

E

ARTS ♦ ENTERTAINMENT ♦ LEISURE



# Mural Magic

Art students and artists alike create local scenes.

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# ART

## An Authentic Space

Former Vice Mayor Andrew Macdonald emerges to launch a new gallery.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
GAZETTE PACKET

What was once the cluttered office of an elected official has been transformed into Alexandria's newest art gallery, a space where former Vice Mayor Andrew Macdonald can launch the next incarnation of his public persona — art mogul. Over the past few months, Macdonald has been quietly finding his way back into public life after his unexpected resignation from City Council last year, renovating his old office into a gallery and filling a vacant position on the board of the Old Town Civic Association. He's also hard at work with friends from the Athenaeum to document the history of the building. On Aug. 8, he will host the grand opening of AHM Gallery, a quiet second-floor over Old Town Coffee, Tea and Spice that takes its name from Macdonald's initials.

"Once I got rid of all the clutter — the political clutter — I started to think about how I could create an art gallery that had a real perspective," said Macdonald, an Alexandria native who was a member of the City Council from 2003 to 2007. "It took a long time to decide what I wanted to focus on."

The tagline of AHM Gallery is "celebrating authentic places," a mission statement Macdonald said will inform the choices he makes in terms of what kind of art will be displayed. He's already talked to some friends from Greenpeace about displaying an exhibit featuring photographs of whaling. And he recently spent some time in Antarctica documenting the ravages of global warming. Other potential themes could include some of Macdonald's longtime passions, such as environmental conservation and historic preservation. The first show will take place in August, with an opening reception slated for Aug. 8.

"The gallery is a business, but I also have a perspective about it," Macdonald said as a Van Morrison CD played quietly in the background. "I have a particular love of photography, but I don't want the gallery to necessary be limited to photography."

MACDONALD IS a well-regarded photog-

rapher in his own right who made a name for himself as an artist before launching a political career with an unsuccessful campaign in 2000 and then getting elected in 2003. When his personal life began falling apart in early 2007, the strains of public life became too much for him and he abruptly resigned, prompting a special election in which Justin Wilson was elected to fill the remainder of Macdonald's term. After the resignation, Macdonald's wanderlust took him to Antarctica, where he met an Australian photographer named Valery Muhin on a cruise ship.

Macdonald was lecturing on geology; Muhin was driving zodiacs. Both were working on the ship so they could spend their free time photographing the Antarctic wilderness. The two struck up a friendship, and now Muhin's photographs of aboriginal life in Australia will become the pre-



Former Vice Mayor Andrew Macdonald opens up his gallery with a reception on Aug. 8.



Valery Muhin will be the artist for Macdonald's first exhibit.

miere show at the AHM Gallery. The show opens with a 6 p.m. reception on Aug. 8 and will run at the gallery through Sept. 15.

"A lot of these traditional communities are collapsing," Macdonald said as he scans a series of Muhin's images. "These photographs have an authentic quality to them that captures the kind of perspective I want that gallery to have."

The gallery is located in a building known as the "Carriage House" although that was never the purpose of the structure. It was built in 1830 by the Atchison Lumber Company as a storage warehouse for windows and sashes. Macdonald first acquired the second-floor studio space in 1998. Although he intended to use the space as a gallery, he ended up using the space as an office as his public career dominated an increasing amount of his time.

"A gallery is a retail space," said Frank Poland, who owns the first-floor Coffee, Tea and Spice. "Someone needs to be there, minding the store or it's not going to work."

MACDONALD INTENDS for his gallery to be a successful retail venture, and he has installed new hardwood floors and a lighting system to properly display the art. Although he plans to show his own work about once a year, most of the art displayed

at AHM Gallery will be the work of others. To empty his gallery space of personal clutter, he acquired another room upstairs to use as an office and installed a professional-grade printer — one that

he used to print all of Muhin's images for the premiere show.

"Andrew took some time to focus on himself and do the things he needed to do," said Boyd Walker, who managed Macdonald's 2003 campaign. "So I'm looking forward to the re-emergence of Andrew Macdonald into public life."

**"The gallery is a business, but I also have a perspective about it."**

— Andrew Macdonald

### FINE ARTS

#### Other Items

**Elizabeth Stone Gallery** is closing its Old Town Alexandria location and moving all sales to the Internet. Visit [www.elizabethstonegallery.com](http://www.elizabethstonegallery.com) to view items for sale. Call 703-706-0025 to request additional information or images of art not currently on the site.

**Call to Artists:** Springfield Art Guild invites all artists to exhibit in the The Greenspring Garden juried art show from Aug. 25 through Oct. 27. Need to receive work by Aug. 25. Go to [www.Springfieldartguild.com](http://www.Springfieldartguild.com) or call Donnalynne at 703-644-6677.

#### New and Upcoming Exhibits

See **"Juried Member Show" from Aug. 5 through Aug. 31** at Multiple Exposures Gallery, 105 N. Union St. See photography by Arlington residents Kit and Gary Putnam. Free. Visit [www.torpedofactory.org](http://www.torpedofactory.org) for more.

