'Take a Moment Today and Count Your Blessings'

News, Page 3

Youth Soccer Hosts Winter Gala

News, Page 5

Painting Rocks With Cops

News, Page 4

Caroline Barbosa and son Gabriel, 5, share a laugh while painting rocks with cops.
Airport Noise Fully Disclosed

To the Editor:

Your recent article “MWAA: ‘Warn New Residents about Air-Craft Noise’” omits important facts regarding our application to develop 157 townhomes in Westfields. Opponents of our application cite new noise contours, a flight path over our property, and projected growth in airport operations as reasons our application should be denied. However, the updated 2019 noise contours and the previous 1993 noise contours are the same for our property. There is no change in the contours for our site. Further, the 2019 noise contours account for the flight path over our property and factor in the ultimate projected growth in airport operations at Dulles International Airport. In fact, the 2019 noise contours account for a projected three-fold increase in the frequency of flights over current levels, notwithstanding the fact that this ultimate projected level of airport operations is not anticipated to occur at any time soon. The projected airport operations in 2045 are anticipated to be less than half of the level of ultimate buildout that is factored into the noise contours.

Opponents also cite the need for full and accurate disclosures to potential residents of the noise impacts from the airport. We agree and have proffered to a robust disclosure package regarding airport noise. These disclosures include notice that aircraft fly directly over the property, that the noise from these overflights exceeds the average noise level, that the frequency of such overflights is likely to increase in the future, and a map showing our site, the airport, and the noise contours. Our application provides appropriate disclosures for aircraft noise, mitigation of noise impacts to homes through enhanced construction techniques, and an avigation easement to protect the airport. That’s why the Fairfax County Planning Commission endorsed our application on a vote of 8-0-1.

James L. Perry
Regional Partner/Vice-President
Elm Street Communities

Fostering Peace in Our Community

Aumen Choudhry
Fairfax

Making Virginia a Climate Leader

Nikka De Mesa
National Audubon Society Springfield

Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Send to:

Letters to the Editor
The Connection
1606 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314
Call: 703-917-6444.
By e-mail: editors@connectionnewspapers.com

CIRCULATION
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Free digital edition delivered to your email box. Go to connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe

NEWS DEPARTMENT:
chantilly@connectionnewspapers.com
Jean Card
Production Editor
jcard@connectionnewspapers.com
Bonnie Hobbs
Community Reporter, 703-778-9415
bhobbs@connectionnewspapers.com
Andrea Worker
Contributing Writer
aworker@connectionnewspapers.com

ADVERTISING:
For advertising information
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431
Debbie Funk
National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com
David Griffin
Marketing Assistant
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Classified & Employment
Advertising
703-778-9431

Editor & Publisher
Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm
Executive Vice President
Jerry Vernon
703-549-0004
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com
Managing Editor
Rental Rapaport
Art/Design:
Laurence Fong, John Heintz, Alli Stein
Production Manager:
Gevani Flores

By Kenneth R. “Ken” Plum
State Delegate (D-36)

T he General Assembly is in the final week of its scheduled 60-day annual session—scheduled to adjourn on March 7. The session has already made history with the actions that have been taken, and that history will be added to in its last week. Resolution of remaining issues will determine just how historic the session will be and how strong the forces of “we have always done it this way” are. A majority of both the House and the Senate members agree that the minimum wage should be increased—actually should have been increased years ago. The current minimum of $7.25 is an embarrassment. But discussions continue to hold the line on the increase should be. Should there be incremental increases over time? Should increases be statewide or regional? What jobs should the increase cover?

Almost every member ran for office with a promise to clean up the environment. How should we get to a cleaner economy in the annual? Most states have dropped the requirement. Would every other year be adequate? With gasoline tax revenues declining as automobiles get more mileage per gallon, should the gas tax be increased to make up for the loss? Or should cars be taxed on the distance they travel in a year? And what about electric vehicles that do not burn any gas? Should we be making a greater investment in our transportation infrastructure?

Should a constitutional amendment be approved setting up an independent redistricting commission or is there another way to try to make sure districts can be drawn fairly without incumbents alone picking their voters?

I have made my views public on these and other issues over the years. In a legislative session all views must be considered: urban, suburban, rural; Democratic, Republican, Socialist (there is one); conservative, moderate, liberal; etc. In most instances a compromise can be reached in conference committees such as those that are now meeting. Other issues will be put off for another year. Regardless of what happens with remaining issues, the 2020 session will go down in history as truly a remarkable one with the many tough issues that have already been resolved.
‘Take a Moment Today and Count Your Blessings’

North Korean refugees speak to Chantilly High students.

