them that they need to move items or get rid of items like the wrong artwork or too much furniture," said Maria Smith of Arlington Realty in Arlington. "But the homeowner's objective should be to sell the home."

Staging helps when a home is too cluttered, or even if a house is already empty. It's also a good idea "for those with dated, mismatched furniture or too many pieces in a room," said Realtor Marsha Schuman of Washington Fine Properties. "For homes that don't have a traditional floor plan, staging helps a buyer see how the rooms can be laid out."

"Even if you have a large home, if your closets are over-stuffed or if you have too much furniture, a prospective buyer can't get a sense of the space and dimension of a room or visualize themselves in the home," said E.J. Stone, a real estate agent with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Alexandria.

REMOVING ULTRA-PERSONAL ITEMS like family pictures or bills is another part of the staging process.

"You want to get a potential buyer to envision their things in the home," said Stone. "Neutrals can help with that. Those are things that a home stager can suggest."

"Staged homes traditionally present themselves better than the competition by being clean, clutter-free and ready to show to prospective buyers."

— **Mona Bekheet, McEneaney Associates, Inc., in McLean**

Less is often more in the home staging game, say Realtors. "I tell my clients to take stuff off the walls, rent a storage space and take all the stuff you don't need and put it into a storage unit, so it opens up more space," said Michael Richter, real estate agent for residential preferred properties at the Richter Group in Burke.

Realtors rank the living room as the number one room to stage, followed by the kitchen. Also in the top five rooms are the master bedroom, dining room and the bathroom.

"Your home should be a model home, like no one lives there," said Neustrand. "The bathroom counters should not have products or clutter. There should not be trash in the garbage can."

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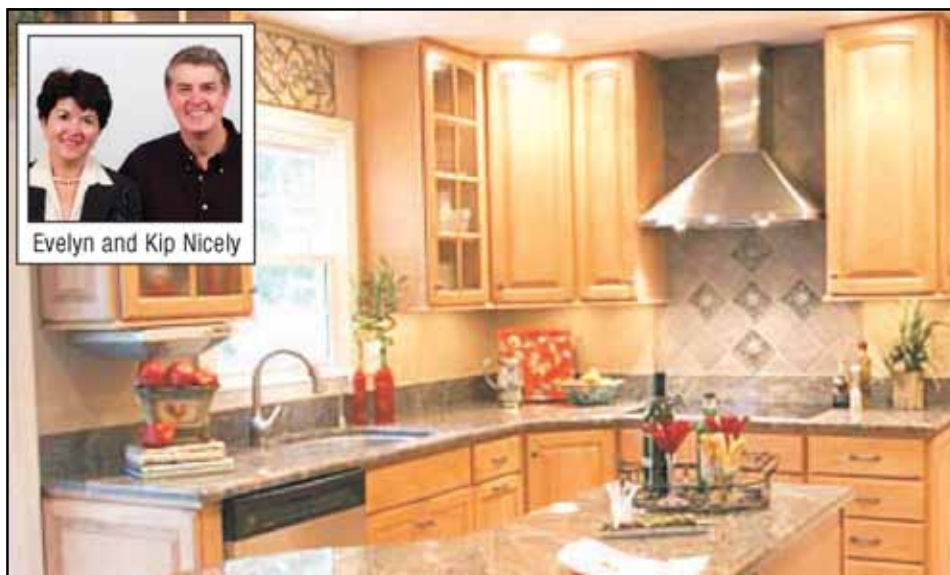
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Custom Kitchen and Bath Design, Remodeling and Project Management

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PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS:
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The American Institute of Architects (AIA)
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The National Association of Remodeling Industry (NARI)
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Trendy Bathroom Transformations

Designers share the hottest ideas in lavatory design.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Imagine stepping into a resort inside the comfort of your own home. Contemporary, spa-like bathrooms with clean lines and features such as floating vanities, open shelving, innovative storage and low-maintenance materials are on trend this year in bathroom remodeling projects.