See art by **Yasuko Riggs and Ginny Oetjen-Gerdes from Aug. 20 through Sept. 17** at Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre. Free. 703-339-4610.

See **"All Fired Up" from Aug. 5 through Sept. 1** at Enamelists Gallery, 105 N. Union St. Look for red and movement. Free. Visit [www.torpedofactory.org](http://www.torpedofactory.org) or 703-838-4565.

See **"Where in the World Is..." from Aug. 5 through Sept. 7** at Fiber Gallery in Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St. Free. Visit [www.torpedofactory.org](http://www.torpedofactory.org) or 703-838-4565.

See **"Board Walk: An Art and Technology Journey" from Aug. 8 through Aug. 31** at Del Ray Artisans

Center, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave. Art and technology merge in this exhibit. Free. Visit [www.thedelrayartisans.org](http://www.thedelrayartisans.org).

#### Ongoing Exhibits

**Multiple Exposures Gallery** presents the member show **through Aug. 3** in the Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St. See photography by the members. Free. Visit [www.torpedofactory.org](http://www.torpedofactory.org) or 703-683-2203.

**"Gifts from the Sea"** will be on display **through Aug. 3** at Fiber Gallery in the Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St. Artwork features animal, veg-

etable and mineral. Free. Visit [www.torpedofactory.org](http://www.torpedofactory.org) or 703-838-4565.

**"Neighborhood Watch,"** Eva Jacob's series of oil paintings of downtown Washington, D.C. will be featured in The Art League Gallery, in the Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St. **through Aug. 4.** Free. Visit [www.torpedofactory.org](http://www.torpedofactory.org) for more.

**The Springfield Art Guild** presents art by Janet Hale at Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, **through Aug. 17.** Free. 703-339-4610.

ART

# Masters Of the Mural

Local artist guides high school students during a summer art program.

BY BEN GEIER  
THE GAZETTE PACKET

The lavishly painted roads, people, buildings and symbols that have popped up on the corner of Eisenhower and Claremont provide a bit of a creative pop out of the dull business zone where they are located.

These figures are the Eisenhower Valley's new way of greeting visitors, as well as those who drive through regularly. With cooperation from the Campanga Center, Jorge Perez-Rubio, a Florida artist with a history in the area, has led a group of close to 20 teenagers in completing a five wall, public mural welcoming drivers to Eisenhower Valley.

The mural, which was planned and completed over three weeks in July, depicts the history and the culture of the Eisenhower Valley and the sections of Old Town that it leads into.

**"It's not political, not religious, and not an advertisement."  
— Jorge Perez-Rubio**

Spanning the sides of multiple buildings across the Rosenthal Building Complex, the mural features images such as a statue of President Dwight Eisenhower, expansive highways, and the Masonic Temple.

"It's not political, not religious, and not an advertisement," said Perez-Rubio, explaining that those were the only three restrictions put on him when he agreed to work on the project.

Perez-Rubio has been teaching art for about 20 years, and has been working on public art projects here and there along the way. He noted that this mural was not within the stereotypical mold of public art- bright colors and a graffiti style, done by fairly amateur artists.

"These guys are so well trained," said Perez-Rubio. "They were all vetted through their local art classes."

It was important to everyone involved to make sure the mural represented the best of this area- especially Perez-Rubio. Though he currently lives in Florida, he spent many years here and appreciates some of the unique qualities.

"I love this town. This is a real melting pot," he said, specifically relating the fact that he had five students from five different countries working on the mural with him.

**SO HOW EXACTLY** does an artist from Florida end up working on a public art mural in Eisenhower Valley? Through the work of a local businessman who approached the Campanga center about working on this project.

"Jorge is a personal friend and also an artist who I collect and respect," said Aaron Pomerantz, an executive and Grubb and Ellis who worked with the Campanga Center in developing the project.

Pomerantz, who met Perez-Rubio in 1989 through a friend of a friend, noted that the idea of the mural was something that was natural, not a grand plan.

"It just kind of came together in my mind that this would be a great project," he said, adding that "it was a fairly organic process."

The project is clearly for the public benefit, but that does not mean that Pomerantz

has not gotten personal satisfaction out of his involvement in the development.

"Jorge is a fantastic, talented artist," he said. "My goal has always been to continue to work with him."

Pomerantz isn't the only one. The kids who have been working hard for weeks to complete the mural are also the beneficiaries of their work with Perez-Rubio.