BY Bonnie Hobbs
The Connection

Imagine living in a country where the electricity is turned off every night and people are so hungry that they often eat tree bark to quell the pains in their stomachs. Chantilly High students learned about this directly from three students of North Korean descent who visited their school and shared their stories during a special assembly.

In their early 20s, the three attended the Jangdaehyun School in Busan, South Korea, and were here promoting cultural understanding. They did so after Chantilly Principal Scott Poole, former FCPS School Board Member Ilryong Moon and Region 5 Assistant Superintendent Becky Baenig visited that school and others in November while learning about education in South Korea.

Lou Gallo, a teacher at Jangdaehyun School, was previously pastor of Sovereign Grace Church in Fairfax. “About eight years ago, my wife and I met a boy who escaped twice from North Korea, was captured, imprisoned, tortured and released – and escaped again,” he said. “We fell in love with him.”

So in 2014, he and wife Lisa started NK Missions to help North Korean refugees assimilate into free societies. They later moved to Busan, where both now teach at Jangdaehyun. It’s for middle- and high-school students and is the only school in South Korea that serves refugees from North Korea.

During his visit there, Poole was so moved by the experience that he offered to help these students any way he could. Lou Gallo later asked Poole if he could bring three students to visit Chantilly High. He and his wife did so, Feb. 5, and the trio addressed a packed auditorium, sang a Korean folk song, toured the school, ate lunch with the American students and then visited the Udvar-Hazy Center.

“North Korea is a full, totalitarian dictatorship,” said Poole at the start of the assembly. “The current issues in South Korea are the Korean conflict and the hope for reunification of families who’ve been separated.”

Gallo showed several slides, including one from outer space, showing countries near North Korea lit up at night, but North Korea – with its electricity off – totally dark. His wife said people sleep on the floor and have to keep a fire burning at night to keep warm. “If they can find wood,” she added. “Most of the forests have been stripped.”

“Forty percent of North Koreans – almost half the country – do not know where their next meal is coming from,” said Lou Gallo. “Two of our students here escaped from North Korea. There are 400 miles between North and South Korea, but their border is the most heavily guarded border in the world.”

“If people escape into China and are captured, he said, they’re returned to North Korea where they’re imprisoned and, sometimes, executed. The other option is to pay a broker $10,000 to smuggle them out of the country via Laos, through jungles and over mountains, to Thailand. They then surrender to the police and are sent to South Korea – their intended destination. So, said Gallo, “It’s a 6,000-mile journey to go 400 miles.”

“North Koreans are hostile to America because they’re taught Americans are evil,” said Gallo. “Jangdaehyun is a school for North Korean defectors, and Americans work with the school to show the students Americans aren’t bad. And we bring students to America and tell them they’re free to think for themselves and make up their own minds.”

Then the three students spoke, starting with Sue, who lived in North Korea until age 10. “My dad died when I was 9 because we had no access to medical care,” she said. “My mother and I lived in a hut, but the police tore it down, so we escaped to China. It was a scary time. Then my mother escaped to South Korea, leaving me to be treated like a slave, cooking and cleaning and being mistreated by a man.”

Finally, Sue went to South Korea, too, and got to attend school. “But I’d only been to school three months in North Korea, so I was behind and couldn’t understand what my classmates were saying,” she said. “I had no friends because I was from North Korea, so I stopped telling kids where I was from and lost my identity.”

But at Jangdaehyun, she said, “I met other North Korean students, and my teachers told me I was the future of reunification and I could help. My teachers were supportive and welcoming; I was class president, and we did activities with other schools. Then they saw us as people and friends, and I became proud of who I was again.”

Now majoring in social welfare at college, Sue added, “I want to help people understand each other and work with both North and South Koreans to bring about reunification.”

Sue’s Story

Actually, Helen isn’t her real name, but her identity needs to be protected because her family is still in North Korea. Her mother escaped to China when Helen was 3, leaving her with her grandmother on a North Korean farm.

“But that wasn’t until she was 19 and fled North Korea with five others. ‘They checked to see if I was a spy,’ said Helen. ‘I’d never before had the opportunity to make decisions about my own life, so it was stressful when people asked about my dreams and what I wanted to do. But they made me realize I was precious and had hope for my life.’

