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April 2011

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Volume 11 • Number 3

Service and Transparency Police Captain Bennett Aims to Serve South County

By Susan Francis

Captain Shawn Bennett knew at age 18 that he wanted to be a police officer. "I played baseball with the son of a crash reconstruction officer who knew I was interested in law enforcement," said Bennett. "He invited me on a ride along with the Mt. Vernon District, and as I went call to call and witnessed the interactions between the police and the citizens, I knew this was what I wanted," he said. Just a little more than a month later, in April 1990, Bennett entered the Fairfax

County Criminal Justice Academy as a cadet.

By January 2010, Bennett had risen in the ranks to become commander of the Franconia District Station, one of Fairfax County's eight district stations. His focus is to continue developing excellent relationships within the community. "The station was already providing a high level of police service when I arrived," he said. "My goal is to keep what we have and move forward from there."

There are about 120,000 residents in the Franconia District Station's 51 square-mile jurisdiction east of I-95. "Many of the folks never come in contact with a police officer unless they have a reason to call 911," said Bennett.

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A Successful Quartet



The Fairfax Symphony Orchestra 2011 Dorothy Feuer Memorial Scholarship Final Competition, from left, Jackie Lin, honorable mention; Michael Romans, third prize; Daniel Tavani, second prize; Brian Hong, first prize. See story page 7.

photo: Barry Wheeler

A New Face for Accotink Village

By Irma A. Clifton

The tiny village of Accotink, surrounded by Fort Belvoir and barely visible as you travel along Rte. 1, is about to get a face lift. In fact, what is happening could be considered a whole makeover. The name Accotink is a reminder of the area's Native American inhabitants, as are the names

Pohick and Occoquan. Meandering Accotink Creek, which in the last century was dammed to form Lake Accotink, still runs through the south part of the village. Historic Accotink United Methodist Church and cemetery sit alongside a modern Buddhist temple, while the remainder of the village is made up of late 19th- and early to mid-20th-century structures. Backlick

Road bisects the village.

Once a thriving community deriving much of its economy from its proximity to Fort Belvoir, Accotink began a downward slide during the last half of the 20th century when it became known for its rowdy bars and porno shops. After years of pressure by the community and with support from Fort Belvoir

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NEWSBRIEFS

Virginia Historical Society Creates Searchable Database of Slave Names

The road from emancipation and reconstruction to the civil rights movement and the election of Virginia's first black governor is well documented in Virginia history.

But early black history, from the arrival of the first Africans through the Civil War, is often represented only through the words of white observers, freed persons who looked back on slavery many years later, or the records generated by others about African Americans who achieved recognition for their actions.

For most enslaved Americans, the only physical record of their existence may be a name in a register kept by a slave owner.

The Virginia Historical Society (VHS) is creating a free, online database called Unknown No Longer: A Database of Virginia Slave Names. The searchable database will contain personal information about enslaved Virginians gleaned from some of the more than 8 million processed manuscripts in VHS collections.

Unknown No Longer is unlike any research tool currently available and will be valuable for academic researchers, family historians and genealogists alike.

The VHS received a grant from Dominion Resources and the Dominion Foundation to fund the creation of this database.

Homecoming



"Homecoming," by Virginia artist Nancy Hannans is part of an exhibit of work by Hannans and fellow Virginian Denise Shamoun Phalan that will be displayed at the Workhouse Arts Center's Studio 5 through May 8. More information is available at www.workhousearts.org.

Right now they are in the research phase, combing through material such as diaries, letters, insurance papers, wills, freedom papers, receipts and deeds to extract raw information.

Once the VHS launches Unknown No Longer in September with 1,000 names, the database will be searchable through the use of a variety of keywords, such as name, gender, location, occupation and plantation. A website visitor could enter as much or as little information known about a particular African American to conduct a search.

To learn more about black history records at the VHS, use the Guide to African American Manuscripts.

Visit the VHS website in September to utilize the free Unknown No Longer database. It was designed to remove a barrier that has stood too long and will allow people today seeking to connect with their past the opportunity to do so.

Portrait Presented to Soldier's Surviving Family

Survivor Outreach Services at Fort Belvoir on March 18 hosted a portrait presentation in honor of Cpt. Andrew Pearson. The portrait was presented to Pearson's surviving family.

The American Fallen Soldiers Project is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that makes available to the families a no-cost original portrait of their fallen loved one that fully captures their appearance and personality. This organization presented an acrylic portrait of Cpt. Andrew Pearson to his surviving family.

Cpt. Andrew R. Pearson was supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. He died April 30, 2008, in Baghdad, Iraq, from wounds suffered when his vehicle encountered an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Hood, TX.

Spring Schedule for Youth Theater Program Announced

Acting For Young People Stages has announced its slate of Spring performances, including a musical version of "Snow White" and another show that asks the question: what would happen if Dr. Seuss had a whack at "Romeo and Juliet?"

AFYP Stages creates both touring productions, performed for young audiences by professional actors and Showcase Productions, in which new plays and adaptations feature young actors. All shows take place at theSPACE in Fairfax, are free (donations accepted) and suitable for all ages.

"We are delighted to bring these new shows to family audiences in and around Fairfax," said Mary Lechter, AFYP Stages' artistic and executive director. "With these new productions we continue to grow our repertoire and expand the goal of bringing high-quality programs with important and timely messages to families and children."

First up, on April 8, is a screening of "Who Was Sadie?" a comedic short film about a group of kids who find themselves abandoning the dance floor at their high school's Sadie Hawkins dance. Written and directed by Dannie Snyder, this is part of AFYP's Film Acting 101.

On April 9 and 10, the Young Actors'

Showcase feature is "Snow White," by Marjorie Sokoloff, directed by Candice Carter with musical direction by Patrick Magill. "This musical tale features characters from the beloved classic," commented Lechter. "Including all seven quirky dwarves, a tongue-tied prince, a sassy mirror, a dancing chicken and, of course, Snow White."

Other productions include "The Seussification of Romeo & Juliet" and a new adaptation of "The Fisherman and His Wife."

theSPACE is a raw space located in the retail center of Old Town Plaza at 3955 Chain Bridge Road in Fairfax. More information is available at www.afyp.org.

Parks Service Award Nominations are Open

The Fairfax County Park Authority is now accepting nominations for the 2011 Elly Doyle Park Service Award.

The Elly Doyle Park Service Award was established by the Fairfax County Park Authority on December 20, 1988, in recognition of Ellamae Doyle's years of outstanding service toward the preservation of parkland, natural and recreational areas for the benefit of Fairfax County residents. The purpose of the award is to publicly recognize a volunteer or group of volunteers for outstanding contributions to Fairfax County parks.

Eligibility is open to individuals and groups that have made outstanding service contributions to Fairfax County parks, including Fairfax County Park Authority volunteers.

The contribution on which the nomination is based must have occurred within the prior year (March 2010 through March 2011), but the nomination may also include accomplishments accumulated over time.

Award recipients will be honored at a reception and recipients' names will be placed on a bronze plaque at the Fairfax County Government Center.

Anyone may submit a nomination for the Elly Doyle Park Service Award.

Nominations are open until June 24, 2011. More information is available at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/2011doylenom.htm.

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HOME AND GARDEN

Prepare for Plant Sales with a Plan for Your Garden

Spring at last. Despite the threat of late snow, warmth and sunshine are coaxing leaf buds, tulips and people out of dormancy. As

plant sales beckon, the delayed effects of color starvation can drive a normally reasonable person to rush at any pretty plant in a pot and

set them out willy-nilly in the yard. Count me in! Some preparation on the way to the garden center can help us with our choices. A plan can do this.

There is plenty of evidence to suggest that it is not necessary to have a plan before having a garden. That said, it can save you time and money, and guide your decisions. The result of line-of-sight plant purchasing is that the garden this year develops the same hodgepodge quality that last year's garden did. And the problems that were present last year—the blank wall, the too-steep slope, the ugly view—are still there this year. A little planning may help us make selections that fulfill our desires for the garden.

A plan is only paper, but it is a powerful

tool. The simple process of putting your yard on paper forces you to take a good look at it and know it better. A copy of the plat of

your house and lot is a great way to begin, but you can start with one part of the yard or one planting area. Graph paper is handy. Measure and record the length, width and height (if appropriate) of a space, such as the one under the windows in the front, and shop for plants with confidence. If the window ledge is at three feet from the

ground, you can avoid future maintenance by choosing plants that only grow that tall. In front of the same window, a shrub that grows to six feet will require routine pruning or may be better suited somewhere else, unless

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Gardeners' Tips



Irene Mills

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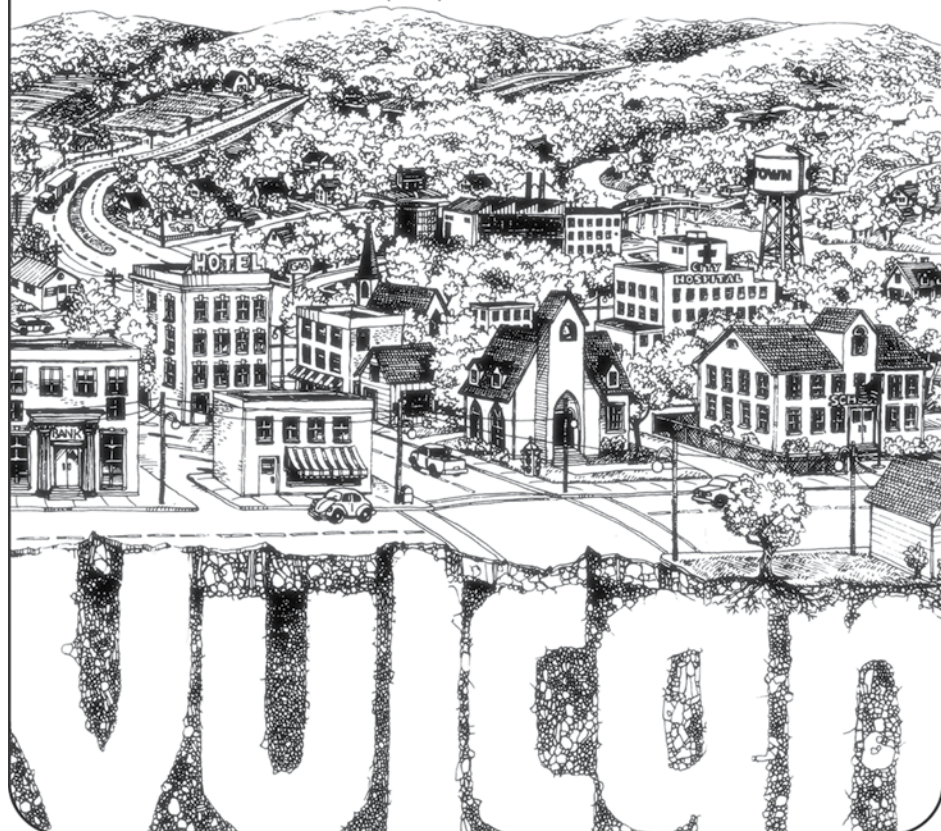
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Going Green at Woodlawn . . . Literally

By Irma A. Clifton

In late March, a plow broke ground on a new partnership between Woodlawn Plantation and Arcadia Food, Inc., a nonprofit organization that will operate the Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food and Agriculture on the grounds of the historic plantation. Woodlawn staff will collaborate with Ar-

cadia to offer innovative programming and events related to the agricultural heritage and historic foodways of the site, Fairfax County and the region, drawing on food and cultivation practices from throughout Woodlawn's history as a working farm of more than 100 years.

Woodlawn is a property of the National Trust for Historic Preservation who has

leased five acres to Arcadia and cultivation began last month. The first crops planted were radishes and greens to be followed later in the season by herbs, squash, tomatoes and other vegetables. The plot under cultivation is in the area of the formal garden that for many years has been in grass because of shortages of funding and staff to tend it. Arcadia's plan has been approved by the Restoration Committee of the Garden Club of Virginia and closely follows the landscape plan that the late Alden Hopkins, resident landscape

architect for Colonial Williamsburg, created for Woodlawn in the 1950s. Arcadia also planted approximately one-third of the meadow that runs along Rte. 1 with rye grass in order to restore the soil.

Arcadia was established as a nonprofit, in conjunction with Woodlawn, by Neighborhood Restaurant Group co-owner Michael Babin to help bridge the farm-to-consumer gap. Quoted in a Washington Business Journal article in Oct., 2010, Babin said, "As

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Northern Virginia Musicians Receive Awards in String Competition

By Eleanor Gomolinski-Lally

The outreach programs of the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra (FSO) offer many opportunities for young people to further their musical skills. There are in-school programs for students in grades kindergarten to 12. FSO musicians perform and work with students directly in their schools with assemblies, workshops and side-by-side concerts.

Master classes are held each season with guest artists who perform at FSO concerts. A small number of students perform for the master teacher in a public lesson in which the audience benefits from the expert advice given by the teacher to the performers.

Students from age six to 18 are eligible to join the new Student Passport Club. Members of the club get their passports stamped

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School Gardens Start Planting for Spring

As the lyrics of a tradition American and English folk song go: "Oats peas beans and barley grow. Can you or I or anyone know how oats peas beans and barley grow?" Well, not only can you and I know about growing vegetables, but school children in 36 Fairfax County schools can know a lot about growing vegetables, fruit and herbs. Some schools in our vast county are just planning their first vegetable gardens this year, but one school, Churchill Road Elementary School, is in its eighth year of planting and harvesting.