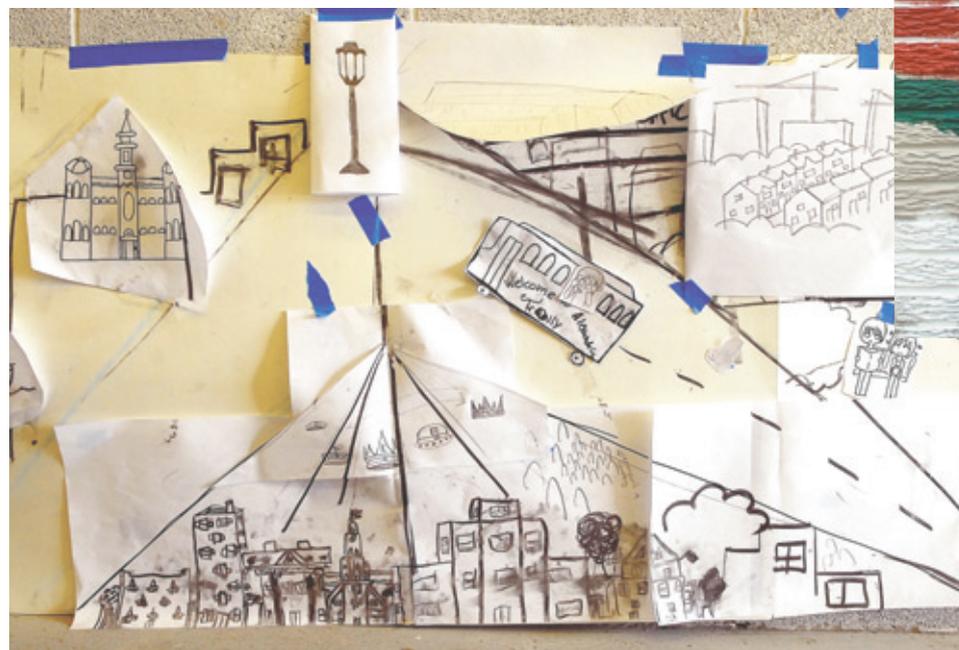
"He's a great artist," said Olivia Gonzalez, a TC Williams student who was part of the mural team. "He also taught us stuff, so it's been cool."



Work begins early in the morning to avoid the recently intense afternoon heat.



Olivia Gonzalez and Mariatu Wurie add red bricks to the outline sketch on the wall. The palette of colors selected is those which appear in the tartan plaid "Campagna" that was created last year for the Campanga Center.



Sketches depicting Alexandria in relation to the Eisenhower Valley were drawn and then sized to fit the model of the mural plan.

PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT/GAZETTE PACKET

ON THE COVER: Adrian Delgado, Trey Tate and Damensio hold the scaffolding steady at Walter Kesaris straightens up a line of grey.

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# CALENDAR

E-mail announcements to the Gazette, [gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com). Photos and artwork are encouraged. Deadline is Thursday at noon for the following week's paper. Call Rebecca Halik at 703-917-6407 with questions.

## OTHER ITEMS

**The Alexandria Choral Society** announces auditions for the Adult Chorus. Auditions will be held Aug. 5 from 6-9 p.m. and Aug. 9 from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. at Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 1301 Collingwood Road. Sign up for an audition time at [www.AlexChoralSociety.org](http://www.AlexChoralSociety.org). If you have any questions about the audition process, e-mail [AlexandriaChoralSociety@gmail.com](mailto:AlexandriaChoralSociety@gmail.com).

## ONGOING

Every Monday and Friday through Aug 11-15 and 18-22 Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria will be having **Butterfly Lab** to teach children ages 6-12 to raise their own butterflies. \$ 135 for students, includes supplies and light snacks. Call 703-642-5173 to register. For more information visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gspg](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gspg)

Take a **seasonal walking tour** from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at Mount Vernon Estate. This 30-minute tour explores a variety of contributions. Free. Visit [www.mountvernon.org](http://www.mountvernon.org) for more.

**On Sundays** take a Potomac River Sightseeing Cruise at 10:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 1 p.m., 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. \$9/adult; \$5/child in addition to Mount Vernon Estate admission. Visit [www.mountvernon.org](http://www.mountvernon.org) for schedules.

Every **Tuesday and Thursday** through October from 5- 8 p.m. at Hotel Monaco Alexandria, enjoy **Doggie Happy Hour**. Enjoy doggie treats and human treats.

In celebration of the exhibition "**Setting the President's Table: American Presidential China**," visitors to Mount Vernon will have a chance every day from June 1 to Aug. 31 to win a piece of porcelain featuring the Martha Washington "States" pattern. Drawings occur daily at 3 p.m. in the Shops at Mount Vernon, and the grand prize will be drawn on Aug. 31. No purchase is required, and visitors do not have to be present to win. Visit [www.mountvernon.org](http://www.mountvernon.org) or 703-780-2000.

Children enter a world of fantasy and fables when costumed interpreters weave three tales together during **Mount Vernon's** outdoor storytelling session, "Once Upon a Time at Mount Vernon", held every Saturday and Sunday at 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. **through Sept. 27** at the George Washington: Pioneer Farmer site. "Once Upon a Time at Mount Vernon" is included in regular Estate admission: adults, \$13.00; youth ages 6-11, \$6.00; and children under 5 are admitted free. Visit [www.mountvernon.org](http://www.mountvernon.org) or 703-780-2000.

Historic Mount Vernon will have special commemorative **whiskey sets** available for sale beginning **Aug. 4!** The set includes a shot glass and a 50 mL bottle of whiskey consisting of 11 different whiskey brands blended and aged at Mount Vernon in 2005. The gift sets are \$25 and are available for purchase in person with a valid ID at the *Shops at Mount Vernon* or George

Washington's Distillery. Visit [www.mountvernon.org](http://www.mountvernon.org) or 703-780-2000.