Now, she’s just graduated from a university, where she majored in biology. ‘I want to someday be a biology teacher, hopefully to North and South Koreans in the same..."
Community Enjoys Painting Rocks with Cops

More than 160 community members joined police from both the Fair Oaks and Sully District stations, Saturday, Feb. 15, at the Sully District Governmental Center in Chantilly to paint “Rocks with Cops.” Among those painting cheerful rocks with encouraging messages was Robyn Povich. Her group, Rockin Robyn Kindness Rocks, leaves painted rocks in Chantilly for people to find and keep or share with others.

“There’s so much negativity in the world today that it’s nice to spread a little bit of kindness,” she said. “And this is a nice way to connect and surprise people and spark happiness and love in their world. You could be bummed out and look down and find a rock that says, ‘You are loved,’ and it could change your whole outlook. It’s also an opportunity to be creative, and it isn’t competitive – it’s about giving and doing something to make others feel good.”

—Bonnie Hobbs
Youth Soccer Hosts Winter Gala

Southwestern Youth Association (SYA) Soccer hosted its inaugural Winter Gala on Friday, Feb. 28 at the International Country Club in Chantilly. The gala honored graduating high school seniors as well as new inductees into the SYA Soccer Hall of Fame. The keynote speaker and awards presenter was Jill Ellis, the former US Women’s National Team Coach and two-time FIFA World Coach of the Year who grew up in Northern Virginia.

—Tom Manning

Alexandra Benton is recognized for her years of commitment to the SYA soccer program.

Damon McCarthy was honored by the SYA program.

Anna Farmelo—pictured with Jill Ellis, former US Women’s National Soccer Team Coach, after receiving an award for commitment and dedication to the SYA soccer program.

Justin Zapata with Jill Ellis, former US Women’s National Soccer Team Coach, after receiving an award for his years of participation in the SYA soccer program.

Members of the SYA U13 Red team.

Jill Ellis offers remarks before presenting awards. She addressed the young players in the room by saying that club soccer, “Truly is a platform to help you build for the rest of your life.” Ellis went on to say that, “You’ve learned resilience. You’ve dealt with failure. You’ve cried. You’ve laughed. Sport is not sport, it’s a gift. And when you can play with your friends at club soccer, it truly is something that I think if you go forward, you’ll take those lessons with you.”

Photos By Tom Manning/The Connection
classroom,” she said. “I’m grateful to have the opportunity to visit America, but my heart goes out to the people of North Korea who have no freedom or dreams.”

Joe’s Story

“My mom was from North Korea and was sold to my biological dad, a Chinese man,” said Joe. “I didn’t find out I was part North Korean until age 15. I escaped to South Korea, went to school in Busan and began to understand the issues in North and South Korea.”

In early 2015, the Gallos came to his school, Jangdaehyun, “to teach us about God, the Bible and the United States,” said Joe. “They also taught me that I was someone of value with a purpose to my life, and they encouraged me to come to America.”

He said he learned about the U.S. at age 7 from a comic book and “wanted to visit this wonderful country. I’m so grateful to be here now, share my culture and learn about your country.” He’s now majoring in psychology in college and is also a magician, later wowing the audience with several, baffling card tricks.

First, though, he told the students to appreciate how lucky they are to live in this country. Said Joe: “There are students, your same age, who dream of going to school and having the wonderful freedoms you have.”

Life in North Korea

“There’s no refrigeration in North Korea,” said Lisa Gallo. “People mainly eat corn or potatoes — but often eat rats, snakes and tree bark to fill their stomachs. Even mentioning God can cost you your life, whereas, in America, it’s a privilege to be able to decide your religion.”

She said clothing choices are limited and there are no cars or school buses. “Here, you bring lunch from home or have a warm meal in the cafeteria,” said Gallo. “There, a young schoolgirl saved a couple kernels of corn in her pocket to bring home to a starving family member and was beaten to death by her teacher because of it.”

“So keep the North Korean people — and the refugees here in this country — in your thoughts,” she said. “There, you’d have no access to the Internet or cellphones. Think what your life would be like without these things. Take a moment today and count your blessings.”

Then, thanking the guests, Poole said, “This was a powerful learning experience. We teach students resilience, and you certainly personify that and truly show what the triumph of the human spirit is all about.”
**WEDNESDAY/MARCH 4**
Sully District Town Hall: 7-9 p.m. At Sully Governmental Center, McDonnell Room, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd., Chantilly. Join Sully District Supervisor Kathy Smith, School Board Member Stella Pekarsky, The Sully District Council, and Budget Staff from Fairfax County and Fairfax County Public Schools to discuss the FY 2021 budgets for Fairfax and Fairfax County. Email sully@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-814-7100.