When the main level master bathroom in a 1970s-era Reston home got a major facelift earlier this year, Dean Turner, of Evolution Design & Build in Reston was tasked with addressing structural issues as well updating the entire space.

"This bathroom had a sunken tub and shower combination that was leaking into the basement below," said Turner. "They wanted me to solve their water problems ... update their bathroom, and they



PHOTO COURTESY OF NICELY DONE KITCHENS AND BATHS
Low maintenance porcelain tile accented with river rock stone are used in this Burke bathroom.

were very interested in a floating vanity."

The floating, walnut piece was made by a local cabinetmaker and hovers 12 inches above the floor, and Turner was able

to give the homeowners an abundance of storage by incorporating cabinetry into the vanity. A simple touch of the fingertip opens and closes its drawers and doors, eliminating the need for visible hardware. Motion detecting, LED lighting under the vanity is another convenience.

Turner's team removed the existing wall and floor tile, replacing it with scratch- and stain-resistant porcelain tile that has the appearance of natural stone, while the wall tiles were made in the image of natural wood.

"When you look at it," said Turner. "It looks just like hardwood flooring on the wall."

AFTER MOVING into a retirement community, an empty-nester couple decided to overhaul the builder-grade bathroom that came with their home. They enlisted the help of Stephanie Brick, of Nicely Done Kitchens and Baths

in Springfield, who designed a contemporary space.

"The homeowners were looking for something that was calming and had a spa-like

energy," said Brick. "They also wanted more storage, especially open storage for linens and displaying items."

Brick and the Nicely team installed cabinetry with open shelving over the toilet. The vanity has a quartz countertop with veins of blue and turquoise that bears a close resemblance to marble. "Those colors were carried through in an accent piece in the shower," said Brick.

The porcelain tile floor has a marble-like appearance.

"You get the beautiful look of marble, but you don't have the maintenance or the cost," said Brick. "The new bathroom has a much more spa-like aesthetic. It was very bland and vanilla and it needed a face lift."

When the owners of a contemporary home in Burke decided to remodel their master bathroom so that it matched the style of the rest of the house, they called on designer Cathy Gross, also of Nicely. She used porcelain tile on the walls accented with river rock stone, a material that she also used on the bathroom floor.

"They wanted to continue the calm, zen, contemporary feel in the remodel of their master bath," said Gross, who also designed the home's kitchen five years prior.

More designs in the unabridged story at www.connectionnewspapers.com

Connecting Outside to In

BY JOHN BYRD

"When we started this company twenty seven years ago, our core specialty was opening up views," said Craig Durosco, chairman and founder of Sun Design Remodeling. "Northern Virginians like their green backyards, so finding ways to connect the house with what's just outside your door is a strong local incentive—especially as spring unfolds into summer."

Homeowner expectation for better integrated outdoor spaces evolves with each season, he said. To accommodate, Sun Design professionals constantly assess emerging building technologies, code issues, design literature. "You are always learning," Durosco says. "Improving on the quality of what you stand for as a company is a constant motivator for everyone here."

By way of example, Durosco cites three recent trend-setting projects.

Poolside Pavilion, Outdoor Kitchen

Entertaining outdoors has become a primary recreational activity for Monte Zaben and family. Though he commutes regularly from his Fredericksburg home to an office in McLean, Zaben's weekends by the pool have become treasured quality time.

"The house was built to my requirements, but I hadn't thought much about the grounds," he says, "We added a saltwater pool a few years ago, only to realize that the back of the house was so sun-

exposed...it was uncomfortable sitting outside."

Zaben set up a meeting with Sun Design.

From the start, the homeowner was impressed with plans for a shaded pavilion outside the home's lower level.

Under roof, a lounge area; a smaller closer-in footprint with a cozy poolside vista; an outdoor kitchen equipped with a traditional grill, a smoker and a power burner. When the summer guest list rises to fifty or more the vaulted canopy is a perfect spot for buffet tables.

"We use our outdoor space on just about every seasonable day of the year," Zaben says. "It's very much part of our lives now."