## FRIDAY/AUG. 1

**Mount Vernon Nights.** Listen to a variety of music at 7:30 p.m. on Friday nights at Grist Mill Park, 4710 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. Free. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/performance](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/performance) for more.

**Friday Flicks.** Noon at John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive. Children up to age 5 can bring lunch and enjoy a short movie and stories. Free. 703-971-0010.

**Lunch Bunnies.** Noon at Sherwood Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Children ages 1-5 can bring lunch and enjoy stories. Free. 703-765-3645.

## SATURDAY/AUG. 2

**Lee District Nights.** 7:30 p.m. at Hayfield Elementary School, 7633 Telegraph Road. Hear SingCo Rhythm Orchestra perform. Free. 703-324-SHOW (7469).

**The Fruits of Summer: Tomatoes and Peppers.** 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Green Springs Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Learn gardening secrets from Cindy Brown, Green Spring Horticulturist, and taste some tomatoes and peppers. \$18 for Adults. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gspg](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gspg)

**Gadsby's Tavern Day.** 1-5 p.m. at Gadsby's Tavern, 134 N. Royal St. Free. Take tours, dance and more. [www.gadsbystavern.org](http://www.gadsbystavern.org) or 703-838-4242.

**Railroad Days.** 11 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. Browse through miniature towns, valleys and more. Free. Hand-on Thomas the Tank engine area. [www.alexandriahistory.org](http://www.alexandriahistory.org) or 703-

838-4994.

**Friendship Firehouse Festival.** 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at the firehouse, 100 block S. Alfred St. Free. Look at antique and modern fire equipment, booths, food and more.

**Music Performance.** 7:30 p.m. at Hayfield Elementary School, 7633 Telegraph Road. Hear music by Doug Bowles and His SingCo Rhythm Orchestra. Free. Visit [www.singcomusic.com](http://www.singcomusic.com) or 301-927-0133.

**Fruits of Summer: Tomatoes and Peppers.** 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Learn how to grow tomatoes from a local horticulturist. \$18/person. Register at 703-642-5173.

**Martial Arts: Family Affair.** 11 a.m. at Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre. All ages can enjoy demonstrations and more. Free. 703-339-4610.

**Housewarming 1753.** Noon-4 p.m. at Carlyle House Historic Park, 121 N. Fairfax St. Enjoy moving day and the birth of John and Sarah Carlyle's son. Free. 703-549-2997.

**Irish Festival.** Noon-7 p.m. at Waterfront Park, 1A Prince St. Celebrate with everything Irish including food, music and more. Free. Visit [www.alexandriava.gov](http://www.alexandriava.gov) or 703-838-4844.

## SUNDAY/AUG. 3

**Railroad Days.** 1-5 p.m. at the Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. Browse through miniature towns, valleys and more. Free. Hand-on Thomas the Tank engine area. [www.alexandriahistory.org](http://www.alexandriahistory.org) or 703-838-4994.

## MONDAY/AUG. 4

**What's the Matter?** 10:30 a.m. at Martha Washington Library, 6614 Fort Hunt Road. Children ages 6-12 can learn about fizz, foam and flash. Free. 703-768-6700.

## TUESDAY/AUG. 5

**Theater Fundraiser.** See "1776" at Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe St. Benefits Mount Vernon Community Children's Theatre. Reception at 7 p.m. and show at 8 p.m. \$20/person [www.mvccct.org](http://www.mvccct.org) or 703-360-0686.

**Dog Days of Summer.** 10:30 a.m. at John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive. Children ages 2-5 can enjoy stories and activities. Free. 703-971-0010.

**Tiny Tots.** 10:30 a.m. at Martha Washington Library, 6614 Fort Hunt Road. Children ages 13-23 months can enjoy songs and stories. Free. 703-768-6700.

**Martha's Movie Madness.** 2 p.m. at Martha Washington Library, 6614 Fort Hunt Road. Children ages 6-12 can enjoy film and popcorn. Free. 703-768-6700.

## WEDNESDAY/AUG. 6

**Music Performance.** 7:30 p.m. at Lee District Park Amphitheater, 6601 Telegraph Road. Hear Citizen perform. Free. 703-922-9841.

**Benefit Concert.** 6:30 p.m. at Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church, 2001 Sherwood Hall Lane. Bring canned or nonperishable food to benefit UCM. [www.mvpconline.org](http://www.mvpconline.org) or 703-765-6118.

**Anime Night.** 6 p.m. at John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive. Children ages 13-18 can watch anime and discuss favorites. Free. 703-971-0010.

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For the full calendar and other events, visit [www.connectionnewspapers.com](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com) and click on Alexandria Gazette Packet, and then E-section.

**Day at the Beach.** 2:30 p.m. at Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre. Children ages 6-12 can learn about the beach and see creatures from the shore. Free. 703-339-4610.

**Forensics 101.** 1 p.m. at Martha Washington Library, 6614 Fort Hunt Road. Children ages 9-12 can dust for fingerprints and look for evidence. Free. 703-768-6700.