**MONDAY/MARCH 30**
**Kindergarten Registration.** 4-5 p.m. Union Mill Elementary is currently registering new students for the 2020-21 school year. If your child will reach his or her fifth birthday on or before September 30, 2020, he or she is eligible to attend kindergarten at the Fairfax County Public School that serves your address. Please follow the following steps to register your child:
1. Find your neighborhood school by entering your address at http://boundary.fcps.edu/boundary/.
2. Complete the “packet of registration forms”—you may obtain these in the Union Mill Elementary office or online at https://www.fcps.edu/sites/default/files/media/forms/enroll_0.pdf. Feel free to call Union Mill’s registrar at 703 322-8500 if you need assistance navigating the website.
3. Gather your supporting documents—proof of residence in the Union Mill boundary, a certified copy of your child’s birth certificate, parent/guardian photo ID, and any custody orders. Certificate of physical exam and immunization will be required before the student may start school, but is not required for registration.
4. Call the registrar at 703-322-8500 or email lrmilla@fcps.edu to make an appointment to bring your completed registration forms and supporting documentation to school.
5. Bring your child to attend Kindergarten Orientation on Monday, March 30, from 4 to 5 p.m. Your rising kindergarten student will have the opportunity to visit a kindergarten classroom while parents attend an information session in the school cafeteria.

**NOVEC YOUTH ART CONTEST**
Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative (NOVEC) invites students in kindergarten through fifth grade to enter an art contest in Cooperative Living magazine’s 18th annual Youth Art Contest. Entries are due May 4. Art should reflect the “Trip to the Zoo” theme. Artwork should be configured vertically (portrait style) on an 8.5-by-11-inch sheet of white paper. Art can be in color or black and white. It can be a drawing, painting, photography, or copy entries should be mailed unfolded to Youth Art Contest, c/o Cooperative Living magazine, P.O. Box 2340, Glen Allen, VA 23058-2340. Original entries will not be returned.

**CORT COLLECTS 70,000 POUNDS OF FOOD**
Through its partnership with Move For Hunger, a nonprofit that mobilizes the relocation industry to reduce food waste and fight hunger, currently partners with more than 1,000 moving companies, retailers, corporate housing providers, relocation management companies and apartment communities across the United States and Canada to collect and deliver food to local food banks. Because many people throw out or leave behind food when they move, Move For Hunger teams up with companies across the country like CORT to pick up the unwanted, non-perishable food items and deliver it to local food banks. CORT has been a Move For Hunger partner since 2017 and has activated the program in 57 districts, including through its partnership with Move For Hunger, CORT collects 70,000 pounds of food.

**Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Patomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.**
Super Pet Expo

Hermit crabs will be one of the highlights at the Super Pet Expo at the Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly.

MARCH 20-22
Super Pet Expo, At Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. Fri., Mar. 20 – 3-8 p.m.; Sat., Mar. 21 - 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sun., Mar. 22 - 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. Call 703-437-1794 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/dulles-historic-site.

Friday, March 21
Bake Old-fashioned Biscuits, 5:30-7 p.m. At Ellanor Lawrence Park, 5040 Wallace Rd., Chantilly. Fairfax County parks preserve history, as well as nature. Get a taste of that history at the “Cooking Biscuits” program at Ellanor Lawrence Park. Come to the park and learn to cook the old-fashioned way—over a fire—that the way Virginians did for generations before us. Cook biscuits and top them with fresh-made butter and jelly. Discover the kinds of tools that were once used in the kitchen and the safety measures required when cooking with open flames. This program is designed for participants age four to adult. Call 703-651-0013.

