

SPORTS

High school girls basketball

W.T. Woodson junior forward A.J. Lemaître takes a shot at Liberty District rival Madison tonight.



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ENTERTAINMENT EXTRA

'Miracle' worker

Coach Herb Brooks (Kurt Russell) maps out a game plan for his U.S. Olympic hockey team in "Miracle." See review inside.



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NEWS

P.W. teacher indicted

A Prince William County special ed teacher turned himself in to police Wednesday after being indicted on sex charges involving a student.

Page 2

Abortion bill defeated

A Senate committee on Thursday demonstrated the General Assembly's disparate views on social issues, killing an abortion clinic regulation bill that the House overwhelmingly approved last week.

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Rebuilding a neighborhood

Kaylynn Kingery's home along Neabsco Creek in Woodbridge was destroyed by Hurricane Isabel. She and her neighbors would like to rebuild their homes, but that is not as easy as it might seem.

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Metro hears weather concerns

Metro officials met with a group of local business executives Wednesday morning to discuss the mass transit service's plans for the future, hoping to create more seamless, informed relationships.

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Tax pledge hogties politicians

Legislators who promised to oppose hikes face renegeing on their word

By **MICHAEL NEIBAUER**
Journal staff writer

RICHMOND — On March 4, 1997, Republican Sen. H. Russell Potts Jr. signed his name on the dotted line, pledging to "oppose and vote against any and all efforts to increase taxes."

In retrospect, said the fourth-term senator from Winchester, he should have packed an eraser.

"It was a mistake on my part ever to sign it in the first place," said Potts, whose Republican opponent in a nasty primary fight last year used the senator's support of the Northern Virginia sales tax referendum as his principal campaign fodder.

Forty-one of the 140 current Virginia legislators, including 10 Northern Virginians, have signed the "Taxpayer Protection Pledge" administered by Grover Norquist and his organization, Americans for Tax Reform. This year might be the toughest for those struggling to hold the line.

An estimated \$1.2 billion shortfall looms over Virginia's next two-year budget cycle and the General Assembly now is considering its options. Some legislators believe tax hikes are necessary, some are calling for deeper budget cuts and others are willing to wait for the economy to turn around.

Norquist and his supporters have pledged to hold those 41 Republicans to their word.

"We will be contacting all of them directly and reminding them of the commitment they made when they ran for re-election," said Paul Proski, ATR's state government affairs manager. "We would expect every one of them to oppose every tax increase."

To close the shortfall and shore up funding for core services, Gov. Mark R. Warner, a Democrat, has proposed raising the sales tax by a penny, cigarette taxes by at least 25 cents and income taxes for the wealthiest Virginians.

Powerful Republican Sen. John H. Chichester is advancing a tax package that could generate upward of \$2.5 billion, while a handful of

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Airports' gun ban under fire by group

Federal regulations at odds with Va. law

By **MIKE RUPERT**
Journal staff writer

A Virginia gun advocacy group is battling the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority over a regulation banning guns on its property — including sections of the heavily traveled Dulles Access Road, routes 28 and 606, and the Reagan National Airport Metrorail station.

The Virginia Citizens Defense League claims MWAA is overstepping state and federal laws to purposely conceal the "obscure and unknown" ban, essentially "trapping" law-abiding gun owners who travel across authority property.

The authority, which operates Dulles International and Reagan National airports, says it is not bound by "the more general" state laws and that the ban is necessary to maintain airport security.

"We believe we do have under our authority the right to have such a ban, even though Virginia has legislation that would prohibit other airports in the state from having such a ban," said Edward Fagan, general counsel for MWAA. "We're sort of a stand-alone authority with the powers given us by [Virginia and the District of Columbia]."

The authority was created in 1987 as an interstate compact, approved by Congress, between

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Jeff Mankie/Journal

Linda Fuller's German shepherd Java soaks up a facial from instructor Tomoko Kawasumi during the "Pawsitive Touch" massage seminar at Fur-Get Me Not dog day care in Arlington.

Shih Tzu shiatsu massage

By **DREW BUSH**
Journal staff writer

Shiatsu, an officially recognized therapy in Japan, requires its practitioners to press with their thumbs, fingers or palms to apply pressure to the human skin to correct internal problems, promote health and treat certain diseases.

Practitioners trace its roots back more than 7,000 years to ancient Nepal, Tibet and Western China, where it was developed from Anma Massage and exercises known as Tao-Vinn.

But during the past five years in America, shiatsu's history has taken a new turn: doggie shiatsu.

"Shiatsu is originally some-

thing people in Japan do a lot as a folk remedy," said Tomoko Kawasumi, a certified instructor of shiatsu for dogs. On Saturday, Kawasumi led 12 women through a two-hour class teaching them how to massage their dogs. The class held at Fur-Get Me Not dog day care, 4140 South Four Mile Run Drive in Arlington, costs \$40 per person-canine duo.