#### THURSDAY/AUG. 7

##### Garden Sprouts: Green, Green

**Grasses.** 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. at Green Springs Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Preschool children (3-5 years) with accompanying adults can visit a variety of ornamental grasses in the gardens and then make their own. \$6 for participants. For more information visit [www.faircounty.gov/parks/gsgp](http://www.faircounty.gov/parks/gsgp)

**Music Performance.** Dagmar and The Seductones will perform at 7 p.m. at Fort Ward Park, 4301 West Braddock Road. Free. 703-883-4686.

**Theatre Performance.** Morningstar Productions presents "Cheaper by the Dozen" at 7 p.m. at Plymouth Haven Baptist Church, 8523 Fort Hunt Road. \$7/adult; \$4/child, senior or student. 703-577-3966.

**Garden Stroll and Tea.** 9 a.m. – 11 a.m. at Green Springs Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Take a relaxing stroll through the gardens and enjoy a

tea at the Historic House. Individuals and groups are welcomed. \$25 for individuals. For more information visit [www.faircounty.gov/parks/gsgp](http://www.faircounty.gov/parks/gsgp)

**Theatre Performance.** 7:30 p.m. at Plymouth Haven Baptist Church, 8523 Fort Hunt Road. See "Cheaper by the Dozen." \$7/adult; \$4/child. 703-577-3966.

**Book Discussion.** 12:15 p.m. at Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre. Adults discuss "Ciao America" by Beppe Severignini. Free. 703-339-4610.

**Let's Play.** 2:30 p.m. at Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre. Children ages 6-12 can learn how to play games from around the world. Free. 703-339-4610.

**Books: Passport to the World.** 2 p.m. at Sherwood Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Children ages 6-12 can enjoy stories and activities from other countries. Free. 703-765-3645.

**Purple Heart Ceremony.** Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, honors all recipients of the Purple Heart and their families. Free. Visit [www.mountvernon.org](http://www.mountvernon.org) or 703-780-2000.

**First Thursday.** 6-9 p.m. at Del Ray Artisans Center, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave. Preview their art show "Board Walk: An Art and Technology Journey." Free, part of First Thursdays in Del Ray.

#### FRIDAY/AUG. 8

**Mount Vernon Nights.** Listen to a variety of music at 7:30 p.m. on Friday nights at Grist Mill Park, 4710 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. Free. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/performances](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/performances) for more.

**Theatre Performance.** Morningstar Productions presents "Cheaper by the Dozen" at 7 p.m. at Plymouth Haven Baptist Church, 8523 Fort Hunt Road. \$7/adult; \$4/child, senior or student. 703-577-3966.

**Friday Flicks.** Noon at John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive. Children up to age 5 can bring lunch and enjoy a short movie and stories. Free. 703-971-0010.

**Fairy Tales from Other Lands.** 10:30 a.m. at Martha Washington Library, 6614 Fort Hunt Road. Children ages 5-9 can learn about other lands with stories and more. Free. 703-768-6700.

**Lunch Bunnies.** Noon at Sherwood Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Children ages 1-5 can bring lunch and enjoy stories. Free. 703-765-3645.

#### SATURDAY/AUG. 9

**Lee District Nights.** 7:30 p.m. at Hayfield Elementary School, 7633 Telegraph Road. Hear The Continentals perform. Free. 703-324-SHOW (7469).

## Old Town ushers in August with a variety of events

Saturday, Aug. 2, is the day to be in Old Town Alexandria. There will be some thing for everyone — from Irish dances to fire engines, old and modern, to model trains, to a trip back into 18th century Alexandria.

Beginning at 9 a.m. and running until 2 p.m. the Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association will hold its annual Friendship Firehouse Festival celebrating the historic Fire Company's 234th Anniversary. This free popular family event will take place in the 100 block of South Alfred Street between King and Prince streets.

It celebrates the special role firefighters have played throughout history, especially those of Friendship, which is known as George Washington's Fire Company. In addition to food and entertainment, the festival features a collection of antique fire fighting equipment as well as a display of modern apparatus courtesy of the Alexandria Fire Department.

Festival participants have the opportunity to tour the Friendship Firehouse Museum. The building was originally constructed as an operating firehouse in 1855. It was remodeled in 1871 and then restored to its original design and condition in 1992.

The first floor Engine Room showcases historic fire fighting equipment, including hand-drawn fire engines, leather water buckets, axes, and sections of early rubber hose. The second floor houses exhibits of the Friendship Fire Company, Alexandria's first fire company, formed in 1774.

Now a philanthropic organization focusing on fire and life safety activities, the association remains active in community events, including the George Washington Birthday Celebration and Parade. Each year the birthday celebration commences with a breakfast sponsored by the association which spotlights the parade Grand Marshal.

**FOR MODEL TRAIN** enthusiasts, "Railroad Days" returns to The Lyceum, Alexandria's History Museum, 201 S. Washington St., on Aug. 2 and 3 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday. It is free.

Sponsored by The Potomac Division of the National Model Railroad Association, the display, on the second floor of the museum, features HO gauge trains journeying through miniature towns and scenic hills and valleys. It is operated by a state-of-the-art digital command system.