DIABETES SISTERS PODS Meetup. Meets the First Monday of each month. At Clifton Library, 4000 Stringfield Road, Chantilly. An evening of sisterhood, encouragement, and peer support. Opportunities to share experiences, peer support, and lived expertise with others who have been there too. Members living with diabetes for encouragement, education, and empowerment. Women age 18+ living with any type of diabetes or prediabetes are welcome, regardless of whether they were diagnosed yesterday or 40-plus years ago. They strive to create an open, respectful environment for women with diabetes or prediabetes to truly focus on their health. Free. Visit the website: https://diabetesisters.org/pods-meetups

MARCH 22
Super Pet Expo, At Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. Fri., Mar. 20 – 3 –8 p.m.; Sat., Mar. 21 - 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sun., March 22 - 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. Call 703-437-1794 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/dulles-historic-site. Attendance: Adults $13; Children age 4-12 $8, age 3 and under – Free. The family-friendly event will feature more than 200 pet-related exhibits along with entertainment and educational activities. Dogs, cats, Champion Trainer, hermit crabs and reptiles will highlight this show. Tickets: www.superpetexpo.com

Library Fun

Toddlin’ Twos, Tuesdays, 10:30 and 11:30 a.m. At Clifton Library, 4000 Stringfield Road. Early literacy storyline with songs and activities included. Age 2 with caregiver, free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a spot.

Storytime for Three to Fivees, Tuesdays, 1:30 p.m. at the Clantilly Library, 4000 Stringfield Road. Stories and activities for children age 3-5 with caregiver. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a spot.

Plant Clinic, Saturdays, 10:30 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfield Road. A neighborhood plant clinic with horticultural tips, information, techniques, and advice. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a space.

Lego Block Party. Every other Saturday at 10:30 a.m. at the Clifton Library. 4000 Stringfield Road. Legos will be provided for an afternoon of building. Grades 3-6. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a space.

Duo Storytime. Every other Wednesday, 10:30 a.m. at the Clifton Library, 4000 Stringfield Road. Develop and reinforce early literacy skills for reading success. Ages 1-3 with adult. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a spot.

Lego Kids Club. Every other Tuesday, 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. at the Clifton Library, 4000 Stringfield Road. Thousands of Legos for children to play and build with. Ages 6-12. Free. Call 703-830-2223 to reserve a space.

Starlight Storytime. Every other Wednesday, 7 p.m. at the Clifton Library, 4000 Stringfield Road. Stories for children under the stars for ages 4-8. Wear pajamas and bring stuffed friends. Free. Call 703-830-2223 to reserve a space.

IMPROVING ENGLISH

One-on-One English Conversation. Various times at Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Spend an hour and a half as a volunteer tutor to practice conversing in English. Various times. Information and Application portal. Visit the library at 703-830-2223 to make a reservation.

ESL Book Club. Mondays, 7 p.m. at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. A drop-in conversation group for all English learning English meet to discuss a book chosen by the group. Drop in. Call the library at 703-830-2223 for book title.

Advanced English Conversation Group. Sundays, 3-5 p.m. at Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Drop in conversation group for adult English as Second Language speakers who want to improve their skills more. Free. Call 703-830-2223 for more.

English Conversation Group. Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m. at the Clifton Library, 4000 Stringfield Road. Practice English with a group of students and adults. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a space.

English Conversation Group. Thursdays, 7 p.m. at the Clifton Library, 4000 Stringfield Road. Practice English with a group of students and adults. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a space.

Practice English Conversation Group. Saturdays, 3-5 p.m. at Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Drop in and enjoy casual conversation and learning for adult learners of English as a Second Language. Free. Call 703-830-2223 for more.

AASL Conversation Practice Group – Practice using American Sign Language in a relaxed, informal group. Teens and Adults. No registration required. Wednesdays, 6:00-7:00 p.m. Call 703-830-2223 for more info.

Beginning English Conversation Group – Drop-in conversation group for ESL speakers who want to improve their skills. Adults. No registration required. Fridays 10:30 am-12:30 p.m. Call 703-830-2223 for more info.

BULLETIN BOARD

from page 7

activated the program in 57 districts, including Boston, Chicago, Seattle, and Washington, D.C. If you would like to partner with Move For Hunger, visit moveforhunger.org/get-involved/ for more information.

BE AN EARTH DAY VENDOR

Reach thousands of Fairfax County residents in a single day at the booth at the Fairfax County Earth Day Festival. Applications for vendors are now being accepted from vendors, exhibitors and food vendors who want to join the celebration hosted by the Fairfax County Park Authority. This event, formerly known as Springfest, will be held on Saturday, April 25 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day. Festivities will take place at 3650 Historic Sully Way in Chantilly, Virginia. For event and vendor information, visit the Fairfax County Park Authority website. www.co.fairfax.va.us/parks/events

DONATIONS

Cell Phones for Soldiers is accepting donations of cell phones and accessories. Donors can call home. Patrons may drop off donations at 14213 Centreville Square, Centreville,