Screen Porch, Rear Decking

As Fairfax homeowner Joanne Alger tells it, Sun Design's solution to a previous problem was key to a new project.

Impressed with the outcome, the Algers now sought Durosco's ideas for a grander rear elevation indoor/outdoor component, one that would better connect the sprawling house with its six acre wooded setting.

The Algers embraced a Sun Design scheme with three main components: a 17-by-16-foot screen porch, a grilling deck, and a ground-level patio. The patio, in turn, segues to a hard-scape platform featuring an eight-foot stone hearth and comfortable seating. Overhead fans and portable heaters keep the outdoor room habitable in all but the coldest days of winter.

"It's our preferred gathering place now,



PHOTO BY MITRO HOOD

The outdoor kitchen is equipped with a grill and a power burner.

"Alger says. "And so comfortable we can use it from early spring to late fall."

Bringing the Outside Indoors

Nick Bonadies, Sun Design's Director of New Business Development, points to the 25-by-16-foot custom window wall in a newly remodeled Fairfax home as a kind of triumph of glazing technologies over the strong wind.

"Homeowners come to us for ideas that will open up space and invite visual continuum," he said.

Sun Design had converted Gini Mulligan's 2,200-square-foot 1960s split foyer home into a 4,238-square-foot French colonial complete with wrap-around porches, a new

master bedroom suite addition, and a spacious gourmet kitchen with a jaw-dropping view of towering backyard trees.

"We bought the house over 20 years ago, mainly because of the lovely wooded setting," Mulligan said. "I then spent so many years gazing out of a small back window, trying to imagine how the house would feel if we had a better view." The scale of Mulligan's vision, a two-story window wall, presented feasibility questions.

A steel "moment" frame, unusual in a residential application, allows for as much as a 40 percent increase in unobstructed glass surface. "It all looks very delicate—but this window can withstand winds of up to 90 miles per hour," Bonadies said.

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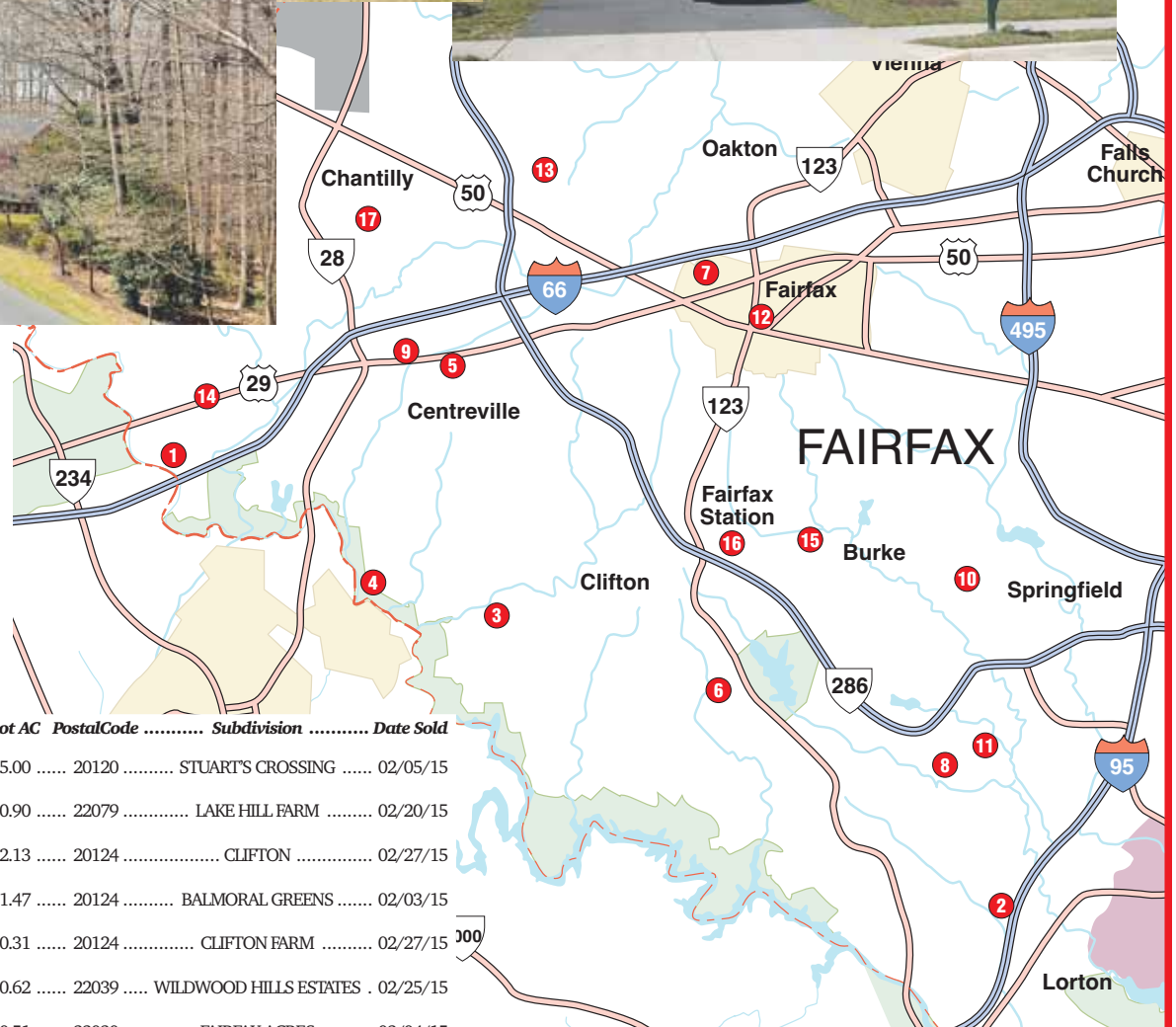
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4 13745 Balmoral Greens Avenue, Clifton — \$1,415,700