"I wish more people would massage their dogs because it's fun," Kawasumi said. "I really want people to know the benefits of it; it's not just relaxing dogs, it's great for health."

For their part, the dogs on Saturday began class more interested in sniffing each other, licking new faces and playing

around. But soon, softly played Mozart combined with Kawasumi's teaching to cause most of the dogs' eyes to glaze over, four-legged bodies to remain still, tongues to hang and muscles to relax.

For those dogs that were particularly restless — one black Labrador retriever couldn't sit still — Kawasumi noted that the instruction was more for the "mothers" to use at home. After all, dogs will be dogs.

"It's too exciting for them," said Linda Fuller, of Damascus, Md. Fuller works as a massage therapist and came to

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Defense studies variable pricing at commissaries

Despite congressional criticism, and charges by military associations of benefit tampering, the Department of Defense has hired consultants to do a quick study on use of "variable pricing" in base grocery stores.

By law, commissary items are sold at cost plus a five percent surcharge, which is used to renovate and replace aging stores. With variable pricing, items could be sold above or below cost. But to test the concept, the Bush administration needs to win approval from a skeptical Congress.

The \$500,000 study began Jan. 12 and has a tight deadline. A final report is due to the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) by Feb. 27.

"If the study says variable pricing won't work in commissaries, we won't pursue it," said DoD officials in written responses to questions posed by Military Update.

John McHugh (R-N.Y.), chairman of the House armed services subcommittee that oversees military stores, said he worries that the department seeks to raise store prices and use the revenue to reduce the \$1.2 billion the department spends on commissary operations annually.

"The clear danger of variable pricing is that where you charge less [for some items], you're inclined in other areas to charge more," said McHugh. "And if what you're

Military Update

Tom Philpott

trying to do is find justification to cut appropriations to commissaries, you use it as a means to increase revenues."

Defense officials said variable pricing, in theory, should provide "greater flexibility to manage the overall savings that customers receive."

The goal, they continued, would be "to provide average savings to commissary customers of 30 percent over similar items sold by commercial grocers, regardless of the location of the commissary where they shop."

This administration is the first to adopt a specific 30-percent savings goal for commissary shoppers. Some critics note that the current average savings is 32 percent over commercial grocers. By replacing cost-plus-five-percent with variable pricing, they suggest, DoD could convert any savings now over 30 percent into revenues via higher prices. Rather than stay in shopper pockets, the money could reduce the \$1.2 billion subsidy.

Defense officials admit to trying to lower the subsidy. But they contend variable pricing

could create a "better commissary benefit."

"Although average savings in the United States are 32 percent, some customers save over 50 percent while others save less than 20 percent. We are interested in determining the feasibility of using variable pricing to more evenly distribute savings to all commissary shoppers," officials said.

The House Armed Services Committee will oppose any initiative that would raise prices or reduce the commissary subsidy, McHugh said. Besides being a threat to shopper savings, he added, variable pricing could change the character of commissary shopping.

"It goes contrary to the across-the-board savings concept that has been extended to virtually every item on commissary shelves since commissaries were in existence," McHugh said. More patrons will feel obliged to comparison shop off base. Over time, he said, the convenience of commissary shopping will be weakened and so will the benefit.

With McHugh and House colleagues vowing to protect shoppers from variable pricing, service associations hope to shore up Senate support.

In letter Jan. 16 to Sen. John Warner (R-Va.), chairman of the Senate Armed Serv-

ices Committee, James D. Stanton, executive director of the Air Force Sergeants Association, said "it defies logic that DoD could successfully manipulate costs to make the annual \$1.2 billion commissary appropriation go away without transferring the cost to the beneficiary."

The administration's intent, he said, is to shift the cost of running commissaries from "all American taxpayers to military taxpayers." He urged Warner to resist any variable pricing plan DoD might propose.

It seems the Defense Commissary Agency even opposes the idea. In the January edition of "What's New", a DeCA newsletter for employees, DeCA leaders said they reviewed variable pricing and concluded it "would fundamentally alter the benefit, fundamentally alter our relationships with our business partners and would not be a prudent action to take."

Still, it was DeCA this month that awarded the contract for a Variable Pricing Feasibility Study to two firms, Dove Consulting Group, Inc. of Boston, Mass., and Willard Bishop Consulting, Ltd., of Barrington, Ill.

Comments are welcomed. Write to Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centerville, VA 20120-1111, e-mail milupdate@aol.com or visit the Web site at www.militaryupdate.com.