What follows is a random sampling of the varied school gardening programs in Fairfax County. It does not attempt to be comprehensive.

Churchill Road's active gardening program is called Outdoor Odyssey and now includes a greenhouse where seeds are first planted while raised beds await the seedlings. Plantings begin in early March and continue through May. In early spring students plant peas, radishes and lettuce. Later, tomatoes, carrots, green peppers, corn, squash, pumpkins, beans, green beans, eggplant, sunflowers, onions, cabbage and cucumbers are planted. Their herbs include lemon balm, oregano and mint.

Lane Elementary's garden has been in existence for several years. Students maintain the garden where lettuces and herbs are planned for this year. Nicole Goeneweg, who teaches a multi-age class of first- and second-graders, runs an after-school program called Roots & Shoots, where students learn about the environment, ecology and plant life. Liberty Middle School has an after-school VIP club that helps plant in the spring. This VIP club (Value in Prevention) runs in the summer with 50 children.

Providence Elementary School is in year two of their garden. Last year they planted tomatoes, carrots, corn, sunflowers, squash, zucchini, okra, cantaloupe, turnips, beets, peas, cabbage, beans, jalapeno and green peppers and pumpkin. Last September the school cafeteria served the beans during lunch and made an okra medley one day and then the parsley was used with potatoes. Students at Mountain View Alternative High eat salads and salsa and fresh squash from their garden all spring. Fourth- and sixth-graders at Lorton Station Elementary School are starting a Colonial Garden this year. They won't be

continued on page 22



Meteorite Donated to the Smithsonian

Months after a meteorite crashed through their rented office space, a pair of Lorton doctors were able to finalize the donation of the space rock to the Smithsonian Institution, and the proceeds to Doctors Without Borders. From left, attorney Michael Chamowitz, Dr. Marc Gallini, Dr. Frank Ciampi and attorney Keith Marino.



Eagle Festival Mason Neck State Park

Sat. April 16, 2011

10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Free Admission

Festival Events

- Reptiles Alive—Reptiles & Snakes
- Raptor Conservancy—Birds of Prey
- Mr. Jones and His Suitcase Circus
- Hay Rides and Trips to the Great Blue Heron Rookery
- Nature Walks
- Canoe Trips
- Pony Rides
- Wildlife Ambassadors
- The Anthony James Band



Mason Neck State Park Programs

Looking for a fun activity this summer?

- **Guided Trips on Kanes Creek**
–Guided Kayak trips are offered on Saturdays and Sundays from 9–11:30 a.m. thru the summer.
–Guided Canoe trips are on Saturdays at 4–6:30 p.m.
–Reservation required. \$15.00 per person
- **Canoe and Kayak Rentals also available:**
–Canoes \$12.00 per hour
–Kayaks \$10.00 per hour
–Tandem Kayaks \$15.00 per hour
- **Bike Rentals:**
–\$5.00 per hour

Mason Neck State Park is in Lorton. From US Rt. 1 go east on Gunston Rd. about 4 miles.

For more information 703-339-2385
www.virginiastateparks.gov

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The floor plan below shows a **lovely two-bedroom, two-and-a-half bath apartment** with a separate dining room and library, plenty of walk-in closet space, your own laundry, and a total of **1894 square feet**. Should you desire a different layout, we have **several other floor plans from which to choose** – all in excellent locations.

Our apartment floor plans give you a small idea of just how spacious and lovely The Woodlands residences are. Please do yourself a favor and contact us today for an opportunity to see for yourself. We invite you to call today and arrange a convenient appointment. You'll see for yourself why we say there's a beautiful apartment in your future here at **The Woodlands**.

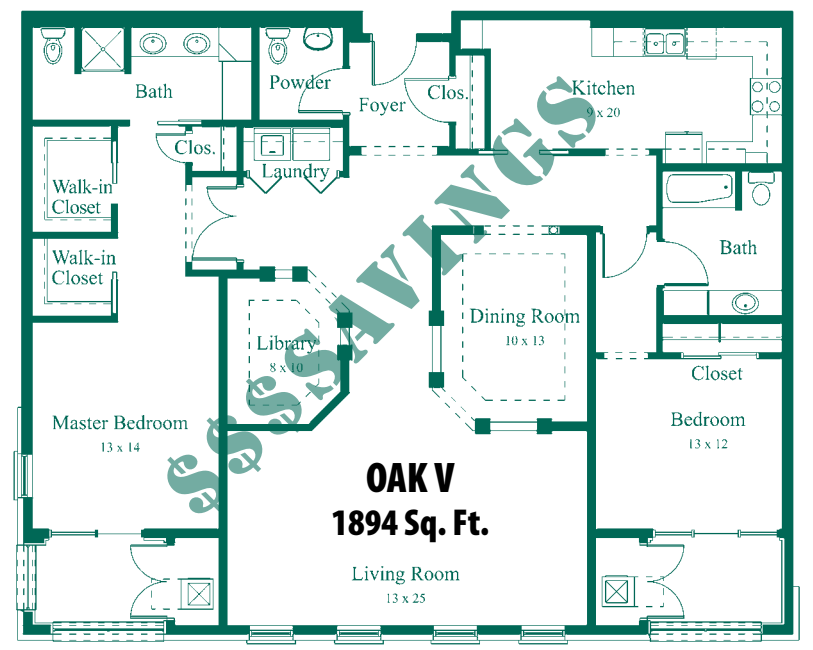
Call (703)667-9801 for more information and for a personal tour of our community.



Dimensions are approximate and floor plans are shown at varying scales. Stop by for a private tour and see just how spacious your new Woodlands apartment home will be!

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The **Woodlands**
RETIREMENT COMMUNITY



Call (703)667-9801 for a personal tour

A Message from EnviroSolutions

....South County's Community Partner....

The Lorton Arts Foundation's (LAF) Workhouse Arts Center is a true symbol of the transformation that has occurred in the South County community. The Foundation's adaptive re-use of a historic facility has created a place where the community can take advantage of a wide variety of cultural arts opportunities.

EnviroSolutions, Inc. continues to be an active supporter of the Workhouse and its mission to enrich the lives of all within its reach by creating a vibrant cultural community that fosters a diverse offering of arts, education, social and entertainment experiences for people of all ages. I encourage you to join us and to become a part of this exciting cultural arts community.

Attending classes and events, becoming a Friend of the Workhouse, and volunteering are all ways you, as an individual, can enjoy and nurture this wonderful organization. As a business, you can support the organization through financial support, sponsorships, corporate membership and in-kind donations.

*Conrad Mehan,
EnviroSolutions, Inc.*



Save the Date!

2011 Congressional Art Competition
March 30-April 17

Susan Tilt Solo Exhibition
March 30-April 17

Workhouse Film Institute:
Cinematic Tourist Series: Japanese
Film & Animation
April 1-2

2nd Saturday Art Walk
Saturday, April 9, 6:00pm

Gallery After Hours:
Ballroom Social Dance,
April 16, 7:00-10:30pm

Theatre For Young Audiences Series
with the Spot-LYTE COMPANY
April 20-23

Joyce Watkins Solo Exhibition
April 20-May 8

Art...for a Chance! Westfield High
School Exhibition: "Elements,
Principles and Voice"
April 20-24

Learn more about these and other Workhouse
events at www.WorkhouseArts.org



The Smithsonian, Joyce Watkins



Save the Date!

**Foulger-Pratt /Lorton Arts
Foundation 4th Annual
Workhouse Golf Classic
Thursday, May 12
Laurel Hill Golf Club,
Lorton, VA
1PM Shotgun Start**

**Individual Players: \$125
Foursomes: \$450/team
Fees include light mid-day
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balls, greens fees and
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LORTON Arts
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Fairfax Spotlight on the Arts Festival

By Jill Graziano Laiacona

If you live in Fairfax, you know the signs when spring has finally sprung—flowers are in full bloom next to Old Town Hall, Mason students are clad in shorts and tees, the soccer fields and baseball diamonds are full—and the Spotlight on the Arts Festival returns to the City of Fairfax, showcasing the best of the visual and performing arts right in our own backyard.

Ellen Brouwer, Spotlight co-chair, said this year's festival features exciting new events and participating organizations, as well as favorites that have been part of the festival for the past 26 years.

"The Spotlight on the Arts Festival will include more than 50 different events over 19 days, making it the premier spring arts festival in Northern Virginia," Brouwer said. "We have chosen to present a selection of diverse performances and exhibitions that will appeal to audiences of every age and artistic interest."

Founded in 1985 as a partnership between the City of Fairfax and George Mason University, the 26th annual Spotlight on the Arts Festival kicks off on Friday, April 15, with the inaugural Mayors' Ball, hosted by Fairfax Mayor Robert Lederer and former Mayor

John Mason in collaboration with Spotlight at the Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center, a state-of-the-art facility that opened to the public in February 2011.

The Sherwood Center will host numerous events throughout the three-week festival, including Polka 'Til Ya Drop by the Alte Kameradan German Band; A Little Night Music, presented by Washington International Piano Arts Council; Jump for Joy, a big-band swing concert featuring the Woodson High School Band and Music for a Lazy Sunday Afternoon by the Main Street Community Band. The Sherwood Center will also be host to A Royal Affair, a breakfast celebrating Prince William and Kate Middleton's nuptials, presented by the Woman's Club of Fairfax and Fairfax Ladies Lunch Group.



The Main Street Community Band

"The Sherwood Center gives a new dimension to the size of the audiences and the events that we can now accommodate," said Jo Ormesher, executive director of Spotlight on the Arts. "It complements all of our other

Community College's Annandale Campus, George Mason University's Center for the Arts and more.

This year's festival will also spill outdoors with a new event called Paint the City, which gives both professional and amateur artists the opportunity to capture the landscapes, architecture and landmarks within the City of Fairfax while residents observe their works in progress.

"Paint the City is a fantastic new venture, and given that we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of Fairfax, what better way to honor the city than capture our beautiful cityscape?" Ormesher said.

Ormesher and the other festival organizers are thrilled with Spotlight's increasing popularity and hope that this year's festival will attract even more people than in

years past. "With our new venues and participants, Spotlight continues to grow and develop along with the City of Fairfax," Ormesher said. "It is truly reflective of our community and we are proud of the involvement and commitment our residents have shown to make this festival successful year after year."

In addition to the Sherwood Center, the Spotlight network includes Old Town Hall, theSPACE at Old Town Plaza, the Civil War Interpretive Center at Historic Blenheim, Truro Church, Fairfax Museum, the Auld Shebeen, Fairfax and Woodson high schools, the Ernst Center at Northern Virginia

venues, giving us a wide range of spaces that are unique, historic, traditional and now state-of-the-art. We have the ability to run numerous events concurrently throughout the city."

Community Conscience

By Steve Rorke

Once again, the Lorton community members have shown how generous they are. The Lorton Community Action Center (LCAC) recently made an appeal for donations to purchase meat and the community responded with more than \$4,000 in donations and gift cards. Grocery stores have stopped providing us with meat due to better planning on their parts for selling inventory. So I say thank you for your generosity.

Other good news comes from the Giant supermarket on Ox Road. The manager has decided to donate excess food to LCAC once again. As you may remember, Giant stopped donating food to nonprofits several years ago. But the manager at this store has decided to stop that practice and to once again provide LCAC with food.

Why does LCAC need food and where does it go?

- During the last six months, LCAC served 472 families comprising 1,678 individuals;
- the vast majority of these families have school-age children and infants;
- the number of families coming to LCAC is increasing and will continue to increase as government revenue shrinks;
- for every \$10 contributed to LCAC, we are able to purchase 67 pounds of food from the Capitol Area Food Bank;
- 347 families are currently registered to receive food from LCAC each week; this number includes 707 adults and 601 children;
- LCAC provides 25,000 pounds of food per month.

As you know, the efforts to cut government spending are increasing. LCAC receives

17 percent of our funding from the Fairfax County's Community Funding Pool. The funding for the pool could be reduced by \$600,000 if the federal government cuts this funding. Several of my fellow nonprofit executive directors are speaking with the county's Board of Supervisors to encourage them to maintain funding for the Funding Pool at current levels no matter what the federal government does. I hope you share our position on this issue.

These are difficult times. Gasoline prices climb higher and higher, the world is in revolt and Japan has been devastated. Radiation is escaping from nuclear plants. But our lives go on. The presence of hunger among our fellow citizens is very real and food prices are increasing. Thank you for your generosity and for supporting LCAC's efforts to serve those in need.

Steve Rorke is executive director of the Lorton Community Action Center.



BUSINESS BRIEF

Supporting Veterans with Survival Bracelets

Jewelry By Design in Woodbridge has launched a new campaign called From Soldier To Soldier, designed to raise money for wounded veterans and their families.

The campaign is based on the sales of a designer version of the survival and friendship bracelets worn by many U.S. and allied soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan.

For every bracelet sold at Jewelry By Design, \$25 will be donated to Homes For Our Troops and other organizations supporting returning wounded veterans and their families.

The bracelets in the field are braided by the soldiers with parachute cord. They are

known as survival bracelets, because they can be unraveled and the paracord can be

used for many purposes in a pinch. They are also exchanged among the soldiers as friendship bracelets. Often a uniform button is sewn on and used as the clasp.