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3 12801 CHESTNUT ST	4	..	2	..	CLIFTON	\$1,095,000 ..	Detached	2.13	20124	CLIFTON	02/27/15
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6 10744 BEECHNUT CT	5	..	4	..	FAIRFAX STATION	\$815,000 ..	Detached	0.62	22039	WILDWOOD HILLS ESTATES .	02/25/15
7 3614 HILL ST	4	..	4	..	FAIRFAX	\$790,000 ..	Detached	0.51	22030	FAIRFAX ACRES	02/04/15
8 8017 FLINT ST	5	..	4	..	SPRINGFIELD	\$789,000 ..	Detached	0.61	22153	CHAPEL ACRES	02/26/15
9 13529 LAMIUM LN	4	..	4	..	CENTREVILLE	\$775,000 ..	Detached	0.19	20120	FAIRCREST SOUTH	02/23/15
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11 8309 KINGS RIDGE CT	5	..	4	..	SPRINGFIELD	\$735,000 ..	Detached	0.35	22153	GAMBRILL OAKS	02/05/15
12 10411 WHITEHEAD ST	4	..	3	..	FAIRFAX	\$720,000 ..	Townhouse .	0.04	22030	MADISON MEWS	02/19/15
13 3419 TILTON VALLEY DR	5	..	3	..	FAIRFAX	\$710,000 ..	Detached	1.48	22033	MARY RIDGE	02/12/15
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17 4608 FILLINGAME DR	5	..	3	..	CHANTILLY	\$512,000 ..	Detached	0.21	20151	LEIGH PROP	02/26/15

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15 9931 Wood Grouse Court, Burke — \$640,000

Award-Winning Connection Newspapers

More Reasons the Connection Newspapers are the Best-Read Community Papers

Winners of Awards in the 2014 Virginia Press Association and Maryland-Delaware-D.C. Press Association Editorial Contests

First Place Winners

Steven G. Artley, *Alexandria Gazette Packet* – Editorial Cartoon. Judge's comments: Smart and insightful.