In addition to the scale model operating display, Railroad Days features a hands-on Thomas the Tank Engine area for toddlers and a display of Lego toys and trains. Whistle Stop Hobbies, located at 150 S. Royal St., will be on hand to discuss the fun and excitement of model railroading as well as Operation Lifesaver, a national railroad safety program.

**HISTORY BUFFS** can experience 18th century living at Gadsby's Tavern Museum on August 2 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. during the free Gadsby's Tavern Day. This event

also enables participants to learn about educational volunteer opportunities.

This year's Tavern Day Open House will include continuous tours of the historic site by costumed guides coupled with the opportunity to learn colonial dances as enjoyed by George and Martha Washington and others. Light refreshments will also be served.

Gadsby's Tavern was a favorite spot of Washington prior to and following the American Revolution. It was the center of political and social life in Alexandria as well as the new Federal City of Washington.

Tavern keepers John Wise and John Gadsby hosted balls, performances and meetings. One of the tavern's most famous social events was Thomas Jefferson's Inaugural Ball. It is located at 134 N. Royal St. across from Alexandria City Hall.

**THE ANNUAL IRISH FESTIVAL** opens at noon in Waterfront Park, at the foot of Prince Street. Food, arts and crafts, and entertainment including the Boyle Irish Dancers, the City of Alexandria Pipes and Drums, and more will entertain you until 7 p.m. This is one of the City's Ethnic Festival series. It is co-sponsored by the City's Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities, and the Ballyshaners. For more information contact 703-838-4844 or [www.alexandriava.gov](http://www.alexandriava.gov).

—CHUCK HAGEE

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## THEATER

# Who 'Blinked' in '62?

Theater recreates missile crisis on stage.

BY BRAD HATHAWAY  
GAZETTE PACKET

Anyone who was old enough in 1962 to be aware of the possibility of nuclear war still remembers the way the whole world held its breath as John Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev struggled with the issue of Soviet missiles in Cuba. It may seem like ancient history to people under the age of around fifty-five, but it remains burned in the memories of their elders, just as the memories of September 11, 2001 are indelible for today's generations.

That is why the current offering of the American Century Theater is so compelling. It is a docudrama of the first order, a quality piece of theater that, at the same time, is a way to recapture the emotions of a moment now long past and to examine events that determined the futures of so many millions.

Jon Townson plays a youthful John Kennedy opposite Kim-Scott Miller, whose more senior Khrushchev is a revelation. So many people know so much about JFK (or at least think they do) that he's a familiar quantity even now, half a century after his rise to political prominence. Khrushchev, on the other hand, is a distant memory. For most, the image of him banging his shoe on the table at the

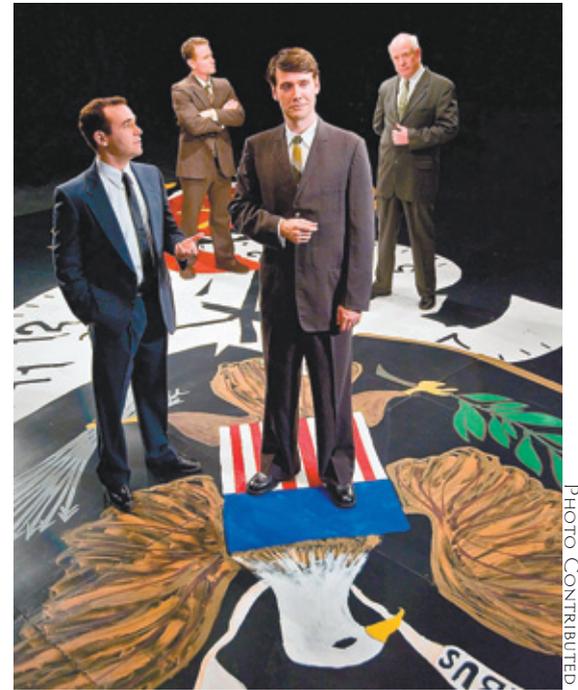


PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Left to right: John Tweel as Robert Kennedy, Brian Razzino as Andrei Gromyko, John Townsend as John Kennedy and Kim-Scott Miller as Nikita Khrushchev.

United Nations may be all that is known of the man besides the fact that he was the Soviet leader during the tense days of October, 1962.

SEE BLINKED, PAGE 7

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# THEATER

## Who 'Blinked' in '62?

FROM PAGE 6

Miller provides a fully fleshed-out portrait of Khrushchev as a committed communist whose faith in his cause and the strength of his homeland is admirable. It is a remarkable piece of acting, turning a cartoonish memory into an understandable person.

The play presents some of the people surrounding the principals as well. John Tweel captures Robert Kennedy's ability to make a serious point with a flippant comment, and, together with Townson, gives a fine rendition of the rapport between the brothers. Brian Razzino is less successful turning Khrushchev's advisor and sounding board, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, into something more than a functionary but the script doesn't give him a lot to work with.