The designer version has a sterling silver clasp shaped like a uniform button and is extremely tightly braided. Sterling silver and gold-plated sterling silver heart clasps with and without a small diamond are also

available.

Jewelry By Design can be reached at 703-580-8880 or www.jbd4u.com.



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Taking a Spin Around Elite Saint Pete

On a sunny Saturday morning, I had a pelican's-eye view of the contemporary city skyline from St. Petersburg Pier. Pelicans perched on each pylon, shifting from foot to foot as runners passed by on their morning routes. The rhythm was reminiscent of "All the Single Ladies" and I laughed. Despite its reputation as being retirement central, Saint Pete is growing younger and trendier by the year. (VisitStPete-Clearwater.com)

On Jan. 11 at 11:11 a.m., The Salvador Dali Museum revealed its new facility right smack dab in the center of things in the town park. The new building is worthy of the artist. A slightly misshapen glass bubble beckons. A maze invites viewers to get lost in the sunshine. And, rising from the floor is a circular staircase to nowhere. It ends pointing toward the sky, where much of Dali's art left you dangling, between heaven and Earth with the sound of cerebral music in your ears and dirt in your mouth.

Next it was a spin around the Saturday farmers' market, where music, jewelry, art and craft are as plentiful as the produce. Then, onto the Chihuly Exhibit right on Beach Drive, where the rich folks dwell in the condo canyons. The Chihuly collection opened in its own space designed by award-winning architect Albert Alfonso. Those who find Dale Chihuly an enigma will be fascinated

by this exhibit. The colorful, complex and multi-dimensional glass sculptures shine in their own space.

The collection includes large-scale installations including the Ruby Red Icicle Chandelier, baskets, drawings and some of his series works including Macchia, Nijima Floats, Persians and Tumbleweeds. I was particularly enamored by the film that places the artist in Jerusalem working on an exhibit at the 2,000-year-old ruin. Tickets to the Chihuly Collection are dated and timed, allowing an intimate experience with the art.

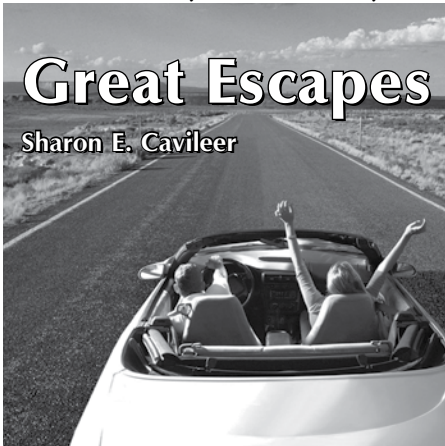
Straub Park, which buffers Beach Drive from the water, also offers a beach, a great place to study how the sun sparkles on the glass towers. When it's time for a taste of St. Pete, there are dozens of trendy eateries along Beach Drive and Second Avenue North. Most locals dine al fresco and the sidewalks are convivial and crowded. Young folks display short skirts and high heels but flip-flops are also considered formal wear in Florida. Pull up a chair and enjoy lunch or dinner at Bella Brava, Ceviche Tapas Bar, Moon Under Water or Park Shore Grill.

Don't miss the Fine Arts Museum in Straub Park. Small as it is, the permanent collection reflects an appropriate sampler of European Art from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries,

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Great Escapes

Sharon E. Cavileer



Win or Die: Playing the Game of Thrones

Without a single episode airing, HBO's upcoming "Game of Thrones" already has high expectations—it's been dubbed the most anticipated television series of 2011. The upcoming series pushed the novel on which it is based—first published in 1996—to the New York Times bestseller list, and the book's sequels have been selling well.

For those who haven't read the novels, the show may look like the second coming of "Lord of the Rings." It's an epic fantasy and features Sean Bean (who played Boromir in the Rings movies).

But the comparisons end there. Both brilliant in their own way, "Game of Thrones" is radically different in tone and setting from J.R.R. Tolkien's work. For starters, "Game of Thrones" features no elves, only one dwarf (of the human variety), and the barest hints of magic and the supernatural. Secondly, in "Lord of the Rings," it was pretty easy to tell the good guys from the bad, and one could rest assured who would triumph. In George R.R. Martin's "Song of Fire and Ice" series, the characters are all gray.

The good guys do nefarious things, while the bad guys occasionally do something noble. Just telling the difference between them is challenging enough. Far more perilous to the reader, however, is that a lot of great characters die, often unexpectedly and

sometimes frustratingly.

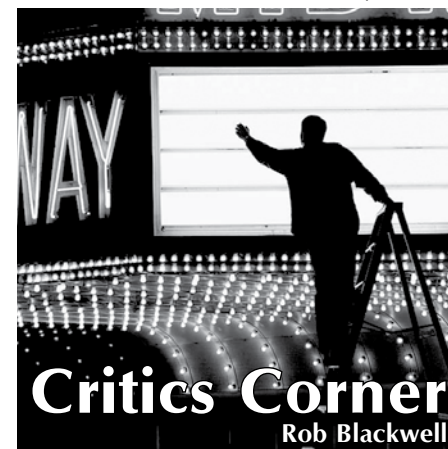
In short: this show, and the novels on which they are based, are not for the faint of heart. If Martin had written *Lord of the Rings*, Frodo probably would have been slain by Aragorn just before he destroyed Sauron's ring of power.

Still, the novels are gripping and fantasy at its best. Because it is not derivative of Tolkien, "Game of Thrones" feels unique, and sometimes more like a historical novel than a fantasy book.

Although Martin plays down the supernatural elements in the world of Westeros, they still exist. The novel begins with rumors that the "white walkers"—creatures of legend that lurk in the cold and use the dead to do their bidding—have been sighted again. There is also talk of dragons, the last of which was slain 100 years ago.

But it is the well-drawn characters that really make the novels such a good read. Eddard Stark, played by Bean in the HBO series, is as close as it gets to a good guy. Noble, moral and intelligent, Stark reluctantly accepts King Robert Baratheon's request to come to the capital of Westeros and become the Hand of the King—running the kingdom while the king goes hunting, drinking and carousing. When Stark arrives in King's Landing, however, things quickly go awry. The former

continued on page 17



Critics Corner
Rob Blackwell

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Lemons: A Bowl of Sunshine

Just sitting in a bowl on the counter, lemons are so bright, cheery and fragrant that it's easy to appreciate them for decorative reasons rather than for their culinary uses. But their sharp acidity makes them an all-purpose player in the kitchen, and unlike most fruits they're useful in both desserts and savory dishes.

Lemons are one of the most useful fruits you can have in the kitchen. Use lemons wherever or whenever you need to sharpen the flavors of a dish without added salt—a bonus for anyone on a low-sodium diet. Lemons add a welcome freshness to rich dishes and a refreshing zing to everything from pasta to salad to jams. A squeeze of lemon is a classic flavoring for fish and they're the essential ingredient in lemon meringue pie. Use lemons instead of vinegar for a quick dressing—whisk together olive oil, lemon juice and herbs to drizzle over a salad. Lemon juice prevents unwelcome browning of cut fruit such as apples. Don't overlook the peel or zest of the lemon. The essential oils in the peel make it a powerful flavoring agent. Lemons are prized throughout the Mediterranean, but the most creative uses are in North African cooking, where pickled or preserved lemons are a major flavoring agent and condiment.



Hooked On Cooking

Janet Thompson Conley

The most intense lemon flavor lies in the skin.

Choose lemons that are heavy for their size with thin, unwrinkled skin. There are several tricks to extract the most juice from a lemon. Bring it to room temperature before squeezing. Alternatively, microwave for a few seconds or roll on the counter before squeezing

to get the most juice. The juice can then be frozen for longer storage. Generally, a medium lemon yields three tablespoons of juice. The most intense lemon flavor lies in the skin and there are lots of gadgets out there for removing the peel or zest without getting any of the bitter white pith underneath. If you're using the zest and juice, zest

the lemon first. Lemons will keep for several days on the counter, but the refrigerator is best for longer storage.

Familiar conventional lemons, also known as Eureka or Lisbon varieties, are widely available at grocery stores year-round. Meyer lemons are sweeter than ordinary lemons and more fragrant with a floral quality. This lemon/orange hybrid is not grown on a commercial basis, but if you're in California or Florida, they're worth seeking out at farmers' markets.

My current favorite use of lemons is with chicken and seasonal vegetables wrapped in

continued on page 17

Uncork New Zealand Pinot Noir

It seems to me that pinot noir is the "it" grape of the moment. New Zealand is perhaps the "it" wine country of the moment. So it stands to reason that the "it" country would produce the "it" wine. Thus, New Zealand pinot noir was born. Originally it

was believed that a quality red wine could not be produced in a country with the latitude of New Zealand; it was too dark and too cold. However, due to some experimental plantings of pinot noir and Gamay vines in the 1970s, pinot noir emerged as New Zealand's second-most important varietal wine. Sauvignon blanc may be New Zealand's No. 1 wine export, but pinot noir is a close second. If New Zealand continues to produce pinot noir as excellent as it has been producing, then pinot noir may well eclipse that other varietal as New Zealand's greatest wine export.

Brancott was one of the first wineries to plant pinot noir in 1973, despite the skeptics who said that New Zealand wasn't sunny enough to successfully plant red varieties. It is now considered the primary example of New Zealand Marlborough Pinot Noir. It is noted for its cherry and deep plum flavors balanced with spice and tannins. As a good entrance-point wine, this one is perhaps a less complex wine on its own. But I would argue that this is a great backyard barbecue party pinot noir, as it is particularly suited to hamburgers. Brancott Vineyards Pinot Noir Marlborough is approximately \$12 at

Total Wine.

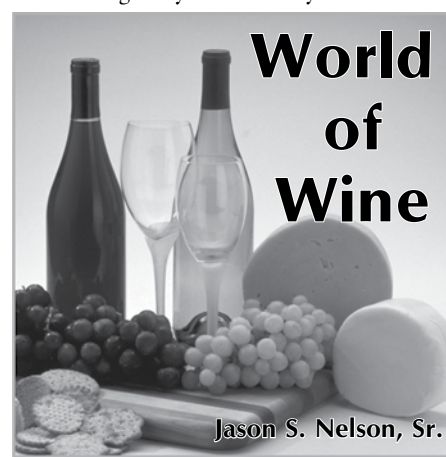
Kim Crawford Wines produces a pinot noir that is a dark, brooding wine. It is purple with a touch of crimson. The flavors of Kim Crawford's pinot noir can best be described as layered: black cherries, raspberries, red

currants, strawberries, spice, rich mushroom, smoky oak and bright fruit. I recommend a bit of decanting time for the Kim Crawford pinot noir, to release this elegant aromatic which is marked by dark cherry flavor balanced by smoky tannins, yielding a velvety finish. This wine works equally well with salmon or roast beef. Kim Crawford

Pinot Noir Marlborough is approximately \$17.50 at Total Wine.

Oyster Bay is another Marlborough vineyard that produces a very good pinot noir. Theirs is noted for cherry and plum flavors rounded by vanilla and perhaps mint. This wine is both barrel- and tank-fermented and matured with a mix of new and older French oak. This yields a complex and spicy pinot noir that is a great stand-alone wine, in my opinion. Oyster Bay Wines Pinot Noir Marlborough is \$14 at Total Wine.

So if you are looking for a new and exciting wine to try that is wallet friendly, look to the up-and-coming New Zealand as a New-World country that produces wines that compete with the Old World. If you have a hard time finding them in the store, they tend to be shelved with the Australian wines, which are usually easy to find.



World of Wine

Jason S. Nelson, Sr.

What's That Croak? Must Be Cope's Gray Tree Frog

Have you ever heard a frog croaking in the spring brush along a pond edge or later in summer in the woods but just couldn't find it? You may have been in very close proximity to Cope's gray tree frog, a master of disguise. This little 1¼- to 2½-inch gray tree frog isn't just gray. It has the ability to mask its presence with subtle changes in color based on what it is perched on, humidity and the season. This frog can show black blotches on its back or throw a variety of brown, green and pearl-gray shades of color on its rough and warty back. Greens are more common during the breeding season when the frog visits brush along pond edges where green leaves are sprouting. Most of these frogs will have a small white mark beneath the eye and sport a white belly that it holds close to wherever it's perching. The inner thighs are yellow to bright orange. The call of Cope's gray tree frog is described as a short, vibrant flute-like trill of 45 trills per second. During the breeding season you can follow his call and try to find him, but you must have an excellent eye to find such a well-camouflaged critter.

The ideal home for this little frog is in wooded areas near temporary or permanent bodies of still water such as flooded fields,

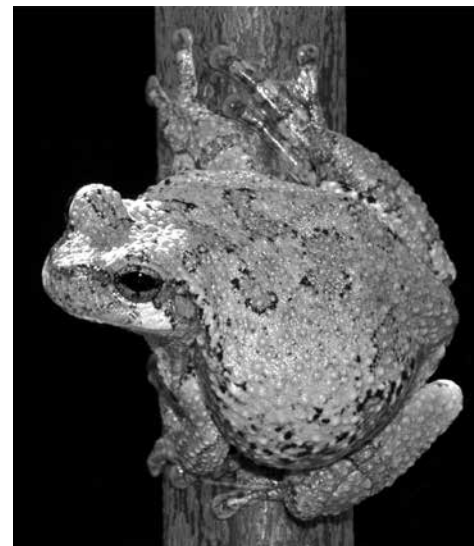
ditches, ponds, lakes and swamps. After breeding they may move further from water and inhabit farm woodlots, wooded suburban neighborhoods and forests where they can be found in damp, rotting logs or hollow portions of trees. In winter they will hibernate under logs, leaves and other debris on the forest floor. In spring they will head toward standing bodies of water to breed.