No-tax promises haunt lawmakers

PLEDGE from Page 1

GOP legislators have introduced bills to raise the gasoline tax and other so-called "user fees."

Whether tobacco or fuel, it is growing clearer that some sort of tax increase will emerge from the 2004 General Assembly session.

"If you raise taxes on one hand, and offset them with cuts on the other, that's fine," said 1997 pledge-signer Del. Vincent F. Callahan Jr., R-McLean, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee.

A final product that is not revenue neutral, however, presents a dilemma for those legislators who might have signed the tax pledge in the late 1990s, when "state economies were expanding at such a fast rate that the treasuries were being filled to the brim without the need for tax hikes," said Larry J. Sabato, political science professor at the University of Virginia.

"Legislators are caught in a vise," Sabato said. "If they raise taxes, they open themselves up to primary challenges within their own party. If they slash services, they could generate a groundswell that could sweep some of them out of office in November, even in safe Republican districts."

"Now that it's fiscal crunch time," he said, "the no-tax pledges have come back to haunt many legislators across the country."

Potts, for one, isn't haunted. He's downright furious.

The senator defeated Republican Mark Tate in last June's primary by a nail-biting 106 votes. Tate, backed by an anti-tax organization with philosophical and organizational ties to Americans for Tax Reform, claimed Potts defied the pledge when he advanced the sales tax referendum through the legislature.

Norquist also stated in published reports that a vote for the referendum is synonymous with a pledge violation. Potts, a proud moderate, describes such reaction to a voter referendum as a "complete repudiation of the will of the people."

"I think he's the biggest hypocrite I've ever heard in my life," he said of Norquist. "I'm totally disgusted with him."

Today, Potts is a co-patron of Chichester's tax bill and has introduced a measure to hike the cigarette tax from 2.5 cents to \$1 per pack. The pledge, he said, is behind him.

It doesn't matter when legislators signed the pledge, Prososki said. If they hold the same office and have not formally backed out — there is a process to do that — then they are expected to fight tax increases virtually in perpetuity.

"If I'm ever going to abandon it sometime in the future, then I'll get off it," said Sen. Kenneth T. Cuccinelli II, R-Centreville, who Norquist named a "true ally" of the taxpayer in a recent press release. "I'm not going to run on something and then abandon it."

Most pledge proponents say they will strive to uphold the agreement.

"I think people have got to make their very best effort to avoid breaking that pledge," said Del. Richard H. Black, R-Sterling. "A point could come where no reasonable step could be taken to balance the budget consistent with the pledge. But I don't think we're at that point."

And ATR has a message for those who stray.

"If people go against the pledge," Prososki said, "we will be out in the newspapers in Virginia, on radio in Virginia, letting people know they broke their word to the voters."



Jeff Mankie/Journal

Jo Hamilton, left, and Kathy Waters give their dogs, whippet Elijah Blue and golden retriever Putter, massages.

For canines, day care and more

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the class with her sandy-colored German shepherd, Java, because her customers always asked if she knew how to massage animals.

"I wouldn't take them into my massage room," Fuller said, laughing. "I've got two friends at pet stores."

The class mainly consisted of learning some of the canines' 40 pressure points and massaging their ears, legs, spinal area, gums and more. Such gentle massage — which Kawasaki learned at the Pet Massage Training and Research Institute in Toledo, Ohio — helps stimulate a dog's circulation, assesses its health, increases flexibility and restores internal balance.

"Pawsitive Touch," was popularized due to a growing network of pet businesses in Northern Virginia. Started in November, Fur-Get Me Not is among eight new facilities in Northern Virginia specializing in caring for dogs while their owners are at work. These facilities, along with veterinarians, pet stores and kennels, have begun meeting informally and hope to form a business alliance.

"There needed to be a place where [dogs] can

do this," said owner Tammy Rosen as her golden retriever Hunter begged for attention. Since she began taking care of dogs out of her home three years ago, Rosen's client list has grown from 25 to 400. More pet owners, she said, are realizing that happy, healthy dogs need to socialize, play and go for walks. A weekday costs about \$27, although Rosen sells only monthly passes.

In Arlington, she added, everyone works so much and the population is so transient that people need a place like Fur-Get Me Not. Rosen hosts other Saturday activities like Christmas card making, animal behaviorists and, someday soon, doggie fly ball.

"I was making really good money working for [Sprint Telecom], but my passion was always for animals, for dogs," Rosen said.

And for the dogs and their owners, the class began a unique bond through an ancient art.

Kawasaki offers a variety of services including house calls for about \$50. To contact Pawsitive Touch call 703-599-5330 or go to www.pawsitivetouch.com. To contact Fur-Get Me Not day care call 703-933-1935 or go to www.FurGetMeNot.biz.