It falls to the fifth member of the cast, William Aitken, to portray all the others on both sides of the struggle. On the U.S. side, he is Adlai Stevenson, who delivered the famous "I am prepared to wait until hell freezes over for an answer" speech at the United Nations, and Air Force General Curtis LeMay, whose faith in the use of air power to prosecute policy was clearly belligerent. On the other side of the stage where Khrushchev's office is located, he's Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin and Marshal Malinovsky. In all roles, he takes full advantage of the opportunity to deliver sharp lines in striking situations.

Playwright Robert M. McElwaine built this tense drama on the public record, the many memoirs and

histories that have been published and personal interviews with many who were party to the events. He has crafted a chronological play that takes the events one step at a time from the first time Khrushchev and Kennedy met, which was before Kennedy was elected President, right on through the moment when the two — in the famous quote attributed to Secretary of State Dean Rusk — went "eyeball to eyeball" and "the other guy blinked." (A superfluous final scene captures the reaction of Khrushchev to the news of the assassination of President Kennedy a mere 13 months after their confrontation.)

The production has a no-nonsense, substantial feel to it under the efficient direction of Jack Marshal. It is an opportunity for some to revisit the emotions of forty-five years ago and for others to grasp in human terms a vivid moment in Cold War history.

*Brad Hathaway reviews theater in Virginia, Washington, D.C., and Maryland as well as Broadway, and edits Potomac Stages, a Web site covering theater in the region (www.PotomacStages.com). He can be reached at Brad@PotomacStages.com.*

### Where and When:

The American Century Theater's production of "The Titans" plays through August 16 at Theatre Two in the Gunston Arts Center, 2700 South Lang Street. Performances are Thursday - Saturday evenings at 8 p.m. with matinee performances Saturdays and Sundays at 2:30 p.m. Tickets are \$23 - \$29. Call (703) 998-4555 or visit [www.americancentury.org](http://www.americancentury.org).

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The only way to make sure people you agree with can speak is to support the rights of people you don't agree with.

—Eleanor Holmes Norton



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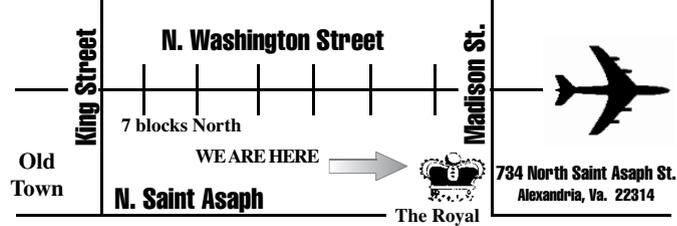
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# The Joy of Cappies

“Starz!: A Midsummer Night’s Frolic” performed in McLean

BY NOAH MARTIN  
THE GAZETTE

**F**ounded by William Straus and Judy Bowns, The Cappies International Theatre offers a program to recognize the talent and cultural importance of high school drama departments. There are more than 50 schools that participate each year. Each school has student critics that critique other schools’ performances. After the shows have all been reviewed, more than 300 critics will meet; nominate performers, technical crew, writers, and critics; and vote for the recipients of the Cappie Awards. There are 42 awards given out each year.

**THE CAPPIES** International Theatre initially included only schools within the D.C. metropolitan area. With passing years though, it has expanded to encompass schools across the United States and Canada. Each region hosts its own Cappies Awards’ Gala. The winners of those competitions are invited to participate in productions comprised of other winners across North America. Families of local Cappie Award recipients host the traveling actors.

This year, one Cappies troupe of 23 actors and four technicians performed “Starz!: A Midsummer Night’s Frolic” on Sunday, July 27 at McLean High School and Monday, July 28 at the Alden Theatre in the McLean Community Center.

I had the privilege of attending a dress rehearsal and speaking with the actors about their Cappies’ experience. One is never quite sure what to expect as a stranger when walking into an acting troupe that has been rehearsing for weeks and has sequestered themselves from the other responsibilities of reality in order to fully enter the world of their drama. What I found at McLean High School was talent, enthusiasm, and a genuine feeling of camaraderie — a feeling that quickly develops when people work in close proximity for extended periods of time. It was the day before the premiere of STARZ and yet the actors seemed relaxed and playful — even under the stress of last-minute additions and changes to the performance.

When I initially approached the actors lounging on their lunch break and announced that I was a reporter there to interview and observe them, I was immediately bombarded with a cry of, “Don’t tell him anything. Those blasted reporters will twist everything you say, take it out of context, and make you sound like an idiot.”

“Here we go,” I thought.

It had been a jocular aside from actor Chris Weschler but representative of the joviality particular to this group of performers.

Kim Ness, a rising senior from Edison



**Hanna Spear (Edmonton), Kimberly Ness (Alexandria).**

High School, had no problem plopping herself down next to me in the hall way/lunch corridor to discuss her participation in the Cappies’ production. “It was great right from the very beginning. It’s like nothing that any of us have ever done before. Getting together with people we have never met in a place we have never been and being part of something so big,” she said. When asked about the difficulty of working with strangers she replied, “Well, we are all so out there that we get along really well ... we are all so different but we all click so well.” “The people,” she said, “have been my favorite part of the whole experience ...”

“**THAT’S WHAT** she said,” said an unsolicited commentator from down the hall.