Cope's gray tree frog finds its meals where it can. Adults hunt the understory small trees and shrubs in wooded areas and will take advantage of most any insect it happens across while foraging. Fine dining for the tree frog is a nice meal of moth and

butterfly caterpillars, assorted beetles, ants, snails, worms, spiders, mites, ticks, plant lice and similar pesky bugs. Being an opportunistic feeder, it won't hesitate to gulp down another smaller frog that happens to cross its path. As youngsters, the tadpoles dine on plant material such as algae or underwater plants. They will also filter feed off the bottom, resulting in cleaner pond water.

Hyla chrysoscelis usually breeds between May and August. You will begin to hear their mating calls after the evening air temperature rises above 59 degrees. Warm, cloudy nights

from dusk to midnight will be noisiest. If the temperature drops, all calling ceases. The males cling to brush, tree limbs and other vegetation overhanging shallow breeding sites to scream out their breeding calls. They'll defend their territory using different calls to let other male frogs know their territory boundaries. Lady frogs are attracted to the man frog with the longest and most frequent mating call. Once she finds the man of her dreams, he will join her in the pond to fertilize the eggs as she lays them. She will lay scattered groups of 10 to 40 egg masses on the surface of small ponds or other small, still water. The egg masses will drift until they contact plants or other vegetative matter in the pond and then will become attached. The total number of eggs laid is anywhere from 1,000 to 2,000. With the eggs being laid, the parents' job is done and they wander off into the woods, however, the males may stick around for additional breeding opportunities. In a short four or five days, depending on temperature, the eggs hatch into tiny tadpoles.



Cope's gray tree frog

It will take another 45 to 64 days for the tadpoles to completely change into tiny frogs only about ¾ of an inch long. Then it will be two more years for the little frogs to reach maturity and start making baby tadpoles of their own. Some adult frogs have been known to reproduce twice during a single breeding season.

Cope's gray tree frog can live quite a long time in captivity, up to seven years. In the wild they fall prey much earlier in life to a wide variety of predators. Most tree frogs will eventually be gobbled up by snakes, birds, shrews and other small mammals, green frogs and bullfrogs. Even as tadpoles they are a tasty snack to fish, giant water bugs and larger amphibian larva such as tiger salamanders.

Allen Easterly is a freelance writer, Complimentary Work Force volunteer for the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and a state-certified Virginia Master Naturalist who has been studying wildlife for 50 years.

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Tips for Spawning Crappie and Bass

By Mark Fike

The air was breezy yet warm when I lobbed the whole nightcrawler toward a barely discernable stump sticking out of the mud in the bottom of the pond. It was submerged at least three feet but my polarized sunglasses helped me pick it out. I knew from experience fish liked to hang out around the cove end and I was repeatedly rewarded for my efforts each time I visited the pond.

This trip was no different as I watched my line begin a sideways slide away from where the nightcrawler had landed. A sharp snap of my wrist put the hook firmly in the fish, and the rod began arcing and throbbing as the fish tugged back. The fish swam around the end of the log in front of me and then around some emerging lily pads when the fight ended as the fish slid up on the bank and then was deposited into my bucket. I caught a half-dozen crappie and then switched over to a topwater Mann's Phat Rat. The Phat Rat is an effective artificial bait that gets a lot of attention from bass.

I had noticed a few dark "submarines" that had been cruising back and forth in front of me when I was busy hauling out crappie for dinner. When the pair entered the lily pads in the back of the cove, I heaved the Phat Rat into the jungle of emerging lily pads and let it settle until the ripples were gone. The water erupted just after the first twitch of the bait. Lucky for me the lily pads were not fully grown. Still, the fish was fully entrenched in the vegetation and had to be worked out of the mess. My line held and the hook stayed put, too.

The bass I caught measured 22.75 inches

long and was fat with eggs. She was slid back into the water to procreate for another year. Crappie and bream reproduce very fast and can quickly overrun a pond. So I did take the crappie and the few bream I caught to the house. The crappie were in various stages of spawning too. Fresh fish caught in cold water are the best-tasting you will ever encounter.

Tips for Taking Crappie in Ponds

Spawning crappie are relatively easy to catch, but for the novice I offer a few tips. These tips are primarily for pond fishing but will also work in lakes and reservoirs.

First, you have to find the fish. Crappie like to spawn in shallow water. Look at water less than four feet in depth. Use polarized glasses to search for movement in the shallows. Be sure to paddle quietly and avoid using even a trolling motor if at all possible. Travel upwind to minimize the need to paddle or motor more than necessary. When fishing from the bank, walk softly and slowly. Crappie spook easily, but they will return to the spawning beds. Look in the corners of coves, particularly those with treetops or lily pads near deeper water. The coves or pockets near the corners of the pond dam are good spots to look, but any cove with cover will hold fish. Docks are also good places to look.


Second, use a light action rod with light test line on it to avoid educating or turning off fish. Four- to six-pound test line is fine for crappie fishing. A spin cast or spinning setup is perfect.

Third, live bait works the best for crappie. Most people use minnows for crappie, but I have found that a garden worm or night-

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THOMAS E. LOVEJOY

Professor, Environmental Science and Policy

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Our planet does not work as just a physical system, but rather as a physical and biological system combined. This is more apparent now as the biology of the planet responds to the current amount of climate change (three quarters of a degree increase, as a global average). This talk will start by describing the response and great sensitivity of nature to the current temperature increase, will project ahead to what further increase could bring, and then focus on how managing the ecosystems at a planetary scale could contribute to a solution.

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Dining Guide

Mamma's Kitchen Serves it Up

Mamma's Kitchen serves hearty, homestyle food in a bright, airy storefront in the Hybla Valley section of Alexandria. Although it is one of many such Greek restaurants serving popular Mediterranean dishes, including pizza, Mamma's Kitchen stands out for its inviting dining space and its delicious versions of the classics.

Inside Mamma's Kitchen, large murals of outdoor and picturesque scenes from Greece—including one of the old city in Athens with a view of the Parthenon—cover several portions of the walls in the dining room. The scenes are painted in bold and bright colors. Some are simply picturesque, while others are whimsical and light-hearted.

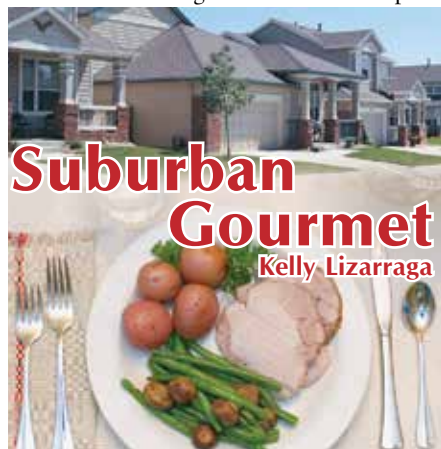
Service at Mamma's Kitchen is fast and friendly. Families are welcomed, and high-chairs are readily available for young diners. The kids' menu (\$3.99 to \$5.49) includes: spaghetti and meatballs, grilled cheese sandwiches, grilled chicken, hamburgers and pita pizza. In addition, the To Go Menu enables diners to order their meal for take-out.

The appetizer menu includes many

Greek favorites: Grilled Halloumi Cheese (\$8.50), Tzatziki, yogurt dip with cucumber, garlic and mint served with pita (\$4.99), hummus and pita (\$5.25) and stuffed grape leaves (\$5.95). We enjoyed the Tzatziki, which went down as a very nice, refreshing start to the meal, and also liked the fried calamari (\$7.50), which comes with a marinara sauce and a spicy "boom boom," Aioli-like sauce. This latter sauce was very pungent had a definite kick. Overall, the calamari was cooked just right—nice and chewy but not rubbery.

The gyro platter (\$9.99 lunch, \$12.95 dinner) is presented with a choice of either chicken or a combination of beef and lamb. (Gyro refers to the Greek style of roasting spiced meats on a vertical spit.) The beef-lamb combo is served over a bed of fries and sprinkled generously with feta. Served on the side are wedges of pita, and small containers with chopped tomatoes, chopped onions, and tzatziki. We highly recommend this dish. The meat was spiced just right—neither too overwhelming nor overly pungent—and the

continued on page 17



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6:30 Reception

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*Price does not include 18% gratuity and taxes that will be added to the final bill.

**A credit card is necessary to secure a reservation. A 48 hour cancellation policy is in effect.



Calendar

April 2011

Send calendar listings to Kathy Marinucci
at calendar@chroniclenewspapers.com

INSTRUCTION

1 & 2—Cinematic Tourist Series: Japanese Film & Animation. This two-day event will include contemporary and classic film screenings coupled with artist workshops and demonstrations featuring traditional arts and food from Japan and Japanese influence. \$5-\$7 for film screenings. See website for schedule. The Workhouse Art Center, 9517 Workhouse Way, Lorton. (www.workhousearts.org, 703-930-8382)

1-15—Art Class Registration. Art Classes in drawing, watercolor or Chinese brush painting will be sponsored on Tuesdays or Saturdays by the Burke Centre Conservancy. Classes are for 5- to 8-year-olds, 8 years and older and teens/adults at the Woods Community Centre, 10100 Wards Grove Circle, Burke Centre. See Web site for times. (www.czarlessons.com, 703-250-6930)

3, 17, May 1, 15—Architecture in the Afternoon Tour. This 90-minute tour will explore the mansion's exterior and interior, including the cellar. Discover why Gunston Hall's carpenter-joiner William Buckland and master carver William Bernard Sears are highly regarded. Recommended for ages 12 and older. \$10-\$25. 2 p.m. at Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Rd., Mason Neck. (www.gunstonhall.org/, 703-550-9220)

5, 7, 12, 14—ESL Classes will be offered at three levels. \$35, includes textbook. 7-9 p.m. at the Lord of Life Church, 13421 Twin Lakes Dr., Clifton. (www.lordoflifelutheran.com, 703-323-9500)

10 & 24—Gunston Hall Conversations. George Mason's family, friends and servants will discuss politics, play games and perform domestic skills in 1787 Virginia. Each session is different. \$10; \$6 for ages 6-18; \$2 for ages 2-5. \$25 for families. 2-4 p.m. at Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Rd., Mason Neck. (www.gunstonhall.org/, 703-550-9220) Second and Fourth Sundays, April through October

16 & 23—Hunting for George Mason's Landscape Tour. In this 45-minute walk with staff archaeologist Dave Shonyo, learn what archaeology has revealed about George Mason's landscape. A visit to the Mason family burying ground is optional. \$10; \$6 for ages 6-18; \$2 for ages 2-5. \$25 for families. 1:15 and 3:15 p.m. at Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Rd., Mason Neck. (www.gunstonhall.org/, 703-550-9220)

16-23—Historic Garden Week in Virginia Celebration. Rediscover the plantation grounds and gain a deeper understanding of Col. George Mason. \$10; \$6 for ages 6-18; \$2 for ages 2-5. \$25 for families. 1:15 and 3:15 p.m. at Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Rd., Mason Neck. (www.gunstonhall.org/, 703-550-9220)

17—Historic Highlights Hike: Lexington and George Mason V. Learn about Lexington, a plantation that belonged to Colonel Mason's eldest son. Enjoy a lecture at Gunston Hall, then hike ¾ mile to the site with local historians Gary Knipling and Chris Schreiner. Presented in partnership with Mason Neck State Park. \$15, \$10/friends. Reservations required. 1 p.m. at Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Rd., Mason Neck. (www.gunstonhall.org/, 703-550-9220)

May 1—Revolutionary Gardeners: Britain, America, and the Seeds of Exchange. Historian Andrea Wulf will explain the garden revolution that began in America and created a nation of gardeners in Great Britain. Wulf will sign copies of *The Founding Gardeners: The Revolutionary Generation, Nature, and the Shaping of the American Nation*. Offered in partnership with the Royal Oak Foundation. \$25, \$20/friends. Reservations required. 3 p.m. at Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Rd., Mason Neck. (www.gunstonhall.org/, 703-550-9220)

PERFORMANCES & FILM

1, 2, 8, 9—"Dearly Departed," presented by the Center for the Arts' Rooftop Productions, brings a new meaning to dysfunctional family. This entertaining comedy is set in the backwoods of the South where each of the relatives helps create mayhem in trying to deal with the funeral arrangements of their patriarch. \$15; \$12 for seniors and students. 8 p.m. in the Kellar Theater at the Center for the Arts at the Candy Factory, 9419 Battle St., Manassas. (www.center-for-the-arts.org, 703-330-2787)

10—"The Tuba Can Do Everything" will feature Christopher Quade on tuba. He will present a diverse

program demonstrating the beauty and surprising versatility of the tuba. 3 p.m. at Burke United Methodist Church, 6200 Burke Centre Pkwy., Burke. (www.burkeumc.org, 703-250-6100)