Bonnie Hobbs, *Centre View* – Feature Series or Continuing Story. Judge's comments: Clear and concise writing with a good flow. Journalist captured the emotion of the event and engaged the reader well.

Michael Lee Pope, *Mount Vernon Gazette* – Business and Financial Writing. Judge's comments: First-rate, data-driven reporting and analysis on important issues. Fine work.

Michael Lee Pope, *McLean Connection* – Health, Science and Environmental Writing. Judge's comments: Michael Lee Pope's stories on driving habits, cesarean deliveries and the Affordable Care Act are well-researched, clearly written and engaging. His use of real-live people high up in his stories to illustrate his findings makes for very compelling material. He seems quite capable of turning some of these topics into a book. If he does, I'll read it.

Jon Roetman, *Vienna/Oakton Connection* – Sports Writing Portfolio. Judge's comments: Strong and clear writing and excellent storytelling helps game stories feel more like features. Excellent work.

Victoria Ross, *Oak Hill/Herndon Connection* – Government Writing. Judge's comments: An engaging look at a lobbyist who fights for the little guy; an entertaining story on a political candidate, helping readers put the upcoming election into context; one of the better budgeting stories I've seen lately that helps readers understand how the county's budgeting process is going to cost them more money. The supporting sidebars help bring the message home.

Jeanne Theismann, *Alexandria Gazette Packet* – Personal Service Writing, Obituaries. Judge's comments: These stories provide a glimpse inside the lives of people who have played significant roles in their communities. The writing is engaging and well-researched. And the stories serve as an example to others of how to live a life of purpose.

Jeanne Theismann, *Alexandria Gazette Packet* – Column Writing, Entertainment. Judge's comments: Ms. Theismann's entertainment columns demonstrate a breadth of knowledge that gives her opinions a ring of authority and authenticity.



Steve Artley



Bonnie Hobbs



Michael Lee Pope



Jon Roetman



Victoria Ross



Jeanne Theismann



Jean Card



Steve Hibbard



Louise Krafft



Joan Brady



Veronica Bruno



Vernon Miles



Marilyn Campbell



Mary Kimm



Steven Mauren



Geovani Flores



Laurence Foong



Renee Ruggles



Ken Moore

LOCAL MEDIA
CONNECTION
www.connectionnewspapers.com



Though I live nowhere near her area, I found it easy to be influenced by her writing and to wish that I had the opportunity to attend some of the events she talked about. All three examples are nicely written.

Jean Card, Jeanne Theismann, Steve Hibbard, Louise Krafft and Kara Coleman, *Alexandria Gazette Packet* – Lifestyle or Entertainment Pages. Judge's comments: Good balance. Front page article has good detail and info.

Second Place Winners

Joan Brady, *Great Falls Connection* – Column Writing.

Veronica Bruno, *Mount Vernon Gazette* – Feature Story Writing.

Jean Card, *Alexandria Gazette Packet* – Page Design.

Vernon Miles, *Arlington Connection* – Breaking News Writing.

Jeanne Theismann, *Alexandria Gazette Packet* – Headline Writing.

Third Place Winners

Steven G. Artley, *Alexandria Gazette Packet* – Editorial Cartoon.

Marilyn Campbell, *Chantilly Connection* – Health, Science and Environmental Writing.

Bonnie Hobbs, *Fairfax Connection* – Personal Service Writing.

Mary Kimm, *McLean Connection* – Editorial Writing.

Michael Lee Pope, *Alexandria Gazette Packet* – Public Safety Writing.

Steven Mauren, Mary Kimm, Steve Artley, Geovani Flores and Laurence Foong, *Alexandria Gazette Packet* – Editorial Pages.

Jean Card, Renee Ruggles and Laurence Foong, *Mount Vernon Gazette* – Informational Graphics.

The *Potomac Almanac* participates in the Maryland-Delaware-DC Press Association, and while 2014 award-winners there will not be fully announced until May 1, 2015, we do know that Ken Moore and Marilyn Campbell are winners.