Introducing himself as the token Canadian, Rob Lippe-Lineker approached me to discuss his road to the Cappies, a road that had brought him all the way from Edmonton, AB — over 2,300 miles. Rob had won best lead actor in a performance for his role as George Gibbs in the play “Our Town.” Before he could say much however, Rob was drowned out by the sound of Jacob Zumoff, a Cappies award winner from Philadelphia, tuning his voice (at least I think that is what he was doing). “Meeting everyone has been my favorite experience and hanging out after our rehearsals, especially when we went to “The Dark Knight” said Rob. “Heath Ledger’s performance was incredible. He didn’t act the character, he was the character.”

“That’s what she said.” Again, from someone, somewhere.

Katie Ryerson, traveling from Ottawa, ON, and Cappies winner for best lead actress in a musical, said, “All the people came together like pieces of a puzzle and just fit together.” The culture shock of accents and mannerism differences only took a few days to get over, said Katie, but what she was most shocked by was the food proportions in restaurants. “We all went to Chipotle one



PHOTOS BY NOAH MARTIN/THE GAZETTE

**Sarah Schwartz (Manassas), Max Lebeuf (Edmonton), Tim O’Brien (Philadelphia), Justin Reekie (Ottawa), and Rob Lineker (Edmonton).**

night and the burritos were like small children. I took pictures so that my friends back at home would believe me.” When asked about the oft repeated and ever present phrase “that’s what she said” Katie simply tilted her head back, laughed, and replied, “that’s like our theme song. Its pretty much every second sentence.” To which a passing actor whispered, “That’s what she said.”

After speaking with Katie I made my way backstage to see the actors in their element. Margaret Berkowitz, McLean resident and youngest Cappies performer in the history of the program, sat quietly while awaiting her stage entrance. She had been chosen for the program at the age of 14 and had just turned 15 three days before the start of rehearsals. “I fell in love with the theatre when I was 8 years old,” Margaret claimed. Her sisters and brother had all performed in the community theatre and she followed in step.

**MIMI LYNCH**, a rising senior and technical director for the drama department at Robinson Secondary, was responsible for the sound and general technical support for the Starz! production. The last three years, Mimi has been the sound assistant for the Cappies’ Gala. She was in charge of creat-

ing a list of actors, characters, stage entrances, microphone positioning, acrobatics, etc. Her task was to design a schematic with all of the details and give it to the technical staff at the Kennedy Center prior to the show.

Kim Ness hopes to draw upon the experience of the Cappies and take what she has learned into the collegiate theatre. Rob Lippe-Lineker wishes to pursue a career in education while continuing drama as a hobby. Katie Ryerson will attend University for performance acting in Toronto, ON, in the fall. Margaret Berkowitz is optimistic about continuing her musical performance career into college and beyond. Mimi Lynch wants to be a doctor and will keep her involvement in the theatre as a recreation. The troupe will be performing its second production, “Anasazi” (written by co-founder of the Cappies, William Strauss), on Aug. 3 at McLean High School and Aug. 4 at The Kennedy Center Theatre Lab.

What seemed to echo from all the actors — besides, “That’s what she said” — was companionship and potential. Recognized for their talent in the dramatic crafts I am sure that this troupe’s chemistry and enthusiasm will translate into two great productions.

## Athens Meets Michael Jackson

“Starz! A Midsummer Night’s Frolic” combines a narrative border with a heart of song and dance that made for a delightful evening. Opening with Act IV, Scene 2 of a “Midsummer Night’s Dream,” the cabaret quickly deviates from the play’s more traditional route. With a lesson from Hamlet on the do’s and don’ts of acting, a last-minute performance of “Let’s Hear it for the Boy”, and an intrusion of a “Deus Ex Machina” to prevent the tragic fate of Euripides’ Medea, and the nonsensical periodic interruption of an out of place messenger, the performance took great liberties with time, place, costume, and dramatic accuracy — but liberties that worked well to entertain.

The more tragic acting scenes were well balanced with song and comedy to keep the overall mood of the play jovial. The costumes were simple yet effective in immediately describing to the viewer the period in history during the radically shifting time-machine performance. The stage was simply decorated with two white columns wound in ivy and lights but the show’s energy left the audience without want for anything more. Lighting was effectively employed to

keep attention focused on the actors.

Difficult as it may sound, the writing seamlessly sutured the diverse song progression of the run. Songs included an all modern repertoire with pieces such as, “Rich and Famous” from “Senioritis,” “Playa” from “Edit:Undo,” “Stop in the Name of Love,” “Let’s Hear it for the Boy”, and “Thriller”.

Highlights from the show included the unexpected grand finale of Michael Jackson’s “Thriller,” the frighteningly mature performance by the young Margaret Berkowitz, the technical difficulty of an actor playing a bad actor within a play while dressed in drag by Justin Reekie, and the captivating dramatic weight of Hannah Spear’s Medea.

Overall, the show was simple yet enchanting, the actors all proved to have deserved their recognition before traveling to Washington, D.C., and the content mingled well with the cast’s and crew’s chemistry I had previously observed. All around, an achievement the Cappies International Theatre can be proud of.

— NOAH MARTIN