12—"Made in L.A." is a film about three Latina immigrants working in Los Angeles garment sweatshops who struggle for basic labor protections. Presented by Unity in the Community, it will be screened at 6:30 p.m. in the Verizon Auditorium of the Occoquan Building, 10900 University Blvd., Manassas. (ulife.gmu.edu/princewilliam/community/filmseries.php)

20-23—"Cinderella, Cinderella!" and "The Road to Forever." The Workhouse Arts Center Spot-LYTE Company will present these two productions especially for kids. \$5. 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. in Gallery W-16 at the Workhouse Art Center, 9517 Workhouse Way, Lorton. (www.workhousearts.org, 703-584-2900)

GATHERINGS

2—First Anniversary

Gala will honor the extraordinary public service of Virginia state Sen. Charles J. Colgan and his constituents, as well as his dedication to the vision and mission of the Hylton Performing Arts Center. \$150-\$300. 4-8:30 p.m. at the Hylton Performing Arts Center, 4400 University Dr., Fairfax. (umurphy@gmu.edu, 703-993-8621)

5, 12, 19, 26—The Wakefield Choral. In its 30th year, will practice, and new members are welcome (no auditions required). 7:30-9:30 p.m. in the cafeteria at North Springfield Elementary School, 7602 Heming Ct., Springfield. (703-451-7917)

6—2011 Regional Summer Work Experience Expo. Students in grades 9-12 will learn about summer work options from more than 50 area companies and organizations offering work experience opportunities including traditional summer jobs, volunteer opportunities, paid and unpaid internships and summer community service projects to help students gain valuable work experience. Students should bring resumes and dress in professional attire. 3-5 p.m. in the cafeteria of Hayfield Secondary School, 7630 Telegraph Rd., Alexandria. (imrivera@fcps.edu, 703-924-7424)

9—"Hectic Place or Sacred Space?" This Retreat Day will include teaching and group interaction. Lunch is included. Preregistration and payment are required. \$40. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at Silverbrook United Methodist Church, 8616 Silverbrook Rd., Lorton. (Pastor@Silverbrook-umc.org, www.silverbrook-umc.org, 703-690-4159)

13—Spring Fashion Show and Luncheon, hosted by the Women's Association of Northern Virginia, will benefit Hope For The Warriors, a nonprofit organization that supports wounded U.S. service members, their families and families of the fallen. A silent auction will be followed by lunch and the fashion show. \$32. Reservations required by April 6. 11 a.m. at the Springfield Golf & Country Club, 8301 Old Keene Mill Rd., Springfield. (703-549-0190)

13—Suffragist Amelia (Mrs. Robert) Walker, as portrayed by Lynne Garvey-Hodge, was arrested in front of the White House on July 14, 1917, then incarcerated at the Occoquan Workhouse for participating in the Prison Parades of 1918-1919 that eventually led to successful passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution giving women the right to vote. She will realistically describe the horror of the women's

imprisonment at Occoquan. The public is invited to this meeting of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association. 1:30 p.m. at American Legion Post 176, 6520 Amherst Ave., Springfield. (jkadelg@yahoo.com, 703 313-9387)

15—Noel Vietmeyer, Lorton author, will discuss Norman Borlaug and his latest book series *Borlaug: The Mild Mannered Maverick Who Fed a Billion People*, which will be available for purchase or signing. 7:30 p.m. at Cranford United Methodist Church, 9912 Old Colchester Rd., Lorton. (www.CranfordUMC.org, 703-339-5382)

16—Gallery After Hours: Ballroom Social Dance will include complimentary refreshments and cash bar. Start with a ballroom mini-lesson (\$5) with a professional instructor, focusing on the foxtrot. All skill levels are welcome. \$18-\$20 per couple.



7:30 p.m. in Gallery W-16 at the Workhouse Art Center, 9517 Workhouse Way, Lorton. (www.workhousearts.org, 703-930-8382)

16—Twilight Tipple. Relax with a glass of wine in the kitchen yard and enjoy a sunset tour of the mansion and grounds. Experience George Mason's home in an intimate setting. \$25, \$20/friends. Must be 21 or older. Reservations required. 5:30 p.m. at Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Rd., Mason Neck. (www.gunstonhall.org/, 703-550-9220)

25—VA 39th District Candidates Q&A, hosted by the Republican Women of Clifton, will feature Republican candidates Miller Baker and Scott Martin. 7 p.m. at Clifton Elementary School, 7010 Clifton Rd., Clifton. (cliftongop.com/)

28—Wine Dinner. Enjoy a four-course dinner with great wine selections. Benefits the Lorton Community Action Center. \$70. Registration required. 6:30 p.m. at Pane e Vino Restaurant, Lorton Station. (www.lortonaction.org/, 571-642-0605)

SWAP & SALES

2—Children's Clothing Swap. Bring your kids' outgrown clothing, clean and in good condition, and take clothing in the sizes you need. Nothing to swap? Take what you need. Or just bring in used clothes. At the end of the swap, leftover items will be donated to LCAC or Rising Hope. 10 a.m.-noon at Silverbrook United Methodist Church, 8616 Silverbrook Rd., Lorton. (www.silverbrook-umc.org/, 703-690-4159)

2—Spring Faire Shop Around, sponsored by the Woman's Club of Springfield GFWC, will benefit the Bethany House for Domestic Abuse. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, 8336 Carrleigh Pkwy., Springfield.

30—Community Yard Sale and Bake Sale will offer crafts, furniture, toys, housewares, knickknacks, hardware, books, baked goods and more. 8 a.m.-noon at St. Peter's in the Woods, 5911 Fairview Woods Dr., Fairfax Station. (703-503-9210)

EXHIBITS

6—2nd Saturday Art Walk will showcase the diverse work of more than 150 visual artists. Tour seven unique studio buildings, mix and mingle with artists, buy original works of art, experience ever-changing exhibitions and meet featured artists, all while enjoying light refreshment and music. 6-9 p.m. in Gallery W-16 at the Workhouse Art Center, 9517 Workhouse Way, Lorton. (www.workhousearts.org, 703-930-8382)

17—N-Gauge Train Display. The Northern Virginia NTRAK members will have a display and trains running. \$3; \$1 for kids. 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Rd., Fairfax Station. (www.fairfax-station.org, 703-425-9225)

OUTDOORS

9—Potomac Watershed Clean Up Day. Enjoy the spring weather as you help clean up Meadowood. Tools, supplies, work gloves, bug repellent, snacks and water to refill containers will be supplied. Wear work clothes and sturdy, closed-toe footwear. Bring lunch. 10 a.m.-noon at Trailhead at 10207 Old Colchester Rd., Lorton. (www.blm.gov/es/st/en/fo/lpfo.html)

30—Arbor Day Tree Planting. Tools, supplies, work gloves, bug repellent, snacks and water to refill containers will be supplied. Wear work clothes and sturdy, closed-toe footwear. Lunch will be provided by BLM. 9 a.m.-noon at Meadowood, 10406 Gunston Rd., Lorton. (www.blm.gov/es/st/en/fo/lpfo.html)

DOG ADOPTION

9—Cocker Spaniel Adoption Show. Meet cockers of all ages available for adoption. All dogs are spayed or neutered. Volunteers will be available to help potential adopters find a good match and answer questions on the dogs. Sponsored by the Oldies But Goodies Cocker Spaniel Rescue. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at Petsmart, 6535 Frontier Dr., Springfield. (www.cockerspanielrescue.com, 703-533-2373)

EASTER

16—Easter Egg Hunt. Meet the Easter Bunny, win a cake in the cake walk, enjoy crafts and play games. Egg hunts are scheduled by age groups and times will be posted. Bring your own basket, but there will be some to borrow. All are welcome. 10 a.m.-noon at Sydenstricker United Methodist Church, 8508 Hooes Rd., Springfield. (www.sumcdisciples.org, 703-451-8223)

21—Maundy Thursday Service will include foot washing at 6 p.m. and worship service at 7 p.m. at Silverbrook United Methodist Church, 8616 Silverbrook Rd., Lorton. (www.silverbrook-umc.org/, 703-690-4159)

22—Stations of the Cross, Time for Prayer and Reflection. A labyrinth will be available to walk. Noon-3 p.m. at Silverbrook United Methodist Church, 8616 Silverbrook Rd., Lorton. (www.silverbrook-umc.org/, 703-690-4159)

22—Good Friday Worship Service will be held at 7 p.m. at Silverbrook United Methodist Church, 8616 Silverbrook Rd., Lorton. (www.silverbrook-umc.org/, 703-690-4159)

23—Easter Egg Hunt. Children up to 12 years old can bring their baskets for the hunt and enjoy other fun activities. 1 p.m. at Silverbrook United Methodist Church, 8616 Silverbrook Rd., Lorton. (www.silverbrook-umc.org/, 703-690-4159)

24—Easter Celebration will include a sunrise service, breakfast, worship services, fellowship and Sunday school. See website for schedule. 7 a.m. at Silverbrook United Methodist Church, 8616 Silverbrook Rd., Lorton. (www.silverbrook-umc.org/, 703-690-4159)

Musicians Receive Awards

continued from page 7

at each concert attended, receive free gifts from local merchants, meet FSO musicians and attend a special reception at the end of each season. Student tickets are \$5 with accompanying adult tickets that start at \$25.

Each year the Dorothy Farnham Feuer Memorial String Competition is held in honor of the founder of FSO. In 1957, violinist Dorothy Farnham Feuer recruited 18 musicians to form what eventually became the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra. As the orchestra grew to more than 80 members by 1960, a board of directors was formed. In 1964, the board recognized the need to support young string players and appointed orchestra member Penny Farris to start a youth orchestra. That grew into four orchestras known as the American Youth Philharmonic Association. After Feuer's death in 1963, the string competition was established to recognize and reward outstanding achievement in young Northern Virginia string players from grades seven to 12. The first \$100 award was given to a student in 1964. On Feb. 20, 2011, four winners of this competition were chosen from a group of nine finalists. At the March 19 FSO concert they were recognized on stage and received their awards.

The first prize of \$1,500 was awarded to violinist Brian Hong, a junior at Robinson Secondary School. Among his many accomplishments, Brian is concertmaster of the American Youth Philharmonic. He began playing the violin at the age of four and realized by middle school that he was serious about continuing to excel in the study of his instrument. His mother says she never had

to push him to practice. Brian is interested in physics and chemistry and has a full schedule at school but still manages to practice three to four hours a day. This was not the first competition Brian has won. Two other competitions provided him with the opportunity to perform at Strathmore Music Center in recital and with the National Philharmonic. When he attended the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, he was recognized as the youngest Fellow of 2009. During the week of May 30, he will appear on the NPR radio show "From the Top," a program that features very talented young artists. Feuer Competition award money must be used to further the music training of the recipients. Brian plans to use his to commission a new bow.

The second prize of \$1,000 went to Daniel Tavani, a sophomore at Battlefield High School. Daniel is principal cellist of the Youth Symphony Orchestra in Prince William County. He began studying the cello at age six and at 11 performed in a master class for cellist Lynn Harrell. Daniel has taken part in other competitions. He won first prize at 12 in the Senior Division Concerto Competition of the Northern Virginia Music Teachers Association and was a finalist in the National Symphony Orchestra (NSO) Young Artists Competition. He has participated in many concerts in the area, including the Masterworks Festival and performs cello in a piano trio and with members of his family in the Tavani Ensemble. Daniel intends to use his prize money toward the purchase of a new cello.

The third prize of \$700 was awarded to Michael Romans, a sophomore at Lake Braddock Secondary School, where he is

concertmaster of the symphony orchestra. He has studied the violin for the past six years, but has also been playing the viola for two years. It was his performance on the viola that led to his award. For the past two years he has played violin in the Virginia All-State Orchestra and in the senior regional orchestra. Michael has had two recitals at the Alexandria Lyceum, where he played both violin and viola. He recently earned first place in a competition held by the Northern Virginia Music Teachers Association. Michael plans to use his award money to purchase a professional violin.

Usually the Feuer Competition awards only three prizes, but this year a \$200 honorable mention award was added, which was given to violinist Jackie Lin, a sophomore at Centreville High School. Jackie has been part of the Youth Fellowship Program and was a finalist in the NSO Young Soloist Competition. She played for Gil Shaham in a Youth Fellowship Master Class and for Timothy Fain, who was soloist at FSO's Nov. 2010 concert. Jackie also studies piano and is on her school's tennis team. She plans to use her prize money to attend a summer music program.

Great Escapes

continued from page 12

American Art from the 18th and 19th centuries including Robert Henri, George Inness and Georgia O'Keefe.

And, if you are emotionally tough enough, the Florida Holocaust Museum will break your heart and give you hope during the same visit. Just a short walk off Beach Drive on Fifth Street South, the Holocaust Museum

hosts an array of artifacts, survivor stories and frequent art exhibits. Through May 31, 2011, you can explore a show by Richard Notkin titled "Peace/War, Survival/Extinction," an artist's plea for sanity. While the contemporary art is moving and representative, the biggest impact comes from the actual artifacts of the museum from baby shoes to a wooden boxcar used to transport Jews to the death camps.

Celebrate the sunshine and the warm waters of the Gulf at one of a series of beaches. It's amusing to hit the beach in downtown St. Petersburg and walk from the Vinoy but one of the most beautiful can be found at Fort De Soto Park. Named America's Best Beach in 2005 and 2008, and TripAdvisor's No. 1 Beach for 2008 and 2009, this sweet slice of heaven is soft sand, emerald waters and shady pines. Comprising five separate islands, the park features a seven-mile paved trail, paw playground and dog beach, camping, fishing and Fort de Soto, of course.

Despite the oil spill, the gulf looks surprisingly lovely and its seafood is just as tasty as ever. And, visiting the gulf this year is just the nice and neighborly thing to do; it will help this gorgeous gulf coast recover.

Consider it a public service to taste great grouper, crab, oysters and more at 400 Beach Seafood and Tap House. Bella Brava, Cassis American Brasserie and Park Shore Grille. Or try the pier-side seating at Sea Critters Café on historic Pass-A-Grille at St. Pete Beach. Another local favorite is simply old Florida fun at the Chattaway . It's colorful, cash-on and out of range of the rich folks, if you've had enough elite St. Pete. The staff at the Don Caesar will applaud your good taste.

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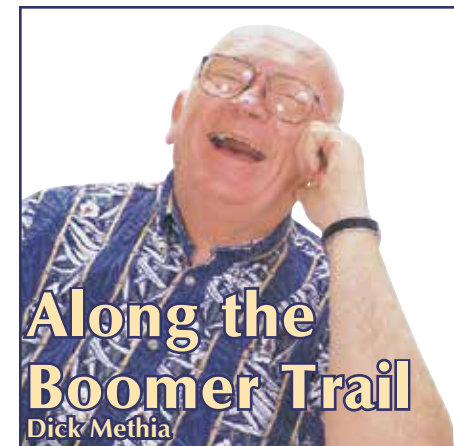
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Along the Boomer Trail

committees. The DC government sanctions gay marriage. Focus on the (heterosexual) Family and their conservative allies on the Hill gleefully promise to overturn it.

Residents of Washington, DC, enjoy (if that's the right word) a quasi-democracy. District residents have no U.S. senator among the 100 more or less distinguished individuals who jokingly call themselves "the world's greatest deliberative body." They have no congressional representation in the House

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Sports Scene

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ming League.

He was a stand-out soccer player and team co-captain at W.T. Woodson High. In 2003, he was a Virginia High School League All Star. Under Woodson coach Richard Broad's tutelage, Millward made First-Team All Liberty District, First-Team All Region and was a Washington Post All-Met Honorable Mention.

Millward wants to infuse his Lancers with some of that success. In the 60th minute of the game against Hayfield, Robert E. Lee soccer took a first step. Just five minutes after they had tied the game, Ahmed passed the ball to fellow junior Luis Aguilar, who scored the go-ahead goal to make it 3-2 Lancers.

Now with the lead, defense is what the Lancers needed. Their new coach knows a thing or two about defense. When playing for Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania, Millward was a defensive specialist, playing in 51 games at the center back position. He had drilled the Lancers on the importance of defense, and for eight minutes they held the score at 3-2. Then in the 68th minute of the game Lancer senior Kelechi Uchella got the ball to Aguilar, who scored his second goal of the night.

Millward started playing soccer when he

was five. "I never stopped," he says. His dad was an officer in the U.S. Navy. At one point John Millward attended seven schools in seven years, but soccer was a constant.

The young coach says he relates well to the high school athletes. It wasn't so long ago that he was dealing with the same stresses and strains of adolescence, the complex high school social scene and the balancing of academics with other activities.

While he can relate to his young athletes in a different way than an older, more seasoned coach, Millward may have to work harder to maintain a healthy respect for his authority. You need to impose discipline he says, hold them accountable so they learn to be responsible for their actions. "It's a fine line that you have to balance."

Millward says the team has a goal to go deep into the Patriot District Tournament this year.

After Shippensburg, Millward returned to

Northern Virginia, where he works for ADDX Corporation. He lives with his wife Sarah and dog Rommel, not more than 10 minutes away from his mom and dad.

As high points in his soccer career Millward lists starting in the VHSL all-star game in Newport News and his freshman year at Shippensburg when his team made the top 10 in the NCAA Division II national poll.

Winning his first game as the Lee Lancers' head coach of boys' varsity soccer has to rank right up there with those two.



photo by Joseph Hight
New Lee High School soccer coach John Millward



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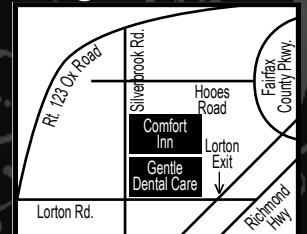
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Education Matters

continued from page 8

planting vegetables; they plan to grow thyme, sage, rosemary and chamomile.

Pumpkins are a favorite crop at several schools. They are used during the students' pumpkin study. Seeds can be planted when the students are in school in the spring and the pumpkins harvested when the students return in the fall.

Floris Elementary was awarded grant money in 2007 that helped to start an outdoor vegetable garden from the Youth Garden Grants Program, which was sponsored by the National Gardening Association and Home Depot. With the money they bought the supplies for raised-bed gardens and a storage shed for the gardening tools. First-grade teacher Jane Ann Cole explained how teachers and their husbands came on a Saturday, built the raised beds and filled them with soil. "Kindergarten students plant pumpkin seeds in the late spring that they harvest as first-graders in the fall. First-grade students plant corn in the late spring and when the stalks are up, our fourth graders add pole beans and squash for a three sisters garden."

Cole explained how Native Americans taught early white settlers the technique of planting squash, whose broad leaves protect the roots of the young corn and how the corn stalks later supported the climbing beans. Squash, corn and beans—these are the three sisters. "We plow it all under in the fall after pumpkin harvest and cover it for the winter. We also have a compost bin, and in the spring we add in the compost and get the area ready for the late spring crops to be planted," says Cole. When school is not in

session during the summer break, the plants are on a timer system for drip irrigation. Floris Elementary School is lucky to have such an avid outdoor gardener as Cole, who lives near the school and through the summer comes by every few weeks to weed.

Students learn water conservation through the use of rain barrels, which have become part of gardening activities at Washington Mill, Island Creek and Haycock elementary



photo courtesy of Alan Borbauer
Mr. Borbauer, guiding 6th graders Josue Borges, Lana Short and Stephanie Torrico, on how to spread mulch during the winter cleanup.

schools. Kings Glen Elementary uses compost from the school cafeteria. Floris has its own compost bin.

Island Creek Elementary in Kingstowne and Newington Forest Elementary are two schools that plan to plant a garden that attracts butterflies. Schools coordinate their planting of milkweed and other plants friendly to butterflies with second grade's science studies of butterflies and moths.

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Woodlawn Goes Green

continued from page 6

people who work in the restaurant industry, we are participants in the food system, and we are constantly made aware of how distorted and broken it has become. With Arcadia, we hope to provide a rallying point and a resource for the many passionate and committed people trying to change this system." Neighborhood Restaurant Group began more than a decade ago with the opening of the Evening Star Café



Woodlawn Plantation House

in Alexandria. It has grown to include nine restaurants and bars, a bakery and dessert lounge and a catering business. Starting small this spring, with just one acre under culti-

Several beehives have been placed at Woodlawn and the bees are expected to arrive any day.

vation, Arcadia and Woodlawn plan to expand the project in coming years and expect to be able to distribute locally produced foods to the Washington, DC, area well as provide experiential learning opportunities for schools and the community. In addition, according to Susan Hellman, deputy director of Woodlawn and the Pope-Leighey House, Woodlawn has entered into a partnership with Star Catering, part of Arcadia's operation, to provide catering for events held at Woodlawn in which they will use as much produce raised on the property as possible.

Hellman said she is especially excited that several beehives have been placed at Woodlawn and the bees are expected to arrive any day.

Volunteers will plant and tend the garden plot under the direction of a farm man-

Arcadia's vision is to have 20 acres devoted to a local and sustainable food initiative.

ager. Employees from the Neighborhood Restaurant Groups restaurants will help out, as well. Arcadia's vision is to have 20 acres devoted to a local and sustainable food initiative. "We anticipate a successful return to Woodlawn's agricultural heritage, and look forward to providing our guests a more realistic portrayal of life on a 19th-century working farm," said Hellman.

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Captain Bennett

continued from page 1

"There are only about 20 officers at a time patrolling the Franconia District," he said. "We need the citizens to be vigilant with their eyes to help us."

"Since their job is to protect the community, police officers tend to see the world as safety issues, and they focus on writing tickets and making arrests," said Bennett. "I try to get them to be open minded to see that there is a wealth of citizens who need our services," he said. "It's a challenge because we're very

reactive."

His strategy is to get his officers off the main roads and out of their cars to engage the citizens "I want my officers to ask questions like how are you? What are your concerns? What are the trends in the community?" he said. "With police, 80 percent of our effort is focused on 20 percent of the issues." Getting out and talking with citizens fosters two-way communication. What I really focus on is equity of service throughout the district."

Bennett practices what he preaches. "It is powerful to get out of the cruiser and speak with someone out raking their leaves," he

said. In recent months he has scheduled police department meetings at community locations such as Lorton and Kingstowne libraries and the Springfield Community Center to take himself out of the station and into the community. "The interactions I've had have been remarkable," he said.

According to Bennett, there has always been a Citizens Advisory Committee at the Franconia District Station, but since his arrival as captain, attendance is increasing. He and Lt. David Smith, assistant commander of the Franconia Station, participate in these monthly meetings, answering questions from those attending. "I have a great time at those meetings," said Bennett. "Folks receive more information that they would typically hear in the news. And attending gives me a chance to hear what's going on in the neighborhoods."

Since police are typically the first called for any problem, Bennett says he hears many complaints that his department is not doing enough. He explained that the police don't have authority to address all issues. Recently he faced complaints relating to the homeless. "The citizens did not understand

"I want people to bring us their issues and then work together with us to find the best resources for resolving them."

that we were not the agency to take care of their concerns," said Bennett. "I held training for the citizens about homelessness in Fairfax County and shared the agencies and departments responsible for different issues. Those who attended walked away with a new outlook," he said.

Bennett said his goal is to work with citizens to resolve any issues of concern. "I'm not a finger-pointing type of person," said Bennett. "I want people to bring us their is-

sues and then work together with us to find the best resources for resolving them."

At January's Citizen's Advisory Committee meeting, the Franconia District Station's Criminal Investigation Section discussed the high incidence of global positioning system

(GPS) devices theft in the area. Citizens were asking if immigration checks were being conducted on those arrested. Officer Eduardo (Eddie) Azcarate, the station's communications officer, said, "We as local police do not enforce immigration law because it is a federal issue." He went on to explain that Fairfax County Police work with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on issues of immigration. In response to the concerns and questions, the Franconia District Station is inviting members of ICE to a future Citizen's Advisory Committee meeting.

Getting out the word is important to Bennett. Franconia is the only district station in Fairfax County that has a station communications officer. "We have permission from the Department Public Information officer M.A. Jennings to work in partnership disseminating information," said Bennett. "Officer Azcarate is in charge of responding to what our citizens need to know or want to know. It's part of our transparency, and it enables us to localize information."

E-mail is another way the station works for transparency and service. From the station's website there is an e-mail link to communicate directly with Captain Bennett and Assistant Cmdr. Dave Smith.

Bennett has been with the Fairfax County Police Department for more than 20 years. He's worked in many capacities, but says the motor squad was his favorite. "Working the motor squad is most everyone's favorite," he said. "You work around the entire county riding a Harley Davidson." Bennett held three ranks in the motor squad: officer, sergeant and second lieutenant. He doesn't currently ride a motorcycle. "When I was riding for my

"We as local police do not enforce immigration law because it is a federal issue."

job, it was fun, but not leisurely," he said. "I'm playing it a little safe now that I have kids."

With 130 sworn full-time officers, 14 auxiliary officers who are unpaid volunteers, and 20 civilians working in the Franconia District Station, it is larger than most police departments across the country. "Lt. Dave Smith and I have 24/7/365 responsibilities," said Bennett. "We are never done."

For all that, Bennett is happy with his career. "I am ecstatic at where I am in my career right now. I supervise more than most police chiefs across the country," he said. He is not finished, though. "I'm going to keep trying to move up the ranks and compete for major."



Captain Shawn Bennett, Franconia District Station

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Along the Boomer Trail

continued from page 20

save phantom delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton, whose modest powers have been reduced further by the new Republican majority. Like a naughty child, Ms. Norton has been sent to a corner, admonished to be seen but not heard. District of Columbia residents have fewer rights than voters in Tehran. House Speaker John Boehner is just a tanner version of Iran's Grand Ayatollah Khamenei.

Washingtonians watch helplessly as freedom-loving Tunisians, then Egyptians, now Libyans take up arms against their undemocratic rulers. However, unknown to the potentates on Capitol Hill, a quieter revolution is now bubbling much closer to home. Disappointed that the city's most prominent citizen, B.H. Obama, has not strongly championed DC voting rights, local government and union leaders are ready to take radical action.

This columnist was recently invited to a clandestine leadership meeting held in Council Chair Kwame Brown's spacious SUV (the one with the black interior). The Lincoln Navigator's pricey entertainment system, one committee member explained, would keep eavesdropping congressional investigators at bay.

Activists plan to hit Congress where it hurts. Just before 4:30 every Thursday afternoon as members speed out of their House garages to National Airport, city garbage trucks will mysteriously stall in front of the concrete barriers.irate congressmen who hail cabs will be sped to the airport—at 25 mph. (DC cabbies have agreed to join the insurrection in return for meter removal.)

When members and senators fly back to “work” Sunday evening, exhausted from fund-raising and constituent meetings on the 16th green, activists will be waiting for them. Using a tactic famed activist Saul Alinsky used successfully against Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, volunteers armed with reading material will stand at the urinals and settle into the rest room stalls at National Airport and lock the doors behind them. Suffering airline passengers just deplaned will be handed contact information for members of Congress opposed to DC voting rights.

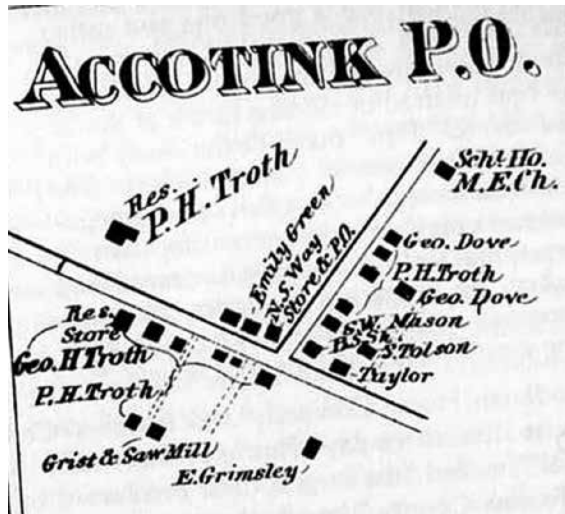
Committee members would not divulge all the tactics in their planned insurrection,

but they are confident that House members and senators, fed up with missed flights and angry calls from the flying public, will not hold out long. “Saul Alinsky’s playbook is full of mischief,” said one activist at the meeting. “If it tamed the Windy City’s Boss Daley, the windbags on the Hill don’t stand a chance.”

Accotink

continued from page 1

base commanders, the strip along Rte. 1 was cleaned up, but an economic decline continued. Today, the façade along Rte. 1 consists of a fast-food restaurant, convenience store, gas station and a motel converted to short-term



Accotink from G.M. Hopkins, *Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington, 1879*. Note the Methodist Church as well as the gristmill and sawmill on the east side of what is now Rte. 1.

housing. To the south is a modern, well-kept apartment complex. Across Rte. 1 from the village is Fairfax County's Eleanor U. Kennedy Homeless Shelter.

With the BRAC realignment, a new hospital being constructed on base at Fort Belvoir and a better forecast for the economy, the time seemed right, says developer Eastwood Properties, to change the face of the village of Accotink. Beginning last year, he started to assemble property within Accotink with a view toward creating a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly development consisting of 200-250 multi-family housing units, small shops, restaurants, offices and community-serving retail and commercial establishments. Parking, for the most part, will be in a multi-story

parking structure, however, there will be surface parking to serve shops and other businesses.

Hoping to draw tenants for the four-story, multi-family housing units from the civilian employees at the new military hospital at Fort Belvoir the developer envisions a village where people live close to where they work and, indeed, the military hospital is only a stone's throw from the proposed village.

Before the plan can go any further, an out-of-turn plan amendment must be introduced by Mount Vernon Supervisor Gerry Hyland and then approved by the county Board of Supervisors. At first, there was some concern among county preservationists that

Accotink had the potential to be named a Historic Overlay District, but the county has ruled that is not the case due to deterioration and compromise of some of the earlier structures. Only Accotink Church, the church cemetery and a few other buildings have retained their historical integrity and the developer has preliminarily agreed to mark these sites with appropriate signage as well as erect signs within the developed area to explain the history of the village. The developer has agreed to call the newly developed area Accotink Village.

According to Greg Rieggle of McGuireWoods LLP, attorney for the developer, no action to move the development process forward is expected for the next two months or more. Of concern to some residents and commuters alike is whether Backlick Road will end in a cul-de-sac before the Fairfax County Parkway, thereby preventing it from being a throughway from Rte. 1.

Gardener's Tips

continued from page 4

your objective is to create a window screen. Measuring the space at the front door and steps will help you choose the right size and shape of containers.

Noting the existing conditions of the yard on paper makes it harder to ignore the issues you may have with it. A beautiful shade tree or a handsome view is an asset that can

be emphasized in a design, but a steep slope is a liability for walking or erosion and may need to be the first priority this year. Other important things to note are the location and height of overhead wires; the limits of a drain field; where power, telephone and cable lines run and irrigation or lighting. Select trees that will not grow up into power lines or far enough away so as not to interfere with them. Make cultural observations. Note sunny and shady areas, keeping in mind that the sun angle and tree foliage will affect the duration of sun or shade. Squiggle in wet and dry areas. A downspout is both a source of undesirable erosion (and watershed pollution), and an opportunity for a rain barrel or a nearby rain garden.

Don't know how a three-foot shrub will look in a spot? Try placing a three-foot box there to get a feel for the volume it will have. Don't know where you want that tree? Have someone stand in as an oak or a maple, flag the spot. Look at him or her from different angles and mark the location on your plan. If you want to reduce the size of your lawn in favor of a butterfly garden, use a garden hose to experiment with the location and outline of the new planting area. The shape and size will suggest the number and type of plants to put there.

Bring your plan to the plant sales and garden centers. In the most hectic time of year for nurseries, a plan can communicate a great deal of information in a short time. Landscape designers can develop plans for you, from vegetable gardens to rain gardens and wildlife gardens. But if you can, take a measuring tape out into the yard and reconnect with your yard before shopping. Bring a friend to hold the other end of the tape, and sketch bravely on paper. It is an eye-opening lesson every year.

Lastly, try new plants that you did not plan on meeting at the plant sale. It's fun. Remember that we can expect frost as late as the end of April. Some plants shiver bravely into the growing season. Others do not recover gracefully from the shock. Like icy rain on open-toed shoes or the first sunburn of the year, container plants need to avoid early exposure to the weather just like we do. See you out there!

Irene Mills is a landscape designer at Silverbrook Nursery and Landscaping.

Commentary



Sharon Bulova (D)
Chairman, Board of Supervisors

New Buses and HOT Lanes

When I gave my State of the County address in January, I listed several items on our plate for 2011 that were “happening to us.” One of the major events looming on the horizon is the September deadline for the movement of 20,000 Defense Department employees to the Ft. Belvoir area under the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process.

To prepare for these workers, my col-

leagues on the Board of Supervisors and I have been working with our county staff to identify transportation improvements and choices in the corridor. We have also worked with the Virginia Department of Transportation on a revised plan for HOV and HOT Lanes on I-95.

Beginning in May, Fairfax Connector staff will launch a broad service change campaign and public outreach effort to inform South

County residents of bus service changes that will accompany the BRAC movements this fall.

Information on the proposed bus service changes will be provided on the Fairfax Connector website (www.fairfaxconnector.com) and through various social media outlets, including Twitter (@ffxconnector) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/fairfaxconnector).

In June, staff will hold a series of public meetings in southern Fairfax County to share information with the public about the proposed new service and receive comments on the routes and schedules. When the public meetings have concluded, the comments received regarding the proposed bus service changes will be reviewed and considered for incorporation into the final service plan.

By August, staff will finalize the schedules and begin training drivers. The final schedules will be available to the public by the end of August. Look for the new service to hit the streets in late September or early October.

The proposed BRAC service plan incorporates nine new buses and significantly increases Fairfax Connector bus service in South County. Funding for these new buses and the increase in service will come from our Commercial and Industrial Real Estate Taxes, earmarked for transportation improvements.

Regarding the I-95 HOV and HOT Lanes, transportation secretary Sean Connaughton released a revised proposal in February that is a truncated version of the previous plan. While our Board had hoped for the original

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Commentary



Pat Herrity (R)
Supervisor, Springfield District

County Board Erred in Subsidizing Luxury Affordable Housing

On Tuesday, March 8, the Board of Supervisors approved the 270-unit Residences at the Government Center over the objections of Supervisor Cook, Frey and me. I opposed this plan because I do not believe that the county should be in the business of subsidizing luxury affordable housing, especially when it directly competes with the private sector.

There are right ways to encourage development of affordable housing and wrong ways. This project was wrong on a number of fronts:

- **Luxury Does Not Belong in County-Subsidized Affordable Housing.** As was clearly stated on the applicant's web site, "Although the development is a luxury product, the units will be leased out to households earning between 50 and 100 percent of the Area Median Income." The luxury units also include significant onsite amenities—a pool, spa, exercise and weight room, tot lot and party rooms.

- **Federal Tax Credit Subsidy in Addition to the County Subsidy of \$10 to \$15 Million.** By providing the land, the county will be subsidizing the units to the tune of \$10 to \$15 million. By approving this project for a developer who can make this project work only by taking advantage of the county subsidy and the Low Income Housing Tax Credits Program (LIHTC), we are also contributing to our national deficit. In 2010, the President's Economic Recovery Advisory Board estimated that the LIHTC program would cost the federal government \$61 billion in lost tax revenue from participating corporations from 2008 to 2017.

- **Subsidizing a Product that Competes**

with the Private Sector. Because this is in my district, I know there are ample (several hundred) units currently available at or below the subsidized rents that will be offered by this project. In essence, the county is subsidizing a luxury product to compete with the existing private-sector apartments that actually have equal or lower more-affordable rents already. This subsidized luxury project will reduce the values of surrounding private-sector buildings and have a negative impact on our commercial tax base.

- **No Park Contribution.** The applicant did not provide the per-unit funds typically contributed as a part of the requirement for the Park Authority, typically used for things such as the construction and maintenance of community fields (for example, Patriot Park). They did not provide these funds because of the extensive money they will be spending for onsite amenities including a pool, spa, exercise and weight room, tot lot and party rooms. However, most of these facilities are not accessible to the public.

- **No Preference for Fairfax County Government Employees.** This project was initially proposed by my predecessor for Fairfax County Government employees. Despite a \$10 to \$15 million subsidy, there is no guarantee that any of the 270 units will be occupied by Fairfax County employees.

Despite the fact that this property is in the Springfield District and my familiarity with the impact on the surrounding properties, Chairman Bulova provided a substitute motion to my motion to deny this project and asked the Board to approve it. It was approved 7 to 3 with supervisors Cook and Frey joining me in opposing the project.



Gerald E. Connolly (D)
Congressman, 11th Congressional District

A Government Shutdown Would Affect Everyone

As I write this column, the prospect of a federal government shutdown is once again surfacing as the Congress and the administration seek to reach agreement on a budget for the fiscal year ending on September 30.

Throughout fiscal year 2011, the House and Senate have been unable to pass a year-long budget and have, instead, passed six short-term funding bills, known as continuing resolutions, to keep the government running on a week-to-week basis. But patience is wearing thin for these short-term budget bills and it is unclear whether Congress will agree to any more of them.

The impact of a government shutdown is far-reaching in Northern Virginia.

Confusion and uncertainty reign in many federal agencies as they struggle to plan for the remainder of the year. Services

food inspectors, and delays of war-damaged equipment repairs are but a few of the problems that could arise.

Ironically, the funding of government by short-term resolutions results in gross inefficiencies that end up costing more federal money than if the programs were funded for the entire year. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates called the use of continuing resolutions "a crisis at our doorstep."

I support the passage of a responsible funding plan for the remainder of this fiscal year that takes into account the need to cut unnecessary spending to reduce the federal budget deficit, but also provides the funds necessary to keep the government running efficiently for the benefit of all citizens. It won't be easy. There are too many of my new colleagues in Congress who seem to know the

cost of everything, but the value of nothing when it comes to government programs.

I also wanted to take a moment to recognize the brave men and women of Fairfax County's Task Force 1, the federal urban search and rescue team composed of

Fairfax County fire fighters, paramedics and other first responders who recently spent a week on Northern Japan following the earthquake and tsunami that struck that nation.

I had the honor of greeting this team when they returned from Haiti last year and I can tell you that they are a dedicated and elite band of first responders who put the lives of others ahead of their own.

I welcome them home and join with their families in feeling pride in their accomplishments and relief that they made it home from Japan safely.

Finally, if you have an opportunity to visit the Lorton Workhouse Arts Center (at 9601 Ox Road in Lorton) before April 18, take a few moments to enjoy the many works of art created by students from the 11th Congressional District of Virginia. Students from more than 20 schools in Fairfax County, Prince William County and the City of Fairfax participated in this year's Congressional Arts Competition.

Their artwork is wonderful. They use a variety of media from watercolors and oil paints to photography and graphic design to provide us with their views of the world around us.

The winner of this year's contest will have his or her artwork displayed for one year in the U.S. Capitol. Winners in the competition also receive scholarships.

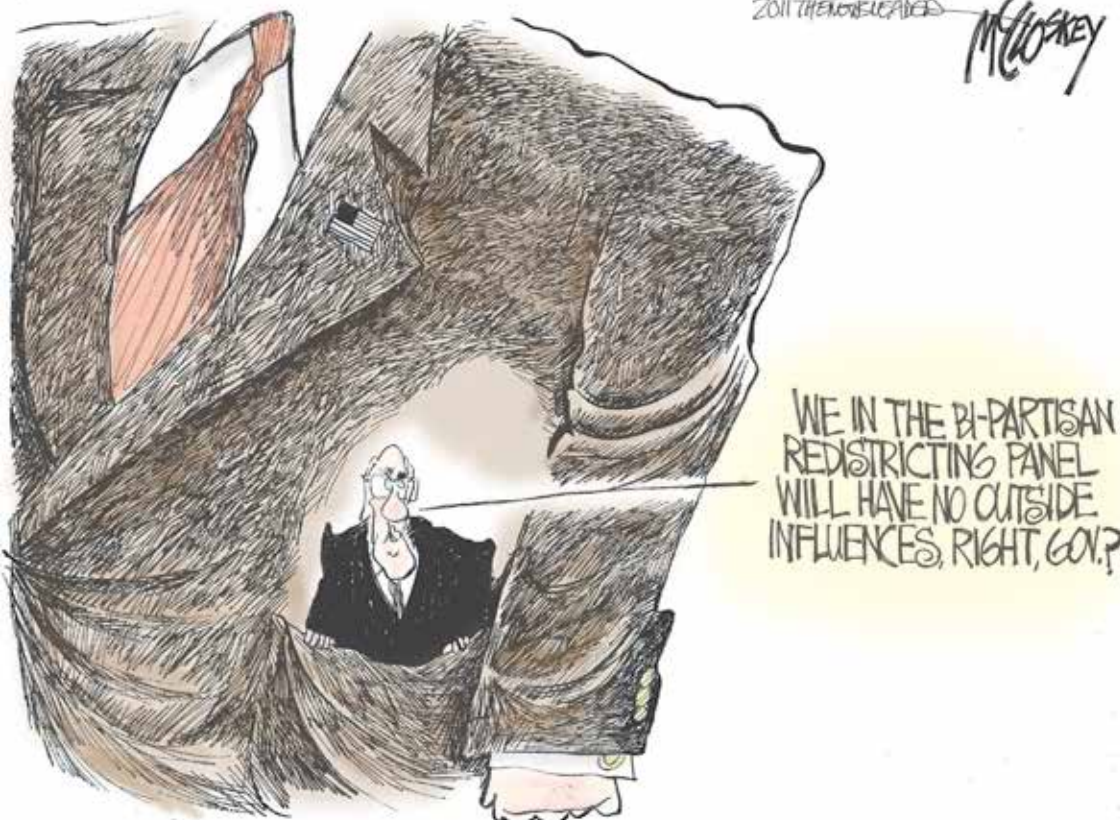
The Lorton Workhouse Arts Center is well worth a trip any time, but it isn't every day you get to see some top-quality art work created by Northern Virginia students.

Services are being scaled back, contracts delayed, hiring frozen, and programs have been canceled...as federal managers wait to find out about funding levels.

Federal employees in our region and across the nation are also caught in the process. A government shutdown would halt paychecks for all feds except those in certain positions, including public safety and national defense roles, deemed "essential." Following past government shutdowns, Congress has always authorized back pay for federal employees, but that, too, is uncertain.

Similarly, federal contractors are faced with tough decisions as they prepare to see the funding for their contracts halted. Many of their employees could lose their paychecks throughout any shutdown period as contractors shut down projects that are not funded.

Ultimately, it is the citizens who will bear the brunt of a federal government shutdown. Closed parks and museums, slowdowns in services to the elderly, Social Security recipients, veterans, postponement of anticipated grants and funding to municipalities, construction halted on road and building projects involving federal funding, suspension of medical research, fewer



Our Viewpoint

School Discipline

The challenge of creating an effective and constructive disciplinary system that contributes to a positive learning environment is a challenge that, sadly, many schools around the country fail. Solving this problem is significantly easier for a small school district with a single high school than it is for a system like Fairfax County, with 195 schools and 177,000 students.

As the 11-largest school system in the country, with a hugely diverse student body, operating a transparent, fair and equitable disciplinary system is very difficult. Fairfax County Public Schools are doing it successfully. However, that doesn't mean the system is perfect. There are few issues more serious or emotionally explosive for a parent than how their child is being treated in school.

On March 14, the school board started a review of the student discipline policies and it is clear that there is an enormous diversity and range of opinions among all the affected constituencies—the school board itself, faculty and school administrators and parents—as to whether the system is fair and effective or rigid and unfair. It appears to us that overall the system is, in fact, fair and effective, but that minor changes could make it better. We are pleased that a careful review is under way.

Two recent cases reported in the Washington Post have attracted a lot of attention and have inflamed some parents. One was the suicide of Nick Stuban, a Woodson student suspended for buying one capsule of a (legal at the time) marijuana-like synthetic compound. Was his suspension and transfer to a new school appropriate and unavoidable? And was it a contributing factor in his death?

The second recent case was that of Hayley Russell, a middle school student who was out of school for seven weeks because she had prescription acne medicine in her locker. Given the information available to the public, it is hard to accept that punishment as appropriate, necessary and constructive for her growth or necessary to maintain school discipline.

The problem with both of these cases, and particularly the death of Stuban, which is as emotionally disturbing as it can get for the community, is that none of the (most likely complex) details or circumstances of either of these cases has been made, or can be made, public by the school system. The result is that the public is making negative judgments about the school system's actions based on only partial information.

The procedure for these serious cases of violations of the rules laid out in the Students Responsibilities and Rights Handbook is that when a principal recommends expulsion, the case is transferred to the Hearings Office. That office conducts a hearing attended by a hearings officer, the principal and the assistant principal, the school resource officer or a county police officer, the student and the parents. In the 2009–2010 school year 636 cases were sent to the Hearings Office.

The word “expulsion” is almost a misnomer, as only a small number of students are actually expelled from the Fairfax County School System each year. What actually happens when a student is “expelled” is that they are transferred from their home-base school to either another base school or to one of a number of special Fairfax County programs.

At-large board of education member Martina A. Hone, an attorney, is more uncomfortable with the existing procedures than many of her associates. She is concerned that the hearing officers become prosecutors and that there is not a neutral party in the hearing. She also believes that the hearings should be recorded. We certainly agree with her on that second point, as it would not increase the cost significantly and it would enable an easy review if the hearing results were later challenged. We are not persuaded that having a third “neutral party” in the

hearings would be either cost-effective or beneficial.

There is nothing nice about such a hearing, and unfortunately many parents are unwilling to fully acknowledge the meaning of what their child did. Suddenly the excuses, justifications and accusations start pouring out: It was an innocent mistake. He didn't mean it. It was someone else's fault. The penalty is way too harsh. The hearing officer wasn't fair or nice. It will wreck his chances of getting into a “good” college. The list goes on.

However, when you look at the actual statistics from the 2009–2010 school year—the most recent figures available—we are hard pressed to conclude that anything is amiss. That is not to say that an error does not occur in an individual hearing.

To us, the most significant statistic that leads us to believe that overall the procedure is thoughtful and fair and working properly is that of the 636 students recommended for expulsion and sent to the Hearing Office only 134 were forwarded to the school board for action. In other words, 79 percent received lesser punishments. That doesn't sound inappropriate or unreasonable to us. Finally, out of 177,000 students only 119 were actually transferred and only 11 were truly expelled from the system. Those are very small numbers.

Hone raises an extremely good issue with regard to the record-keeping in these discipline cases. She points out that the Fairfax County Public Schools system has an extremely sophisticated computer system, but it is not tracking what happens to the specific students in the disciplinary system and the effect of transfers on them. Better information could confirm that the procedures are successful or that they are not successful and alternate policies need to be developed. Tracking these students today would require a tedious manual review of the records.

Hone would also like some analysis that explores whether there is a relationship between attendance problems and future discipline problems. That information might produce some data that could lead to effective treatment programs.

The one serious problem that does need to be addressed is that once a student has been suspended, it sometimes takes way too long before a hearing is scheduled. Is there sufficient staffing available for the workload? Given the seriousness of these cases and the serious negative impact on a student who is out of school and in limbo for an extended period of time, these hearings need to happen promptly almost regardless of what it costs to achieve that service.

So, with some reservations, we believe the students of Fairfax County are well served by the school system's disciplinary procedures. Fairfax provides good information about its procedures for students and parents, laying out its policies in a clear handbook.

However, the school system faces a difficult challenge as the vast majority of parents want strict discipline until their child violates the rules.

How does a large system ensure that students in different schools, charged with the same offense under similar circumstances, end up with the same punishment? Solving that problem often results in rigid rules and penalties that are not sensitive to the circumstances and can sometimes result in inappropriate punishments. The minute a system makes subjective judgments, the door is opened to the charge of unequal treatment. Did the child of an “important community leader” get different treatment than the child of a low-income immigrant who doesn't speak English?

While we don't believe Fairfax has a serious problem, we do believe a careful review of the policies is justified. Perhaps it will insert some flexibility into the system without damaging the confidence in the procedures or weakening the equal penalties for similar offenses.

Finally, careful analysis may determine that procedures that are assumed to be effective actually aren't, and that alternatives should be tried.

Parents who have direct experience with the schools absolutely should take the time to communicate with their school board representative how they feel about the system. If there are unrecognized problems, the board needs to hear about them now and look for solutions. On the other hand, if you are happy about how the system is run, it would be good to convey that opinion to your representative.

We have a great school system. We have an opportunity to make it better and it requires everyone's participation.

Bulova

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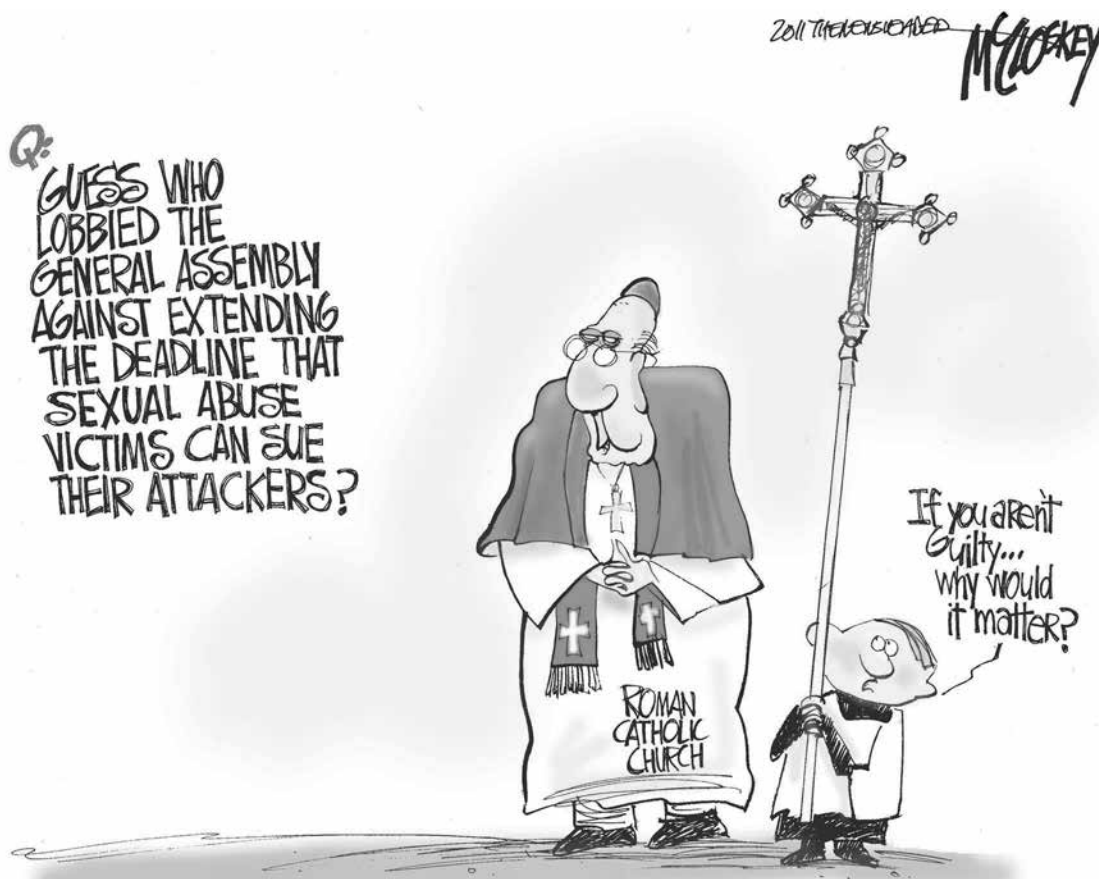
design that called for new HOT Lanes that stretch all the way from Massaponix to the Pentagon, we have expressed support for the revised proposal.

The new proposal adds a third lane to existing HOV lanes on I-95 beginning in Stafford County, but ends the HOT Lanes just inside the Capital Beltway instead of bringing the new third lane all the way to Washington, DC, as was the plan originally. The rescoped HOT lanes

project will link directly to the I-495 HOT lanes currently under construction on the Capital Beltway within Fairfax County and provide a direct HOT to HOT lanes connection between I-95 in Springfield and Tysons Corner.

The new proposal includes a companion project to build a ramp from the existing HOV lanes on I-395 at Seminary Road. This ramp is a critical component of the new plan as it will allow direct HOV access to the new Mark Center site that by September will be home to 6,400 Defense Department employees relocating as part of BRAC.

As the BRAC relocations continue (employees began moving to the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency in January), Fairfax County will continue to identify strategies and make adjustments to make the transition as smooth as possible both for the employees and for county residents.



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